

A  
NARRATIVE  
OF THE  
BRITISH EMBASSY  
TO  
CHINA,

IN THE YEARS 1792, 1793, AND 1794;

CONTAINING  
THE VARIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE EMBASSY,

WITH ACCOUNTS OF  
CUSTOMS AND MANNERS OF THE CHINESE;

AND A DESCRIPTION OF THE  
COUNTRY, TOWNS, CITIES, &c. &c.

BY ÆNEAS ANDERSON,

THEN IN THE SERVICE OF HIS EXCELLENCY EARL MACARTNEY,  
K. B. AMBASSADOR FROM THE KING OF GREAT BRITAIN TO  
THE EMPEROR OF CHINA.

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# P R E F A C E.

**A**N embassy to China was a new event in the diplomatic history of this country, and very naturally excited a general curiosity concerning it: for, without considering the great commercial objects it had in view, the universal ignorance which prevailed respecting the interior parts of that empire, and the consequent novelty which must be produced by any authentic history of it, would irresistibly attract the attention of our enlightened country, to the only civilized nation in the world, whose jealous laws forbid the intrusion of any other people.

It is not my design to examine those writers who have preceded me on the subject of China: it is not for me to point out their contradictions, or display their fabulous interpolations — my only business is to relate what I saw in the course of this embassy, in every part of which I had the honor to attend Lord Macartney, who was appointed to be the representative of his Britannic Majesty at the Court of Peking.

The disadvantages which oppress the trade of European countries with China are well known, and to remove them in behalf of our own, was an object well worthy the attentive wisdom of our government. It was not, however, a mere speculative project; as a sufficient intimation had

been made to the Court of London, that an Ambassador from thence would be graciously received by the Emperor of China: ministers, therefore, acted with a strict political attention to the commercial interests of this country, by preparing an embassy, suited to the dignity of the Court of Great Britain, and fitted out in a manner to attract the attention of the Chinese people, as well as to command the respect, and secure the regard of the Court of Pekin.

The Honorable Colonel Cathcart was, accordingly, invested, in the year 1788, with the important character of minister from this country to the Empire of China; a man whose superior talents, amiable manners, shrewd sagacity and active perseverance qualified him, in a pre-eminent degree, to forward the important objects of his mission: but the premature death of that able, excellent, and accomplished man, which happened on his voyage, thwarted the progress of the embassy he was appointed to conduct; and as no person had been named in the King's commission, to succeed to his diplomatic office, if he should not reach the place of his destination, that embassy died with him; and may be said to have been buried on the distant shore where his ashes repose.

The wise attentions of government were not, however, to be turned aside from such an important, national object, as a commercial alliance between the Courts of London and Pekin: the

character of Ambassador to China was accordingly revived, with additional splendor, in the person of Earl Macartney; and an embassy was re-appointed in such a manner as became the empire it was to represent — and the empire before which it was to appear.

It is impossible to speak in higher terms of the anxious care and liberal attention of government to this diplomatic mission than it deserves. The superior talents which direct the board of control, and the commercial spirit which animates the direction of the East India Company, combined to form those arrangements which certainly deserved success, if they did not obtain it. No narrow, or sordid views, mingled with the preparations of it: the means of exterior figure, and the allurements of national productions, in every branch of art, science, and manufacture, were amply supplied; and though the embassy has failed in its object, its failure cannot be attributed to those who framed and fashioned it in this country, and set it forward to its distant destination.

I have accurately related every circumstance that came under my observation, with many occurrences which I heard from those, whose authority it would be impertinence, to say no worse, in me to resist. My design is to attempt no more than I am qualified to fulfil: and this

volume will be more particularly found to contain a faithful account of the British embassy, with its progress through China, from the time that the Lion man of war, and the Hindostan East-India Company's ship, anchored before Mettow, in the Yellow sea, to its arrival at Canton. This Narrative is faithfully given according to the best of my abilities, and from the most accurate observations in my power to make, during the journey of the embassy by land, or its voyages by water, or its temporary residence in Peking and Tartary.

Others, who possess a brilliant fancy, or a glowing imagination, might give to their description of the scenes through which this volume will conduct the reader, those bright colors which we see on the Chinese manufactures that are imported into this country, to decorate the apartments of elegant opulence; but my principal object is to give a strong and accurate outline of the picture; and I would rather be accused of the dulness and tautology of truth, than risk a suspicion that I had sacrificed to a creative imagination. Indeed, in a journey, or a voyage, or by whatever name it may be distinguished, of upwards of two thousand miles, some repetition must be expected and forgiven, not only from a similitude of objects, but from the impossibility of displaying, by literal description, those differences between them, which, though evident to

the eye, cannot be transferred to the page. Cities, towns and villages, mountains and rocks, rivers, canals and lakes, &c. &c. will oftentimes admit of nothing more than general denominations. The regularity, also, with which the British embassy was conducted in its progress through China, will give an occasional uniformity to the narration, that may sometimes check the interest which, I trust, it will be generally found to excite: but I beg leave to assure the reader that, if unfortunately he should not be always amused by this work, he will never be intentionally deceived; and the merit of faithful representation is all I have to claim, and all I wish to receive.

I have preceded the history of the journey through China with an account of the voyage to it; and have consequently mentioned places which have already been described by others, and are to be found in the volumes of modern geography; but I was advised by those, on whose judgment I could very much rely, to give this introductory part of it, according to my own knowledge, and from the result of my own observation.

I have also added the journal of the Lion and the Hindostan from Chusan to Canton, as it contains much curious and useful information relative to the navigation of a long range of the coasts of China not generally known, and may be, therefore, important to the future voyager of the seas that wash them. The river of Canton is so well known, that I have

compressed my account of it into a very small compass. The homeward-bound voyage, also, which was accompanied with no circumstance worthy of particular attention, is contained in a few pages. To these I have added a short glossary of such Chinese words and expressions, as I had myself acquired; and no more.

