

each fearing to speak lest he should disturb the others. In fancy I see you watching our party—catching each glance of the eye as it runs anxiously over every column—amusing yourself at the solemn stillness that obtains among us—and smiling at the sudden start and slight pause of interruption which occurs at the remotest corner of the last page, leading only to the delay of extending the arm for another paper. I see you contemplating the ideas passing in our minds, and marking the varied expression upon our countenances as we pass eagerly on from page to page! But all these feelings have been formerly your own; you will therefore know how to estimate them. Had you not been already a traveller I could have wished you a long voyage that you might know the real value of a Morning Herald, or an evening Star—that you might enjoy the high flavor of a true English feast, seasoned with absence! Send out our friend \* \* \* \* that he may be roused from the apathy which so distressfully encroaches upon his mechanical round of luxury and indulgence! Tell him that were he held in disappointed expectation, from day to day, through many anxious weeks,

he would find the amusements which he now partakes with indifference to be really exquisite : and assure him that the variety of occurrences, during a temporary privation, might divert him from a life of indolence and appalling pleasure, and convince him that many things he now disregards are capable of affording far more enjoyment, than the vapid time-killing routine of parading in Bond-Street,—treading upon muslin trains in the crowd of Kensington Gardens,—and lounging at the play and the opera, without hearing five words of the performance !

We find the uncertainty, regarding our convoy, removed by the news we read, but not so satisfactorily as we had hoped ; for we have the mortification to learn that the fleet, with which we sailed from Spithead on the 9th of December, and which, for so long past, we have anxiously and hourly expected, instead of being safe with us, at Barbadoes, is lying quietly at anchor with you, in England !

From the papers it is ascertained that the great body of the convoy, with our commander

in chief and the admiral, are returned to St. Helen's, after continuing seven tedious weeks at sea, beating against contrary winds and destructive storms, and that many of the ships, which had separated, had previously put back to Cork, Kinsale, Plymouth, and various other ports. This is very distressing and vexatious news, for it robs us of the pleasing hope with which we had daily looked out for our comrades, and tells us that all still remains - - - - to be done again ! Twice has this great expedition put to sea, and during many months has it been, daily, expected to arrive : yet after a long and vivid suspense do we now learn that it is still in an English harbour, only preparing to fail !

A voyage to the East Indies or to China might be performed in less time than seems to be required for this unhappy expedition to reach its destination. It was expected to sail so long since as the month of September, and actually did put to sea in November, and again on the 9th of December ; and its arrival has been anxiously looked for, by the people of the islands, more than half a year !

The season is rapidly advancing—the milder temperature of the climate, and the more favorable period of the year are wearing away, and the wet months fast approaching: we fear, therefore, that all the ills to be apprehended from climate may now be expected in the midst of the campaign, or before the troops can well be brought into action.

When or how the convoy is again to attempt the voyage we do not learn: but it seems to be the opinion, on your side the water, that the commander in chief will sail in a frigate without delay, and that the fleet will follow, in small divisions, as speedily as the ships can be repaired and made ready for sea. This would undoubtedly be most advisable; for the waiting to assemble large convoys, and the delays and accidents which necessarily happen to them, at sea, would seem to be the very bane of the enterprise.

We are still told that the Cork division may be daily expected, yet we learn that it had not sailed when the packet left Falmouth. From all we can collect it would seem proba-



ble that more than six thousand troops, and upwards of sixty ships, many long since arrived, may have still to wait through another tedious period at Barbadoes.

We find it among the reports of the day that honors are to be conferred on the Admiral for braving the weather, during so many weeks at sea, and returning to port *in England* with so great a number of the convoy in safety. On reading this the captain of our ship wittily asked—"What honors are those to receive, then, who fought through all the perilous storms, and have made good their passage to a port - - - - - *in the West Indies?*"

Some say that it is likely Admiral Christian will not again attempt this inauspicious voyage, and that Admiral Cornwallis will take command of the fleet when it next sails: but concerning this you will have the best information in England. Our prayers are that, let who will command, you will send out the convoy, and not withhold from the troops their long-expected, and much-honored chief.

If we are to give any credit to what we read in the papers it would seem that the pro-

spect of peace is more remote than some had ventured to hope. The Austrians, we are sorry to find, have been checked on the Rhine, and defeated under General de Vins in Piedmont. Before we sailed from England appearances were somewhat pacific, and we were not without the hope of soon returning to our friends—indeed the delay in the departure of the fleet had been explained, by many, upon the probability of an approaching peace! But things again look more hostile, and it seems likely that our tropical sojourn may be of longer duration than was at first expected.

