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PERILS OF THE DEEP.



# PERILS OF THE DEEP

BEING AN

ACCOUNT OF SOME OF THE REMARKABLE  
SHIPWRECKS AND DISASTERS AT SEA

DURING THE LAST HUNDRED YEARS.

BY

EDWARD N. HOARE,

RECTOR OF ACRISE.

AUTHOR OF "TWO VOYAGES," "PATHS IN THE GREAT WATERS,"  
"A TURBULENT TOWN," ETC.

WITH MAP.

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PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF  
THE COMMITTEE OF GENERAL LITERATURE AND EDUCATION  
APPOINTED BY THE SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING  
CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

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LONDON :  
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE,  
NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE, CHARING CROSS, W.C. ;  
43, QUEEN VICTORIA STREET, E.C. ;  
26, ST. GEORGE'S PLACE, HYDE PARK CORNER, S.W.  
BRIGHTON : 135, NORTH STREET.  
NEW YORK : E. & J. B. YOUNG & CO.

1885.

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## INTRODUCTORY.



IT is not intended in the following pages to give an account of, or even to enumerate, all the maritime disasters of the last hundred years ; indeed, a mere catalogue of them would, with the very barest outline of each case, fill a volume. It is difficult to make a selection, and it may be that some very interesting narratives have been omitted. But the principle on which the book is based is that of bringing together in groups certain tales illustrative of the varied forms of danger to which those “who go down to the sea in ships and occupy their business in great waters” are exposed. It is hoped that this *grouping* may make the subject more interesting, and may tend to obviate the confusion that is apt to arise when a number of brief narratives on kindred subjects follow each other in merely chronological order.

Again : maritime disasters fall, for the most part, into one of two classes, which it may be convenient to keep separate. In the one case the interest centres round the circumstances of the shipwreck itself. All is over in a few minutes or a few hours. The good ship, whose fortunes we had followed, dis-

appears beneath the waves, or is dashed in fragments on some rock-bound coast. Nothing remains but to count the dead or listen to the survivors' tale. But, in the other case, the interest, if not always so intensified by horror and pity at the moment, is more "long drawn out." The wreck itself may not have been marked by any circumstances calling for special comment, yet the subsequent story may be full of romantic or thrilling incident. In this class we place the narratives of long voyages in open boats, of the sufferings and shifts of castaways on remote wave-swept reefs, on desolate islands, or hostile and barbarous shores.

We propose in the following pages to keep these two classes, as far as may be, distinct. Part II. shall be reserved for those narratives which partake, more or less, of what we may be allowed to call a "Robinson Crusoe" character. In Part I. we shall tell the story of some of those catastrophes—involving, many of them, such lamentable loss of life—which again and again remind man of his impotence in the presence of the fully-aroused forces of Nature. And here, too, we propose to arrange our illustrations in reference to some of the leading causes to which maritime disasters owe their origin.

A portion of this book is a reprint. Some years ago the S.P.C.K. issued a volume entitled, "Shipwrecks and Adventures at Sea," from which work most of the narratives of wrecks previous to that of the *Royal Charter*, in 1859, have been taken in an abridged and somewhat altered form.



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A CHART OF THE  
 WORLD  
 SHEWING WRECKS & C.

PRINCESS OF WALES 1821  
 AVENTURE 1825  
 STRATHMORE 1875

# PERILS OF THE DEEP.

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## PART I.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### FIRES.

THE cry of "Fire" is ever a startling one. With what sudden terror does it rouse the slumberer at midnight? with what panic horror does it thrill the crowd packed close together, it may be in some scene of amusement or revelry? But most unutterably awful must be the warning shout when heard at sea! Here every circumstance of danger and horror is intensified. A ship is necessarily composed of the most inflammable materials, and once the flames take hold upon her, they seldom relax their grasp till, too victorious, they are finally overwhelmed in the hostile element, when the burnt-out skeleton sinks hissing into darkness! What a situation must it be to stand a bewildered, awe-struck spectator of that last conflict between the opposing elements—to have to choose between the burning gulf that is opening at one's feet and the cruel waters that rage and swell in the lurid glare, for a place of sepulture!

As on land, so at sea, some trifling accident may originate an appalling conflagration. But there are special dangers that beset a vessel at sea. Thus fires have frequently been caused by the heating of a damp or inflammable cargo, such as cotton or coal. There have been remarkable instances where for many days the crew have lived over a suppressed volcano,—the decks growing hot beneath their feet, and the flames only kept down by drowning the vessel with water till she was in danger of sinking. Another source of danger in ocean-going steamers has been the heat generated by the friction of the machinery; while in war-ships there is always the added risk of explosion owing to the presence of a large quantity of gunpowder in the magazine.

In a catalogue of "Fires at Sea" the story that demands the first place is that of

### THE AMAZON.

True, there has been a greater loss of life in other cases, but of few such disasters have we recorded details so numerous and touching. Many of the passengers were persons of education, and occupying well-known positions, while several of the survivors were able to give graphic accounts of the catastrophe from the midst of which they were mercifully delivered.

The *Amazon*, at the time she was launched, bore the reputation of being the largest timber-built steamship in England. She was 300 feet long, her breadth was 41 feet, her burden 2,256 tons, and her engines of 800 horse-power. Constructed for the West Indian



trade, and belonging to the Royal Mail Steam-Packet Company, she was equipped in the most complete and luxurious style; her crew were mostly composed of picked men; her officers were selected for their ability and skill; and her commander, Captain Symons, was widely famous for his courage, presence of mind, and experience.

On Friday afternoon, January 2nd, 1852, this splendid vessel sailed from Southampton under the most favourable auspices. She had on board the West Indian mails and a valuable cargo. Her officers and crew numbered a hundred and ten, and her passengers were about fifty. Among the latter was Major Eliot Warburton, the author of "The Crescent and the Cross," &c.

The first day or two after a ship puts out to sea is always occupied in clearing the decks, stowing away stores and baggage, and generally making things all "snug" and "taut." Such was the case on board the *Amazon*; but the usual course was nevertheless interrupted to some extent by the alarm felt by many passengers on the score of fire. It was noticed that the engines, which were new, became greatly heated in working, and that, in order to cool them, they had to be continually stopped. We are told that the alarm of a Mr. Neilson, one of the passengers, was so great, that he could not be persuaded to go below until after midnight; and another survivor, Mr. Glennie, asserts that the same apprehension was entertained by the crew. To a certain extent the captain succeeded in tranquillising the fears of the timid; but there were many who did not scruple to

assert that the machinery was not safe, and that the captain would act wisely in returning to Southampton.

The vessel had not left her moorings thirty-six hours, when, at a quarter before one o'clock on Sunday morning, as she was entering the Bay of Biscay against a violent head-wind, the alarm of fire was given. Mr. Treweeke, the second officer, who had charge of the watch, while standing on the bridge between the paddle-boxes discovered flames issuing from near the engine-room. He immediately sent the quartermaster, Dunsford, to call the captain. This man, apparently, took no pains to conceal his errand, and the passengers caught the alarm.

Meanwhile others had discovered the fire. Stone, the fourth engineer, attempted to go below and stop the engines, but was prevented by the smoke. Attempts were made to drag forward the hose, but the flames came roaring up through the oil and tallow store-room, and the hose had to be abandoned, while those who were handling it were driven to the spar or upper deck. The passengers, by this time fully aware of what was going on, forced open the saloon-door, and swarmed upon deck. About the same time the engine-room became no longer bearable, and the men with difficulty made their way up the hatchway,—some of them, it is affirmed, failing to do so, and being burned or suffocated below.

It is impossible to form any adequate idea of the scene which ensued. The reports of those who finally escaped differ materially from each other, and, indeed, it were too much to expect consistency from the

actors in so terrible a drama. For a time the wildest panic prevailed, as we may gather from the following words of the Rev. C. A. Johns : " All was horror, confusion, and despair. The flames, having broken out just behind the foremast, rapidly extended across the whole breadth of the ship, forming a wall of fire as high as the paddle-boxes ; so that all communication was cut off between the officers, who were aft, and the greater portion of the crew, who were in the fore-castle. One or two of the sailors, indeed, managed to get across the flaming barrier, by creeping up the paddle-box and sliding down on the other side ; but all other means of access were effectually barred, and even that was attended with so much hazard, that not more than two or three ventured to make the attempt, thought it must have been known that the sole chance of safety, the boats, were all in the after part of the ship. It would be needless here to tell of the screams and shrieks of the horror-stricken passengers, mixed with the cries of the animals on board ; of the wild anguish with which they saw before them only the choice of deaths, almost equally dreadful—the raging flame or the raging sea ; and of those fearful moments when all self-control, all presence of mind, appeared to be lost, and no authority was recognised, no command obeyed."

Amidst the awful confusion and paralysing sounds of anguish, some attempts were made by the officers to get the fire under ; these, however, were found to be unavailing, and were consequently abandoned. The captain ordered the helm to be put up, so as to bring the vessel before the wind ; and the result of

this change of her course was to reverse the direction of the flames, which were now driven forward, and not towards the stern, which was crowded with the passengers and crew, and where also the boats were stowed, in which alone lay the last chance of escape.

Now comes the saddest part of this terrible history. There were nine boats on board—and four of these were life-boats—capable of containing the whole of the passengers and crew, who, could the boats have been fairly lowered, might thus have escaped. There was, however, no possibility of lowering the boats safely while the vessel flew through the water, as she now did, at the rate of thirteen miles an hour. To turn off the steam and stop her was equally impossible, the engine-room being now a glowing furnace. The captain probably hoped that the vessel might stop of herself when the boilers were exhausted, not knowing that one of the engineers, fearing an explosion, had, at the first alarm of fire, turned on the pipe of the cistern that fed the boilers so as to allow of a continuous supply. He accordingly gave directions to keep the boats fast until he should order them to be lowered.

The deck was now thronged with passengers, the majority of them in their night clothes; the flames were momentarily advancing towards them; horrible visions flitted before their eyes, men writhing in agony from the effects of fire, despairing women moaning in anguish, or frantically shrieking for help—while the doomed ship still rushed through the water with accelerating speed. At length the captain issued orders to lower the forward life-boats—it was too late:



the boats too were on fire, and thus a great part of the means of escape was cut off. After this, all order and discipline vanished, and each one sought, by his individual energies, to save himself as best he could.

Endeavours were made by different groups to get the remaining boats into the water, but these were to a great extent unavailing. The boats of the *Amazon*, in accordance with a recently-introduced "improvement," were not only suspended from the davits as usual, but had their keels grasped in projecting iron cradles to prevent them from swinging. Nobody seems to have been aware of the new contrivance; nor was it discovered till several boat-loads of poor victims had been capsized into the raging sea through the haste and ignorance of those who were handling the tackling.

The captain and Mr. Roberts were seen assisting in the lowering of the boats, but neither of them seemed to think of taking any measures for his own safety. When he could do no more, Captain Symons went aft, and took the wheel out of the steersman's hands; and for aught that appears to the contrary, he may have perished at the helm of his ship.

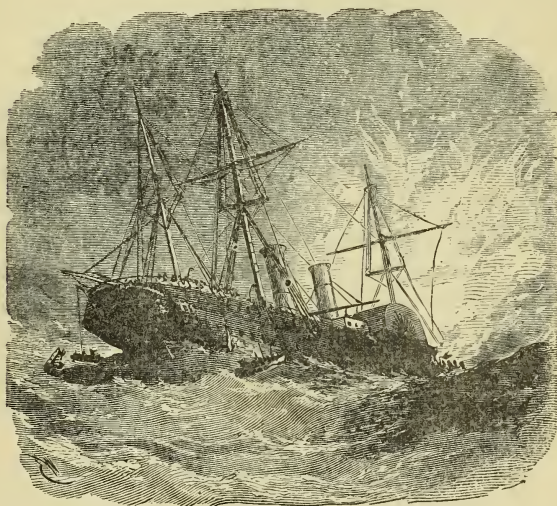
During the oft-repeated attempts to lower the boats, the most touching and appalling scenes were being enacted among those who had given up all hope of surviving. One gentleman was observed pacing the deck with his hands clasped in prayer. A gentleman and lady, in night-dresses only, with their arms entwined round each other, walked deliberately to the yawning hatches, and leaped into the fiery abyss. A young lady, in her night-gown, having that and

her feet much burnt, was three times placed in one of the boats, but refused to remain, and from a feeling of modesty returned to the ship, where she ultimately perished. One man, all on fire, was seen rolling on the deck in the attempt to get rid of the flames ; and from another, roasted by the glowing heat, the skin was falling away in ribands.

During the first eager rush to the boats, though most of them were lowered, and some of them several times, only one of the after life-boats and the dingy got away safely. The results of most of the experiments had been so terribly fatal—one boat-load after another having been precipitated into the sea before the eyes of those on deck, that, in spite of the advancing fire, numbers of the agonised throng hesitated to enter the boats. Not till the speed of the vessel was somewhat abated does the attempt appear to have been resumed ; and then other boats, or rather the same boats in other hands, endeavoured to put off from the flaming wreck. Three at least were successful ; if any others got away they must have perished with all hands, for nothing was ever heard of them afterwards. Let us now follow the fortunes of the boats, and in doing so we shall get a last glimpse of the ill-fated *Amazon*.