As to the names of cities, villages, &c. I have given the orthography according to their sounds, and as I was instructed by those natives, whose knowledge of the English language was sufficient to assist me.

I shall offer no apology to my country for publishing the journal of a voyage, which had excited such universal attention. If this volume contains a faithful narrative of the public transactions of the late embassy to China, with such an account of the country and its inhabitants, as the circumstances of it, and mode of travelling through it, would allow; an apology must be considered as insulting the public, to whom the work is presented; and, if it should be found to contain nothing that can interest or amuse the public, the book itself will be an insult, and beyond the reach of apology.

But I indulge myself in better expectations; nor am I without a flattering hope, that this volume contains information which will gratify reasonable curiosity, and enlarge the knowledge of a country so little known to the other nations of the globe.

*Westminster, Markham-street, April 2, 1795.*

# LIST

*Of the Gentlemen who composed the retinue of  
Earl Macartney.*

**S**IR George Staunton, Bart. Secretary to the Embassy;  
Lieutenant-Colonel Benson, Commandant of the Ambassador's  
Guard;

Lieutenant H. W. Parish, of the Royal Artillery;

Lieutenant J. Crewe.

Mr. Acheson Maxwell, }  
Mr. Edward Winder, } Joint Secretaries to the Ambassador.

Mr. Baring, Assistant Secretary, outward bound; Son of  
Sir Francis Baring, Bart.

Dr. Gillan, Physician and Philosopher to the Embassy;

Dr. Scott, Surgeon and Physician to the Embassy;

Mr. Barrow, Comptroller of the Household;

Dr. Dinwiddie, Mechanist, Conductor of mathematical  
and astronomical presents;

Master George Staunton, Son of Sir George Staunton, Bart.

Mr. Thomas Hickey, Portrait painter;

Mr. Alexander, Draftsman;

Mr. Hutner, Preceptor to Master Staunton;

Mr. Plumb, Interpreter.

*Commissioners sent by the East India Company to Canton, to notify  
the intended Embassy of Earl Macartney.*

Messrs. Jackson, Irwine, and Brown.

*His Excellency's Servants, &c. consisted of*

|                                |                            |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| A Steward, and an under ditto. | A Carpenter and Joiner,    |
| 2 Valets de Chambre,           | A Saddler,                 |
| A Cook,                        | A Gardener,                |
| 2 Couriers,                    | A Taylor,                  |
| A Footman,                     | A Watchmaker,              |
| A Baker,                       | A Mathematical Instrument- |
| A Band of 6 Musicians,         | maker.                     |

*Belonging to Sir G. Staunton :*

2 Servants

1 Gardener.

Which, with Mr. Crewe's Valet de Chambre, formed the  
whole of the domestic establishment, except three natives of  
China, who went out with us from England.



*The Military Establishment, or Guards, consisted of*

- 20 Men of the Royal Artillery;
- 10 Ditto 11th Light Dragoons;
- 20 Ditto drafted from the additional Companies of Infantry, at Chatham.

*The Ships which were employed to take the Embassy to China, were*  
 The Lion, of 64 guns, Sir Erasmus Gower, Commander;  
 The Hindostan East Indiaman, Capt. William Mackintosh,  
 Commander; and

The Jackall brig for a tender, manned by officers and men from the Lion.

*List of the Officers on Board his Majesty's Ship Lion.*

- |                                   |                               |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Sir Erasmus Gower, Knight,        | Mr. Bromely,                  |
| Commander;                        | Mr. Swinbourne,               |
| Mr. Campbell, 1st. Lieutenant;    | Mr. Kelly.                    |
| Mr. Whitman, 2d. ditto;           | Mr. Dilkes,                   |
| M. Atkins, 3d. ditto;             | Mr. Trollope,                 |
| Mr. Cox, 4th. ditto — died at     | Mr. Heywood,                  |
| Chufan;                           | Mr. Hickey,                   |
| Mr. Ommaney, acting Lieutenant;   | Mr. Thompson,                 |
| Mr. Jackson, Master of the Lion;  | Mr. Waller, (died at Wampoa); |
| Mr. Saunders, Master's-mate;      | Mr. Beaumont, (returned home  |
| Mr. Tippet, ditto;                | from Angara Point, for the    |
| Mr. Simes, ditto (dismissed from  | recovery of his health);      |
| the ship at Batavia);             | Mr. Snipe,                    |
| Mr. Lowe, ditto;                  | Mr. Wools,                    |
| Mr. Roper, ditto;                 | Mr. Montague,                 |
| Mr. Warren, ditto (son of Dr.     | Mr. Chambers,                 |
| Warren, Physician to his Ma-      | Mr. Scott,                    |
| jesty, and the Prince of Wales),  | Mr. Bridgeman,                |
| promoted to be acting Lieute-     | Mr. Perkins,                  |
| nant;                             | Mr. Sarradine.                |
| Mr. Kent;                         | Mr. Tothill, Purser, (died at |
| Mr. Chapman, (appointed Gun-      | Cochin China);                |
| ner, vice Corke, deceased).       | Mr. West, Captain's Clerk;    |
| <i>Midshipmen.</i>                | Mr. Nutt, Surgeon;            |
| Right Hon. Lord Mark Kerr, (son   | Mr. Anderson, Chief-mate;     |
| of the Marquis Lothian), pro-     | Mr. Cooper, 2d. ditto;        |
| motored to be acting Lieutenant;  | Mr. Thomas, 3d. ditto;        |
| Hon. Wm. Stuart, (son of the Earl | Mr. Humphries, Schoolmaster.  |
| Bute);                            |                               |

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