My dear Friend,

God, all wise, all-mighty to save, present help in time of need, be praised. I am still an inhabitant of this world, still am permitted to take part in its concerns, its duties, its trials, and to enjoy its blessings. I have heard and read of ship-wrecks and their attendant destruction of property, and life, but little thought I would ever experience the former and witness the latter, but such has been the will of Him who orders all things well. I now take up my pen to narrate to you the total wreck of the Steamer "Saristor" on the night of the 2nd May last, by which I was returning from Shanghai to Canton. In addressing a friend may be allowed to mention little particulars and personal afflictions, which though tedious to a stranger, may be interesting to a dear friend.

On the 20th March I embarked from Macao, on board the United States Steam Frigate "Susquehanna" for Shanghai, and Nanking, in public service, reached Shanghai on the 27th March, and on the 1st April, embarked for Nanking, but had not proceeded far up the Yang-tse Kiang, when the "Susquehanna" from her great draught and the shallowness of the river, grounded and remained fast for twenty-four hours, when she again floated.
I returned to Port. From the absence of two Peninsular & Oriental Company's steamers, I was detained beyond my original expectations, and deemed myself fortunate, when through the politeness of one of the owners, a passage was secured for me on board the "Savietos," the pride of her proprietors and whose speed reflected credit upon her architect. I embarked on the 29th April, a night memorable for the torrents of rain that fell, accompanied by the first lightning and thunder of the season. Early the next morning, amid dense fogs, the Steamer proceeded down the River and passed the Shipping at Woonong about 9 a.m. and then anchored to receive Merchandise and Treasure. As the fog dispersed, the wind became fresh from the North East, and the Steamer swung to the ebb tide, it became necessary to repass the ships within the mouth of the river in order to turn; and in doing this, the "Savietos" unfortunately came in collision with the United States ship "Plymouth," by which she lost her mizen mast, and main top mast, and seriously injured one of the boats on her quarter. However the wreck was cleared away with all despatch, and the Steamer proceeded on her voyage. Nothing particularly deserving of note occurred, except the alternate sunshine and fogs which are usual on the Coast at the change of the Monsoon, till the 2ndinstant. In the afternoon of
This day we were anticipating with pleasure the prospect of spending an hour at Avon; the next day and of reaching Hong Kong in time for the despatch of the Mail from there on the 5th, little aware of what was before us. In the evening the wind from N.E. blew with the ordinary strength of that Monsoon, but steaming and sailing at the rate of 10 knots before it, all seemed prosperous till near 11 of P.M. land was discovered immediately upon the Starboard bow, and in spite of any effort to clear it, in about one minute, the steamer struck, passed over one rock, and in a moment more, stone, in her bows upon another. The forecastle soon filled with water, the fires were shortly extinguished, the engineer with presence of mind took the requisite precautions to prevent a collapse of the boilers, and two anchors, I think were dropped to keep the vessel from sliding off, and avoiding inevitably, and at once, in deep water. Our situation at this moment may be conceived, but with difficulty described. With her bows still upon the rock, the stern was forced around by each successive sea that dashed against her, till she headed nearly in the direction she had come, and every moment settled to seaward, till her Starboard rails were under water, scarcely affording time to disengage the life boat upon that quarter. How long any portion would remain above water was uncertain. However it was deemed advisable that the Passengers should take
to the life boat, and try to make way through the surf and amid rocks for the Island. Here a fresh danger was apprehended from the lascars crew which had rushed aft crying "Alla! Alla!" lest they might rush into the boat in such numbers as to sink it. The decision of Captain Baylies, prevented such a catastrophe, and by means of a rope from one of the davits of the disabled boat on the larboard quarter, most of the passengers descended one by one into the life boat, and as one sea carried it away from the wreck, we hung suspended by the rope till the return of another sea enabled us then to drop into the boat. Whose chances of life were best, those who remained by the wreck, with the possibility a portion of it might remain above water, till morning, or those who embarked for the land, was a question, for within a boat's length between which and the boat was, and it was apprehended the moment, the rope was cast off, it might go to pieces on the rock. I descended by the rope to the boat with the solemn conviction that within five minutes I might know experimentally what it is to endure the last conflict of life, to pass to the "spirit world". The boat having been manned by the second officer, one engineer, and several lascars, all but two of the passengers descended into it, and the rope was cast off.

To our great joy the sea, instead of setting the boat
boat on to the rock, shot her past it, when we made our way through the breakers, guiding the boat as we best could, the tiller being lost, & the oar used only by the hand. As we left the wreck Capt. Baljies hailed us, and advised us to make for the lee of the Island, as affording the best chance of landing. As we proceeded accordingly, we discovered a conical rock some twenty feet above water, and a quarter of a mile, more or less, from the Island. Apprehensive of sunken rocks, between it and the land, we kept outside of it, and as we rounded it, discovered what appeared to be a small island, distinct from the principal one, and as it seemed too small to be inhabited, it was resolved to try and land upon it, and thus escape violence from men; but on reaching its bluff side, we found it impossible to ascend it, and most providentially we could not, for it subsequently proved, that if we had, and having put away our boat, at high water we must have been taken off by the tide. We then made for the larger Island, but its perpendicular wall, also refused us admittance.