The papers we have received having, been printed during the Christmas holidays, furnish us with no parliamentary news; but we learn from them, with much regret, that our country experiences a scarcity of corn, and of specie. Without money, and without bread John Bull would make war very badly indeed! Wheat we find is at the extravagant price of thirteen shillings per bushel, and bread as high as thirteen-pence half-penny the quartern loaf. This, we fear, may create dissatisfaction, and lead to commotions or ill-judged excesses, from the people erroneously attributing events

to causes which have no just connection with them\*.

Having culled all the leading heads of news Dr. Cleghorn and myself went on shore in the evening, and returned the papers to Mr. Hinde. We now took an opportunity of calling at the post-office to ask for letters in the hope of hearing from you all; and there we learned that a sad scene of confusion had prevailed throughout the day, from the crowd forcing their way into the office, and each person tumbling over the whole heap to look for his own letters.

I am sorry to have again to inform you that late accounts from Grenada state the island to be in great danger, and that we hold possession of it by a very precarious tenure, the troops being pent up in the town, and not in sufficient force to march against the Brigands. From St. Vincent we hear, also, that the inhabitants have been obliged to fly to arms

\* We have been so accustomed to pay extravagantly for bread, in England, since this period, that the price which then seemed frightfully enormous, might now be deemed moderate.

to assist the military, and that still they are not powerful enough to defeat the Charibs. It is further added that the negroes, impatient of remaining inactive, have petitioned to be sent against the enemy, threatening to go over to the Charibs if not soon employed to subdue them.

I had nearly forgotten to inform you that a French spy has been detected among us, who has been, for some time, watching the proceedings of the fleet at Barbadoes. It were unnecessary to add that his life will be the forfeit of his temerity.

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*Sir Ralph Abercromby arrives at Barbadoes on St. Patrick's day. Joyous scene in Carlisle bay. Author's reflections upon scenes which may follow. Success of the General in his third attempt to make the voyage. Many rumours expected to prevail. Influence of season with respect to a campaign in the West Indies. The general Cuyler, and Clarendon arrive in Carlisle bay. State of the Clarendon. Perils of the general Cuyler. A Dutch mode of punishment. Progress of a leaky ship. Concerning the ships of the December convoy which made good their passage.*

March 17.

HOW eventful are the hours which now pass before us! The sons of St. Patrick have not felt



themselves more blessed, nor hailed in more joyous greetings this hallowed day than the anxious multitude at Barbadoes. It was only yesterday that I took up my pen to announce to you a glad arrival, and I have now to mention one still more happy. Before breakfast this morning a signal appeared at the fort, implying that a ship of war was in sight ; and about eight o'clock a proud frigate, with sails swelling to the breeze, cut her liquid path silently into the bay, and dropped her anchor in the midst of the fleet. A general feeling of joy, instantly, spread throughout the harbour. It was the *Arethusa*, with Sir Ralph Abercromby, and the officers of his staff on board. A signal was made from the agent, and all the ships in the bay immediately manned their yards, and rigging to hail, and to welcome, in loud salutation, our long-expected commander in chief. Three heart-felt cheers were, rapturously, shouted from every vessel, and as cordially echoed by the *Arethusa's* company.

The scene thus introduced was novel and peculiar. It was, also, highly interesting. The yards, the tops, the masts and rigging of all the vessels being covered with men, they

resembled clusters of bees, as they hang about the hive at the moment previous to swarming. Each ship was, indeed, a hive of men, but it was without drones, for all were equally industrious in greeting the arrival of the “king bee” among them.

Crowded with yards and masts the harbour resembled a thick forest—the leaves of which were men, not rustling in the wind, but set in motion by the more animating breeze of joy and gratulation.—Loud shouts of welcome resounded throughout the bay, and when the General went off in the boat towards the landing place, each ship repeated three cheers as he passed—the multitude upon the beach again shouting his welcome as he stepped on shore. On reaching the government house at Pilgrim he was received with a salute of twenty-one guns. The same number was then repeated from the fort, which we had remarked did not fire any salute when the frigate entered the harbour.

