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**An Expedition to Korea to Rescue the Crew of The Narwal in April 1851**

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**Introduction**

In 1851 Shanghai had a small but bustling enclave of Westerners who were mainly traders and missionaries. Tea was an important part of the port’s trade and its harbor was often filled with American tea clippers and British ships incoming with cloth and other goods and leaving with holds full of tea. Shanghai’s strategic location, was also an idea stopping point for whalers to re-supply going to and from the rich hunting grounds off the coasts of Korea and Japan.

On April 19th, nine sailors from the French whaler, Narwal, made their way to Shanghai with the news that their whaling ship had been wrecked off the coast of Korea and their fellow crew members detained by the Koreans. They made their way to the French consulate and presented their story to him and pleaded with him for his assistance.

The French Consul at Shanghai was Louis Charles Nicholas Maximillian de Montigny, an ambitious and proud man who took his role as French Consul very seriously. It was through his efforts that France gained its concession in Shanghai, a concession that was not always viewed in a positive light.1

Usually a warship would be sent in a situation such as this, but with no French warships in the harbor, and no time to wait for one, Montigny realized that he had only three options if he were to save the Narwal’s crew. First, he could make an unofficial call upon the English

1 “A large and absurdly disproportionate tract” described one British official who added: “The national vanity of the French leading them to an absurd and useless acquisition.” Alexander Michie, The Englishman in China, p. 435

[page 28] Consul and request an English warship be sent and rescue the crew. Second, he could send Mr. Arnaud and his fellow sailors aboard a chartered boat and have them bring back their fellow crew members, and third, he could go himself

He rejected the first idea not only out of French pride but also because he did not want to cause tensions between his government and the English. If an English warship, with its crew of 120-130 men, was sent and lost trying to save the lives of twenty French sailors, the French government would be left greatly indebted to the English. He rejected the second idea fearing that the sailors, if faced with a hardship, might easily abandon their quest - a fact that was later proven.

The only sensible thing he could do was to go himself. Two members of the French Consulate, Michel-Alexandre de Kleczkowski2 and Benoit Edan,3 volunteered to accompany the Consul, but only Kleczkowski, the consulate’s interpreter, was accepted. Montigny explained to Edan that he needed to remain behind and run the consulate in his absence and to be prepared to send assistance if some misfortune occurred. A twenty-year-old Frenchman named Bidet, an employee in a French firm in Shanghai,4 was allowed to accompany the expedition

2 Michel-Alexander de Kleczkowski (1818-1886) arrived in Shanghai with Montigny in 1848 and remained in China for 17 years. Pierre-Emmanuel Roux in his article “Du nouveau sur l’expedition de sauvetage du baleinier francais le Narval, sur une ile de Parchipel de Coree”, Tan’gun, Pratiques sociales des Coreens, Paris : L’Harmat-tan, 2007, vol. 1 (Nouvelle serie), pp. 167-184, and 2008,vol. 2,pp. 176-187 (from this point on simply referred to as Pierre-

Emmanuel Roux) cited Nicole Bensaca-Tixier, Dictionary of the French Diplomatic Corps in China (1840-1911), Paris, the Eurdite Indies, 2003, 232-237

3 Benoit Edan (1803-1871) arrived in Shanghai where he worked for the French firm of Remi and in 1850 joined the French consulate. Following Montigny, he served as consul from June 1853 through 1857, when Montigny returned, and again from June 1859 until February 1863.

4 The Remi firm, owned by Dominique Remi, arrived in Shanghai from Canton in 1848 and was the first French landowner in the French concession. He sold watches and later expanded into wines and alcohols. Pierre-Emmanuel Roux citing Nicole Bensacq-Tixier, Dictionary of the French Diplomatic Corps in China (1840-1911), Paris, the Eurdite Indies, 2003, p. 197

[page 29] because he was related to the Narwal’s captain. Five members of the Narwal’s crew, including Mr. Arnoud, were also included in the expedition. The final member was the Englishman, James MacDonald. MacDonald ran a very successful commercial firm in Shanghai and judging from his actions and his account, was well educated with an interest in Greek mythology, skilled at Chinese, and had a fondness for adventure.

What follows is James MacDonald’s account of the expedition as printed in the North China Herald in a series of articles from May through August 1851, and supplemented with notes from Consul Montigny’s report to his government.

**James MacDonald’s Account**

From the notice which appeared in the columns of the North-China Herald last month, the object of the short voyage of which I am about to narrate the particulars, is already well known to its readers. It will be recollected that on the 19th of April, the chief officer and eight men of the crew of the Narwal of Havre, Captain Rivalan, a ship of about 450 tons burden, arrived here from Lookong, and reported to Monsieur de Montigny the French Consul, the total loss of that vessel, during the night of 2nd-3rd April, on one of the islands of the Amherst group, on the southwest coast of Corea, and their subsequent escape in a whale-boat after being a week upon the island; the Captain, Doctor, and eighteen men remaining behind.

Ill luck had attended Captain Rivalan on his present voyage, having been out twelve months without fish; and he and his officers having formerly visited the seas of Corea and Japan he intended cruising in those parts until the season should be sufficiently advanced for him to proceed to Behring’s Straits. He entered the Yellow Sea in March, and after sighting the Shantung promontory, crossed over to the coast of Corea, seeing several whales which however they did not succeed in capturing.

[page 30] Having made the coast of Corea he turned southwards, and proceeding through the archipelago, had reached the last group, named the Amherst Islands on the English Map, when on the 2nd April, the vessel struck on a sand bank, near to a rocky islet lying a few miles to the northwest of the island called Fei-kin-taou. N. Lat. 34-11. From this danger they succeeded in recovering the ship, which after being got off was brought to anchor. During the following night a hard gale suddenly sprung up from the northwest, which aided by a strong ebb tide caused the vessel to drag her anchors, unperceived by the watch until too late, and at about three o’clock in the morning of the 3rd she struck on the rocky and precipitous coast of that island. In a few minutes after striking, the destruction of the ship was complete - the masts went over the side - the decks burst up with a loud report, and she was literally crushed to pieces. Meanwhile the Captain and chief portion of the crew had pushed off from the ship in the whale-boats, while the others sprang upon a projecting ledge of rock, and with the exception of one man who was drowned in the attempt, they succeeded in climbing up the precipice. The boats kept off until daylight, when they entertained a small cove at about a furlong’s distance to the north, and the men landing joined their unfortunate companions already on shore. They whole coast was by this time strewed with the wreck, and collecting empty casks, spars, they set to work to establish a camp. So sudden was the disaster that little else had been saved beyond the clothes on their persons, and a small quantity of biscuit. Fortunately the natives of the island, although they showed a propensity to pilfer, yet seemed otherwise well disposed, and the head men of the nearest village brought supplies of rice to the shipwrecked crew. Thus they remained for a week, on good terms with the natives, when the Chief officer Mr. Arnaud and eight of the men, having come to a resolution to attempt to reach the coast of China, secretly prepared one of the three whale-boats saved, with a small supply of biscuit and water, and under cover of night took their departure from the island. [The next day,] steering for the southwest, they passed Alceste island at a distance, and continuing on their course they had not reached more than half way across the Yellow Sea when a northerly gale came on, so strong that they could no send before it. Lashing several oars together they attached them by a rope to [page 31] the bow to serve as a breakwater, and for thirty hours during which the gale continued they with difficulty kept their boat from being swamped, although planks had been raised on her gunwales to aid in keeping her dry. After considerable suffering from cold and wet, and from want of room being unable to lie down to rest, they at last after a five day’s passage sighted the Chusan islands, and were shown the way to the harbour of Lookong by a Chinese fishing boat, where they were equally surprised and glad to find European vessels, having never been on this coast before. Seldom, perhaps never, had so small a bark crossed the Yellow Sea in safety, and Mr. Arnaud who on his own responsibility undertook the voyage with his eight volunteers, surely deserves to have his name favourably recorded in this narrative; and moreover is entitled to the lasting gratitude of those of his comrades who by his enterprise and determination were relieved from a wearisome captivity.

On the arrival of Mr. Arnaud and his companions at Shanghai on the 19th April, Monsieur de Montigny the French Consul, bearing in mind the peculiar position of Corea in reference to foreign nations, took the resolution to proceed himself to the rescue of his countrymen. On the afternoon of that day, a friend of the writer attached to the French Consulate, called on him with an invitation to join the approaching expedition. So novel a voyage at once seized my fancy. I easily contrived to excuse myself to myself for a ten or twenty day’s absence, on the score of the great benefit of a sea voyage to one’s health, although I happened to be perfectly well at the time. But a trip to Corea, I reflected - a real terra incognita! Never get another opportunity perhaps, -I must go. We accordingly proceeded to the French Consulate, and from thence presently accompanied Monsieur de Montigny to examine two Macao Lorchas5 lying in the river. One of these was soon engaged for the voyage. The wind being favourable it was resolved to depart without loss of time, and we returned on shore to make our preparations.

Next morning, Sunday 20th April, the Consul proceeded in the

5 A lorcha is a vessel with a western style hull but the upper deck and riggings are Chinese in design. They were popular armed merchant ships in Chinese waters.

[page 32] Lorcha down the river with the tide, and I joined at Woosung shortly after noon; we left the anchorage there about four o’clock that day on the first turn of the tide, with a light favourable wind.

Next morning, Monday 21st April, we were in the mouth of the Yang-tze-kiang. While waiting at anchor for the change of the tide two fine merchant ships passed close to us, - the Carrington, American for New York,6 and Albemarle, British for London. In the afternoon we got under weigh and stood over behind the banks towards Sha-wei-shan. This, as is well known, is a lofty barren rock off the north entrance of the Yang-tze-kiang, and was not long ago a notorious rendezvous for Chinese pirates, where they lay in wait to capture the Shanghai junks proceeding to, and returning from Shang-tung, Leao-tung, and the Pei-ho. Many of these fell an easy prey. The cargo when valuable was plundered and both junks and crew held to ransom, the latter being cruelly ill treated if their friends did not speedily relieve them. In 1846, 1847, and 1848 their ravages were particularly destructive, scores of junks being repeatedly in their clutches at one time. For their suppression, the Shanghai Authorities engaged a number of Macao Lorchas, well armed. They also have built a small fleet of war junks after the model of the Lorchas, and they purchased an old American schooner, the Boxer. They were cruising this day and passed us going to the islands, the Boxer bringing up the line. By these means the pirates have for the most part been put down in this quarter, while the authorities have been rewarded for the relief given to commerce.7

6 The Carrington, under the command of Captain Abbott, was one of the fast tea clippers that sailed between New York and China.