In the starboard life-boat, which appears to have been the first that got clear, was Mr. Neilson, with fifteen other persons. They were hardly fairly afloat, when they were hailed by the dingy, which had left the vessel about the same time, and was fast filling with water. Mr. Vincent, midshipman of the *Amazon*, and four others, were in her, and were baling out for

bare life with a pair of boots from which the tops had been cut. These five persons were received on board, and the dingy was taken in tow. The life-boat then pulled after the burning ship in the hope of saving more lives; but the wind was now blowing a gale, and the stern of the boat was stove in by the dingy, and the rudder torn away. Thus disabled, it was vain to attempt the rescue of others. The gale



continued for three hours, during which time, all that could be done was so to trim the rudderless boat as to keep her head to the wind, and save her from being swamped. Those on board her saw the masts of the *Amazon* go over the sides one after another, as she drifted, evidently without guidance, before the wind. About the same time, an outward-bound barque passed within three or four hundred yards of the

boat, and being hailed by the crew, answered by signals, but instead of hastening to the rescue, passed on and left them to their fate. About four o'clock came heavy rain, and the wind moderated. The life-boat followed the burning ship until her magazine exploded; and shortly after her funnels went over the side, and she sank, leaving them in gloomy darkness.

All that could be done now was to pull away in the direction of the coast of France, in order to make the land as soon as possible, in case of not falling in with a passing vessel. This course they followed during the darkness. The morning broke bright and clear, and about three hours after, the man on the look-out saw a sail. This proved to be the *Marsden* brig, outward bound, and in two hours they came up with her. Captain Evans, the master, received them with the utmost kindness, and being prevented by the shifting of the wind from landing them on the coast of France, bore away for England, and landed them at Plymouth shortly after midnight on the Tuesday.

A second boat which escaped was the pinnace. In the first attempt which was made to lower her the boat had dropped at one end, owing to the fouling of the tackle, and most of her occupants had been cast into the sea and lost. Some few climbed back into the burning ship, and Mrs. McLennan, unable to do the same, having a child of eighteen months in her arms, clung fast to the seat, holding on until the boat was righted, and having been again filled with passengers, was got clear off. The pinnace carried six-

teen persons in all, among whom was Mr. Glennie, from whose detailed narrative we extract the following particulars :—

“Immediately on clearing away from the ship we drifted astern very rapidly; so much so, that I imagine the ship must have been going about eight or nine knots. It was blowing fresh: the sea was running high, and we were at first in much danger of being swamped—more, however, in consequence of our own confusion than from any extraordinary violence of the waves. One of the sailors, a fine fellow, named Berryman—a man-of-war’s-man, who had never been in a steamer before—advised that we should throw a spar by a rope astern, that might serve as a breakwater. This we did; and what was better still, we soon got into some kind of order. . . . Our boat was a small one, and would hardly have held more in such a sea with safety. While this was going on, I remember to have got a view of the larboard side of the steamer, and observed that a large hole was burnt out of her side immediately abaft the paddle-box, part of which also was burnt. The hole was nearly down to the water’s edge, and through it I could see the machinery. . . . I remember to have seen some people still on the after part of the deck, and amongst them I thought I could yet distinguish the captain and Mr. Warburton; and my impression was that they still possessed the means of escape from the burning wreck. . . . With a view of steadying our boat, and being enabled to steer her well before the wind, we hoisted Mrs. McLennan’s shawl on a couple of boat-hooks for a sail, one of the sailors giving her

a blanket in exchange. . . . By the time that we got our sail up, or, I should think, from twenty to twenty-five minutes after leaving the ship, the *Amazon* was in a blaze from stem to stern. The only people that I remember to have seen upon her at that moment, were some three or four on the bowsprit."

Mr. Glennie goes on to say that all in the pinnace suffered extremely from cold, those who were clothed being completely drenched, and many of them hardly having clothes at all. By three o'clock they could see nothing of the ship, and only knew when she blew up and sank by the sudden brightening and expansion of the light, succeeded by its total disappearance. At dawn they found that the pinnace was leaking faster than they could bale her out, and, in consequence, they well-nigh gave themselves up for lost. Fortunately, Stone, one of the engineers, discovered the leak, and contrived partially to stop it.

They now steered for the coast of France, the men labouring hard at the oars, and Mrs. McLennan, as she lay in the stern-sheets, cheering them to their work. At noon they saw a sail in the distance, and the wind abating, endeavoured to come up with it, hoisting the lady's shawl as a signal. Labouring for their lives, they got within hail of the vessel at about six in the evening, and being safely lifted on board, were received with the greatest possible kindness by the captain and crew. She proved to be a Dutch galliot, the *Gertruida*. Her commander, Tunteler, forthwith made sail for Brest, the nearest port, from which they were then distant about forty miles. At the request of Mr. Glennie, he kept a good look-out



during the night, and at daylight picked up another boat from the *Amazon* with eight persons on board, among whom was a lady passenger, Miss Smith.

This third boat had met with a series of mishaps. She had been twice capsized during the frantic efforts that were made to get her into the water, and finally she seems to have gone adrift empty. It was then that Miss Smith had leaped into her from a height of fifteen feet ; and as she passed beneath the stern of the burning ship, a few men succeeded in getting into her. They were but nine, and the boat would have held thirty. The little party would willingly have saved more lives, and they remained near the vessel for two hours in the hope of doing so ; but fearing the blowing up of the magazine, they dared not approach too close.

After losing sight of the ship, they pulled in the direction of land, Mr. Stribus, one of the passengers, steering. At nine in the morning they saw a sail, but could not succeed in attracting her attention. They continued to row towards the French coast all through the Sunday, and about midnight, observing a revolving light, pulled towards it, until, from the swell of the sea, they dared approach no nearer. By this time they were totally exhausted, and appeared incapable of making any further effort ; but, observing a light in another quarter, they resolved to make one last push, and were rewarded about dawn by coming up with the *Gertruida*, as above narrated.

The *Gertruida* reached Brest in safety. There the shipwrecked party received every attention from the Vice-Consul and the inhabitants of the town ; and,

at the suggestion of Mr. Glennie, the port admiral immediately despatched a steamer to the scene of the catastrophe, though that measure unhappily proved fruitless. The rescued persons were forwarded to Southampton from Havre by the *Grand Turk* steamer.

For some days it was supposed in England that the boats above mentioned contained all the survivors of the miserable catastrophe. But on the 15th of January, the whole country was electrified by the tidings that the after port life-boat of the *Amazon*, containing thirteen persons, had been picked up by a Dutch galliot, and that the rescued persons had been landed safely at Plymouth.

This boat had been safely lowered at about one o'clock, though not until the stewardess had fallen out of her and been drowned. Lieutenant Grylls, of the Royal Navy, who, though sailing as a passenger, had ably seconded Captain Symons in his endeavours to clear the boats, had assisted in getting her afloat, and took the command of her when she got away. No sooner had she left the ship than it was found that she was filling with water, a large hole being stove in her larboard bow. Fox, a stoker, stopped the hole by taking off his drawers and cramming them into it, keeping them in position for three or four hours by the pressure of his own body, and, when seized with violent cramps, being relieved by Dewdney and Wall. A couple of hours later, a barque passed between them and the burning ship, almost within hail, but continued on her course without noticing them. In the morning they passed



over the place where the vessel had sunk, and saw large pieces of the wreck, chests, boxes, &c., but no person living or dead.

About one o'clock on Sunday, Lieutenant Grylls descried a sail, and, having no oars, they broke up the boat's bottom boards and used them as paddles. The sail tacked and stood away ; but soon afterwards they saw another vessel in the same direction, and by great exertions they came up with her about four in the afternoon. She was a Dutch galliot from Amsterdam, bound for Leghorn ; and the captain and crew behaved most hospitably to the castaways. Shaping his course for Plymouth, the commander of the galliot, when off that port, transferred his shipwrecked guests to the *Royal Charlotte* revenue cutter, from which they landed safely in the town, whence they were forwarded by the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society to Southampton, to which place they, with but one exception, belonged.

Of the whole number of persons on board the *Amazon*, amounting to a hundred and sixty-two, fifty-eight only were saved ; one hundred and four, or nearly double the number of the saved, perishing by flood and fire.

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### THE COSPATRICK.

It would not be easy to imagine a sadder tale of "sea-sorrow" than that which tells of the burning of the emigrant-ship *Cospatrick*. There is absolutely nothing to relieve the lurid light and dark shadows that hang over the scene. Scarce any element of

horror is absent—enormous loss of life, terrible confusion, wild despair, hunger, thirst, madness, cannibalism—in a word, but three survivors to tell the story of how four hundred and seventy of their fellows perished miserably!

The *Cospatrick*, a wooden ship of 1,200 tons, sailed from London for New Zealand on the 11th of September, 1874, having on board a general cargo, 429 emigrants, and a crew, all told, of 44. The vessel was admirably fitted in every respect, and special precautions seem to have been taken to guard against that most terrible of marine dangers—fire. There was a fixed fire-engine on the fore-castle, with a considerable quantity of hose. Every possible precaution was taken with regard to the numerous lights required on a vessel with so many passengers. At each hatchway shone a lantern, but it was kept locked. The lamps between decks were lighted by the emigrants' steward, and then locked for the night. Constables selected from among the emigrants themselves patrolled the ship between decks to preserve order. Regulations prohibiting smoking and the use of lights were exhibited in each compartment, and strictly enforced under the supervision of the master and the doctor. The hatches leading to the lower hold were kept locked, and it was impossible for any of the crew or passengers to obtain access to them.

The voyage was continued prosperously and uneventfully for nearly two months, till the ship, with her living freight, stood in lat.  $37^{\circ} 15'$  south, and long.  $12^{\circ} 25'$  east. This was what they "made it" at midday on the 17th of November. The weather

was fine, the wind from the north-west, but so little of it that the vessel made scarce any way. It was a quarter of an hour before midnight when Macdonald, the second mate, having gone round the ship and carefully examined poop and forecastle, went below to rest.

But that rest was soon disturbed. Shortly after midnight he was brought on deck again, all undressed as he was, by that awful cry of "Fire!" At the cuddy-door he met Captain Elmslie, who bid him go forward and inquire what was the matter. He did so, and the answer met him in a volume of dense, black smoke pouring up from the forecastle. Already the chief officer was at work getting the fire-engine in order. The alarm spread rapidly, and soon crew and passengers came crowding on deck in a state of bewilderment and terror. The report was that the fire had broken out in the boatswain's locker—a small space partitioned off, between decks, where ropes, oil, cotton-waste, paint, &c., were kept.

The captain's first effort was to get the ship's head before the wind, so as to prevent the smoke and flames being blown back over the crowded decks. But she did not answer her helm readily, and the flames with fatal rapidity rushing up the forecastle, the fore-sail had to be hauled in. By this time all was confusion on board, and the captain appears to have lost command over both crew and passengers. In the tumult of voices and the hurrying to and fro, the shrieks of women and the shouts of bewildered, struggling men, he hesitated what to do; and every moment lost brought hopeless destruction nearer.

The hose of the fire-engine had been got to work, and fire-buckets were passed from hand to hand, with the effect of deluging the fore-part of the ship with water. But these efforts were useless ; the fire gained rapidly ; the flames ran like fiery serpents up every rope and spar ; and the ship was enveloped in a thick white smoke as in a shroud.

The *Cospatrick* now came head up to the wind, so that the smoke drove aft in suffocating clouds. The second mate, Macdonald, asked Captain Elmslie if he should lower the boats. Unfortunately, the captain, desirous of making further efforts to save his ship, delayed to give the order till it was too late. Soon the flames were rushing up the main-hatchway, and had seized upon the foremost boats, while the space available for crew and passengers was growing more and more contracted. Further delay was impossible. The mate hurriedly sent men forward to clear the boats. The starboard-quarter boat was lowered at once, but no officer being on the spot, and no order being observed, a crowd of terrified emigrants, chiefly women, clambered into her, and the moment she touched the water she capsized, and all were drowned. "It was heartrending," said one of the survivors, "to see the women when the first boat went down. They were about eighty in number. The ship's davits bent down with the weight of them. They went down with one shriek."

In consequence of this sad catastrophe, two men were now stationed at the port boat, with directions to prevent any one from lowering it except by the captain's orders ; and the officers made a vigorous

effort to get the long-boat lowered, but, in the panic that prevailed, no help was forthcoming. Her bows caught fire, and she was abandoned. Then the struggling, shouting mass made a rush for the port life-boat, which was lowered, and instantly filled by thirty or forty people. Just before she was pushed clear of the ship, Macdonald, the second mate, sprang into her. The chief mate and a female also jumped overboard, and were picked up.

The fire now made terrible progress. In an hour and a half after the giving of the alarm, the vessel was beyond the possibility of being saved. When too late, the captain consented to have the boats got out, but, meantime, the two in the fore part of the ship had been destroyed, and the long-boat was so enveloped in smoke that all efforts to get at her proved fruitless. All hands having been engaged in the frantic and hopeless endeavour to keep under the fire, no steps had been taken to victual or in any way prepare the boats, and the disastrous effects of this neglect add to the horror of the whole story, as we shall see just now.

After a while the mainmast went by the board, crushing a number of poor creatures in its fall. Shortly after the mizenmast also gave way, while the expansive force of the fire blew out the stern of the luckless vessel. Thus the night passed.

Morning came, and towards noon the people in the port life-boat saw that the starboard boat had also in some way been got afloat. Having drifted against the wreck of the mainmast, by which a number of people were supporting themselves, some thirty-

two, including eight or nine women, succeeded in scrambling into her. Later on, Macdonald, the second mate, pulling alongside of her, went on board, and took charge, leaving the port boat in command of Mr. Romanie, the chief mate. There were then two boats afloat—the port and starboard life-boats; but in neither was any supply of provisions or water, and their fittings had been so grossly neglected that the starboard life-boat had only one sound oar and part of a broken one! There was neither mast nor sail.

All day, and until late in the afternoon of the 19th, the two boats—one containing thirty-nine and the other forty-two people—hovered around the burning ship, which had by that time become a ship of death,—a charred, blackened, smoking hulk. It sank at last, carrying with it the few poor passengers who had not been killed by suffocation or by jumping overboard. The captain was seen to throw his wife into the waves to give her a last chance of life, before he himself sprang from the burning wreck; but neither was saved.