All is now life and activity. An impulsive sensation vibrates throughout the bay. Every breast throbs with ardour, and, inspired

by the presence of the commander in chief, every one looks forward to a successful campaign. No one imagines that fate has destined him to fall; but each anticipates the joyous moment, when he shall return to relate histories of battles won, and islands conquered, to his friends in peaceful England.—Yet alas! to how few is it allotted again to visit either England or their friends! But to such reflections let me be silent:—to speak them were unmilitary! Still the duties I may have to perform will, sometimes, call up strong associations in my mind, and amidst the busy din of war, or the loud rejoicings of victory, my very soul will often swell with painful sympathy. Even while I may feel a lively joy in my country's success, my agonized spirit will dwell on scenes of desolation; and be absorbed in the contemplation of individual sufferings and affliction. However brilliant the campaign, the sad horrors of the contest will, frequently, usurp the possession of my mind, and create an afflictive impression. But it would ill become me to expatiate on the evils I am destined to deplore. Upon the great subject of war be it mine to view the

events before me with the eye of a soldier—my immediate duty will be a sufficient tax upon my feelings, as a man !

In his third attempt to reach the islands the commander in chief has been very successful ; the *Arethusa* having sailed only on the 14th of February, and, consequently, made the voyage in thirty days. The general takes up his abode at a large building a little way out of the town, called the King's house, which is to be made the head quarters, during the assembling of the troops, and the continuance of the army at Barbadoes.

Much news will now, of course, obtain currency, and various and strange reports will find their way into circulation ; many perhaps equally devoid of truth and probability. Every one being anxious to catch up each word concerning England, and the expedition, much will be hastily heard by some, and as hastily repeated by others, whereby even facts will become so distorted as to lose all features of correctness ; and we shall not dare to rely upon any rumour we may chance to hear.



Among other things it is now said that only the remaining troops, belonging to those regiments already in the West Indies, are to come out with the fleet; and that the others are actually sent into different cantonments, in England, there to remain until next September, before they again sail for the West Indies. Of this we have many doubts; yet might it seem to be a prudent arrangement: for, advanced as the season now is, it were, perhaps, wise policy to postpone the grand object of the expedition for a December campaign; and to employ the troops which are now here in restoring tranquillity to our disturbed and endangered islands, thus fulfilling the more immediate, although perhaps the minor objects of the armament.

A body of troops brought out in October or November would have the season before them for a long campaign, but were they to leave England now, the length of time required for the voyage and for their being assembled at Barbadoes, and again prepared for leaving it, would bring them so near to the wet season, and to the hot and unhealthy period of the year, that not only would multi-

tudes fall victims to disease, but impediments, occasioned by the weather, might interrupt the proceedings of the campaign before any thing important could be effected.

We find that the Cork fleet has, unquestionably, been for several weeks at sea, and may be daily expected; the *Arethusa* having spoken several of the ships of that convoy upon her passage. At the time the *Arethusa* came into the bay two other ships appeared in sight: they are since arrived, and prove to be the *General Cuyler* merchantman, of our division (long supposed to be lost), and the *Clarendon* transport of the Cork division:—their arrival, and the reported approach of the Cork fleet add to the auspicious events of St. Patrick's day.

The sad uncertainties of a sea voyage are strongly exemplified in the combined arrival of the *General Cuyler*, and the *Clarendon*. The one sailed on the 9th of December, and the other on the 9th of February; (periods more distant than the time usually required for making the voyage) yet, so favorable had been the elements to the one, and so

adverse to the other, that they both came into Carlisle bay at the same moment.

The Clarendon, we are told, left the harbour of Cove with a fleet of 132 sail, having 10,000 troops on board ; but she parted from the convoy, in the course of the first night, and has not seen any ship belonging to it since. She has brought out nearly 200 men of the 99th regiment, who, we are sorry to find, have been far from healthy, notwithstanding the favorable passage they have made. From this we are led to fear that those who are longer detained at sea may arrive in a very sickly state.

The safety of the General Cuyler spread consolation among us, and very much augmented the great and general joy diffused by the arrival of the commander in chief. You will feel that I had real pleasure in felicitating my friend Nichol, who was one of the passengers, when I tell you that it had obtained universal belief that this ship was lost at sea, or, at best, taken by the enemy. Indeed, for several weeks past, such had been the despondent feel-

ings regarding her, that it would have been a great relief to us to have heard that she was in the enemy's possession. She had sailed with us on the 9th of December, and was the last ship we had spoken in the European seas, which was on the 4th of January, and on the 10th of February our ship reached Carlisle bay; hence from our having been five weeks in harbour without hearing of her, scarcely a hope remained of ever seeing her again. Nor were our apprehensions far from being realized, for on the 7th of January, only three days after we had hailed her, she sprung a leak, and during twenty succeeding days, was only kept from sinking by the persevering toil and exertions of the ship's company and the passengers, all of whom took their regular watch at the pumps, for six or eight hours each day. With great difficulty she was kept afloat : daily their peril increased, and, for nearly three weeks, they had only the melancholy prospect of going to the bottom, before they could possibly make any port. Almost exhausted with fatigue and apprehension, the hope of being saved had nearly abandoned them, when, fortunately, they made one of the Canary Islands.