7 Piracy would continue to plague the coasts of China and Korea. In the late 1890s the American bark, White Squall, under the command of Captain White, was chartered by the Chinese government to transport $100,000 worth of freshly minted silver coins from Fuchau, China to Korea. The White Squall was provided with four cannons and twelve Chinese soldiers, but while the ship was taking on supplies, word got out concerning the ship’s mission, and preparations were made to intercept it. A short distance from the port the White Squall was suddenly set upon by several junks, but Captain White was able to fend off the pirates until a British warship could offer assistance. The Newark DailyAdvocate, November 30, 1897, pp. 3; North Adams Transcript, December 30, 1897,

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The same evening, Monday 21st April, about 7 o’clock we took our departure from Shang-wei-shan steering northeast with a fine breeze from the southeast.

Next day, Tuesday 22nd, April, the weather was cloudy with slight showers of rain at intervals. The wind continued at southeast by east, and although rather light we made fair progress. From the thick muddy colour of the Yang-tze-kiang the water had now changed to green. We were in the direct line of the Shantung junks this day but none were seen. Being now fairly at sea we had leisure to observe the capabilities of our Lorcha and her crew. She was a stout built but roughly finished craft of about 21 feet beam, drawing with the rudder down about 8 feet water, having one large and two smaller masts as usual, with mat sails. The armament consisted of two 6-pound guns, one long 9 on a revolving slide, and two 16 pound carronades, with abundance of small arms, and gunpowder, I must say ad nausem. Compared with the crack Lorchas newly built, which carry as many as eighteen guns, and are nicely finished, our bark was inferior, although not many years old. Outside she was pointed of a gay green colour, but the owner had not considered it requisite to decorate her within, not even the cabin. It is just however to suppose he had intended the vessel more for the convoy trade than for

5 Perhaps one of the most infamous pirates was Eli Boggs, an American renegade sailor, who for three years, along with his fleet of thirty to forty Chinese junks, was the terror along the coast of southern China. In 1857, he was captured by another American, Captain Bully Hayes, who, ironically, was later accused of piracy in the South Pacific. George Wingrove Cooke described Eli Boggs as a “handsome boy” with “a face of feminine beauty. Not a down upon the upper lip; large lustrous eyes; a mouth the smile of which might woo coy maidens; affluent black hair, not carelessly parted; hands so small and so delicately white that they would create a sensation in Belgravia...” Boggs was convicted, but because of his youth and probably his looks, he was sentenced to life imprisonment. However, in 1860, after only three years of hard labor in Hong Kong’s prison, Boggs was released because of poor health and his name faded from history. A.D. Blue, “Piracy on the China Coast,” Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, Vol. 5, 1965, pp. 69-85

[page 34] carrying passengers.

Our crew was composed of two classes - Portuguese and Canton Chinese. The former were the officers so to speak, and the latter the working seamen, steersmen, &c. The Captain who was destined to carry us across the seas, and show the flag by the by, was a worthy person in his way of whom it may at least be said, that if his abilities were not great, his pretensions were small. He was a native of Macao, a colony which although pleasant as a place of residence, can scarcely lay claim to be regarded as a nursery for seamen - as we English are wont to consider of our own. The others were also all natives of the east. Captain and all spoke Chinese with facility, in the same dialect as the crew, and the whole body took their meals together in the most sociable manner.

In respect to the means of navigation our vessel was apparently guided ordinarily upon the Compass, Lead, and Look out principal; no log-line was in use, but as we were supplied with both a Chinese and English compass. Such superfluities as Charts, Sextant, had to be procured by ourselves.

Mr. Arnaud, the officer of the wrecked ship and four of his men also accompanied us on the voyage in search of their late companions.

Thus equipped, we proceeded on that day with moderate weather, but rather adverse wind, and on Wednesday 23rd, April, the wind changed N.N.E., and compelled us to tack to the eastward. Previous to doing so, two Shanghai junks were in sight coming from the north with a fair wind. The first passed at some distance, and the second junk evidently getting alarmed at seeing us in that quarter, luffed up suddenly as he saw us stand across his bows, but on showing our flag he became reassured, and held on course. The sea had now become of a dark colour, and these two junks we were informed by our Shanghai Pilot were to eastward of their usual track. At noon this day we were in Latitude 33 -40 and Longitude 122 - 42 (from Pers.) Several small land birds were caught today, having alighted on our rigging to rest; and not a day passed but we saw some, both in going and returning, although the distance from China to the Corean islands in this meridian is about 400 miles.

Thursday 24th April. In the latter part of yesterday the wind had gradually veered round to the westward of north, so as to enable us to [page 35] make good our northeast course, and continued in that quarter this day, but not fresh. The weather was also thick, with occasional showers of rain. About noon it cleared up somewhat and Mr. Arnaud conceived he had got a correct observation by which he made our position to be in Lat. 34 - 50 and consequently about half a degree to the northward of the island on which the shipwreck took place. He therefore altered our course to E.S.E., and with the wind now free, although not very fresh. We made rapid progress for some hours. But this alteration of our course was not made without opposition for we knew without pretending to a deep knowledge of the science of navigation, that a northeast course made good, would carry us to Corea, and once among the islands we could find the latitude at our convenience, while a course to the southward of east, we felt would be more likely to lead us to Japan. We yielded however to the sincere conviction of our practical guide, although unable to comprehend how a Lorcha could possible make such progress beating to windward, as his reckoning showed, and quite incredulous of the existence of a northerly current so early in the season, as he seemed to believe and thereby try to account for it. Towards evening of this day the wind became lighter, when after dusk our Leader (the Consul) was the first to detect a land smell on the breeze, which was sensible at intervals, and this night we kept a good look out.

Next morning, Friday 25th April, the weather was thick and cloudy, the barometer falling. The latter circumstance we considered merely to indicate the approach of rain with a southerly wind. Between six and seven o’clock, we saw the land at a short distance, but from the extreme thickness of the atmosphere could not determine whether it was a large island or not. Perceiving an opening in the coast just before us which seemed calculated to afford shelter from easterly winds, we ran in and cast anchor in eight fathoms. We found we were now in the middle of an open roadstead, formed by a sudden turn pf the coast line to the east for about a mile or more, where a high hill terminated in an abrupt precipice, from which a rugged islet at about two hundred yards’ distance seemed to have been detached by volcanic action. Beyond this islet seawards, at the distance of about half a mile, was a small but a lofty island with a curved sandy bay on the side fronting the main island. [page 36]

With this slight exception, the shores around the anchorage were entirely lined with rocks of black basalt, on which the heavy seas swell broke with a sudden roan Towards the southern side of the anchorage a rock appeared a few feet above water, and altogether the appearance of the place was most uninviting, which was heightened by a drizzling rain.

We had arrived as we afterwards ascertained at the western point of Quelpart Island in Lat. 33 -19, the center island above referred to being that named Eden Island, by Sir E. Belcher in his Survey of Quelpart. Throughout its extent of coast Quelpart possesses “but one safe anchorage,” according to the same authority, and that is at the eastern or opposite end of the island. No houses were visible except one beyond the hill, but we soon observed people collecting on the beach above our anchorage, to gaze at the unusual visitor: and a catamaran sculled by one man passed over from the rocky islet to the shore.8 Having breakfasted we all proceeded on shore in our little sampan, which required to make two trips to convey us, with our European sailors, all well armed.9 We landed on the rocks opposite to the islet above mentioned, at a point were a small stream found its way through a very rocky channel into the sea. In the mouth of this rivulet we found about a dozen catamarans aground on the rocks it being low water. They are formed by ten or twelve pine logs of about 14 feet in length securely lashed together, with a top work of a few upright and cross bars of wood, and are perhaps well adapted for such a rocky coast.

The people on the beach were of the lowest class, clad in the usual wide quilted jacket and trousers of unbleached coarse hempen cloth, yet their appearance did not seem to indicate less cleanliness or comfort than that of the same order of Chinese. Their complexions were similar to Chinese of a corresponding latitude, yet their tout ensemble was very

8 MacDonald almost never mentions it, but apparently Montigny had three shots fired every time the ship anchored in a new location or when they were visited by Korean officials as a salute, and possibly as a means of attracting the Korean population’s attention.

9 According to Montigny, there were ten men in the party - six French, MacDonald, and three Chinese - and that six were armed with shotguns charged with lead.

[page 37] different, arising chiefly from the head not being shaved as in China, the men wearing the hair tied up in a knot on the crown of the head, and the boys having it long and hanging over the back. They were food humoured, cheerfully collecting shells, sponges, &c., for us in hope of being rewarded with a cigar. Presently the whole of our party had landed, and our attention was called to the top of the beach where an officer appeared who was talking in a loud key and gesticulating with some vehemence of manner. He had just arrived on a little rough pony, and as we approached he beckoned to us to return on board in a way not to be misunderstood; but his rapidity of gestures and volubility of speech were alike lost upon us, as we merely replied by handing him a slip of paper with a line in Chinese intimating that we intended to have a parley with him at his house, but not there in a crowd10 This he read off in a loud and interrogative sort of tone, then talked on for some minutes in a vociferous voice as before, and then as we showed no intention of returning, he suddenly mounted his little horse, whose height was about equal to the diameter of his master’s hat, and trotted off somewhat to my disappointment, as I was just forming the intention of having a ride on my own account. Off, however, he went, faster than we could follow, making more noise than a magpie all the while; and the import of which I am sorry for the reader’s sake we could not precisely understand, not being “ripe” in Corean language.11

The day was most unpleasantly wet, and the appearance of the country dreary, but we trudged on by a narrow road confined within stone dikes on either hand, and at the time little better than a watercourse. Around the foot of the hill by which our path led, were small fields of

10 Montigny described it as: the rain fell in torrents and it was impossible to write in the middle of the noisy crowd, and that we needed shelter. I made the signs of this to him be he continued his cries and gestures without appearing to notice me. I then took his arm forced him, without violence but with firmness and coolness, to walk with me towards the houses.

11 According to Montigny, the Korean official was assisted to his horse by one of the French sailors who also held the horse while they walked, but when the road became rough, one of the sailors inadvertently released his hold on the horse and the Korean official fled.