Thus ends the first section of this chapter of horrors; the second is nearly as heartrending. It may be told almost entirely in the words of Macdonald, who was one of the three survivors. How terrible in its suggestiveness is the following brief narrative, taken down by a newspaper reporter from this brave man's lips:—"The two boats kept company the 20th and 21st, when it commenced to blow, and we got separated during the night. I whistled and shouted, but when daylight came we could see



nothing of the other boat. Thirst began to tell severely on all of us. A man named Bentley fell overboard whilst steering the boat, and was drowned. Three men became mad that day, and died. We then threw the bodies overboard. On the 23rd the wind was blowing hard, and a high sea running. We were continually bailing the water out. We rigged a sea-anchor and hove the boat to; but it was only tied with strands to the boat's painter, and we lost it. Four men died; and we were so hungry and thirsty that we drank the blood and ate the livers of two of them. We lost our only oar then. On the 24th there was a strong gale, and we rigged another sea-anchor, tying it with anything we could get. There were six more deaths that day. She shipped water till she was nearly full. On the 25th there was a light breeze, and it was awful hot. We were reduced that day to eight, and three of them out of their minds. We all felt very bad that day. Early on the morning of the 26th, not being daylight, a boat passed close to us running. We hailed, but got no answer. She was not more than fifty yards off. She was a foreigner. I think she must have heard us. One more died that day. We kept on sucking the blood of those that died. The 27th was squally all round, but we never caught a drop of water, although we tried to do it. Two more died that day. We threw one overboard, but were too weak to lift the other. There were then five left—two able seamen, one ordinary, myself, and one passenger. The passenger was out of his mind. All had drunk seawater. We were all dozing, when the madman bit

my foot, and I woke up. We then saw a ship bearing down upon us. She proved to be the *British Sceptre*, from Calcutta to Dundee. We were taken on board, and were treated very kindly. I got very bad on board of her. I was very nigh at death's door. We were not recovered when we got to St. Helena. I had dysentery. They handed us brandy, and we were in such a state that we should have drunk all of it. We made five hundred and forty miles in those eight days. The latitude where it (the disaster) occurred was  $37^{\circ} 15'$  S. lat.,  $12^{\circ} 25'$  E. long. This was at mid-day on the 17th. I knew that we had kept in near the same longitude all the time. We knew we were to the northward of the Cape. My opinion is, that the first boat never recovered the wind of that night. The woman in that boat was frantic; she leaped more than once."

The captain of the *British Sceptre* describes the scene that met his eyes as soon as he had succeeded in bringing his ship alongside the boat. "The sight was something horrible. There were five men in her alive, and one dead body. One man was stripped naked to his waist, his feet swollen, full of sores, himself raving mad. The coloured man barely alive, but still in his senses."

The sufferers were treated with the utmost care, but despite of all that could be done for them the mad passenger and the coloured man only lived a day or two. The survivors were then but three—Macdonald and two sailors, named Lewis and Cutter.

The two sailors told a tale similar to Macdonald's. Lewis, who is described by the newspaper reporter as



a "grim old Welshman," said that for the first four or five days he felt neither hungry nor thirsty, but afterwards his sufferings were very great. At first, he said, the passengers were quite cheerful. "They would soon," they said, "be at the Cape, and have a glass of wine!" But, after the separation of the boats, the hearts of all began to sink. Delirium came on with its strange and grotesque fancies. Thus, one who had always boasted of his good eyesight, exclaimed—with such confidence that his fellow-sufferers were almost fain to believe him:—"I can see a pleasure-walk on the beach; I can see a white house on the beach; the sign of a public-house, the Lamb." And then the poor wretch entreated Macdonald to steer in the direction he pointed out.

The other sailor, Cutter, said, "We soon got to know who was to be the next to die." They became delirious or torpid, but mostly passed away in sleep. Four or five would lie down, huddled together; and when, after an hour or two, the mass moved again, it would be found that one at least was sleeping his last sleep.

Macdonald, who appears to have been a man of surprising courage, energy, and power of endurance, kept a sort of rough diary so long as he was able to write. We conclude with an extract. It will be seen that some of the dates are incorrectly given. When the Thursday came, he was too ill to write.

*"Wednesday morning, 19th November, one o'clock.—A fire; took boats; at noon fell in with second boat; all night laid to with a drag.*

19th.—Pulled up with the ship, she still burning; about 4 p.m. she sank; all the time both boats kept by the ship. Nothing to eat since we left the ship.

Friday, 20th.—Fine weather; nothing in sight; men commenced to ask for water. At nine o'clock lost sight of the other boat.

Sunday.—Very dull; heavy sea on; three men died.

Monday, 22nd.—Strong gale, with a heavy sea running; five deaths; cut a couple for the blood and liver.

Tuesday, 24th.—Strong gale; four men died.

Wednesday.—Light breeze; more died; reduced to eight men, three of them mad."

The port boat, it may be added, was never seen or heard of after she parted company with the star-board one; probably she foundered with her forty-two passengers, whose sufferings were thus mercifully cut short.

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Side by side with the above story we may place that of another crowded ship that was destroyed by fire almost half a century earlier. Fortunately, in this case, aid appeared at the critical moment, otherwise the loss of life on board

### THE KENT

might have been even greater than that which so terribly distinguishes the unfortunate *Cospatrick*.

The *Kent*, East Indiaman, Captain Henry Cobb, a fine new ship of 1,350 tons, left the Downs on her voyage to Bengal and China, on the 19th of February, 1825, having on board 651 persons, consisting of

344 soldiers of the 31st Regiment, with 20 officers, 43 women and 66 children, private passengers to the number of 20, and a crew, including officers, of 148 men.

The vessel bore down the Channel with a fine breeze from the north-east, and, losing sight of the English coast on the evening of the 23rd, entered on the Atlantic. On the 28th, when in latitude  $47^{\circ} 30'$  north, and longitude  $10^{\circ}$  west, she was met by a violent gale, which continued increasing, and compelled her, on the 1st of March, to lie-to under a triple-reefed main-topsail only. Being partly laden with shot and shell, the ship rolled heavily, dashing about the contents of the cabins, to the no small alarm and inconvenience of the passengers.

Shortly before noon one of the officers went below with a lantern, and in the endeavour to secure a spirit cask which had got adrift, stove the cask, and set the spirits on fire. In an instant the whole of that part of the after-hold was in flames ; and though every exertion was made, both by soldiers and sailors, to subdue the fire by pumping, by pouring in water, and by the application of wet sails, it spread rapidly, and soon volumes of smoke were seen issuing from all the four hatchways at once. Seeing the imminence of the peril, Captain Cobb ordered the lower decks to be scuttled, the combings of the hatchways to be cut, and the lower ports to be opened. So expeditiously were these orders obeyed, that some of the sick soldiers lying below, one woman and several children were drowned by the in-rushing flood, before they had time to escape to

the upper deck ; and some others at the same crisis were suffocated by the smoke. The vast body of water thus introduced into the hold, checked the fury of the flames ; but the ship became water-logged before the ports could be again closed.

A wretched and heartrending scene ensued. From six to seven hundred human beings crowded the upper deck, and nearly the whole were in a state of indescribable confusion and terror. Some who had been suffering from sea-sickness had staggered from their berths nearly naked ; some, panic-stricken and reduced to a condition of stupid insensibility, gazed vacantly around them ; and others, frantic and despairing, shrieked aloud for aid ; while a number of the older soldiers and sailors seated themselves doggedly over the magazine, with the expressed wish for a speedy termination of their sufferings. Some sank on their knees in silent prayer—and others vowed in loud and piteous tones to devote their lives to God, if He would spare them in this calamity.

Meanwhile, the waves beat furiously against the ship, and in one of the heavy lurches which she made, the binnacle was wrenched from its fastenings, and the whole apparatus of the compass dashed to pieces on the deck—an accident of most ominous import to some of those who witnessed it. At this moment Mr. Thompson, the fourth mate, sent a man to the fore-top to look out for a sail. As all eyes were watching him with unspeakable anxiety, the sailor waved his hat, and sung out, “A sail on the lee-bow!” a cry which lightened every heart, and was responded to by three cheers from the deck.

Up flew the flags of distress, and the next moment the minute gun was fired, while the *Kent*, with all the sail she could safely make, bore down upon the stranger. From the violence of the gale the guns were not heard; but the dense smoke from the burning ship told her sad tale, and in a few minutes the stranger was seen hoisting British colours, and crowding on her canvas to hasten to the rescue. She proved to be the brig *Cambria*, Captain Cook, bound to Vera Cruz, and having on board twenty or thirty Cornish miners.

Captain Cobb, Colonel Fearon, commanding officer of the troops, and Major Macgregor, of the 31st, now consulted on the necessary preparations for getting out the boats, and it was resolved that the officers should move off "in funeral order," the youngest first. Orders were issued at the same time by the Colonel, that any man should be cut down who should dare to enter the boats before the women and children had left the vessel; an order which in the result happily proved superfluous, owing to the general subordination and discipline that prevailed.

The cutter was now got ready, and the lady passengers, with as many of the soldiers' wives and children as she would contain, were put into her, and she was lowered. It appeared to be against all probability that she would live for a moment in such a sea; and twice the cry arose from those on the chains that the boat was swamping. But a kind and watchful Providence ordained otherwise; the tackle was dexterously freed, and the next moment she was seen bounding over the huge billows, now tossed on

their foaming tops, now lost to sight in the hollows between. She reached the *Cambria*, and to the unspeakable relief of the husbands and fathers who watched her course, her precious cargo was discharged in safety.

As it was impossible, owing to the heavy sea, for the boats from the *Cambria* to come alongside the *Kent*, the remaining women and children had to be tied together, and lowered by ropes from the stern.



But from the heaving of the ship, and the fitful motion of the boat beneath, many of them were unavoidably plunged repeatedly beneath the water; none of the women were lost by this process, but many of the younger children were drowned before reaching the boats. Seeing this, some of the soldiers, hoping to save their children, leaped with them into



the sea, and perished in the attempt to swim to the boats. Other pathetic incidents were witnessed. One person, having to choose between his wife and his children, saved the former, the four children being left to perish. One man, a soldier, with neither wife nor child of his own, had three of the children lashed to him, and, plunging into the sea, struck out for the boat; he was unable to reach it, and was drawn back to the ship, when two of the children were found to be dead.

The *Cambria* had taken a position at some distance from the *Kent*, for fear of the explosion, which was momentarily expected. It took three-quarters of an hour for the boats to go and return, and thus the process of removal was tedious.

As the day drew to a close, and the fire was extending, Captain Cobb and Colonel Fearon grew more and more anxious to get their men away from the burning wreck. To accelerate the transport, a rope was suspended from the head of the spanker-boom, and the men were directed to slide from it into the boats. Numbers followed this plan, but they had to swing a long time in the air, and were often repeatedly plunged in the water, before they gained the boat—and some, indeed, losing their hold of the rope, sank to rise no more. Many, in preference to sliding down the rope, chose to leap from the stern windows, and trust to swimming or to the assistance of rafts made of hencoops, which had been lowered to form a kind of communication with the boats.

It was not until evening that the officers of the

31st began to leave the ship, with their several parties of soldiers, in the boats. Throughout the day they had set the example of discipline and coolness, one and all of them emulating the conduct of their colonel, and acting under his orders with the same cheerful promptitude as on ordinary occasions. The passengers, also, several of whom were cadets of the East India Company, followed their example, and shared with them in toil as well as peril. As an instance of the right feeling of the soldiers at this melancholy time, it is recorded that towards the decline of day, when the working groups on the poop were exhausted with fatigue, and suffering from intolerable thirst, some of the men found a box of oranges, and refused to partake of them, though fasting since the morning, until they were shared by their officers.

We must not, however, conceal the fact, that there were individuals on board the *Kent*, who were wanting equally in discipline and manliness at this fearful crisis. The gentleman to whose narrative we are indebted for the materials of this sketch, states that soon after sunset he descended to the cuddy to look for a blanket to shield him from the cold. There, amidst articles of furniture shattered into a thousand pieces, the geese and poultry were cackling, and a solitary pig which had wandered from its sty had made his bed on the Brussels carpet—and among the broken furniture and intruding animals were a few miserable human beings “either stretched in irrecoverable intoxication on the floor, or prowling about like beasts of prey in search of plunder.”



The imminence of the danger, and, consequently, the alarm, increased as the night drew on, and the inevitable moment approached when the fire must reach the magazine. Before darkness set in, most of the sailors had left the ship, and now the soldiers, in order that they might be distinguished in the gloom, bound pieces of white linen about their heads ere committing themselves to the water. While waiting impatiently for the boats, one of the officers offered up a short prayer, in which his auditors joined by frequent exclamations testifying the urgency of their need ; and it was remarked that this appeal to the mercy of the Almighty was followed by comparative composure of mind and attention to orders.

Between nine and ten o'clock the *Kent* had settled so low in the water that it was evident she could not float for many hours longer, and it seemed doubtful whether she would not sink before the fire reached the magazine. Such of the soldiers as remained on board now hesitated in the darkness to commit themselves to the rope hanging from the boom ; and Captain Cobb, who had determined, if possible, to be the last man on board, being unable either by threats or persuasions to induce them to proceed, was compelled, with the remaining officers of the 31st, to provide for his own safety. It was not until the guns were heard exploding in the hold, and after every argument had been tried in vain to rouse the poor fellows who seemed struck dumb and powerless with dismay, to make one effort for their own preservation, that the gallant Captain let himself down into the boat—having first seen the officers of the 31st, who

so nobly stood by him to the last, accomplish the perilous descent. In doing this, Colonel Fearon had a hair's-breadth escape from death, being several times dashed by the waves against the side of the boat, once drawn completely under it, and only dragged into it at last by the hair, dreadfully bruised and nearly senseless. Not long afterwards the flames burst forth from the stern windows, and all further escape by the boats was cut off. Some twenty of the soldiers yet remained in the chains and rigging, too panic-stricken to do aught for their own safety—while some few wretched individuals were below, in the senseless oblivion of drunkenness.