Few occurrences can be so truly distressing, or so strongly calculated to depress the mind with desponding feelings, as this critical, and very perilous situation at sea. To prevent the threatened fate, excessive bodily exertions are required, when, from the impression of terror, a sufficient degree of hope scarcely remains to stimulate or support the fatigue. Extreme toil is demanded—perhaps, too, in an exhausting, and ungenial climate, and under the depressing prospect of the vessel sinking in despite of every effort!

The Dutch are said to have a mode of punishment somewhat resembling this very dangerous and afflicting situation, although infinitely removed from it, on account of the person who is exposed to it knowing a certain means of saving himself, provided he has enough of industry to continue his exertions. The prisoner is confined in a room, into which water is made constantly to flow, so increasing in depth that he must, inevitably, be drowned if he is idle: but if he will be industrious and persevere at the pump, he knows that a certain proportion of labor will keep down the water, and preserve his life. Surely none but the amphibious and

toiling Hollanders could have invented such a punishment—such an aquatic remedy! although it must be allowed to be a most excellent one against idleness. But in a leaky ship at sea no such certainty is attainable. The leak may increase, and no human effort may be sufficient to keep the vessel upon the surface; and, in such case, all resource is denied,—the impending doom can, no way, be averted! No mental powers, no bodily exertion can ought avail. Safety is not to be attained by any effort of human strength, or human wisdom. No opening is left for intellect or enterprise. Each road leads equally to despair; and the event can neither be avoided nor resisted. On each hand the wretched sufferers see only the wide jaw of destruction. The leak still increasing, the water continues to gain upon all the means employed. It grows deeper: the sinking ship moves heavily on: her weight opposes all the force of wind and sails: she labours to proceed: her progress is more and more impeded: the slow motion ceases at intervals: a dread pause succeeds: the ship no longer moves! A momentary silence,—a death-like stillness prevails throughout the crew; or impulsive horror ejaculates in loud

bewailings !——She sinks to the bottom, and all hands perish in the silent deep.

You will join in our rejoicings that such, although long threatened, was not the fate of the General Cuyler. Happily she put into Palmas, and was saved. At the time of gaining the harbour she had many feet water in the hold, and, only with great exertion, was kept afloat while the cargo was removed. A fortnight's delay was occasioned in repairing her, and fitting her for the remainder of the voyage. It is upwards of fourteen weeks since she sailed from England, twelve of which have been actually passed at sea : most of them in struggling against storms and gales—against contrary winds, and contending elements !

The passengers are quite in surprize to find that, even at this late period, their ship is among the *early arrivals* of the convoy; having imagined that, during their perilous delay, the whole fleet must have reached Barbadoes, and the troops been again embarked for their respective destinations.

On the other hand, all who arrive in the ships from England or Ireland are astonished to find so many vessels of the convoy at Barbadoes, having been led to believe, from the account of those who returned, that the whole must have either gone back, put into different ports on the passage, or been lost at sea.



## LETTER XXXIII.

*Carlisle Bay the Thames of the West Indies. Arrivals from various quarters. A slave-ship engages a French Privateer. The Madras E. Indiaman, and a packet arrive in Carlisle bay. Admiral Christian receives the Honors of Knighthood. Visit to the Venus slave-ship. Author and Dr. Cleghorn continue to use walking exercise. Estate of Mr. Daniel. Tamarind tree, and fruit.*

Barbadoes, March 22.

CARLISLE bay is become quite the busy Thames of the West Indies. Scarcely a day passes without the arrival of vessels from one part of the globe or another ; and to us this affords a degree of variety and amusement ; for we are frequently enlivened by the signals made for vessels either coming into harbour, or appearing in sight, and which prove to be from various, and widely separated coasts. English ships of war, merchantmen, and transports ; slave ships from the coast of Africa ; packets ; prizes ; American traders ; island vessels, privateers, fishing smacks, and different kinds of boats, cutters, and luggers, are among the al-

most hourly variety, to be seen either entering or quitting Carlisle bay.