[page 38] young wheat; farther down on our other hand the land was marshy and of a mossy nature. We soon descried the walls of the fort in the distance of about a half a mile across some wet field land, reserved for rice crops apparently, but then unploughed. One of the Coreans, a numerous retinue of whom accompanied us, beckoned us to follow him into the fort, we approached within a short distance, but as the official cavalier did not show himself to us, and the gate being shut, we turned off and entered the first cottage in the adjacent hamlet. It was that of a poor husbandman, having three small apartments nearly filled with agricultural implements, &c., walls not six feet high, and thatched roof; a rough stone dyke of about five feet enclosing the premises. Finding seats as best could, we sat down under the projecting eaves of the house which sheltered us from the rain, and as the yard in front was soon thronged by Coreans, who were not deterred by the wet, we soon ascertained that most of them could read and write Chinese, and accordingly addressed ourselves to one of the principal men, enquiring regarding the officer and the fort The former we were told in reply was a Great-Frontier-Protecting-General, on reading which I am afraid some of us laughed rather disrespectfully, but our peasant scribe was not decomposed. “Send and tell the Great-Frontier- Protecting-General that we guests are waiting to be received,” we added. “The General has no time for idle conversation” answered the old fellow. “Not very polite,” said we: “our country is distinguished for propriety of manners and rectitude of principal,” he rejoined. “How many men and guns are there in that fort,” we asked. “The laws of our country are very severe, and forbid communication with you, so I cannot tell you,” he replied, moving away, as he drew his hand across his throat, giving a very significant sight there by.

Finding nothing could be learned thus, we advanced to the fort. The gate was still shut, but one of our European sailors climbed over the walls to open it from inside, while our Canton braves, several of whom had accompanied us, each armed with a pair of the double short swords, put on a fierce look, as if expectation of a desperate sortie from the [page 39] garrison.12 Great was our amusement therefore to perceive on the gate being opened that the interior contained nothing but a field of young wheat, with several small huts and two ponies at the further end. The wall of the fort was built of rough stone, about twenty feet in height, having numerous embrasures in the parapet, and of a quadrangular form, with a projecting bastion at each of the four corners, and a covered gateway. Its extent was about two hundred yards in length and about nine hundred yards in breadth, and to judge from its decayed appearance was probably built during the war with Japan about 150 years ago, and neglected since that time.

As we advanced up the path in the centre we perceived the General bristling about. He, finding us in possession of his stronghold, put on a good face on the matter, and received us courteously in the only place he seemed to possess adapted for public occasions. It was a small square cottage, open to the west which direction it fronted, and partly at the sides, being covered with a good thatch roof, which was supported by four substantial wood pillars about eight feet high, the base resting on stone pedestals, and having a plank floor and tolerably clean appearance. Mats were spread for us on the floor, chairs not being in use in the parts of Corea we visited, but finding the posture a la Turque not very convenient, the general did his best to procure substitutes for chairs. His surname was ascertained as Lee, his rank he evaded telling us, and the warlike

12 Unlike MacDonald’s account which seems to indicate they were followed to the fort by the Korean crowd, Montigny states that all the Koreans disappeared and he, concerned about an ambush, ordered his riflemen to spread out on both sides of the road so that they would not be grouped together and provide an easier target. Montigny states he had Kleczkowski write a letter in Chinese and then tried to give it to one of the Koreans to take to the fort but they indicated through sign language that they would be killed (heads cut off) if they complied. So Montigny had one of the Chinese sailors from the lorcha carry the note to the fort and received the prompt answer that the “General of the Frontier” was not able to leave his stronghold and that Montigny would have to go and visit him. Montigny does not mention sending a French sailor over the walls but instead claims that apprehensively he went to the fort’s gate, unarmed, and after several attempts, opened the door and walked into the courtyard.

[page 40] weapons at his command consisted as far as we could discover of only his own rusty Toledo.

Shortly after conversation commenced in Chinese writing, the people collected around our little hall began to express their interest in the proceedings with more noise than was agreeable, intimation of which being given, our host gave a loud order, and one man was instantly seized in the crowd. Making not resistance by word or action, he quietly submitted to be thrown on the ground with his face downwards, his clothes were then drawn down bare from the waist to the knees, and the instrument of flagellation was being applied to the hams of his legs, when we interfered, giving the General to understand that no punishment of this nature could be permitted before us. The instrument I allude to, resembled somewhat in size and shape the blade of a wherry’s oar, having a round handle of about two feet, and would seem to be in much more diligent use than even the bamboo in China for the same purpose. It is a cruel and severe punishment, tearing the flesh, and making the blood spurt after a few strokes are given. And yet we learn that in former times these Quelpart officials have even dared to treat Europeans [in a similar manner]. About the middle of the 17th century, a Dutch vessel, the Sparrow-hawk, was wrecked on the island, and the crew detained in slavery there for nineteen year, during which time they were often cruelly bastinadoed, until at length an opportunity offered of seizing a small junk, in which they escaped to Japan.13

The independent tone we had adopted towards our so-distant General Lee, had the designed effect of reducing the boisterous manner

13 Hamel described a beating in which the offenders had the soles of their feet beat with sticks and sometimes the offender ended up losing some of their toes. Vibeke Roeper and Boudewijin Walraven, ed., Hamel’s World: A Dutch-Korean Encounter in the Seventeenth Century, Amsterdam: Sun Publishers, 2003, pp. 113, 139-140. Montigny was convinced that the “contemptible” punishment of the offenders by the Korean officials was an attempt to intimidate or awe him with their power. He was not impressed and warned the Korean officials that he considered it an insult for them to punish people in such a manner in front of him. Evidently his protests were successful as the officials ceased to administer these beatings in front of mm and seemed more attentive and refined in his presence.

[page 41] with which he at first attempted to repel us, into the most deferential attention. Nevertheless we did not succeed in accomplishing the object of our visit on shore. To our repeated enquiries as to the name of the country, the island, and locality, the replies were “Tchaou-sin,” their pronunciation of the name of Corea in Chinese, and Ying-chow-san the name of the locality; while Tsee-chow the name of Quelpart Island, as we believed, we were told lay some hundreds of lee to the eastward, and we found it would be necessary to shew our Charts to the General to remedy the confusion. And in reference to our ulterior object, he protested he had heard of no European vessel having been lately ship-wrecked on that Coast. We therefore concluded to remain in that neighbourhood until the weather permitted us to ascertain our exact position by observation.

Our host after we had been some time with him ordered a repast to be spread for us, consisting of boiled rice, dried fish, slices of beef, vegetables, sea weed, and a species of sea slug, accompanied by samshoo and a beverage tasting like cider. The whole was served up on small tables of about 15 inches in altitude, a convenient height for the posture of the natives. The rice &c., was served up in bowls made of metal, a mixture of brass and tutenague apparently, with small flat dishes of common earthenware; and the chopsticks were composed of the same metal and flat in shape.

We now prepared to return on board, having arranged that the General visit us on the morrow; and this reminds me that I have not described his appearance. He was a man of middle stature olive complexion, features somewhat sharp but interesting, and his eyes resembled the Japanese more than Chinese. His look was intelligent and penetrating. His hands and feet were small, his hair was dressed in a knot on the top of the head, and secured by a broad band of delicate network composed of black silk and hair. “The hat,” says Belcher, speaking of another Quelpart Military officer, “which is a light fabric, and most beautiful piece of workmanship, is composed of the fine outre fibres of the bamboo, dyed black, (many are not) and woven into gauze, like our finest network. The rim is about two feet in diameter; the cone rises to nine inches, having a diameter at the truncated vortex of three inches, and has one or more peacock’s feathers attached in a kind of swivel, forming a [page 42] graceful head-dress, and one not unbecoming a military character (?) Beneath this hat our chief was decorated by two necklaces or collars, one composed of large ultra-marine-blue balls, apparently of porcelain, the centre being about nine-tenths of an inch in diameter, diminishing in size towards the extremities. The other fastened behind the left ear and crossing the breast, but this was composed a long tubular pieces, about a quarter of an inch in diameter, by two inches in length, tapering at the extremes, and apparently amber having a dark coloured red bead between each.

His personal dress consisted of a fine loose shirt of grass cloth, trousers and stockings in one, of a species of (white) Nankoen, and leather boots of very neat workmanship in the loose Wellington style (!) the upper part being of a black velvet; a loose tunic of open texture approaching to coarse grass cloth or muslin, having the cuffs lined and turned up with scarlet silk, confined by a broad sash of blue at the waist completed the house dress.” The only article of foreign manufacture that we observed in our host’s dress was his hat strings, which were composed of fine white twilled Manchester cotton cloth. We subsequently at the Amherst group observed one of the officials who visited us had the wide sleeves of his gown turned up with fine white long cloth. These were the only instances we perceived of European manufactures being in use.

Such articles are doubtless an expensive luxury to the Corea, and must reach them by their northern frontier, from Niew-chwang in Leaou- tung, to which place considerable quantities are sent from Shanghai direct, in part payment for the bulky produce thence imported, and perhaps also from Peking, since the Corean Ambassadors are said on the weighty authority or Montgomery Martin14 to be given to doing a smart stroke of business, in the buying and selling line, on the occasion of each visit to that capital.

On our return on board in the afternoon my first remark was how

14 Sir Robert Montgomery Martin was an expert on British trade in China. At one time he served as the British colonial treasurer and wrote “British Relations with the Chinese Empire in 1832,” along with several other books dealing with China and British colonies throughout the world.

[page 43] desirable it would be to obtain a better anchorage, the bottom being bad, putting aside the exposed situation, but the day was too far advanced to go in search of another, and we passed the evening in hopes of clear weather on the morrow when we intended to make a thorough exploration. Little did we anticipate the danger that was to overtake us that night, or the varied emotions, the hopes and fears, with which we should contend ere we should see another sun.

At dusks there were no threatening signs of a gale; the barometer had been low all day, but not so as to excite great apprehension, being accompanied with much wet. We lay at single anchor and there in was the peril in such a place, with a negligent watch.

It was about one o’clock in the morning when I was roused from a profound sleep by hearing my name loudly and rapidly called several times by the Consul with the addition to “come up on deck quickly, - we are going on shore - we are on the rocks - don’t stop to dress - come up quickly.” I turned round in my berth at the first call - the cause of the danger flashed across my mind - I sprang on my feet - jumped into my trousers, and snatching my vest without waiting for coat or cloak I rushed on deck. The imminence of the danger was but too obvious. A most violent gale had come thundering upon us from E.S.E. accompanied by a cold and cutting rain. We were driving fast down upon Eden Island, and although the night was black as Erebus15 we could already discern the white foam lashing the shores of the island which we were rapidly approaching. All hands were on deck in a few moments after the first alarm was given - our best anchor was let go, and still she dragged - the halyards were laid on the capstan, and the sail run up “with a will” - no laggers then - but of course we drifted faster than before, and they tried but in vain to heave up the anchors, till at last the black rocks were frowning high close behind us. At this time I perceived the shanghai pilot come on deck - he went to the stern, - and as he realized the danger of our situation, he turned round and stamping on the deck broke out in

15 Erubus, whose name means darkness or shadow, was the son of the god Chaos. According to some legends Erubus was the part of Hades in which the dead had to pass through right after death.