The deck of the *Cambria*, while all this was going on, presented a scene which can only be left to the imagination of the reader. The violence of the gale rendered the safe passage of each successive boat terribly dubious; and even when the *Cambria* was reached, the attempt to get on board often failed, and many were lost—either by being crushed between the boat and the ship, or by missing their footing in their eagerness to mount the side. But for the Cornish miners, who took their stations in the chains, and dexterously seizing the exhausted people as the billows hove the boat upwards, swung them on board by sheer strength of muscle—but for those stalwart and hearty fellows, hundreds must have perished.

Soon after the arrival of the last boat, the flames which had spread along the upper deck and poop of the *Kent*, ascended with the rapidity of lightning to the masts and rigging, forming one general conflagration. The flags of distress hoisted in the morning were

seen for a considerable time waving amid the flames, until the masts, to the top of which they were suspended, successively fell over the ship's side. At length, the fire having communicated to the magazine, the long-threatened explosion took place, and the blazing fragments of the once magnificent *Kent* were instantly hurried high into the air; leaving, in the darkness that succeeded, the scenes of that disastrous day floating before the mind like some feverish dream.

The *Cambria*, which had been making all the sail she could, was at this time three miles distant from the *Kent*, and her crew and passengers were doing their best to minister to the wants of those they had rescued. The final safety of the whole was still a fearful problem, and might well suggest the gravest doubts. The *Cambria*, a small brig of 200 tons, had over 600 persons on board; she was provisioned only for forty, and was several hundreds of miles from the nearest accessible port. Her deck, her small cabins, her hold, were crammed with human beings—and her bulwarks on one side had been carried away by the violence of the gale.

Happily, the wind was fair for the English coast; and crowding as much sail as he dared, Captain Cook urged his vessel onward, and sighting land on the afternoon of Thursday, the 3rd, cast anchor in Falmouth Harbour about half an hour after midnight. Just in time! At least, it is said that the crowded vessel had not been above "an hour in Falmouth harbour, when the wind, which had all along been blowing from the south-west, suddenly chopped round to the opposite quarter of the compass, and continued

uninterruptedly for several days afterwards to blow strongly from the north-east." Had the wind so changed but a few hours earlier, the *Cambria* would have been driven out to sea; famine and pestilence would have raged among that rescued multitude, and have completed the destruction which the force of flood and fire had not sufficed to accomplish.

At Falmouth, the whole of the shipwrecked people met with the warmest sympathy and hospitality; and, after having on the ensuing Sunday solemnly returned thanks to God for their unparalleled preservation, they separated for their respective homes.

It is pleasant to be able to add, that the greater part of the unfortunate men left in the burning *Kent* when the boats could no longer approach her, were also rescued on the same night. When the masts fell overboard they clung to the floating wreck for some hours, without the slightest prospect of escape. The explosion of the vessel, however, at one o'clock, was seen on board the *Caroline*, a trader, on its passage from Egypt to Liverpool. Captain Bibbey, the master, instantly made sail for the spot, and picked up fourteen of the men, three others having died of fatigue before his arrival.

Captain Cook, his crew, and the sturdy miners, all received the reward of their gallant conduct, not only in the enthusiastic praises of their countrymen, but also in substantial pecuniary acknowledgments both from the Government and the East India Company—rewards richly deserved and honourably won by the noblest exertions in the face of the deadliest peril, and in behalf of the helpless and the suffering.

There is an interesting incident in connexion with

the burning of the *Kent* that yet remains to be noticed. Just previous to the providential appearance of the *Cambria*, and when there seemed no prospect before that miserable throng save that of speedy death by fire or water, there was one at least who faced that prospect calmly and without flinching.

It occurred to Major MacGregor that should the ship blow up, as it might do at any moment, no single individual might be left to tell the story of the *Kent*, and thus friends and relatives at home might remain for ever ignorant of the exact fate of those they loved. Accordingly he wrote a memorandum on a scrap of paper with a pencil, of which the following is a fac-simile :—

The ship the *Kent*  
 Indiaman is on  
 fire — Elizabeth  
 Louisa & myself  
 commit our spirits  
 into the hands of our  
 blessed Redeemer  
 his grace enables  
 us to be quite  
 composed in the awful  
 prospect of entering  
 eternity  
 M. MacGregor  
 26 March 1825  
 Bay of Biscay

These touching words were then committed to the raging sea, having been secured in a bottle, and addressed to the Major's father, who was connected with a bank in Edinburgh.

Nearly two years after, Major MacGregor received from a gentleman in Barbadoes this very paper that he had written in his hour of deadly peril. The bottle had been spied and picked up by a person bathing, on the 30th of September, 1826. Over how many miles of ocean—through storm and calm—had that frail but trustworthy messenger been tossed about during the *year and a half* that had elapsed since it had been committed to the deep!

The numbers lost by the destruction of the *Kent* were: 55 soldiers, 1 seaman, 5 marine boys, 15 women, and 20 children—in all 96 souls, out of a total of 651.

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In the loss of the

*EARL OF ELDON*

we have a good example of a fire caused by the overheating of an inflammable cargo. This vessel sailed from Bombay for England on the 24th of September, 1834. Three days later she was abandoned by her crew and passengers in a state of fierce conflagration. Some of the cotton, with which the ship was laden, had been put on board damp; and hence, like a heated haystack, the entire mass was soon on

fire. The following account is given by one of the passengers :—

“On the 26th of September, the trade-wind seemed to have fairly caught hold of our sails, and we anticipated a speedy arrival at the Cape. On the 27th, I rose early, and went on deck ; one of my fellow-passengers was there : we perceived a steam apparently rising from the fore-hatchway. I remarked to H—— that I thought it might be caused by fire-damp, and, if not immediately checked, might become fire. The captain came on deck, and I asked him what it was. He answered, steam ; and that it was common enough in cotton-loaded ships, when the hatchways were opened. I said nothing ; but the smoke becoming more dense, and assuming a different colour, I thought all was not right, and also that he had some idea of this kind, as the carpenter was cutting holes in the deck, just above the place whence the smoke appeared to come. I went down to dress, and, about half-past six, the captain knocked at my door, and told me that part of the cotton was on fire, and that he wished to see all the gentlemen passengers on deck. We assembled, and he stated the case to be this—that some part of the cargo had been spontaneously ignited, and that he wished to remove part of the bales till he could come to the ignited ones, and throw them overboard. We, of course, left everything to his judgment. The hands were ordered to breakfast as quick as possible, and set to work to discover the source of the fire. This having been done, he said there did not seem to be immediate danger, and that he hoped to avert it



altogether. But at eight o'clock the smoke became much thicker, and rolled through the after-hatchway—the draft being admitted forward, to allow the men to work. Several bales were removed; but the heat became intolerable below, the smoke rolled out in suffocating volumes, and, before nine, part of the deck had caught fire: in short, the men were obliged to stop work.

“The hatches were then battened down to keep the fire from bursting out; the boats were hoisted out and stocked; and, about half-past one, the three ladies, the two sick passengers, an infant, and a female servant, were put into the long-boat, with 216 gallons of water, 20 of brandy, biscuits for a month, and preserved meats, &c.

“It was now two o'clock: the hatches were opened, and all hands set to to try and extinguish the fire. The main-hatchway being lifted, and a tarpaulin removed, there was a sail underneath, which was so hot that the men could scarcely lift it: when they did, the heat and smoke came up worse than ever. The fire being found to be underneath that part, orders were given to hoist out the bales till the inflamed ones could be got at; but when the men got hold of a lashing to introduce a crane-hook, they were found to be consumed beneath, and came away in their hands.

“Our case was now bad, indeed; however, we tried to remove the cotton by handfuls, but the smoke and heat were so overpowering, that no man could stand over it, and water only seemed to increase it, in



the quantities we dared to use ; for, had the captain ventured to pump it into the ship to extinguish the fire, the bales would have swelled so much as to burst up the deck, and have increased so much in weight as to sink the ship ; either way, destruction would have been the issue. Seeing the case to be hopeless, the captain assembled us on the poop, and asked if we knew any expedient for extinguishing the fire, and saving the ship, as in that case 'we will stick by her while a hope remains.' All agreed that nothing could be done ; the crew were all sober, and had done their best. The heat increased so much that it became dangerous to leave the poop ; the captain requested us to get into the boats ; told off, and embarked his men, and at three himself left the ship, just as the flames burst through the quarter-deck. We put off, the two boats towing the long-boat ; the ship's way having been previously stopped by backing her yards. When we were about a mile off, she was in one blaze, and her masts began to fall in. The sight was grand, though awful. Between eight and nine she had burned to the water's edge ; suddenly came a bright flash, followed by a dull, heavy explosion—the powder had caught ; for a few seconds her splintered and flaming fragments were glittering in the air—then all was gloom."

The above account shows what a prodigious amount of heat may be generated in a brief space of time. The vessel was, in fact, a *suppressed volcano* before any of those who walked the surface were aware of the danger.

Of the fate of the boats and their living freight we shall speak further on (see page 221).



The burning of the *Lord Eldon*.  
"She had burned to the water's edge."

We may add one more tale of a fire at sea. The story is now an old one; but the catastrophe was very terrible, happening, as it did, in fine weather, with land in sight, and yet resulting in the loss of *six hundred and seventy-three lives*.

### THE QUEEN CHARLOTTE

was one of the finest three-deckers of the navy in the days when the "wooden walls of old England"

were a reality. She carried a hundred guns, and had been Lord Howe's flag-ship in one of his most important victories. Six years later—that is to say in the beginning of the year 1800—Lord Keith hoisted his flag on board of her as commander of the Mediterranean squadron. On the 16th of March he landed at Leghorn, leaving orders with Captain Todd to reconnoitre the island of Cabrera, which was held by the French.

Next day, when twelve miles off Leghorn, on a calm sea, the people on board the great ship were startled by the awful cry of "Fire!" Baird, the ship's carpenter, has put on record an account of what followed:—"At about twenty minutes after six in the morning, as I was dressing myself, I heard throughout the ship a cry of 'Fire!' I immediately ran up the after-ladder to get upon deck, and found the whole half-deck, the front bulkhead of the admiral's cabin, the mainmast's coat, and the boat's covering on the booms, all in flames; which, from every report and probability, I apprehend was occasioned by some hay which was lying under the half-deck having been set on fire by a match in a tub, which was usually kept there for signal-guns."

Meantime the rising smoke and flame had attracted attention on shore. Numbers of boats put off in hopes of rendering assistance; but it proved a work of great danger to approach the burning ship, since her guns, as they became heated by the flames, went off, one after another, dealing with those who would fain have helped as though they had been foes!

Baird next describes the efforts made by Lieutenant

Dundas, himself, and such men as they could induce to work with them, to prevent the fire spreading downwards to the lower-deck and magazine. This was done by plugging the scuppers, opening the lower-deck ports, and flooding the deck.

“I think,” he continues, “that by these exertions the lower-deck was kept from fire, and the magazines preserved for a long time free from danger. Nor did Lieutenant Dundas or myself quit this station, but we remained there with all the people who could be prevailed upon to stay, till several of the middle-deck guns came through that deck.

“About nine o’clock, Lieutenant Dundas, finding it impossible to remain any longer below, went out at the foremost lower-deck port, and got upon the fore-castle, upon which I apprehend there were then about one hundred and fifty of the people drawing water, and throwing it as far aft as possible upon the fire.

“I continued about an hour upon the fore-castle; but finding all efforts to extinguish the flames un-availing, I jumped from the jib-boom, and swam to an American boat approaching the ship, by which I was picked up, and put into a boat then in the charge of Lieutenant Stewart, who had come off to the assistance of the ship.”

Captain Todd and Mr. Bainbridge, the first lieutenant, remained upon deck to the last, heedless of their own safety, and occupied in giving directions for the safety of the crew. The former, undismayed by the terrible scene around, calmly sat down and recorded in writing the particulars of the calamity, for the information of Lord Keith, giving copies of

his statement to different seamen, with a request that whoever might escape would deliver it to the admiral. Both he and his lieutenant perished on board, dying as brave men should, at the post of duty.

No fewer than six hundred and seventy-three officers, seamen, marines, and boys, were lost through this dreadful catastrophe.

## CHAPTER II.

## FOUNDERING.

IT is a more common occurrence than the general public has any idea of for a ship to “go to the bottom,” often “with all hands,” leaving no survivor to tell the tale of undermanning, overloading, or general neglect. But such vessels are, for the most part, crazy and rotten old “coasters,” with perhaps half-a-dozen men on board. A good ship, sound and well-handled, is supposed to be able to live through any stress of weather. Accidents apart, and with plenty of “sea-room,” the boast of the master of the *Hesperus* would be echoed by most of his craft :—

“ I can weather the roughest gale  
That ever wind did blow.”

It is not very often, then, that we read of an efficiently-handled and well-equipped ship actually sinking out in the open sea, crushed down and overwhelmed by the mere force of wind and wave. Such things have happened, however, and it must be remembered that in the case of a steamer the merest accident may leave the huge hull absolutely at the mercy of the elements. First in our list, under this head, we may place the very interesting story of

## THE REGULAR.

The *Regular*, an East Indiaman, of 550 tons burden, Captain Carter, left the London Docks, on her voyage to Bombay and China, on the 21st of February, 1843. She encountered a good deal of rough weather shortly after leaving the Downs, and shipped a considerable quantity of water—being observed to strain much under the heavy seas. However, as the weather improved shortly afterwards, she made rapid progress southward, all going on tolerably well until towards the middle of April. On the 13th of that month strong breezes set in from the west, with a heavy swell and a cross sea—the vessel labouring so much that the pumps were in frequent requisition. The weather continued boisterous for several days, but no actual fear was felt for the safety of the ship. Gradually matters improved, and on the 1st of May the Cape of Good Hope was doubled, the weather being then fine and the wind favourable.