The day after the arrival of the *Arethusa* we were early enlivened by signals for other vessels coming in from windward ; but they proved to be ships from very opposite coasts ; one being from Hallifax, and the other a Guinea-man with a cargo of slaves from Africa.

Several vessels of the Cork fleet have arrived within the few last days ; but none of them bring any accurate tidings of the fleet, most of them having parted from the convoy, during the first or second night after quitting the harbour, and not having seen it since. The *Charlotte* transport was chased by a privateer at the distance of only a few leagues from Barbadoes, and must, inevitably, have been taken, but for the fortunate circumstance of a slave ship, from the coast of Guinea, coming up at the time and engaging her pursuer. A running action was maintained, for two hours, between the Guinea-man and the privateer, when the latter sheered off, leaving the slave ship, and her protégée, to pursue their

way quietly to Barbadoes—the slave ship having suffered considerably in her rigging.

The Madras East Indiaman and a packet are this day arrived from England. They sailed, the one from Falmouth, the other from St. Helen's, on the 23d of February, and have made the voyage within a month. The Madras brings a cargo of ordnance stores. She sailed alone, and made a running passage. Several persons availed themselves of the opportunity of coming out in this ship as passengers; and she has also a small party of artillery-men on board.

The arrival of the present packet has not caused so great a sensation as was produced by the appearance of that which I mentioned to you before, although we are much pleased and gratified to see it. We have now an ample supply both of English and American papers, and from the arrivals being more frequent, and the commander in chief among us, the sad torpor of preceding weeks no longer reigns. Activity prevails, and the suspense of waiting is alleviated by busy preparation.

We now learn that Admiral Christian has received the honor of knighthood for his exertions, in keeping the sea so long, during such dreadfully tempestuous weather : and we are told that Admiral Cornwallis, and Sir Hugh Christian are both coming out to the West Indies. By those on board the packet it is reported they were to sail the day that she came away ; but the passengers in the Madras say that they were not to sail for nearly a month after. The latter ship coming from the place where the convoy had assembled, and the circumstance of many of the ships being disabled and requiring to be repaired, render the report from the Madras the most probable.

We have lately had an opportunity of visiting the Venus slave ship of London, just arrived with a cargo of slaves, from the coast of Africa. The ship appeared small : there was a want of space, and the negroes seemed crowded ; but, in all other respects we were pleased to remark the excellence of the accommodations, and the great attention paid to the health and comfort of the slaves. The cargo consisted of 230 prime negroes, all in high health, and good



spirits. The ship was remarkably clean. No sickness had appeared among the blacks, or the crew ; nor had any one died upon the passage. They made the voyage in six weeks, and the slaves were fed the whole time with Guinea corn. The average value of the cargo is calculated at nearly £ 50 each negro. The captain has but few hands in his ship's company, yet from his kind treatment of the slaves he has so well secured their attachment and obedience, as to feel no apprehension of a revolt, or of any occurrence to menace their safety.

Dr. Cleghorn and myself continue our pedestrian excursions about the neighbourhood of the bay. In one of our late rambles we ascended some hills in the vicinity of Bridgetown, which afford a fine landscape of the island, together with a view of the town, the harbour, and the sea.

Situated below this mountainous range is the plantation of a Mr. Daniel ; an old and rural estate which is sheltered, and rendered picturesque by the neighbouring hills. Here we saw a very lofty and fine avenue of trees, of the valuable *Lignum Vitæ* ; also an immensely

large and ancient tamarind tree, of more extended branches, and wider trunk than the antique oaks, or spreading elms, which are sometimes seen to grace the door-way of our old English dwellings. The tamarind is of the Mimosa tribe, and may be regarded as a very handsome example of the vegetable creation. It bears an immense quantity of fruit, which hangs in a filiquose form, among the small leaves, and the numerous pods being of a dirty brown colour they give a singular appearance, without adding to the beauty of the tree. Upon this old ornament of the mansion were hanging many bushels—perhaps I might say many hogheads of tamarinds, which were left to fall useless to the ground. Esteemed as this fruit is in Europe, in its preserved state, it seems to be as little valued here, as the common crab of the hedges in England, and is equally neglected, not being considered worth the labor of gathering, or the expence of the sugar required in preserving it.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.













