

A Narrative of the Shipwreck, Captivity and Sufferings of Horace Holden and Benj. H. Nute, Who Were Cast Away in the American Ship Mentor, on the Pelew Islands, in the Year 1832; and For Two Years Afterwards were Subjected to Unheard of Sufferings Among the Barbarous Inhabitants of Lord North's Island. Fourth Edition. Boston: Russell Shattuck, and Co., 1836.

NARRATIVE

P R E F A C E .

THE islands now known by geographers under the general name of *Polynesia*, have for some time past attracted the attention of the scientific and commercial world. Few opportunities, however, occur of obtaining information respecting any of them except those which are resorted to for commercial purposes. With a view, therefore, to the collecting of all the necessary materials for the history of their soil, climate, productions, and other particulars, especially of such of them as have not already been visited by the civilized people of Europe and America, it is desirable to preserve all authentic accounts of them, even of those which are of inferior importance.

The following unpretending Narrative contains such an account of one of them, commonly called *Lord North's Island*, but sometimes known by the name of *Nevil's Island* and *Johnston's Island*. It is situated in about lat. $3^{\circ} 2\frac{1}{2}'$ N., and, according to the most correct calculations, about long. $131^{\circ} 4\frac{1}{2}'$ E.

This island has been stated, in geographical works of authority, to be uninhabited; but Horsburg's *India Directory* (vol. ii. p. 497, edit. of 1827) correctly says it is inhabited, and that the natives "will sometimes come off to ships passing near." And it will accordingly be found, by the present Narrative, that it has a population of between three and four hundred inhabitants, as nearly as could be estimated by the American seamen, whose captivity and sufferings are the subject of this work; the island itself being, according to their judgment also, about three quarters of a mile long and half a mile in breadth.

The materials of this Narrative were furnished by Horace Holden, one of the seamen above mentioned, who, with his companion, Benjamin Nute, was detained as a captive by the islanders for two years; during which time he and his companion acquired the language so far as to converse in it with ease. This afforded them the means of knowing and observing many things which would escape the mere passing voyager; and whatever statements are here made, the editor has every reason to believe may be entirely relied upon.

In order to complete the little collection of facts in relation to this people—who may justly be called a new people, as no white man has ever before been upon their territory—a specimen of their language is added to the Narrative. This has been made under many disadvantages; but no small labor has

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been bestowed upon it, in order to render it of use, so far as was practicable, in elucidating the affinity of these islanders to others in that quarter of the world. It is now universally agreed among the learned, that language affords the surest test of the affinities of nations; and it is greatly to be desired that more attention should be bestowed upon this subject by the intelligent navigators of the United States, and especially by the scientific young men of our navy, who, under the permission of the government, would have the most ample means of augmenting the stores of general science, while at the same time they would confer honor upon their country.

The editor forbears to add any thing further in relation to the contents of this little volume. But he cannot dismiss the work without again expressing the high sense of gratitude felt by the two seamen in question, to the benevolent individuals of their own country, and others, who have relieved their sufferings; and this he subjoins in an extract from a note on that subject by H. Holden:—

“In addition to the gentlemen mentioned in the Narrative, we are under great obligations to Mr. Stephen Oliphant and his son, and their clerk, of New York, who were residents at Canton when we arrived there. Mr. Oliphant kindly furnished us with a room, food, and other necessaries, and gave us our passage from Canton to New York in his ship called the Morrison, commanded by captain Lavender, from whom also we experienced every attention.

“The respected American missionary at Canton, Mr. Edwin Stevens, rendered us many friendly services; and from the English physician, who was formerly in the East India Company's service there, but whose name I do not recollect, we received every attention and medical aid that could have been bestowed on his nearest friends.

“We are also much indebted to Mr. Bradford and Mr. Robert E. Aphorp, both of Boston, for their many acts of kindness. To the latter gentleman, then a resident at Canton, I cannot sufficiently express my obligations; he interested himself much in obtaining money, clothing, and other necessaries for us, to make our situation comfortable during our stay in Canton and on our passage home.

“To the many friends whom we have found since our return to our own country we can never be sufficiently grateful. Among these I cannot omit to mention Mr. J. N. Reynolds, author of the interesting Account of the Voyage of the Potomac, who has taken the most lively interest in our case, and Mr. Joseph P. Bradley, of Boston, to whose untiring zeal and benevolence I feel myself to be indebted more than I am able to express.

HORACE HOLDEN.”