For six days after passing the Cape, the *Regular* ran before a strong north-westerly wind, at the rate of ten or eleven knots an hour. But on Sunday, the 7th, came indications of an approaching storm; the wind increased every hour, and soon a gale was blowing. The topsails were taken in, and all was made as snug as possible—but the sea rose rapidly, and huge, mountainous billows, catching the ship astern, swept the decks with a deluge of water. The vessel rolled heavily in the trough of the sea, and though the pumps were worked every two hours, the water fast gained in the hold. Through the whole of that night



the captain kept on deck ; the pumps were worked at longer spells, while the utmost care had to be taken by the man at the wheel to alter the course of the vessel from time to time, so as to surmount the huge waves which threatened to overwhelm her.

The dawn of the next day (Monday) brought no improvement in the weather, and only showed to what a fearful extent the sea had risen during the night. The vessel laboured more than ever, and rose but sluggishly from the heavy seas that broke over her. About six a.m. an enormous mass of water burst upon her with terrific violence, descending on the decks with an awful crash. She reeled under the shock, and lay, for a time, nearly on her beam-ends ; then, as she slowly righted, it was seen that the greater part of her starboard bulwarks had been clean washed away. Throughout the whole of the day the crew were kept constantly at the pumps, for which purpose they were divided into parties. Notwithstanding the most incessant labour, the water was found to gain three inches every hour. The weather showed no symptoms of improvement ; and as the ship continued to strain and labour heavily, and to take in large quantities of water, Captain Carter gave up all thoughts of holding on his present course, and determined to let the vessel run before the wind, which had shifted considerably since the commencement of the gale. She was accordingly put before the wind, under close-reefed main-topsail and foresail.

Before dawn on Tuesday the weather moderated, and, the wind abating considerably, the day opened with apparently more cheerful prospects. The



*Regular*, however, continued to strain and labour ominously ; and, in spite of the exertions of the crew, the water gained steadily upon the pumps.

On Wednesday, the 10th, the unfortunate ship encountered a recurrence of violent gales and occasional squalls, with a high cross sea running. She laboured fearfully, and shipped immense quantities of water. Another night was passed like the last, in anxiety, labour, and watching.

The morning of Thursday, the 11th, opened with no prospect of relief. The gale continued to blow with equal violence, and the mountainous waves more frequently overtook the devoted vessel, flooding her with a deluge of water fore and aft. The immense quantity of water in the hold began seriously to affect her steering. She became more sluggish in her movements, and was consequently a more helpless prey to the fury of the storm. Captain Carter now determined to lighten the ship by getting rid of some of the heavy materials with which she was laden, and about eighty tons of copper, iron, and steel were accordingly cast over the side. The ship, thus relieved, became in some degree more manageable ; but all the exertions of the crew failed to check the progress of the leak or to discover its position.

Throughout Friday, the 12th, the weather was still cloudy and threatening. The gale maintained its violence, accompanied by furious squalls and a tremendous sea. The water gained so fast upon the pumps that it was found necessary to bale out with buckets and casks at the fore-hatchway, and again large quantities of the cargo were thrown overboard

to lighten the ship. But notwithstanding all the means adopted, the vessel laboured excessively, and shipped great quantities of water during the night.

The morning of Saturday, the 13th, found the crew almost exhausted by four days and five nights' incessant labour at the pumps. From the captain to the youngest apprentice, each had borne his share in the unwearied exertions made to keep the ship afloat; and the crew continued cheerfully and manfully, as well as their wasted strength would allow them, to carry out the orders of their commander. All hands that could be spared from the pumps were now set to heave overboard all the deck hamper, consisting of spars, spare anchors, &c. The carpenter was at the same time ordered to see to the boats, in case it should be necessary to abandon the ship.

The situation was now terrible. The nearest land was distant seven or eight hundred miles; not a single sail had been sighted for forty-two days; and the sinking ship had been driven by the gale considerably out of the usual track of vessels navigating that part of the ocean.

At eleven o'clock in the forenoon the officer in charge of the pumps reported that the water was gaining fearfully, and that the quantity in the well had risen to five feet six inches. The utmost exertions were made to get it under, but by twelve o'clock it was found to have risen to six feet six inches. At this time, according to the ship's reckoning, her position was in latitude  $37^{\circ} 23'$  south, and longitude  $38^{\circ} 13'$  east. The gale still raged violently, and the vessel laboured helplessly in the trough of the sea. Being

waterlogged, she was with the greatest difficulty made to answer her helm, while every wave burst over her with relentless violence. She shipped repeatedly large quantities of water, and her position was momentarily becoming more alarming and critical. By four o'clock in the afternoon, the water in the hold had increased to nine feet six inches: in the fore and after-holds, barrels and bales of goods were floating from side to side; the ship had almost ceased to answer her helm, and was evidently fast settling in the water.

The time had now come when the abandonment of the ship could no longer be postponed. Everything was carried out with the utmost care and deliberation. To launch the boats in such a heavy sea was a work of great difficulty; but it was at length safely accomplished. The doomed ship was brought up to the wind, and the work of provisioning the boats hurriedly yet carefully carried out. Several days' provisions, with a supply of fresh water, were stowed away; nor were log-book, chronometers, charts, and compass forgotten.

It was now eight o'clock in the evening. Work at the pumps had been given up two hours earlier, and now the sea was level with the vessel's gunwale. Then, at length, the three boats shoved off to encounter, as it seemed, a scarcely less certain fate than that of the sinking ship which they abandoned. The launch contained eighteen persons, including the two female passengers; the pinnace carried ten. Captain Carter, who was the last to leave the ship, took his place in the gig, manned with four seamen.

The *Regular* must have sunk almost immediately, as those in the boats saw her but once after they had quitted her deck.

The situation of the boats was now most appalling. They were distant nearly nine hundred miles from the land, and were compelled to scud before a furious Cape gale, which was driving them yet further from shore. To aggravate their misery, about ten at night came a heavy squall of hail, under whose blinding blast each of the boats shipped a deluging sea. Everything that was not washed out of the launch was immediately thrown overboard to lighten her. The pinnace and the gig shared the same fate, the wave catching them astern, and washing everything, except the crews, clean out over the bows. Thus, in a single moment, disappeared all their means of supporting life and of navigating their frail barks.

Throughout the night they continued to drive before the gale. About midnight, Captain Carter, finding it impossible to navigate the gig, which had already filled five times, transferred himself and crew to the launch, which now contained twenty-three persons, and was almost too crowded to move in. During the darkness they lost sight of the pinnace; there was neither star nor compass to guide them; the inky waves rolled past, and seemed to touch the gloomy pall above. No hope seemed to remain. The two unhappy ladies, crouching in their drenched garments, lay bewildered by the horrors of the scene. Still no one murmured. If now and then a voice was heard, it was in accents of brief and earnest prayer, as each one strove to raise his thoughts to

God, before whom he might in a moment be called to render his account. The weary seamen tugged at the oars, or baled out the water, and with the instinct of discipline, followed the directions of their commander, who, standing in the stern-sheets, continued to guide the boat through the rolling sea. Thus passed this dreadful night — a night of unutterable suffering, unalleviated by a single gleam of hope.

The dull, grey daylight was beginning to dawn, when, as the launch was slowly rising on the breast of a broad wave, Captain Carter looked behind to measure the billows that were chasing them in their flight. There, just beyond the ridge of advancing waters, he beheld the masts and yards of a noble ship! A heartfelt burst of gratitude to God escaped his lips, but ere he had time to speak, the cry of "Sail, ho!" broke from a dozen voices at once, and in a moment all was bustle and activity. The change from hopeless grief to sudden joy was almost too much to bear. Some wept and laughed in turn. All felt the hand of God marvellously displayed in this unlooked-for deliverance from the very jaws of death. A lady's shawl was speedily hoisted as a signal of distress, and was answered by the stranger.

A second vessel now appeared; and the two in company bore down before the wind towards the boat. They proved to be French ships of war, the frigate *Cléopâtre*, of 52 guns, and the *Alcmène*, of 20 guns. The frigate rounded to as she approached, so that the boat came up under her stern. Some of

the exhausted people were lifted through the ports, and some were handed up the vessel's side; meanwhile, tackles were fixed, and braces passed beneath the bottom of the launch, and, with the rest of her living cargo, she was hauled into the air, and gently deposited on the frigate's deck.

Many of the rescued people were so worn out and exhausted that they were unable to stand, and some, from the revulsion of feeling acting on their weakened frames, were rendered insensible. Captain Carter himself, whose mental anxiety and bodily exertion had probably exceeded that of any of his crew, was for a time after reaching the deck of the frigate unconscious of what was going on around him. His first thought on recovering was of the pinnace, and he earnestly besought the French commander, Commodore Roy, to go in search of her. The noble-hearted Frenchman immediately signalled his consort, directing her to stand on a certain course, which would enable them to sweep the neighbouring surface of the sea for the missing boat. "Do not despair," he said to Captain Carter; "the great God who did save you, may be pleased also, in His mercy, to rescue your unfortunate companions," adding that he would go a hundred miles out of his way rather than abandon them.

Captain Carter and the commodore were still in conversation, when an officer reported that the *Alcmène* was answering signals. To their intense gratification, the purport of the answer was, that the *Alcmène* had discovered the pinnace two miles ahead, at the very instant when the launch was being



rescued by the *Cléopâtre*, and that she was now in the act of lowering the boat upon her deck, having rescued every living soul on board.

From the moment of their rescue by the two French ships, every attention was lavished upon the crew of the *Regular* which the most generous hospitality and the best medical skill could supply. Commodore Roy resigned his cabin to the two unfortunate ladies; and both officers and crew of the frigate gave up their berths to the outworn people of the *Regular*, while Captain Carter had one of the lieutenants' cabins. The only relics of the lost vessel were the launch and one of the chronometers, the pinnace having fallen to pieces on coming in contact with the deck of the *Alcmène*.

When the rescued crew had sufficiently recovered from their exhaustion, they were assembled by Commodore Roy, who seems to have been a man of sincere piety, together with all those of the frigate's crew who could be spared from the duties of the ship, to perform a solemn service of thanksgiving to Almighty God for the late striking display of His power and mercy. The scene must, indeed, have been striking and singularly impressive.

The *Cléopâtre* and her consort were bound to the Isle of Bourbon; but Commodore Roy proposed to Captain Carter to take his guests direct to the Mauritius, where they would be more certain of meeting with some British vessel. This generous offer having been thankfully accepted, the frigate and corvette made sail for the Mauritius, where they arrived on the 27th of May, without meeting a single sail from



the hour in which they had rescued the boats of the *Regular*.

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Thus, by a kind Providence, every soul on board the *Regular* was rescued in that remote and lonely sea. Contrast with this the tale we have now to tell of a vessel foundering within two days' sail of home, and less than twenty saved out of a total of nearly two hundred and sixty. Such is the sad story of

### THE LONDON.

This vessel was a comparatively new ship, of 1,428 tons register, full-rigged, but carrying an auxiliary screw of two hundred horse-power. On the 30th of December, 1865, she started for Melbourne from the Thames, having on board some two hundred and fifty-eight persons, of whom one hundred and sixty-three were passengers.

Owing to the unsettled state of the weather, the voyage down Channel was tedious; and it was not till Thursday, the 4th of January, that the ship reached Plymouth. Here she delayed to take in passengers and cargo till the following day. Late on Friday she got away to sea, and next morning was out of sight of land.

Saturday was a pleasant day enough. Passengers, including some ladies, came on deck, and began to make each other's acquaintance. "All sorts and conditions" were represented. There were two clergy-

men, an actor (the well-known G. A. Brooke), besides lawyers, merchants, tradesmen, labourers, &c. There were newly-married couples, wealthy families returning after a visit to friends at home, young fellows eager to seek their fortune, mothers with babies, nurses, and so forth. Though there was but little wind, it was noticed that the vessel rolled considerably—her stability not being improved by the fifty tons of coal stowed in sacks upon the deck, which had been taken on board at Plymouth.

Sunday came in wet and stormy. The wind was adverse, and the vessel could carry but little canvas, trusting almost entirely to her engines. In the morning, Divine service was held in the chief saloon; and in the afternoon the Rev. Mr. Kerr read prayers, and delivered a short address in the second-class cabin. Not without difficulty, however, since he was suffering from sea-sickness, and the water at times came down upon his bare head.

One of the second-class passengers, who was fortunate enough to escape, has put on record a most graphic and interesting description of the wreck; and from his narrative\* we shall freely quote in our account of what followed.

Monday, the 8th, he tells us, “came in a little more pleasantly.” The sun was visible at times; but a strong head-wind compelled the vessel to keep under steam. Observation this day gave the ship’s position lat.  $46^{\circ} 40'$  N., long.  $7^{\circ} 7'$  W.; distance run from Plymouth, 272 miles. She was just entering the ill-

\* In the *Cornhill Magazine* for July, 1866.

omened Bay of Biscay. As the day advanced the weather became worse, and the condition of the second-class passengers was by no means to be envied, as we may gather from the following extract:—“While we were at tea this evening (Monday, the 8th) the ship commenced to roll (it is often remarked at sea that a ship generally commences to roll and pitch at meal-times), and shipped a great deal of water, which soon found its way down through the skylight on to our heads. Soon after we shipped another heavy sea—or rather dipped it in out of the Bay of Biscay; and it came rushing down our hatch-way in a body, causing quite a scene of consternation among the ladies, many screaming at once, ‘Oh, we are sinking!’ others crying, ‘Shut down the lids of the hatch!’ One man who had come home in her from Melbourne said, ‘Oh, you must not mind this; it is an old trick of the *London’s*; and, more than that, if the lids of the hatch are shut down, it will not prevent the water coming down—they are not made properly: the sides of the covering of the hatch don’t fit close to the combings, and also the water floats up the lid, and comes down nearly the same as though there were none!’ all of which proved true. After a time the water on deck subsided. Then the men had to fall to and carry up the water in buckets out of their state-rooms, to save their clothes from being spoilt. This continued nearly all night.”