[page 44] frantic cried, “cut the cable or we’ll all die.” One of best Canton men - and they were a crew of picked men - was at the tiller - he joined the pilot in the cry to “cut the cable,” and our officer Mr. Arnaud exclaimed about the same time “Ah mon Dieu” if they would but cut the cable quickly. Then indeed, I did think No. 51 was near her latter end.

Till now we passengers had scarcely exchanged a word, when the Consul addressed me in terms, I must not as a faithful narrator shrink from declaring, worthy of the generous reputation of the man. “We will go on shore,” he said, in a tone, firm, but as if regarding it as inevitable, “and the only circumstance I regret is, that I should have been the means of bringing you into danger; as for us, we did our duty in coming to relieve our countrymen and must take the risk.” “No fear,” replied, “they are calling out to cut the cables - if they do so, that sail will take her through anything.”

Yet I doubted much the chance of escape by that manoeuvre. The sail was three-fourths up, the lorcha quivering in every timber as it shook in the gale, and the mast in all probability would have given away, being so poorly supported by stays. But it became evident to me that on cutting the cable, so light a vessel would rapidly surge to leeward, and ere the sails could draw her forward, would have struck on the rocks. The wind which at first drove us upon the sandy bay, changing a little, we ultimately were drifted, near the South-east point of Eden island, where a reef of rocks a few feet above water ran out to about two hundreds, and ended in an overhanging bluff head about eighty feet high. From the reef three jagged pyramidal rocks shot up to a height of about thirty feet each, and it was between these frightful rocks and the head, that we were threatened with shipwreck.

Luckily the means of cutting the cables were not to be found, when convinced that our only resource for safety lay in “riding it out,” I went forward and gave the orders (in Chinese) “down sail, give her all the cables.” Down came the sail immediately, and then picking out the poor Capitano who was neither to be seen nor heard in the crowd, I desired him give every inch of cable on both anchors, to which he objected, saying, “oh Senhor if I give ten fathoms more w’ell go on the rock,” “ha grande perigo!” Decision was necessary. - It was not a time to stand upon [page 45] ceremony, or to chaffer with one whose neglect had nigh ruined our expedition; sharp rang the order - the last inch of cable was given - forty fathoms on both anchors - the strain was great, - but she held her ground, - let those who have been in a similar situation, judge of the relief it afforded us when this was ascertained by the lead. Still we were in a most critical position. The barometer was then at 29.-45. and fell shortly to 29. - 40.; we were close on a rocky shore, and should the gale increase much, nothing could save us from shipwreck. But Providence had otherwise decreed, and our time was not yet come. The storm had reached its height, when shortly after we observed lights moving on the shore where we landed the previous day, at which point a watch guard had been established. The native shad discovered our disappearance from our first position.

All this time I was half clad and now began to feel the piercing cold and wet, and bethinking myself of the proverb “dum vivimus, vivamus,” I observed to our leader, “I’ll go down below and get my coat,” adding, “I think we are all right now.” But he was not sufficiently assured of our safety to let me out of his sight for some time, until it was evident the gale was abating. The crowing of the cock that morning was welcome music to us, for it heralded the approach of dawn. By daylight the gale had died away - the larks rose from the grassy bank on the back of the bluff, chanting their notes over our heads - never before did I heartily wish to be out of hearing of them, for it made me shudder to look round at the rocks. We lost no time in sending out a kedge anchor and warped out into the middle of the anchorage. We had drifted about a mile that night, on first night in the Corean dominions - a night never to be forgotten by us who escaped its dangers.

Saturday 26th April. Our narrow escape from shipwreck last night determined us to move in search of a better anchorage, and we accordingly got under weigh this morning, but shortly after leaving the bay the wind failed us, so that we could make little progress, while a turbulent sea tossed and tumbled us about in a manner threatening accident to our rudder, the barometer also began to fall again, and we were fain to return in the forenoon to our former position.

On our return the reader may be sure we did not neglect to look [page 46] well to our “ground tackle.” Our best anchors were put out, and full scope of cable given. As a further precaution it was proposed and seconded that our two 16 pound carronades should be stowed away in the hold, where they were likely to prove more useful as ballast than they were necessary for our defense. This was soon safely affected, and in the agitated state of the sea, even in the bay, was a relief to the vessel.

Shortly after our return, a boat entered the bay from the northeast, but the surf on the rocks prevented its communicating with the shore. In the afternoon, this boat left the bay shortly before we went in our sampan to examine the anchorage of the northeast of the islet where we found a better bottom in suitable depth but no shelter from the sea. Returning, we rowed along the foot of the precipitous head I have before alluded to, at as near a distance as safety permitted, passing by numerous lofty caverns which perforated the rock, and gave shelter to myriads of seafowl. These were very tame and many flew around us making much noise, being disturbed by our unusual appearance, or perhaps in their own way demanding satisfaction for the loss of certain of their kindred, whose career had been shortened by powder and lead on the previous day.

As we slowly passed, all gazing in wonder, I asked one of the Canton men, “have you any such great caverns in your Kwangtung coast?” “No,” replied he, “I never say any, but I have heard there are great caverns in the province of Yunnan.”

On our return on board a note was sent on shore to the General desiring him to visit us on board, but the messenger after effecting a landing, found he had already left the tent for his fort, the day being far advanced. We were glad when our sampan returned in safety, for towards dusk [the light breeze from the west] increased to a gale, and blew hard, with a driving rain. We now congratulated ourselves in having disposed of our heavy artillery below, as the bay being open to the quarter from whence the wind now blew, a furious sea ran in, and the violence and rapidity with which we plunged and rolled exceeded anything I ever before experienced. That night was an anxious one for our party, and few on board went to sleep. Below, the creaking and groaning of the bulkheads with the horrid beating and rocking noise of the helm banished all peace: above, the wind and rain howled and beat hard, [page 47] while the swelling seas would now and again curl their white crests as we rose upon them, and rolling past spend their fury upon the rocks. Our fears were excited lest the stony bottom should cut our coir cable, in which case our chain one would soon have snapt asunder, and left us to drive among the caverns on our lee, and then - the clear cold sea would soon have demanded us for its prey.

But as on the previous night the gale was short duration. Towards morning of Sunday, 27th April, the wind abated, but a tempestuous sea rolled in.

Another large boat appeared about ten o’clock this forenoon, and after many attempts for about two hours, succeeded at last in embarking the General and the other officials waiting on the racks to come off. They approached soon after noon, their boat being propelled by two great sculls, and full of men; but as it was defended by several strong transverse beams, projecting about three feet over the sides, we were compelled for our own safety, in the dangerous state of the sea, to forbid their coming alongside. They on the other hand were afraid to trust themselves in our sampan and it became a matter of difficulty to transfer them from the boat to the lorcha. At last, the General, a Che-hieu or District Magistrate, with four others, and two subordinates were safely got up, being literally “bundled on board,” and their boat was sent astern.

From these officials I need scarcely say, we could extract little information; their sole object was to hasten our departure from the island When we demanded a pilot they declared compliance was impossible, and would infallibly involve them in the loss of their heads: but this, their usual style of tactics, did not avail them much on the present occasion, for we gave them gently but clearly to understand that we wished to use no compulsion, but must have a pilot, and until supplied with one, we were resolved to enjoy the pleasure of their society on board. We had, I should have before observed, treated them on coming on board, to a dejeuner a la fourchette; but most of them as our vessel was rolling heavily, soon began to feel the horrors of sea sickness. Our friend the General was particularly affected with it, lying on the deck with his head on the side, his servant nursing him, as he emitted the most doleful sounds, and with misery lugubriously depicted in his countenance. The state of  [page 48] things perhaps hastened their acceding to our demand for a pilot, when they found we would not otherwise permit their boat to approach the gangway; and finding they had determined people to deal with, they consulted together, and ended by proposing to give us two pilots from the crew of the boat. In the end they transferred four of the boat’s crew over to us, with one of the secretaries in charge of them, after which our visitors took their departure.

The weather had now cleared up - the sea shone forth - and with a fine fresh northerly breeze we again left the anchorage, which from our severe experience we had named the bay of Tribulation, and stood along the west coast of the island to the southwards, maintaining a distance of about half a mile from the shore. The sea seemed deep, and dark coloured to the very shore, which was rocky but not lofty, and we now beheld in a clear sky, the hills in the interior rising top over top in a gradual series to the loftiest range, an altitude of six thousand five hundred feet according to Captain Belcher’s survey. How exhilarating we felt the change as we scudded along before a brisk breeze! Our Corean pilots, too, seemed to enjoy the fine sail, and divided their attention between the biscuits, &c., with which we supplied them, and the various, to them well-known objects, we rapidly passed in succession along the coast. Under the southwest head which is a lofty rocky bluff rising perpendicular from the water we were a short time becalmed, but gradually rounding the head we opened up the south coast of the island, and tacking in shore, anchored about half a mile from a fine sandy beach.

On this side Quelpart, I doubt not, presents its most favourable aspect. The panorama now before us was imposing, and worthy to be described by a more experienced pen.

On our left was the bold head recently passed, its black rocks mingled with several masses of iron-stone; before us a hill extending nearly to the beach, bold, rugged and nearly perpendicular on three sides, towered up to a height of about 600 feet, its flattened top, and bleak withered sides of grey basalt, standing out in strong relief, against the sylvan ranges and conical shaped hills which skirted the vale behind; while on the right, the sandy bay terminated at the distance of a few miles in another rocky headland rising like a vast wall sheer out of the water, [page 49] and behind which the mountains rose to the highest summit on the island.

The sun was now well down, - the wind had sunk to a whisper, - and the blue smoke ascended in curling wreaths from the hamlets in the valley before us, - nature inviting us to land on the forbidden shores. Several natives appeared on the beach as we disembarked, but offered no molestation, and we had proceeded beyond the sandy ridges which skirted the beach when the alarm was give threat the Coreans were driving away our sampan. There was no cause for it however, beyond the usual pantomime of pointing seawards, the head men writing on the sand as we approached, how very strictly their country was prohibited to us. To prevent accident we made our boat lie off at a short distance from the beach, and then resumed our walk. And it was such a pleasure to stroll along that Corean strand, listening to the murmur of the waves beating the sand at our feet, as only those who have long dwelt on diluvial mud can well appreciate! Leaving the beach we passed by several fields whose borders were marked by dikes of stone, within which we saw several cattle grazing. It was now dusk, and we returned on board.