A third effort was made, when with difficulty we succeeded in gaining a footing upon some rocks above high water, but it was effecting it seems down between the boat and the rocks into the water, yet of such depth as to enable me to gain the rock. With the aid of our cutlass, we fell
our way from stone to stone, (for sight could not avail, in the darkness of that hour), till we gained a point above high tide, and then sent the boat back to the wreck, and decided to remain as we were till the morning should reveal to us our situation, and its light enable us if possible to gain the summit of the Island. Our situation at this time will never be forgotten, for we was the dark Canopy of heaven, at our feet, the seas were breaking in the distance were our companions if yet alive, clinging to the wreck, and what was before us uncertain. Upon what Island we were on I knew not, if inhabited we knew not by whom, whether by pirates or friendly Chinese was doubtful. How or when if life should be preserved, we should get away from the Island, all unknown. At this time, as it seemed by simultaneous & unanimous impulse, it was proposed that united prayer should be addressed to Him, who had so wonderfully preserved us thus far. Having rendered devout thanks & giving praise to our Almighty Deliverer, before offering our petitions for ourselves, our companions, and fellow beings, we had left on the wreck, came up in fervent remembrance before God, that if they yet survived, they too might experience like deliverance. At the close of the extemporaneous prayer, it was suggested by one in a subdued tone "The
Lord's prayer, in which all united in solemn and heartfelt sincerity. Probably this was the first time, prayer ever ascended from that Island to the true God.

After a considerable time had elapsed, we heard in the distance human voices, in what direction we were uncertain. Supposing it to be the life boat returning, we hailed them, but received no response. After some hours the boat returned, having endeavored in vain to reach the wreck, on account of the wind & seas. With care she was now kept from being injured by dashing against the rocks at our feet. At length the day began to break, and human voices were again heard, and looking up over our heads, sparks of fire & smoke were seen issuing from the Mountain top. "The island is inhabited!" was the instant conclusion, and one of our number attempted to ascend by a crevice in the rock, almost perpendicular, by which descent was next to impossible. Having ascended some twenty feet we hailed him. His situation was critical, he asked us to say nothing, and presently he gained the top. Mean while another had sought and found a less dangerous ascent by which the rest of us gained the summit also.

We then ascertained the voices we had heard, proceeded from those who had succeeded in landing in the disabled boat consisting of Chinese servants.
and passengers, &c. cars, who had preceded us and taken possession of the little stone building, which was occupied by the Chinese fishermen, the only inhabitants of the island, and had kindled a fire around which they were shining and endeavoring to dry and warm themselves, hence the sparks we had seen. The summit gained, no time was lost in hastening to the part of the Island upon which the steamer was lost in painful solicitude to ascertain if any more survived. To our great joy we found the bowsprit was still above water, and members were still clinging to the wreck, the main mast & funnel still standing out of water, though in a little time after, we looked again the smoke pipe was gone. It is not easy fully to describe our mingled emotions of joy and pain at the sight before us, joy that they still survived, solicitude for their rescue from imminent peril of life. At this time the storm had increased in violence, the breakers more terrific than ever. We could see, but not hail each other. Every sea that broke over them concealed them from sight, till the sea passing over, one after another, appeared head above water, still clinging to life. The vessel was constantly breaking up, and each sea loosening some new timbers or planks, to which one after another he took himself, whether European or Native crew, the distance would not permit us to determine.
The discolored water from the coal in the vessel, marked the circuitous sweep of the current, dotted with fragments of the wreck upon which a score of men were borne away into the bay between the Island of New-Shan (Buffalo Island) or as about Island on the Charts) on which we were, and Ha-Shan, to the Northward Westward, thence out to sea, and we without power to afford them aid. By signs we endeavored to cheer and encourage those upon the wreck as we best could. Apprehensive that they thinking the life boat had been lost might attempt to swim on shore, which in their exhausted state was impossible, we therefore pointed in the direction of the boat, and then to them, making the motion of rowing, wishing to convey the idea the boat would return. A part of our number remained in sight upon that part of the island, while others returned to reconnoiter, and see if there were other inhabitants, and to look out for any sail that might be passing. Towards 10 a.m. the wind had subsided somewhat and the tide ebbed, and it was resolved to make one final effort to land off the life boat. There was but one small Chinese boat at the Island; with difficulty the Chinese were prevailed upon to try and reach the wreck. The two boats proved together, but the Chinese boat had not gone far when their attention was attracted to a hoop floating past, they pursued it, broke it open, pulled in-
shore, and handed its contents to one of their companions who concealed them under a rock. They then proceeded on their way, and reached so near to the wreck that two swam off, and were taken up and brought safely to the shore. The life boat also succeeded in taking off a large number, and by means of the two boats together all who survived were in a few hours, brought safely to the island. In the mean time we had ascertained the entire supply of provisions of any kind, when the whole consisted of some thirty pounds of dried sweet potatoes, and a little salt fish. In exploring the island the former we found concealed, by the Chinese, for their own subsistence. The disabled boat it may be mentioned, went to pieces upon the rocks immediately upon reaching the island, and from my Chinese Secretary, and several others perished in attempting to land.