For a while, on Tuesday, things seemed to mend a little; but, as the afternoon drew on, the wind rose again and the vessel laboured terribly. A good deal

of damage had been done to the masts and rigging during the previous night ; and now one of the life-boats was lifted clean out of the davits and carried away by the sea. At seven o'clock in the evening it was found necessary to close the hatches ; but this, as foretold, did not prevent the water coming in. Terror and discomfort reigned in that gloomy prison-house (for such it was). " Apart," says our informant, " from the horror of being in the company of nearly frantic girls and women, who thought that every roll would be the last, and not quite clear on that point yourself, there was the discomfort that at every roll of the ship the water would shoot down the hatchway, first one side, then the other—then wash to and fro the same as on the upper deck. Then, worse than all, was the steam, produced by water that went down the engine-hatch on to the hot machinery : this steam came forward and lodged in our cabin, which was very suffocating. During any lull of the sea we lifted the lid to get some fresh air, but most of the time we could not see each other five feet apart. Most of the passengers were sitting on the tables. That night was really terrible, but the next was worse. The ship at this time was hove-to, and oh ! how she would roll ! It was no gentle, undulating motion ; she would roll on her side until you were in doubts of her ever coming up again. Then up she would come with a jerk ; and when she did rise there was a general displacement of boxes, trunks, chairs, buckets, and other movable articles, placed on board in confusion at Gravesend and Plymouth."

This state of things continued all night ; but with

Wednesday morning came a certain degree of relief. Alarmed at the behaviour of his ship, and at the persistence of the storm, the captain had put about during the night, and the *London* was now running for Plymouth. The day was dull and gloomy, "heavy cross seas, ship labouring, no comfort anywhere." Darkness closed in early, the wind increased, and another—the last—night of terror and misery drew on. "By seven or eight o'clock we were in as great a state of terror as on the previous night, and with more cause, for the gale was more violent. The steam was so troublesome that we could not open the lids for a moment to let in air. The sensation in the cabin then was really awful. I never shall be able to convey an idea of it. Imagine what your feelings would be, waiting and expecting every moment to meet death. Add to that the dismal sound of water rushing in. You could not see it through the cloud of steam and dim lights, and were not sure whether the ship was filling or not; in fact, a foot of water washing to and fro, carrying with it every movable article, strengthening your fears that she was. Then at every heavy roll a woman shrieked. There was one young girl nearly frantic. By nine o'clock we were in worse state than ever; when the ship rolled there would be nearly two feet of water in the cabin. It would come in with a rush, then back again to the other side, carrying with it anything that was not lashed. The boards of the lower berths were washed out, and the bedding would drop down, and then, by the roll of the ship, was carried out into the cabin, and there floated about."

Yet, amid all this, we are told, some of the ladies were quite collected, "talking as calmly as on land"; nor did the children at any time seem to realise their danger. The following is a curiously graphic touch:—

"I often stood that night watching the port-hole in the state-room when the ship would take those awful lurches. I would see the water dark and still against the glass of the port; it would remain so for half a minute or more. I would say to myself, 'Is she sinking now, and twenty feet under water, or is she at her old tricks?' Presently I would see the water in a foam against the glass, and then I would say, 'She is all right yet.'"

But the accident that directly led to the final catastrophe was not long delayed. The purser had come down to see how the passengers fared, and, while our informant was remonstrating with him about the quantity of water that was coming down, they were interrupted by some sailors who rushed past them, hurrying to the room where the sails were kept. "I heard one say to another, 'Let us make haste with a sail, or she will sink.' At that moment I heard an order from one of the sailors that all men were wanted on the poop. I knew this applied to the passengers, and felt there must be something very serious now. Immediately we left to go aft, leaving the women alone; only a few men having children remained behind, their wives begging of them not to go. In getting there we had to grope our way through a long dark passage, say sixty or eighty feet in length, and over the top of stores, luggage, &c., that were piled in some places within two feet of the

deck. Once through, and in passing the engine-room, we could see there was water rushing down. A short time before, the skylight over the engine-room hatch had been washed off, and this was the cause of the consternation. At this time I was not aware of it, but hurried by to get up on the poop, the place we were ordered to.

“There a dismal sight presented itself, and one I shall never forget. The gale was at its height. The night was very dark; but from lights held at the cuddy windows to give light on the deck in front, and which reflected up the mainmast, could be seen the half of the maintopsail still standing, and the other half blown away, the shreds blown straight out at right angles with the yard by the force of the wind. The winds whistling through the wire rigging produced a dreadful sound. Waves lashed the sides of the ship—now and then one breaking over her, she laying over very much. There was a boiling foam level with the railings, and a little farther off could be seen seas ten or fifteen feet above us, with a phosphorescent crest showing through the dark. . . . Soon after getting on the poop I saw there was nothing to be done there, and, with the others, went down again. I then went into the cuddy, which was well lit up; it was full of people. There was a clergyman praying at the time, very fervently, and all joined in with deep and earnest *Amens*. It was a solemn and trying moment; I remained there about five minutes until prayers were ended, when all arose and with one consent showed a willingness to assist in any way for our safety; even some of the ladies



were very energetic—assisting the best they could, and encouraging others. Of course, there were some quite prostrated with fear. . . . As soon as prayers were over, I heard one of the officers order more lights to be held to the windows to enable the men to see how to secure the engine-room hatch. I got two swing-lights from the after-part of the cuddy, and took them to the windows. There were several holding lights at the time.”

Notwithstanding the partially successful efforts that were made to secure the engine-room hatch with sails piled up upon it and nailed to the deck, the water continued to force its way in. Gradually it rose till the fires were drowned, and the firemen ordered to come up. The doomed ship was now absolutely at the mercy of the waves and wind; already dangerously overladen, the water that poured over the decks and down the hatches added every moment to her weight. Efforts were made to lighten her by passing up buckets of water from one to another; but truly it was a futile effort to bale out the Atlantic ocean!

Meanwhile, the captain had given orders that the pumps should be kept going, and, as many of the sailors were exhausted after days and nights of toil, and some seriously injured, it was necessary to seek volunteers among the passengers for this work. The gentleman, from whose narrative we have been quoting, consented to go, and thus he describes the scene:—“On my way out through the cuddy, I noticed that almost everybody had become very quiet. Ladies were sitting together talking, some

reading. Those from the second cabin were there also, as well as the children. Men had become much more calm than they were three or four hours previous; there was very little conversation; every one seemed wrapped in his own thoughts. I got to the cuddy door to go out, watching an opportunity when the ship was over to leeward to open the door, so that the water should not rush in.

“Once on deck, what a sensation it was! Water whirling round you up to the knees—wind piercing cold—night intensely dark. I felt my way along in the darkness, again steadying myself by the ropes, &c., on the weather bulwarks, to about midships, to where the pumps were. I found about a dozen men there. I could barely distinguish figures in the dark, though I recognised a few voices. It required six to turn the wheels that worked the pumps, three at each handle. All were passengers there at the time, excepting two of the officers, Mr. Angel and Mr. Grant. Mr. Angel was placed to see the pumps were kept going, and nobly he did his duty. I saw him there after we had left the ship, still at his post, encouraging and assisting. . . . The work at the pumps was very laborious. We had to take brief spells, being short-handed; occasionally we would have a fresh hand, whom Mr. Grant had persuaded to come, while others left off, quite done up; and indeed it was a trying place. The seas broke over us so roughly that sometimes I felt the water up round my neck. At those moments the pumps would have to stop; but as soon as the tide had receded, then would be heard Mr. Angel’s voice, ‘Round with the pumps,

keep them going.' There was a good deal of talking and encouraging to keep up pluck and make the work go lighter. I felt much happier here, away from the women, for seeing so many frightened made me feel worse, and when inside you did not know how matters stood, whether she was sinking or not, and I had a great horror of being shut up inside when she did go. After being about an hour there we were getting fatigued—wanted a stimulant—and wishing we could get something to drink. One said, 'I will try and get some.' He went to the cuddy and returned with a bottle of whiskey, which was fully appreciated. It gave us new life.

"Some time after, Mr. Main, a passenger, and I were sent to the cuddy to raise volunteers, as we were getting worn out. When we got in I saw a good many men sitting there, and asked every one; some went out, some were not well, some sitting beside their wives and children. The mother would say, 'Oh, do not take him from me!' Most of the passengers were still below, carrying up water."

At length that terrible Wednesday night was over. The dawn found the *London* still afloat, but a mere helpless log, tossed on a furious sea. "When she rolled she seemed going right under; the sensation to any one on deck was truly awful." No one blamed the captain, "but the expressions towards the owners were quite different. They were anything but blessings." Here we have the two facts that make the story of the *London* so pitiable. The catastrophe need never have occurred at all. It was the fault of man, and not the "visitation of Providence." A

vessel, specially built for speed, long, narrow, heavily sparred, had been dangerously overladen; she was further hampered by coals and other things stowed on deck; she was sent to sea in a hurry, everything below, including passengers' baggage, &c., being in confusion; a number of the crew were foreigners, and could not be made to comprehend the orders given them. And here was the result. Had the storm come on towards the end of the voyage, when the vessel had been lightened by the consumption of coals and provisions, when there had been time for things to be put "ship-shape," and for the crew to have come to understand the vessel and one another, probably the good ship would have weathered the gale and reached her destination in safety. The second pitiable circumstance about the loss of the *London* was that the end came so slowly. After days and nights of discomfort and anxiety all hope had to be abandoned. Then, for nearly an entire day, these hundreds of people—men, women, and children—had nothing to do but to await their inevitable fate.

Yet it seems unaccountably strange that, throughout the long hours of that Thursday, nothing practical was done towards averting or postponing the final disaster. No signals of distress were hoisted; the masts were not cut away, nor was any attempt made to lighten the ship, which, hour after hour, sank lower in the water. Steam, indeed, had been got up in the donkey-engine on deck, and, by this means, the passengers were relieved from their incessant and exhausting labour at the pumps.

There still remained four boats—one cutter, two large iron pinnaces, and a small wooden boat. At about 9 A.M. the captain ordered the boats to be got ready for sea. It was a last and a desperate resource, and the immediate result seems to have completely disheartened nearly everybody. One of the pinnaces was lowered, several persons jumped into it, but soon, such as had not been drowned, came scrambling back again. The boat had been stove in and sunk. This was discouraging ; but it seems truly marvellous that, as the certainty of the vessel being in a sinking condition became more apparent, no further efforts were made at the time. Our informant describes the people as “walking about, very quiet and very anxious.” “I saw several ladies walking about bare-headed, their hair flying about with the wind, but calm and resigned, and very little being said. They were walking about just as you see people at a railway-station when they are waiting for a train. I saw and spoke to the young girl who was so frantic at first, now she was as reasonable and calm as anybody.” What a picture ! The calmness that comes of despair ; the reasonableness that, in brave hearts, asserts itself in the face of the inevitable !

Our passenger now tells us how it was that he came to be among the *nineteen* survivors. About ten o'clock, he says, he noticed some sailors getting the port cutter ready for sea, but being told it was for “the captain and the ladies,” he did not allow himself to entertain the idea of obtaining a seat. He then went below to see how it fared with the

ladies, and this is his description of what he saw and heard in the saloon :—

“When I got to the cuddy, the usual question was put by the women, as it was to any one coming in from the deck, ‘What hopes now?’ I said, ‘We are afloat still; and while we are afloat we are alive, is all I can say.’ At this time I thought it wrong to disguise our actual condition; in fact, the captain did not. He had been in the cuddy some time previous, and told all to ‘prepare for the worst, nothing but a miracle would save us now!’ which dreadful assertion was received with no fresh outburst of terror. All the women from the second cabin were sitting by themselves. Those from the steerage part of the ship were in the cuddy also. No distinction now. There were fathers and mothers, with their families of three, four, and five, grouped around them—the children very quiet. They did not seem to understand why their fathers and mothers were crying so; and, poor little things, many were standing up to their knees in water. The Rev. Mr. Draper was sitting about the middle of the cuddy, at one of the tables, with many round him, reading and praying unceasingly. Now and then would be heard a voice, saying, ‘Oh, Mr. Draper, pray with me.’ There were also to be seen men by themselves reading the Bible. I remember seeing a newly-married couple sitting by themselves, weeping bitterly. . . . One poor young girl was writing a message on an envelope, she probably intended putting it into a cask or keg, that was being got ready by a friend of her’s. . . . Every one seemed fully to understand that there was no

chance of being saved. . . . I remained there till, say, twelve o'clock. Matters getting worse and worse, I could not remain below, but went up on deck again, bidding some whom I knew good-bye. . . . I turned round and took the last look I ever had at the cuddy ; the sight is indelibly stamped on my memory."

Many other touching incidents and curious details are given, but these cannot be inserted here. When going below for a dry coat, "thinking he might as well live comfortably for a few hours if he had to die then"—our lucky passenger encountered the captain having a look at the ruined engine-room.

"We looked down, and a frightful place it was: the water coloured black with the coal, and washing about and breaking up the iron floorings, or platforms, and producing an unearthly noise. And a great pool of water it appeared to be. We stood looking for a minute or two."

Passing back towards the cuddy (or saloon), he continues, "We saw some sailors and firemen in there opening cases of liquor, and some with bottles of brandy in their hands: there were several drunk at this time. The captain said to them, calling some by name, 'Don't do that, boys! don't die cowards!'"