In the evening we showed a Manuscript Chart of Corea to the Secretary who was a pleasant and intelligent man. We had now anchored off Tai-tsing district, the island being divided into three districts, Tsee- chow on the north, where the chief town is situated, and Tsing-ye towards the south-east, being the other two. The Magistrates of the different districts are probably the “independent chiefs” mentioned by Belcher. Independent enough they certainly seem to have been in their bearing towards him, saluting him in the warmth of their “courtesy” with shotted guns, and poking his signal men with lighted brands for stubbornly refusing to jump over a precipice into the sea. Doubtless the Quelpart appointments emanate from the Corean capital King-ki-tao, but this and much more, our very short intercourse, owing to the terrible weather we there experienced, prevented us ascertaining accurately.

In the meantime our pilots had supped and finished a bottle of whisky, a case of which, by a lucky accident, we had taken with us, when the Secretary who as the leading man no doubt had received a good share, for his voice was now become rather husky, wrote to me gravely, “your distilled spirit is very good and we request some more of it.” They [page 50] quaffed off the fiery spirit like water, one and all, and would have actually I believe finished a bottle each man, but as we did not wish to find our pilots “dead drunk” in the morning, or the Secretary unable to give any account of himself, we restricted the alliance. The fame of our whisky, however, spread abroad the next day. We had sent to the village a list of the articles we wished to be supplied with, not knowing how long we might cruise about ere we found out the wreck.

Next mornings Monday 28th April, we started on various excursions on shore. Two of us tried to ascend the steep hill near the shore from whence we could have obtained a fine view, but so abrupt and precipitous were its sides that after several attempts at different places, and no little fatigue, we had to desist. It was in fact only practicable by making a considerable detour into the country, which our limited time did not admit of. Iron seemed to abound in the neighbourhood, and the sea beach under the hill was at one place composed of a conglomerate in which iron formed the chief ingredient. The fields in the uplands contained young crops of Wheat and Barley, while the plough, which is a miserable implement like the Chinese, was at work preparing the low grounds for rice. As we passed by the nearest village the men would run and point to us to go the other way, but finding we invariably acted just contrary to such directions, they let us alone, and contented themselves with shouting to their women to retire, as the barbarians were at hand. Such at least, I presume, was the drift of their bawling, and as the female portion of the Quelpart community it is not to be supposed are devoid of that spirit of intelligent curiosity which happily distinguishes the sex elsewhere, we saw many heads peeping at us over the dikes, but alas! No muse can sing or say much about their charms. They were evidently not given to have their limbs in the crystal floods which poured from the hills around, and that was the only impression they made upon us.

After our return on board in the forenoon our friend C.K.16 was deputed to go on shore to a part of the beach where the Tai-tsing magistrate, our old friend the General Protector, and many more officials had assembled to deliver the supplies we had desired to be provided. He

16 This was probably Kleczkowski

[page 51] was furnished with various articles to be given in payment, pieces of cotton, &c., which the dignitaries received with a show of indifference; but when half a dozen bottles of the famous Foreign Spirit were presented, their satisfaction knew no bounds. Corean gravity couldn’t stand it, and their reserve fairly yielded before the potent influence of John Barleycorn.17

Sly rogues! They hardly deserved such good liquor. When our live stock came off we found the two bullocks and thirty fowls were all old veterans of the masculine gender; and although our two hundred eggs were correct in number, a large portion of them were beyond eating, while many pigeon’s eggs had been put in to make up the account. We also received a small quantity of rice which was good - not unlike that from Formosa - and some firewood.18 Our deputy was well bantered about his supplies, and a vote of want of confidence in our Commissariat General unanimously passed. The wind had been from the south all morning, and we hastened to depart Once more the Capstan was manned, - the anchors got up, and our little bark pursued her way for the Amherst Isles.

I have said that on Monday, the 28th April, the wind having been from the south all morning, we early in the afternoon left our anchorage in the southwest of Quelpart, and rounding the southwest bead called by Sir Edward Belcher Loney’s Bluff, we stood to the north along the west coast of the island.

We had dismissed our whisky drinking pilots at their own request, not desiring to carry them so far away from their island home as the Amherst group, whither we were now bound, a distance of more than eighty miles.

By reference to the Map, for there are no Charts of those parts of much value excepting those of Quelpart and a small portion of the south coast of Corea, from Belcher’s Surveys, the reader will perceive the direct

17 Whiskey

18 Montigny’s report also mentions the request for two oxen, rice and fuel, but according to Yi Hyon-gong’s report to his own government: ten chickens were sent and there is no mention of cows. Pierre-Emmanuel Roux citing Ilsongnok, Ch’oljong 2.5.3

[page 52] channel across is clear of known dangers; and it was only necessary for us to maintain a course sufficient to the westward of north to prevent any easterly current driving us towards the Basse Island and rocks, a dangerous neighbourhood.

We ran along the west coast of Quelpart with a fresh and increasing breeze, passing by our former anchorage in Tribulation Bay; and it was not without a feeling of deep interest that we gazed at Eden island and the rock, the Scylla and Charybdis19 which had so nigh proved fatal to us.

At about five o’clock we took our departure from Quelpart, running fast before a freshening breeze. Mount Auckland the loftiest summit on the island, so named by Belcher, appeared high above the clouds, and was not lost to view until dusk. As the night advanced the wind increased to a gale, and torrents of rain poured down. For several hours we scudded along at such a rate that we deemed it prudent to shorten sail about one o’clock, lest we should overrun our distance, and be amongst unknown islands before day-break. Towards morning the rain ceased and the wind abated; the sun rose clear, and we soon after saw what we believe to be Lyra island.

But our little Argo20 was yet destined to a severe trial. Soon after sunrise a yellow haze overspread the sky, the prelude and accompaniment of severe winter gales on the Chinese coast, and a rattling norther burst upon us. To find an anchorage was then our only wish. We tacked up under Lyra island, and approached almost to within a cable’s length of the lee-side, but still no bottom in 35 fathoms. It was evidently deep to the very edge of the precipitous rocky shore, and sore against our inclination, we had to sheer off and face the blast.

All that day we bore from island to island seeking in vain for an

19 Scylla and Charybdis were two monsters from Greek mythology who were strategically placed on either side of a narrow channel or strait. An attempt to avoid one would put the sailor within reach of the other. Perhaps similar metaphors would be “out of the pan and into the fire” or “between a rock and a hard spot.”

20 The ship from Greek mythology in which Jason and the Argonauts sailed.

[page 53] anchorage. Boreas21 himself might have pitied us, as we ran from rock to rock, seeking like a hunted deer for a place of refuge. Our foremast was sprung just above the deck, our mainsail very much torn, and poor Demetrius the Captain was in a state bordering on despair. He had never made his account for such a series of gales, so close in succession, and begged me in the afternoon to propose bearing up for China! Our European officer and sailors too, having again and again fancied they recognized several of the islands, only to be disappointed as we approached them, had become disheartened and disgusted, because all knew we were almost in the desired Latitude.22 The fact was, we were too far to the west, and the different conformation of the other islands among which we now were, would have been immediately apparent to men of practiced observation. Even some of our amateurs (upon whom, however, I must not be too hard, their nautical inclinations, abilities, and pretensions, being like Demetrius much on a par) were rather mutinously disposed; and all these parties combining, it was proposed and urged on the Consul to be satisfied with leaving a letter on any of the islands, enjoining the Corean Aurthorities to take proper care of the ship-wrecked crew until relief should arrive. But before this time the nautical direction had been assumed by the winter; and the reader may easily anticipate his opinion on this proposal being referred to him by the Consul.

It was simply this, that there was every reason to believe we should ultimately succeed in the object of the voyage, and there existed no adequate cause for our return. A northerly gale would not last long, so late in the spring; we could work well under half our foresail, provisions were plentiful, the crew satisfied: besides, it was laughingly added, our

21 The Greek god of the Northern Wind and the summoner of winter. He was a powerful god with a violent temper who was believed to dwell in ancient Thrace.

22 Montigny wrote that he was tired and disappointed, as were the rest of the expedition, because the French whalers had already been mistaken and given false hope with their recognition of the islands. He went on to ask the Minister to take into consideration that he and his staff were not sailors and their stay aboard the ship was far from pleasant; the quarters were cramped and at night they worried about the ship being wrecked upon the numerous rocks that surrounded them on all sides.

[page 54] nautical reputation was at stake, and if we put back to Shanghai unsuccessful, we should “never hear the end of it,” as the phrase goes. Hence, it was added, all that is necessary, is to order the Captain to look to his sails, and not grumble; the Europeans to assist and obey, and no proposal of return to be mooted by anyone, even if we should not get anchorage for a week to come. For this unhesitating support and determination, the Consul’s warmest thanks were then received.

Late in the afternoon we discovered a sandy bay, but it being on the north or windward side of an island, and covered by a narrow rocky entrance we dared not venture to run in. That night we lay to carefully keeping on ground as we had already explored, there being islands in sight in every direction, but no bottom to be found with our lead. Fortunately for us the wind gradually fell during the night, and on the following morning, Wednesday, 30th April, became quite light, the weather clearing up beautifully. As before, our Europeans thought they recognized some of the islands, but were undeceived on a nearer approach. From the observation made at noon, we were certain we were within several miles of the desired parallel of latitude. As the tide made north in the afternoon, we beat up and entered a passage between two islands of under a mile in breadth, and probably that named Murray’s Channel, being certainly in the immediate neighbourhood, but if so, the islands are very incorrectly laid down, both in the English and French Charts; in fact, it was difficult to reconcile them with the Charts at all.

Surely the time is not far distant when the coasts of Northern China - of the provinces of Shantung, Chih-lee, and Leao-tung, as well as the coasts of Corea and Japan, will be properly surveyed. It is nonsense to excuse the English Admiralty by saying the people of those countries will oppose it. The Governments of these countries, and I believe their policy does as truly represent the genius and spirit of their inhabitants as that of any country in the world, will invariably debar the presence of the European whenever or wherever they can. Had permission been deemed necessary, the East and South coast of China would never have been surveyed. And although I believe the Chinese Government Officers at the Five Ports were presented with copies of the Coast Charts, I am not aware that any efforts has been made by them to publish and promote their [page 55] use by their own shipping. On the contrary, the Charts like every thing else that would reflect credit on the foreigner, are no doubt put aside, and like other things if ever brought into use, their foreign origin will be concealed. Let it not be said that the Chinese Government takes no interest in such things. So recent as 1848 it published in this province works treating amongst other matters of the navigation from Shanghai to Tien-tsin. It also published a Treatise on the Cultivation of Silk, with the view of extending the knowledge of the Silk culture, shortly after this port was opened, and we all know its constant professions of extreme solicitude for “the trading interests” of the country, as I may say. We urge the Survey of those coasts not for the sake of their inhabitants, but for our own interests. The time will come, and may not even now be far off, when trade with Northern China, the West coast of Corea, and the chief ports of Japan, may be as practicable as it is desirable, and would be particularly beneficial to the two first named countries.