The storm, though moderating, at 12 o'clock, still continued, and neither a boat nor a sail of any description was to be seen, if how long we were to be upon the island uncertain. Neither our boat, nor the Chinese could then cross the bay to procure assistance. Fortunately there were springs of excellent water, and at length our first meal was prepared, consisting of the dried root and salt fish.
our only supply, till a duck and a Chicken washed on shore from the wreck, increased our vanity. Ignorant how long these might be our only sustenance, it was dealt out frugally among the "seventy." Our boiler answered for the whole Company, portions of the wreck serving for fuel. This simple fare contrasted strongly with the abundance, not to say, luxuries, to which more or less of the Company had been accustomed. Instead of the full spread table, a small wooden tub with its boiled dried potatoes, and fish, with a portion of the water in which they were boiled, and to which the potatoes had imparted a sweetish taste, answered every purpose.toniie and plate around which we gathered, and in primitive style, fingers answered the purpose of knife and fork, to those who had not the good fortune to be supplied with "Chop Sticks," or a small cup from the shrine of the idols in the little temple which we had selected for our accommodations. A sense of the necessity of taking something to sustain strength of life, rather than appetite prevailed as this first meal. The Cascars added to their portion some wild leaks, and a grass found growing upon the Island, the latter a kind of creeper, with a leaf resembling clover, which they used as greens. By 3, p.m. (3rd May) the storm and seas had 20
abated, that it was thought practicable for the Chinese boat to reach the opposite settlement, and the Chinese were induced to attempt it, accompanied by the Ships Carpenter, a Chinese who understood partially the dialect spoken in this Province. Retaining one of the islanders, a lord in his teens, as a hostage, the rest were dispatched, with a few dollars to purchase rice, and to acquaint the Magistrate of Hacshan of our situation, and to request a priest to be sent to take us to that island. Before night fall, our boat approached the opposite shore, when we saw two sail boats come out from the land, one of which made for our sampan, and as we subsequently learned, robbed them of the little money we had given them, and having stripped them of their clothes allowed them to proceed, while they, the pirates, continued on for our island, under which they anchored in the evening, remaining in their boats over night.

We upon the island, from fatigue and loss of sleep for twenty four hours, were inclined for repose at an early hour, but not before assembling in the Idols Temple, and in the darkness, which we had not a candle or a torch to dissipate, we united in devout worship before that God to whom "the darkness and the light are both alike," praising Him for all his mercies, and suppling him continual care of us and that, if possible, we might
might yet be spared to reach our families homes in safety and peace.

The watches, both of the Europeans and the Pascua, being arranged for the night, to the cry of all well, if the surf breaking at the base of the mountains, were the principal sounds heard, and though wet, cold, I swear one after another fell off in unconscious sleep. Some upon a bed of Clam shells, or mouldy sea weed, the damp ground, or upon a door from some uninhabited houses, or upon the table before the idols. This night was passed in quiet, and the morning of the 4th May dawned upon us. The storm was over, and small sails from the opposite Islands, were seen in considerable numbers, standing some towards us others for the wreck. When the sun was well up several Chinese from the two pirate boats, that arrived the preceding evening, ascended, one apparently a man of fifty look the lead, and as he approached looked carefully about, and had a rusty old sword partially concealed about him. The character of this man could hardly be mistaken, but this was not the opportunity to develop it. Our numbers too great, and we had too little to tempt cupidity. In the course of the morning our Chinese visitors amounted to some hundreds, and were careful in their examinations of our premises, and whatever we had about our persons. Several times the guard of my watch was taken hold of by them, curious to know what
was attached to it, when my eye glasses served to direct their attention for the moment, and I walked away from them. Just as their number was becoming rather formidable, some intelligence from the directs reached them and scores immediately left us without particular regret on our part.

Not knowing the fate of our little boat despatches to Macao, the preceding day, we endeavoured to engage Chinese boats to take us from the islands. One party engaged to do so for 20 dollars each $420.00 for the party. Even the exhorbitant price was promised them, but they demanded the money in advance. This we suspected to be a ruse, to ascertain if we had money, and if so, where it was. Presently another boat crew arrived, the principal man of whom could speak a little of the Court dialect, and he seemed to have more of the qualities of a human being. He was willing to take the whole company in five or seven boats for $70.00 but at the same time assured us, our situation was known to the local authorities.