It was now about half-past one o'clock ; the vessel could not float much longer, and, accordingly, the passenger whose fortunes we have been following came on deck for the last time. The sun shone out at intervals, the wind had somewhat abated, but there was still a heavy sea, and the *London*, now low in the stern, and on an even keel, rolled slowly and



ominously. The captain was pacing the deck, clad in a long mackintosh, and having on a cap of the same material fastened under his chin. He gave no orders and held out no hopes.

But there were a few at least who were not stupefied with despair, and who were resolved to make an effort for life.

“I looked around to see what prospect there was of being saved, and saw that the small wooden boat near the forecastle had been got out to the ship’s side to be lowered, the bows were just over the railing. At this time, nor at any time after did I see any men near it for the purpose of launching it. The port iron pinnacle was still hanging in its place; no order was given that I heard, nor any preparation made for lowering it. I saw a young man in it trying to do something, but he knew nothing of a boat. There was only one boat being got ready—the same one I have mentioned before—that for the captain and ladies—the port cutter, a fine wooden boat and still hanging in the davits, with several men in it. I stood by for a time watching the proceedings, when it gradually dawned on my mind that the sailors had this boat in their own possession, entirely under their own control. I never saw any of the officers giving any orders or directions; and as for the ladies, I saw no preparation towards getting any on board.”

The fact was, that a few of the sailors had agreed together to make a last effort for life, and they were now deliberately fitting out this boat with oars, compass, buckets, life-belts, biscuits, water, &c. The chance was a desperate one, and our passenger pro-

tests that, had he been asked, he dare not have advised any of the ladies to take a place in the boat. Nevertheless, having some slight acquaintance with one of the sailors, he improved it, and finally received an assurance that, if he would make a jump for it when he saw the boat in the water, he would be allowed to have a place, and would even be pulled on board should he fall into the sea. In this he appears to have been lucky, since he heard numbers of persons entreating the sailors and offering large sums of money for a place in this forlorn hope. All were refused, however, and several of the foreign sailors driven back by force. We are told of one young girl who appealed, not in vain, to one of the sailors: "Young man, will you save me?" "Yes; you jump as soon as you see the boat in the water all right," was the reply. The man was ready to perform his part, and when the boat was actually launched, he held up his arms and bade her jump. But the poor creature, who was clinging to the main-rigging, hesitated; the fearful, tossing waves appalled her, and the opportunity was lost.

It was now two o'clock, and the end was evidently at hand. The passengers crowded on deck, they still walked restlessly to and fro, but scarce a word was spoken. The men in charge of the boat plainly kept their wits about them, and were faithful to their confederates. We must give the description of what followed in our cool-headed passenger's own words:—

"I began to fear that the ship would go from under us before the boat was lowered, so said to

my acquaintance in the boat, 'Unless you lower soon, you will be too late.' He said, 'We can't lower till King comes.' He was one of their party, who had gone below to see if any water could be got to take with them; presently he came up, and they told him to come in and they would lower. He then walked a short distance to where Captain Martin was, to ask him if he would go with them. He declined, saying (which I did not hear, being too far away), 'God speed you safe to land.' Then King asked him for the course and distance to land; he said, 'E.N.E., ninety miles to Brest.' King must have misunderstood him, as we were then fully 190 miles off. King returned and jumped into the boat, and immediately they lowered, being about a dozen in her. I got on to the rail, holding on to the mizen-rigging. As soon as I saw that she was safe in the water, I stepped down on to the mizen-chains, then watched my opportunity when the boat rose on the sea, and made a cautious leap right into her stern. I did not have far to jump, about four or five feet, by waiting until a sea lifted the boat. Immediately that I was in, I saw the boat was drawing under the channels of the ship, and was in imminent peril. I at once got out an oar, as did two others, and we pressed the boat off.

"When the sailors saw that the boat was safe, and there was a chance of getting away, then they were anxious to have a few women. Mr. Munroe was at the side, intending to leap, when they sung out to bring a lady; he turned round and ran his eyes around the few to find, naturally enough, one he

knew ; not seeing one, he made a few steps to the middle of the deck and asked the nearest, a young girl of sixteen or eighteen, if she would go. She said 'Yes.' They went to the side to jump ; but when she saw the fearful sight below, the little boat being tossed about, and a prospect of being smashed at every heave of the sea against the iron wall of the ship, she said, 'I can't do that.' There was no time for delay or consideration ; as she would not leap, Munroe, seeing the boat shoving off, leaped in himself. All this took place in about a minute or two—that is, the lowering and getting away.

"After the boat was shoved off the first time, she drew in again. There appeared to be a suction at the stern, and I saw when she drew in this time, that she was drawing right under the stern—which would have been sudden death to us. The oars were again brought to bear against the side of the ship ; we were then, I think, more in dread of being lost by getting under the ship's side, than in fear of too many jumping. At that time there was no attempt made by any to prevent any one from getting in—all on board could have jumped. There was only one man prevented getting in, and that was one of the foreign sailors : he came down by the falls from the davits and some one pressed them on one side so that if he dropped he would go into the water. The boat was apparently crowded full, and I heard one remark (which was very true), 'Why don't they go and get out the other boats ? why all look to this one, as if there was no other on board ?' It still is an unaccountable thing to me why Captain Martin did not

see and have those boats got ready, properly manned and officered, and then tell some of the ladies, 'There is your only chance, accept it if you choose.' It certainly does seem unaccountable."

As the boat pushed off, some of the unfortunates on board saluted her with cheers and waving handkerchiefs. Perhaps it was a comfort, in that supreme moment, to think that some at least might escape to tell the sad story of their fate. Just then a sea broke over the poop scattering those who were watching the boat about the deck. As if in cruel mockery the sun now shone out for a while. Then the end came; it is thus described:—

"The stern very low in the water, the bows pretty well out of it, so that we could see the red painted bottom, or iron coloured by rust; the jib-boom gone. Soon we ran down in the trough of a large sea, and were hid from sight of her. When we came up we could see she had changed her position very much; we could not see the after-part of the vessel—whether under water or hid by a sea, I cannot tell; her bows were high up out of water, and by the pitch or rake of the mast we could see that she was sitting at an angle of about 45 degrees. Soon another wave came, and we ran down in the trough of another sea; when we came up there was nothing to be seen of the *London*."

Those in the boat waited a little to see if there were any poor creatures clinging to floating spars, &c. But no; there was nothing, or, at all events, nothing that they could discern amid those troubled seas. There remained nothing now, but to make such provision as

they could for their own safety; and apparently everything was ordered with admirable forethought and consummate skill. Duties were assigned to each—some were to row, some to bale, some to act as look-outs. Careful arrangements were also made as to the distribution of the provisions. The party thus thrown together consisted of three engineers, one fireman, one young midshipman, one carpenter, eight seamen, one steward, one boy, and three passengers, nineteen in all.

Their position was most critical, confused cross seas rushing down upon them and threatening every minute to swamp the boat. Provisions, too, were very scant, consisting of about fifty pounds of biscuit, two bottles of brandy, and one of champagne. Unfortunately, the water had got mixed with salt and had to be thrown away. There was no tiller, and the man steering had consequently to hold the rudder with his hands, one being constantly immersed in the water.

We must hurry over the circumstances of this perilous voyage. Just before dark a vessel was sighted; but as the boat's only chance of safety was by keeping before the wind, it was found impossible to approach her. Night came on, squally and very dark; but the phosphorescent light on the waves enabled the sailors to observe their position almost as well as in the daytime. The following extract will give an idea of the perils through which they had to pass:—

“About this time, and a time that will never be forgotten by any in the boat, we experienced the



most narrow escape of any during the whole of our disaster. A large sea was seen close behind us, and on the point of breaking, and it was impossible to get out of the way in time. There it was, eight or ten feet higher than our stern, and the next moment we should be all engulfed. Some quietly remarked—‘It’s all over with us now.’ I myself thought the end had come at last. Over came the wave, burying the after-part of the boat completely. She trembled, and up she came ; the sea had passed on and left us in all but a sinking state. The water in the boat was about a foot and a half deep ; a bucket would dip in it. Immediately King sung out, ‘Don’t move—bale out quick—we are safe yet!’ At once the bucket was going, and in a few minutes she was lightened, and on we went again. It was some time before we fully recovered from that shock. It was a providential thing that we had no more in our boat at this time, for I think the weight of one man more would have taken us down.”

A bitter disappointment was now in store for the sufferers.

“After many weary hours of anxious looking we at last saw the sky in the east lighten up a little. We at first thought it to be daylight breaking, but it proved to be the moon rising. It was then about four o’clock. Daniels was now steering ; he relieved King for about three hours, when of a sudden the lights of a distant ship were seen. We watched her intently for a short time, and discovered she was nearing us. Presently she was abreast of us, and only a short distance off. We dare not row towards her,



the sea would not permit that. The order was then given for all to sing out at once, and lustily we obeyed ; it must have sounded terrible to those on board of the vessel—our voices above the roar of the sea and wind. We soon had the gratification of knowing they had heard us, and were putting the vessel about to run for us. We could now see her—a small vessel of two masts. She ran across our bow, a short distance ahead of us. We could see her, but they could not see us. They were evidently looking for us, and we bellowed as loud as we could. We also tried to light matches, but they had got wet. We could see the ship run first to one side, then across to the other. Then a squall would come, and she would be hid from view ; when it passed we could see her again, perhaps in another direction ; on which there was another cheer and another cry. Presently we could see they had lost the run of us ; and how tantalising that was when we were within three minutes' row of her, and dare not deviate from our course. Now we could only see her occasionally through the gloom when we rose to the top of a wave. At last she was out of sight ; all hopes of safety from her were now gone."

But they were now well in the track of passing ships, and by 9 A.M., Friday morning, two vessels were in sight. The difficulty was to approach either of them owing to the tremendous sea before which they were obliged to run. At length, after a dispute that threatened for a while to become serious, King steadily refusing to endanger the boat by altering her course, and the men urging him with threats to do

so—the oars were manned and they endeavoured to approach one of the ships. After a time they were seen ; and although compelled to run away before the wind the vessel followed and overtook them. A line was thrown to them and with some difficulty they were got safely on board. The vessel proved to be an Italian barque, the *Marianopolis*, wheat-laden, and under orders to call at Cork for instructions. The captain, “a fine, jolly, and burly old fellow, with a most benevolent countenance,” treated them with the utmost consideration and hospitality—serving out Geneva in the first instance, and filling the time till something more substantial was ready, with a supply of warm tea and biscuit. It was about 10 A.M. when the survivors from the *London* were taken on board, and the barque’s position at noon was lat.  $45^{\circ} 54' N.$  and long.  $7^{\circ} 13' W.$

This was much further from land than they had imagined, and the weather continuing rough, their troubles were not over for some days longer. However, on Monday morning, they were in the Channel, and land in sight. But it proved impossible to make any port before dark, and another very stormy night had to be endured. On Tuesday morning the *Marianopolis* ran into Falmouth, and soon the sad story of the *London*, which we have now told at length, was known throughout the land.

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Towards the close of that same year, 1866, another sad calamity of the like kind to that of the *London*

was reported. This time from the farther side of the Atlantic.

The story of the

### *EVENING STAR*

may be briefly told ; it is a sad and even ghastly tale of an unseaworthy passenger-boat foundering in the open sea.

The *Evening Star* was a paddle-steamer plying between New York and New Orleans. Though altogether unfit, on account of the rotten state of her timbers, to encounter rough weather, the vessel was attractive enough to the eye, being fitted up in gaudy and luxurious fashion. She sailed from New York on the 27th of September, 1866, having nearly three hundred passengers on board. The company was a mixed one ; for, besides the class of passengers ordinarily found on such vessels—merchants, military men, planters, &c.—there were on board a French opera company, engaged for the winter season at New Orleans, and also a troupe of “ negro serenaders,” with banjos, bones, &c.

For the first two days all went well. The sky was bright, the breeze moderate, and the sea calm. The passengers with one consent agreed to “ eat, drink, and be merry.” “ Every evening,” we are told, “ the main-deck presented the appearance of a brilliant ball-room, a gay promenade, and all ‘ went merry as a marriage-bell.’ The ‘ painted ship ’ seemed to float idly on a ‘ painted ocean,’ and probably few voyages had been performed under similar conditions

of ceaseless and almost frantic amusement and revelry."

On the 1st of October Cape Hatteras was passed, the sea being still smooth and the sky serene. But on the 2nd came indications of a change. Throughout the day the wind continued to rise, and at evening it was blowing a gale. Clouds gathered rapidly and ominously on the horizon; the sea began to roll in heavy billows; the waves tossed their salt spray over the deserted deck. There was every sign of a coming hurricane; and the captain made the necessary preparations to meet its fury. He had the boats and spars secured, placed the steadiest men at the helm, and took in every yard of canvas. A feeling of alarm had now hushed the songs and laughter of the passengers, and many a white lip trembled as it questioned the captain, "Is danger at hand?" His reply was always cheerful and encouraging, and yet the inquirer went away anxious, dissatisfied, unhappy.

At this time the ship was nearly two hundred miles from the nearest shore. She laboured heavily in the trough of the sea, which took away her paddle-box and bulwarks; and leaked so rapidly that torrents of water rushed into her hold and cabins. Then the panic began. Women rushed on deck, and sobbed and wept, ceaselessly demanding if there were no hope of safety. The captain was compelled, as a measure of precaution, to send them below again, and fasten the doors of their cabins. Immediately afterwards, a furious billow crashed upon the ship, carrying away the hurricane-house, with two seamen

and some of the passengers who were standing upon it.

This was the beginning of the end. The work of destruction thenceforth went on rapidly. The wheel-house was swept into the waters; the rudder unshipped; plank after plank was stripped from the helpless hulk; the incoming waves extinguished the fires, and stopped the engines. The sole hope of safety now lay in the continued action of the pumps; but, before long, these were rendered useless by another heavy sea.