In truth, I believe the Chinese, Coreans, and Japanese will not only permit but actually assist such surveyors when they find them determined nolens volens to execute them. But it is essential to the success and full benefit of such undertakings, that the Commanding officers be furnished with a proper medium of communication with the natives, by which I mean European Interpreters of the Chinese Language, able to explain correctly their objects and intentions; as also the danger to which the natives will expose themselves if they resort to violent or hostile means to retard or annoy them. No one can doubt, at least I cannot after visiting Quelpart, that the conduct of the officials of that island towards the officers of the Samarang would have been very different had Captain Belcher possessed the assistance and advice of any of the Interpreters from the British Consulates in China, instead of a Canton servant boy, who actually as I shall hereafter show, told the officials, the Samarang was a private vessel, although sent out by the Queen of England. Such was Aseng, Captain Belcher’s “determined interpreter,” as he calls him, whose profound acquaintance with the Mandarin dialect, in which he wrote, so astonished the eastern islanders, [page 56] as we are gravely told.23

And I should imagine an occasional three month’s cruise would be hailed by the Interpreters as an agreeable relief from the dull routine of Consualr Chops and Chaou-hwuys, and would prove an invigorating restorative of health to the student, fagged and worn with his dull task.

But I am digressing. We proceeded slowly after entering the passage, the wind becoming very light. Several fishing boats were in sight. They were two masted, the mainmast have a strong rake aft, the mainsail broadest at the yard, and as they sailed along, they much resembled those on the lackered work from Japan. The two islands bounding the passage were extremely rugged and barren, but yet between each spur from the main ridge, little patches of sandy beach appeared on the shore. Small fields of wheat, &c., surrounded the clusters of huts composing the little hamlets in those sequestering spots, their bright verdure pleasantly contrasting with the rocky barrenness around. The shore of the western island was in most parts high and steep, and numerous caverns pierced its rocky sides. Into one of these caverns we actually saw a large fishing boat enter, with masts upright, from which the reader may judge of its height. We formed the intention of exploring them on the following morning, and much regretted that it became inadvisable to delay long enough to do so.

At last, about sunset, we entered a small bay on the western side of the passage at its north end, and anchored in eight fathoms. This bay was of a horse-shoe shape, under two miles in circumference, affording excellent shelter from northerly gales, and a good anchorage and partial protection from south-easterly winds. Assuming to ourselves the right exercised by the most renowned navigators of ancient and modern times, we unanimously decided that in honour of our Leader whose keen eye was the first to perceive it, it should be named Montigny Bay.

Immediately after the anchor was down we proceeded in the sampan to shore and landed on a fine shingle beach. Above the beach the hill side was covered with dwarf firs; following a foot path several

23 Aseng was a pupil and servant of John Robert Morrison (1814-1843), a missionary and physician in China.

[page 57] patches of wheat were passed, bordered by clumps of trees amongst which the wild Camellia was most prominent, enlivening the dark foliage by an abundance of its beautiful flowers in full bloom, while fragrant plants scented the evening breeze. It was indeed a charming spot as we looked around on the fields, the trees, and shrubs, the picturesque rocks - the fishing village on the other side, and the placid bay with our pleasure boat looking Lorcha quietly at anchor on its surface.

But we had little time to linger on its beauties, the “sable goddess” was already throwing her mantle around, and we hastened by a path over the hill towards the nearest village. We arrived almost as soon as the first Corean who had descried us, and had sped to give the alarm. Great was the consternation excited, “the clamour much of men and dogs,” as we entered the yard of the best house at hand, and seated ourselves on the verandah usually fronting the Corean houses. It was already becoming dark, and our interview must be brief. Our Quelpart experience had taught us how prone the Coreans are to evade, and therefore assuming that they knew of the shipwreck we handed to the head man the question, “where is the wreck of the European ship?” Tsai-tung-taou, on the eastern island, was the for once direct and decisive reply. “I am convinced there is no mistake now,” I observed as we discussed the chances of their only deceiving us. They were caught unawares, or very likely would have concealed the fact, for “our Corean Correspondent” immediately recovered himself and refused to give further information, quoting a doggerel rhyme to something like the following effect.

Our National Laws are stern and severe,

Against clandestine intercourse with foreigners here.

It mattered not. They agreed to give us a pilot the next morning, and then feeling that the object of the voyage was all but accomplished, we returned in high spirits on board.

1st May.- By sunrise this morning we were all on the qui vive.

The pilot promised us last night did not make his appearance, but as the morning sun lighted up the islands to the eastward, our Europeans recognized in the distance the islet near which their ship struck on a sand bank, and the island beyond on which she was afterwards wrecked. We therefore determined to proceed across without delay, and getting up our [page 58] anchor with some difficulty, the bottom being a tenacious blue clay, we bade adieu to Montigny Bay, the most picturesque place we visited during the voyage.

For the last two days the cold has been rather keen, the thermometer standing at little over 40 in the morning. The distance across was about twenty miles, and the wind being very light, the forenoon was well advanced ere we arrived at our destined port - the little harbour on the west side of Fei-kin-tao, - close by the scene of the shipwreck. When about a mile distant, we fired a salvo from our guns to notify our approach to the shipwreck crew. Soon we entered and anchored in four fathoms of water. The little haven in which we were at last safely moored is surrounded on three sides by bare and sterile hills, which rise steep from the water to ah height of five or six hundred feet. It opens to the sea on the westward, and is but partially protected from north-westerly gales by a bold rocky head at its entrance. Several spurs diverging from the hills project into the harbour forming rocky points, and cutting it into a singular shape, which when viewed from the surrounding heights resembles that of the leaf of the Dryandra Tree. The shores of the harbour had a desolate appearance, no houses and but one small patch of cultivation being visible.

To our surprise and disappointment, not a man, native or foreign, appeared on the beach to welcome us, although on anchoring we fired a second round from our guns, the report reverberating among the encircling hills in a lively manner. Presently the natives began to show themselves on the heights, and we landed in silent apprehension that we had arrived too late.

It was from this harbour which is in N. Lat. 34’, 11”, that the boat which brought intelligence of the wreck to China had escaped, and the men now led the way up the toilsome ascent towards their former camp. On gaining the crest of the ridge the natives motioned us to proceed towards the camp, which was situated at the mouth of a gorge running into the hills; the beach below was strewed with broken timber, and we were glad to perceive also the two remaining whale boats.

At the camp we found two Corean officials waiting; one of these was the head man of the adjacent village, and he recognized our guides, [page 59] expressing much joy at seeing them again. We soon learned that the shipwrecked crew were all well at the village, and would be over presently. We quickly resolved on proceeding there, notwithstanding the endeavours of the two officials to prevent it. They had travelled to the camp in open chairs, attended by servants and runners, and it was on this occasion we first observed to our amusement and surprise that the servants carried not only their master’s tobacco pipe, &c., but also a small brass utensil slung in a net bag, which in other countries is supposed to be exclusively used as an article of bedroom furniture.24 Specimens of these curiosities were afterwards presented to us, and it is only to be regretted they were received too late for transmission to England in time to embellish the Corean department of the Great Exhibition,25 being so illustrative of the manners and customs of Coreans.

After leaving the camp, we climbed over a hilly ridge and found ourselves descending towards the central valley of the island. The slopes of the hills were bare and sandy except in those parts which were sheltered from the fury of the northern blasts, on which a scanty soil supported some tracts of stunted firs, which supply the islanders with firewood. Our path led down along the sandy bank of a small brook which issued from the hill giving life to a scattered line of dwarf willows.

One of our men had preceded us carrying the news of our arrival to their former shipmates, and here it was that we at last beheld the crew of the lost Narwal. A grizzled and a motley band they seemed, as they advanced towards us with their Captain at their head. A month in Corea had certainly not refined their appearance, and the meager and broken down looks of some of them bespoke little satisfaction with their diet of rice and aromatic fish thrice a day, varied by the addition of a small portion of beef every seventh day. No wonder then that they should welcome their deliverers with hearty shouts; that our party should feel the pride and gratification of success; so that when both joined, the vivas and

24 Chamber pot?

25 The Great Exhibition, also known as the Crystal Palace, was held in London’s Hyde Park from May 1 - October 15, 1851. It was the first World’s Fair or Expo and was extremely popular with an estimated 6,000,000 visitors*.*

[page 60] cheers that arose made the old hills ring again. In fact a rather general enthusiasm prevailed - the liberated Jacks tore off their tickets,26 and jumped about for joy, and even the brave Demetrius shouted and cheered till the tears ran down.

It was well that relief was not long delayed. After the escape of the first boat as already narrated the head men of the village induced the Captain to leave the camp and remove thither with his men. They quartered them however, not in the village which was situated on a healthy site on the slope of a hill, but in huts at some distance in the midst of the paddy fields. The huts were three in number, two of which were appropriated to the Captain and his men, and the third to the Corean guard. Their dimensions like most others on the island were on the most Lilliputian scale, the principal apartment in each hut measuring about seven feet by nine; hence the twenty men to be accommodated found themselves so crowded that they could not stretch themselves at length when the lay down to sleep; and they were in every respect the most wretched places I saw on the island. There was a small courtyard around each hut, beyond the precincts of which they were strictly prohibited from proceeding. Any attempt of the sort was certain to bring down the vengeance of the “Shang-kwan,” high officers, of the village, upon the guard who were bastinadoed without mercy; and irksome as the confinement was, the sailors refrained from involving these poor fellows in trouble. Shortly after the escape of the boat above noticed four more Officers arrived and took up their residence at the village; the crew were then numbered 1 to 20, beginning with the Captain; and each man had his wood ticket or label with the number in Chinese Characters inscribed on one side, and the same number of bars cut on the other, tied to his breast.27

Numbers of people visited the “distinguished foreigners” to gratify their curiosity, and by levying a regular toll in kind the sailors continued to keep up a small supply of tobacco. Some of the villagers

26 Myung-pae, which are described in the next paragraph. They were quite common amongst the Koreans who were required to carry them at all times.

27 Myung-pae. “...marked like animals in a herd...” is how Montigny described them.

[page 61] also took lessons in the French language in which they succeeded much better than Chinamen could have done; and it was diverting to observe them exhibiting their proficiency, to us, as they pointing upwards would exclaim “Le soleil.,” and looking down cry, “La Terre.” The R.’s and L.’s which puzzle the Chinese of the South, are too common sounds in Corean to be difficult to them.28

But to return to our muttons. We all went on to the village where the population young and old, male and female, were in a state of unprecedented excitement, and the whole body of the Shang Kwans came forth to receive us. We were led up to the principal house which was divided into three apartments. Generally speaking the cottages were thus divided - one end compartment forms the kitchen; the middle room is the eating and sleeping chamber, and is not incommoded with chairs, tables, or such like superfluous articles, but being raised two or three feet from the ground, the plank floor is covered with matting on which they sit, the walls are covered with a stout white paper, as also the lattice work doors which fixed - (on iron hinges) - are about four feet in height giving light and ventilation to the apartment; one or two boxes in the corner contain spare clothes, and in the other is a small roll of bedding. The average size is about eight by ten, and the height of the interior barely sufficient to admit of standing upright at the sides. The third room is devoted to agricultural implements, and the eave of the house projecting about three feet is supported by wooden posts, thus forming a verandah about three feet deep, which when floored with plank as is often the case afford an excellent sitting place, being raised from the ground to a level with the floor. The cottage are warmed by underground stoves lighted from without which heat the air under the floors, and in the severe colds of winter these little nests must be snug and comfortable. Each cottage is surrounded by a yard in one corner of which is the humble cow-shed. Close by is the cabbage yard; a clump of dwarf bamboos in the corner yields tubes for their pipes; here and there is a fruit or flowering tree; magnificent specimens of wild Camellia in full blossoms shone

28 Ironically these are two sounds that modern Koreans studying English have problems with pronouncing.

[page 62] conspicuous above all.

Here let me caution the reader of this narrative against supposing, that like these itinerant writers, chiefly the wandering sons of Esculapius,29 who survey the eighteen provinces of China from the heights of Whampoa, I mean my remarks to apply to all Corea; or that I intend to treat him to any learned disquisition on the political and moral condition of the country, or the state and prospects of its inhabitants. Nor let those interested in opening “new marts for our trade” imagine that I felt animated by so intense a desire to be “useful,” as to trouble the natives much about the latest quotations for Cotton or Hemp. Yet on this I may venture to remark, that I doubt not Drills would be highly popular with the Corean clod-hoppers, - Domestics warmly received into the bosoms of their families, - 66s. will be in current request, and a strong desire will arise for 72s.; - in short, heavy goods will be in heavy demand, while light fabrics will be lightly esteemed.

May 1st, 1851. On our arrival at the principal house in the village, towards which we were escorted by most of the male inhabitants, we found the officials with whom we had to deal were six in number. The chief of these was surnamed Lee, of the rank of Muh-sze, or Village Superintendent, who had been sent to take charge of the Europeans after the escape of the boat, before related. Of the others one surnamed Tsuy called himself a Naval Captain; he was the eldest and most reserved in his manner; another surnamed Lee, was a Clerk of the Records, a man of a jovial appearance; and the remainder, one of whom we styled “Whisky punch” from his fondness for that beverage, stated they were Wanhoo, or heads of ten thousand families.

An entertainment was soon spread out for us in the open yard in front of the cottage, and was served up in a much more inviting way than that of our poor Quelpart General. One favourite dish was veal of excellent quality, cut into small slices and eaten with vinegar, which was also good.

Numerous servants kept the crowd back, so as not to

29 Also spelled as Aesculapius — the god of medicine and healing. He was a Greek hero who later became the god of healing and represents physicians.

[page 63] inconvenience us, and the women of the village took up positions behind the neighbouring dykes, so as to command a view of the strangers, but did any one of the latter look round, then down went their heads out of sight like ducks. Their personal appearance however as far as we could perceive seemed by no means dangerous, and some we met were almost as dark as Malays.

Our chief entertainer was a man of a more prepossessing aspect than any of his colleagues. Like them he was in the prime of life. His demeanour towards us was not only polite, but even obsequious. The greatest responsibility rested on him, and it was plain he was but ill at ease during our stay.

We were informed that the island of Fei-Kin-Tao forms Lo-chau district, in the department of Tsieun-lo, and lies about 300 lee distant from the mainland. The shipwrecked crew had already understood by signs that they were in a few days to be transferred to the mainland and to ride on horseback, but could not comprehend their destination. The Superintendent explained to us, that they were to have been taken to the Capital King-ki-tao, there to await instructions from Peking, the King of Corea not being at liberty to hold any direct intercourse with Foreign Nations. Had such been their fate, perhaps they might have reached Shanghai in the Shantung Junks next winter, but sickness and misery would nave thinned their number.

Many questions and replies were interchanged with the Shang- kwan, as the people generally termed the officials; and the writer took occasion to explain to the Muh-sze, that he was a “British Subject,” engaged in trade, and not a Government Officer like the other two voyagers. He was asked if he had heard of the English War with China, but with the caution which was his leading feature, he would not commit his reply to writing, but pronounced some of the few Chinese words he could speak in a very significant way, giving one to understand that he knew all about it, but dare not discuss the subject Having a copy of the British, French, and American Treaties with us, we gave it to them to copy, which they proceeded to do with much alacrity. They used no table or desk, but squatting on the floor held the roll of stout paper in one hand, wielding the writing pencil with great swiftness and dexterity in the other. [page 64]

During our visits on shore to-day, we were shown a manuscript Interrogatory of the Crews of two Chinese Junks, which were wrecked in the winter of 1848-49, on one of the islands a short distance to the north. As these junks sailed from Shanghai, we made particular enquiries regarding their crews, and were assured they had been sent to China by the Corean Government.

We took occasion during this visit to intimate to the chief Authority, that while we remained at the island, we should ramble everywhere, over hill and dale, but as we should avoid injuring person or property, it would be unnecessary to set spies to watch or follow us. The explicit declaration saved us all future trouble on the subject.

After our entertainers had been invited to visit the Lorcha on the following day, we took our leave in open chairs provided for us. On our way to the harbour, we turned aside to visit the scene of the shipwreck. It was low water, and on approaching the edge of the precipice we saw beneath us about a hundred feet, the bottom of the ship which, firmly wedged among the rocks, was all that remained of the Narwal.

When the ship was wrecked, one man perished as already related. A little to the south the precipice rose higher and more abrupt. Here a fine Behring’s Strait’s dog was lost. Another dog a favorite from France more fortunate than the other, escaped with the men who gained the rocks, and after scrambling to the top of the precipice, its joy deprived it of its instinctive caution, for it jumped about until it fell over the rocks, and was killed.

Passing from this melancholy quarter, we returned on board, with all the late prisoners. I may here observe, that they distinctly heard our first salute off the island, but were not allowed by the guard to leave their prison, until it was ascertained we had actually landed, and were on our way to the village.

Thus ended the first of May, the same day it may be remarked, which saw the survivors of the Larpent’s crew, delivered from slavery on Formosa.30

30 On May 1, 1851, the American Opium clipper, Antelope, en route to Shanghai was lying off the coast of Formosa (Taiwan) where it observed a boat with three men in it rowing towards the ship. The crew, thinking that they were members of the ferocious pirates who infested the Formosan coast, began firing upon them until, surprisingly, the three men hailed them in English. They were the only three survivors of the 31 -man crew of the Larpent, an English merchant ship of 614 tons, which had left Liverpool for Shanghai on May 18, the previous year. On September 12th, the ship ran aground and subsequently the crew was killed by the natives. Three men, Blake, Hill, and Beris managed to make their way to a village where they were fed but forced to work like slaves. After five months they were sold to a neighboring village for six dollars each. Fortunately for them, they were treated much better and were allowed to row out to the Antelope. The villagers were later thanked and richly rewarded by Sir Harry Parkes who traveled to the island aboard a British warship. Edmund Burke, ed., Annual Register, (London, England: George Woodfall and Son) 1852, pp. 125-126; Robert Swinhoe, “Additional Notes of Formosa,” Proceedings of the Royal Geographic Society of London No. 10(1866) pp. 122-128

[page 65] May 2d. - One of our sailors who was a good shot has been successful among the wild duck yesterday afternoon, and I this morning accompanied the Consul on an excursion to the marshy flat at the northern end of the island. Starting by sunrise we made our way over the hills, enjoying the exercise in the clear bracing atmosphere with a zest heightened by the rarity of the pleasure. Leaving the path I climbed over the highest points in order to command a more extensive view. The whole eastern horizon was filled with a maze of islands and sand banks without end. But wild and sterile as was the chief feature of the scenery it did not the less impart a feeling of pleasure. -

“Who would not rather take his seat,

Beneath those clumps of trees,

The early dawn of day to greet,

And catch the healthful breeze?”

We were too late in reaching the sporting ground; the sun was now well up, and the birds, of which we saw several brace, very shy. Our sporting Jack however, who was enthusiastic enough to crawl on all- fours in the mud was rewarded with a brace in the course of the morning. During winter ducks and geese abound on these islands.

Crowds of people came down to the harbour today, but the [page 66] scarcity of boats prevented their coming on board. Our official friends visited us in grand state about noon, coming off in a large boat that had been sent round to the harbour for their use. They were all got up in their best style, and looked a decent, grave and reverend body of Functionaries. They were clad in the usual whitey-brown coloured stuff; and their dresses, especially at the sleeves, were of the most capacious width imaginable. The official caps which they wore today, resemble in shape those of the ancient Chinese, as seen on the stage: in colour they were the same as the dress, and the rank of the wearer was indicated by the number of black spots on the band surrounding his cap, ten being counted on that of the Superintendent’s. Their wide dresses were confined by the Official girdle, and from this depended a neat pouch containing the Muh-sze Seal of Office.

Our visitors when questioned respecting the general uniformity of colour of the people’s dress, informed us that such was the case in consequence of the Nation being then in mourning for the late king who died two years before. But we have otherwise reason to know, that dyed colours are not in general use in the every day dress of the common people.

The newly ascended King whose designation is Jih-ho (Sun-fire) is said to have sprung from a very humble position in society; he who is now a King, being actually said to have been once a beggar! Verily the age of Romance is not yet past.31

Such information we did not of course derive from our official writers, who were extremely guarded and reserved in their replies to our numerous enquiries. As they promised to furnish us with various little articles, curiosities to us, such as Corean hats, shoes, we first pressed them to receive presents from us; they were to reluctant to accept anything,

31 King Choi-Jung (Yi Won-bom) Born July 25, 1831, on Kangwha Island, he was a member of the powerful Yi clan, but from the black sheep side of the clan. He was relatively poor, and uneducated - unable to even read. Yet, in 1849, after king Hong-jong died young and heirless, Yi Won-bom was selected to rule as king. Some speculate that he was chosen because of his illiteracy which enabled him to be controlled by the powerful Andong Kim clan. Like the previous kings, Chol-jung died young and heirless in 1864.

[page 67] but I had proof that this feeling arose more from the bulky nature of the articles presented, as cotton cloths, &c., which the public necessarily saw, than from any extreme delicacy on their part. The jolly Recorder with whom I was in conversation, after, like the rest, refusing most of the tilings offered him, observing my Watch, quietly took and dropped it into his sleeve, nodding to me at the same time as much as to say “if you will force your presents on us. I must try to oblige you by accepting this trifle for myself.” This I thought rather cool, and so withdrew it by the guard, at the same time telling him, as we had been just discussing the Currency Question, that if he would bring me a certain number of Taels of Silver as a specimen of the Corean Circulating Medium I should be happy to give him a Watch. On their return to the shore we in a manner forced our presents upon them. They seemed delighted with a piece of Fine Woolen Cloth shewn them, but would not accept it, or a Telescope, apparently conceiving both these articles to be of very high value.

May 3rd. - They sent two cows and various other articles promised us, being no doubt anxious to obtain our early departure. This morning I took a long ramble towards the south end of the island. After passing through several hamlets my intention was called to two natives who were waiting by the roadside: as I approached they beckoned to me to sit down on the grassy bank; then to my surprise the eldest of the two presented a paper to me containing Chinese Stanzas written to congratulate us on our safely crossing the ocean in our lone bark. This man whose surname was Chang was a keen ana intelligent looking person, well educated in Chinese, which he wrote with fluency, and even elegance. He was desirous to leave his native country and accompany us. “Woo yu kuen yuh kew wan” (I wish to ramble over the world in your company Sir,) was his desire as I see written by him in my notebook. The number of people already on board the lorcha, upwards of fifty, prevented me from encouraging his application: afterwards I found mm on board proposing to go on “eternal ramble” with the Canton sailors, who could ill comprehend his fine phrases, and I have since regretted that I did not bring him away on my account.

We brought away, however, two Corean Christians, recognized to be such by their making the sign of the cross to us on our first visit to their [page 68] village. These were poor illiterate fellows, unversed in Chinese, and consequently incapable of communicating their ideas to us. Their Christianity did not in my eyes suffice to excuse them for their ignorance and stupidity. On the second day of our return voyage, when out of sight of land, they became seasick and begged us by signs to lower one of the boats and convey them back!32

In reference to the subject of Christianity in Corea I may here say a few words. It was first introduced by the Christians in the invading army from Japan about the close of the 16th century. Its followers would however seem to have dwindled away, until near the end of the last century, when some members of the Corean Embassy at Peking who were studying Mathematics under the Roman Catholic Missionaries there, were converted by them. Returning to their own country, they revived and extended the worship of the Western Faith, Frequent and severe persecutions have harassed its followers, many of whom have died for their religion; and in 1849 when European influence in China, seemed utterly crushed by the Dragon, and persecution against the Christians raged there likewise, the Corean Government which had uniformly endeavoured to prevent the access of Europeans to their country, did not hesitate to condemn to death, three French Missionaries who fell into their hands.33 Many natives suffered at the same time; nevertheless it is

32 William Elliot Griffis, Corea The Hermit Nation, p. 369. “A French whaler having grounded off the coast, the French Consul at Shanghae, with two Englishmen, came to reclaim the vessel’s effects, and meeting three young men sent by the ever-alert Thomas Tsoi, took them back to Shanghae, the third remaining to meet his comrades on their return with fresh missionaries to come.” Thomas Tsoi (Choi) was a Korean priest who came to Korea with the French expedition in 1846 under the command of Captain Pierre. The mission was to investigate the deaths of the three French missionaries killed in 1839.

33 An error in the date seems to have been made by the writer. In late 1835, Pierre Philibert Maubant entered Korea by crossing the frozen Yalu River and making his way to Seoul on foot and horseback. He was joined in January 1837 by Jacques Honore Chastan, and in December 1838 by Laurent Marie-Joseph Imbert. In 1839 the Korean government began persecuting and killing Christians in Korea. The three French missionaries, in a mistaken belief they could prevent further bloodshed, surrendered themselves to the Korean authorities. On September 21, 1839, the three missionaries were led to an execution ground near the Han River where they were beaten by a dozen soldiers who “only when weary of their sport...relieved the agony of their victims by the decapitating blow.” William Elliot Griffis, Corea The Hermit Nation, pp. 361-363

[page 69] computed that there are about 15,000 Christians still in the country.

Those of my readers who were residing in Shanghai about five years ago will recollect the visit of a small Corean Junk to this port, with a Corean Priest on board. He was an intelligent and interesting man in the prime of his life; educated in French and Latin, as well as Chinese. He had formerly traveled as he told me from one end of China to the other, and now crossed the sea to procure another European Teacher for Corea. In that, I believe he succeeded, but paid the forfeit with his life, being apprehended and executed not long after his return.34

34 He was Kim Tae-gon, but is also known as Andre Kim, Andrew Kim, and Kim Hai-kim. The history of Kim Tae-gon is given briefly in Choe, Ching-Young. The Rule of the Taewon’gun, 1864-1873. Harvard East Asian Monographs No. 45. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988 pp.94. Kim Tae-gon was born in 1821 and was sent to Macao to study at a Portuguese seminary where he was ordained in 1845 and then sent back to Korea. He left Korea on April 30, 1845, and soon arrived in Shanghai where he met the English narrator of the Narwal account. Kim later returned to Korea in October of the same year with two missionaries, Jean Joseph Ferreol and Marie-Antoine-Nicolas Daveluy. Kim was captured on June 5, 1846, and executed on September 15, 1846. William Elliot Griffis, Corea The Hermit Nation, pp. 365-368 “Andrew collected a crew of eleven fellow-believers, only four of whom had ever seen the sea, and none of whom knew their destination, and equipped with but a single compass, put to sea in a rude fishing boat, April 24, 1845. Despite the storms and baffling winds, this uncouth mass of firewood, which the Chinese sailors jeeringly dubbed ‘the Shoe’ reached Shanghae in June. Andrew Kim, never before at sea except as a passenger, had brought this uncalked, deckles, and unseaworthy scow across the entire breadth of the Yellow Sea.” Andrew Kim met many of the British officers and the British Consul at Shanghai prior to returning to Korea. On September 1 1845, he left Shanghai with the two French priests in the same unworthy ship that they had arrived in, but it was now known as the “Raphael, and they sailed past Quelpart (Cheju Island) and into the maze of small islands off the coast of Cholla province. On October 12th they landed on the mainland in the dead of night, dressed as mourners. Andrew was captured later in Whanghai province on suspicion of being a Chinese spy and taken to Seoul where he was imprisoned and was employed in copying and translating two English maps of the world. He was executed on September 15, 1846: “Put to death for communicating with the Western Barbarians.”

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There are at this time two European Missionaries in Corea. In that country their lot is much worse than in China.35 The northern frontier is too strictly guarded to admit of communication by that route, while the coast is so extensive and the islands so numerous that a vessel may long search in vain for their messengers, as was the case when a lorcha sent up last yean Hence from the difficulty of sending them assistance, their life is one of misery and privation; their adherents are among the poorest of the people, and they themselves although satisfied with the plainest fare, have been sometimes at loss for their daily bread.

But to resume my walk: finding the sun get hot on my return, I entered a farm enclosure at one end of a hamlet to obtain a drink of water. As I advanced to the cottage, I perceived perched in a little chamber at one end, an old woman working on a loom. She was of grim aspect, and in truth frightfully ugly to behold; the unexpected apparition seemed to have mesmerized her, for she remained motionless for a few moments; then observing her alarm, I sat down at a distance, and called out the word water in Corean, making the sign of drinking; this seemed to reanimate her, and watching a safe chance as she no doubt thought, she abandoned her loom, and rushed out of the yard, cackling at a rate which soon brought the neighbours, civil people, to see the arrival. The web she was engaged upon, was the common coarse hempen cloth of the country, a strong fabric, but narrow like most of the productions of the Chinese loom.

*.* 35 Jean Joseph Ferreol and Marie-Antoine-Nicolas Daveluy, dressed in “the garb of native noblemen in mourning” landed somewhere along the coast of Cholla province on October 12, 1845. Their ability to penetrate Korea’s coastal watch is astonishing considering the British warship, Samarang, under the command of Captain Edward Belcher was busy surveying the coast and Quelpart Island and undoubtedly had caused the Korean coastal watch to be more observant than usual

[page 71] The evening two of our Europeans who had been on a message to the village reported on their return that they found their Worships engaged in administering the baton on a most extensive scale; the recipients were probably those who had been holding communication with us.36

May 4th. - Before sunrise this morning we were getting under way and stood out with a light fair wind. The Corean guard on shore, not it seemed, anticipating our immediate departure, set up a loud shout, but we heeded them not, and soon bade farewell to Narwal harbour and Flying-bird Island. About dusk Alceste Island was seen, and night approaching soon hid the Isles or Corea from our view.

Nothing of interest occurred in our return voyage. The wind was fair, the sky clear, and the sea smooth and unruffled. By the afternoon of Tuesday, 6th May, we were within 30 miles of Sha-wei-shan, and holding on continuously during the night, we found the Amherst rocks in sight early on the following morning. Here a calm and ebb-tide detained us till noon; after which with an easterly breeze we entered the Yang-tsze-kiang. Junks and fishing boats are now passing about. One of the Canton men reported to the Capitano that there was a Kwei-shuen (devil’s ship) in sight. “Is that a Kwei-shuen” says the latter, bringing out a telescope, forgetful or unconscious of the degrading and improper term used. We passed the Kwei-shuen, an English clipper-brig, which did not demean itself by taking any notice of our Flag; the Captain probably thinking that the “damned Macao Lorcha” then passing him carried on board representatives of almost every nation.37

But the fresh verdure of the low and level bank was now clear to the eye in striking contrast to the coast we had so recently left. Night came on but with a steady breeze we held over the tide, and by midnight were passing the Opium Fleet at Woosung. A few hours more, and the first streak of day found us landing at Shanghai on the morning of

36 In Montigny’s report he stated that every day there were beatings of Koreans who had approached or spoken with the foreigners.

37 “...our lorcha had become a genuine Tower of Babel; I had on board individuals of more than ten various nations...” Montigny in his report*.*

[page 72] Thursday, the 8th May, after an absence of eighteen days.

The Author: Robert Neff is a former columnist for Korea Times who has also authored or contributed to several articles and books dealing with life in Joseon Korea.