As a last resource, the captain now determined to throw the cargo overboard, and the passengers were summoned to assist the crew in the work. The call was eagerly responded to. The women especially laboured with almost frantic energy. Merchant and singer, negro minstrel and southern planter, old and young, all crowded together to heave up bales, chests, trunks, &c., and to throw them as an offering to the fearful sea-monster that threatened to devour them. There were some, however, who took no part in this toil. With the "ruling passion" ready to assert itself in the immediate prospect of death, the avaricious and selfish put on their costliest dresses, and loaded themselves with jewels, preparatory to embarking in the boats; the sensual and craven broke into the store-room and soon were mad or stupid with drink.

The captain—who had acted with great courage and skill—was now compelled to recognise the fact that the vessel could not be saved. Accordingly, he entered the chief saloon, where the greater part of the passengers were assembled, and informed them

that he had done all that his skill and experience could suggest—it had been to no purpose, and the *Evening Star* could not float another hour! Some, we are told—especially the Germans—received the announcement with dignified composure; but the majority of that volatile throng were altogether unable to control themselves. Many of the women, in an agony of penitence and despair, tore off their jewels and costly garments, and flung themselves down prostrate or jumped overboard. Some rushed on deck, gesticulating wildly, shrieking, and tearing their hair. Others drank deeper and still deeper; some cried, some sang, some blasphemed; while only a few sank on their knees in silence, and offered up to God their prayers for pardon and compassion. Here and there, husband and wife, or parents and children, collected in little groups, and, clasped in a last fond embrace, awaited the supreme moment.

The boats, meantime, were got clear, and preparations made for lowering them into the angry waters. As rapidly as possible, the passengers were embarked; but two, as soon as launched, were hurled back against the vessel's straining hull, and shattered into fragments.

It was now about six in the morning, and the daylight broke over an awful scene. While the crew were making an effort to launch two more of the boats, a tremendous billow advanced with irresistible rush against the shuddering wreck. The hull was partly raised, and the sea then swept clean through the dismantled saloons. Then the ship, giving a sharp quick quiver, as it were, from stem to stern, made a



roll to port, then settled to starboard, and—sank! A moment more, and the waters were crowded with struggling wretches, and spars and planks tossed hither and thither on the swell; while loud shrieks and cries rose above the din of the tempest. Many of the sufferers were struck by the floating timbers, and killed immediately; others, after one or two unconscious or frantic efforts for preservation, disappeared beneath the waves; while others prolonged life for a few minutes by clinging to planks, gratings, broken spars, buoys, and pieces of furniture.

Four of the life-boats belonging to the ship remained afloat, but were capsized as she went down. The passengers, however, clung to them with the desperation of men who felt it was their last chance, and as they were righted by the sailors, some succeeded in regaining their seats; others were lost, and among them the captain, who surely deserved a better fate. After a succession of marvellous escapes, the four boats got clear of the wreck, and began to steer for the land. It was soon discovered, however, that they contained no provisions, and not even a cask of fresh water.

One of the boats contained the purser, chief-engineer, three passengers, and six seamen. A second carried three passengers, three seamen, the steerage steward, and the third mate. In the third boat were the pilot, assistant-engineer, four passengers, the cook, the butcher, and one of the firemen. The fourth held the second mate and thirteen female passengers.

It is unnecessary to dwell upon the sufferings



undergone by these poor creatures, without a drop of water to quench their thirst, without a morsel of food to sustain their strength, with nothing to protect them from the inclemency of the weather. The second mate's boat reached the coast of Florida, but was upset by the surf, and all the women perished. The first boat was picked up by the Norwegian bark *Fleetwing*, having lost one of her freight. The second arrived on the 7th at Fernandina, Florida, two of the passengers lying dead on board, the survivors being too weak to throw the dead bodies into the sea. The third boat was rescued by the *Morning Star* on the 8th, but had lost two passengers and two of the crew.

Thus, out of the two hundred and seventy-eight persons who left New York on the 27th of September, only twenty-four survived on the 9th of October.

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### THE LA PLATA.

In the loss of the steamer *La Plata*, we have a striking example of the way in which a strong, well-equipped, and fully-manned vessel may "go to the bottom" in the open sea—crushed, conquered, and destroyed by the sheer force and weight of overmastering, triumphant waves.

The *La Plata* left Gravesend on Thursday, the 26th of November, 1874, having on board three hundred and fifty miles of telegraph cable, for the purpose of renewing a portion of the submarine line

between Lisbon and Brazil. The ship was no doubt heavily laden, but she was especially adapted for the work in which she was engaged, was fully manned with engineers, seamen, &c., and under the care of a judicious and experienced officer, Captain Dudden. All told, she had on board seventy-five persons. She carried five boats and two patent rafts.

On Friday morning, when she was off the Isle of Wight, her pilot left, and she proceeded down Channel, the wind blowing freshly, and the ship steaming about four knots. The wind continued to increase, until at midnight on Saturday it blew a gale. Weighted down as she was by heavy apparatus, and those hundreds of miles of cable, the *La Plata* lay dangerously low in the water. She shipped a heavy sea, which carried away one of the crew, and swept overboard the port jolly-boat. Soon afterwards, another billow broke over her, and she lost one of the starboard boats.

Sunday morning came, but it brought no diminution of the fury of the gale. The ship strained and laboured ominously, and between eight and nine the engineer reported that she was making a great quantity of water. The captain, after consulting with his officers, ordered a portion of the cable to be thrown overboard, so as to lighten the vessel; but she still rolled heavily in the trough of the sea, and though the pumps were kept going, the leak rapidly increased. At length the rising water put out the engine fires; and the second mate ordered the maintop, foretop, and foresail to be set, and the ship to be put before the wind. Unfortunately, she was now unmanage-

able, and lay like a log on the water, the waves breaking over her, and buffeting her mercilessly to and fro. Captain Dudden preserved his presence of mind, and the orders, given with coolness, were obeyed with promptitude. But nothing could be done. The *La Plata* had ceased to answer her helm, and the water was now forcing its way in in every direction. It filled the aft cabin, swamped the hold, tore away the engine fittings, and rushed in with a force and rapidity that no human efforts could control.

It soon became evident that the vessel was sinking by the stern, and orders were given to lower the remaining boats and to get out the rafts. But it was too late. Just after noon, the *La Plata* foundered with sixty persons on board. The captain was last seen, with the surgeon, on the bridge; bravely and in silence he went down with his ill-fated ship.

Only one of the boats got away in safety—she was the port-quarter boat, and had twelve men in her. The others were stove in or capsized. The steamer sank gradually till only the top of the funnel, with the upper part of the masts, were visible. It was a terrible and heartrending scene. Numbers of men were struggling for dear life amid the mountainous billows. Vainly, for the most part, did they cry out for the help that none could render. Some clung desperately to the wave-swept masts; but even this precarious refuge soon failed. The funnel disappeared. Then came a sudden explosion, and all was over. Masts, yards, and sails, with the poor wretches that clung to them, were hurled into the air, held

there a moment, and then scattered in confusion and horrible wreck over the raging sea.

Those in the boat succeeded in rescuing three others, thus raising their number to fifteen. Their position was most critical. The boat was dangerously overladen, she leaked, and it was two hours before she could be got clear of the floating wreckage. A tremendous sea was running, and they had no provisions save a bottle of gin and part of a Dutch cheese. However, the oars were got out, and all hands set bravely to work to do the best they could under the circumstances.

About four o'clock on that Sunday afternoon, a steamer was sighted, apparently only two miles off. It was blowing very hard at this time, and she was under canvas as well as steam. The people in the boat shouted wildly, and for a time fancied that the steamer was making towards them; but she passed on unheeding, leaving them in despair. Night now came down on the sea. They had no provisions, and the boat made so much water that they expected every moment she would be swamped. Two or three men were kept constantly at work baling; while everybody was soaked and chilled with the waves and the spray. About midnight the wind changed to the north-west, bringing with it a storm of rain. Though it froze their life-blood, the rain was welcome, for it quenched their thirst. They lay in the boat with their mouths open, and caught what they could. As the night wore away, some of the crew became delirious. A boy—one of the three who had been picked up by the boat—woke from his

sleep, exclaiming, "What a long walk I have had ; I have come from Belvedere,\* and want to walk home to Woolwich ;" and in his delirious fancy he would have stepped out of the boat had not a kind hand restrained him.

Great was the joy of the survivors when, at day-break on Monday morning, they saw the tall masts of a ship about eight or ten miles distant. They did all they could to attract her attention, but it was nearly ten o'clock before they were discovered. Then the stranger bore down upon them, and at about a quarter past eleven she was so close that they no longer entertained any doubt of their safety. Fifteen minutes later they were all on board the *Gareloch*, a Glasgow ship, commanded by Captain Greenwood. The attentions they received from the captain, his wife, and all the crew, were both kind and judicious. They were provided with warm clothing, and supplied with small portions of brandy and soup, as they could bear them. But the *Gareloch* was outward-bound ; and, therefore, when the steamer *Antenor*, a vessel belonging to the Ocean Steamship Company, came alongside, it was deemed advisable to tranship them, —all but the poor boy, who was in a state of such nervous prostration that he could not be removed. By the *Antenor* they were safely conveyed to Gravesend, from whence they had set out so short a time before.

But the strangest, and perhaps the most interesting, part of our tale remains to be told. The fifteen were

\* A village in Kent, between Woolwich and Erith.

not the only survivors from the wreck of the *La Plata*. Two others had been marvellously—we might almost say miraculously—preserved. Their story was made public in a London newspaper on Christmas Day.

When the rising water had extinguished the fires, and the foundering of the *La Plata* seemed inevitable, two of the life-boats on deck were manned, in the desperate hope that they might still float when the vessel sank. But just as the steamer was settling down, a huge wave broke against one of the boats, stove her in, and hurled the men who thronged her into the sea. Among these was a man named Hooper. At first he was drawn under by the suction of the sinking ship; and when he came to the surface, it was only to find himself entangled in the wreckage, and to be drawn under again. He contrived, however, to extricate himself from the rigging, and once more rose to the surface; but only to receive so heavy a blow on the head from a floating spar that it nearly killed him. At last, on looking about him, he saw a damaged air-raft tossing to and fro; and upon this he and a man named Lamont, who had undergone a very similar experience, contrived to seat themselves. It was made of compartments filled with air, and joined together by a canvas band, which formed a kind of seat. Perched upon this band, they were in a kind of trough, with the water up to their waists.

Their lower limbs were soon benumbed; and as they were without food, their sole chance of escape from a lingering death lay in their being sighted by some passing ship; a poor chance indeed, since to



any ship not passing quite close they would have seemed a mere tiny speck on the water, or would even have been invisible, except when on the crest of a wave, and with the help of a telescope. Then the sea was continually washing over them; so that, had they not been men of strong frames and abundant vitality, they would scarcely have lived through the terrible ordeal that was before them.

During the Sunday they could discover only one passing ship, and she was much too far off to see them. On Monday the breeze was strong, and the sea rolling in great waves, but the weather was fine. Several ships swept by in the distance. These they could plainly see, but by none of them could they hope to be seen. Tuesday, for many hours, was delightfully calm; and their hopes were raised by the appearance of a three-masted schooner, which bore down within half a mile of them. They shouted with all their might; but it is to be supposed they were not heard, for the schooner passed on, and soon disappeared beneath their limited horizon. Towards evening the breeze freshened, and it continued to blow hard during the night. The men were now almost exhausted; gradually they sank into a condition between waking and sleeping—dozing for a minute or two, and then suddenly waking up to a consciousness of their miserable situation.

About four o'clock on Wednesday morning, one of them saw, through the grey mist, the outline of a dark object bearing down upon them, and immediately roused his companion. They soon perceived that it was a vessel rapidly approaching, and when



she was within a hundred yards of them they rallied their remaining energies, and uttered one loud cry for help. To their indescribable joy, a bright light, shining through the gloom, after a few seconds' interval, told them that their cry had been heard and was answered.

For two hours the light burned before them like a beacon-star, but just before daybreak it disappeared; and when morning rose over the wintry waters, it was nowhere to be seen. The two castaways underwent a painful revulsion of feeling, and were fast sinking in despair, when, at the end of two miserable hours, the vessel that had loomed through the darkness re-appeared and bore down towards them. She proved to be the Dutch schooner *Wilhelm Benklesoon*. Her master, on hearing the cry of distress, had immediately brought his ship to, resolving to keep by the spot until morning. But, meantime, the shipwrecked men and their air-raft had drifted to leeward. At daybreak they were out of sight; but the Dutch captain conjectured, from the force and direction of the wind, the point at which any boat or floating wreck would naturally drift, and made sail in that direction.

But all danger was not yet over. The sea was so rough that it was impossible to launch a boat, nor could the schooner be got quite close alongside the raft. There remained nothing but to swim for it; but the two men were so numbed and exhausted that they hesitated to make the attempt. At length Lamont, the boatswain, cast off from the raft and struck out for the schooner. He reached her side,

took a turn round his wrist with the rope that was thrown towards him, and so was hauled on board. With the other man there was yet greater difficulty. The raft had drifted to leeward, and the Dutchman had to make another tack to get near it again. Then Hooper made his plunge for life. He, too, reached the schooner's side, but his hands were so benumbed that he was obliged to seize the friendly rope in his teeth. Then, the little schooner lying low in the water, some of the crew, watching their opportunity, laid hold of the poor fellow and drew him on board, Neither of the men could stand unaided; and, indeed, when we consider that they had eaten nothing between Saturday night and noon on Wednesday, and had been so long exposed, up to their waists in water, beneath a November sky, it will appear wonderful that they were alive at all!

On board the Dutch schooner the two men were treated most kindly, and by the time they reached Gibraltar they had somewhat recovered their strength. From Gibraltar they were taken back to England by the P. and O. steamer *Cathay*, which landed them safely at Southampton.

At Southampton the two men were "interviewed" by a correspondent of the *Daily News*, and gave some interesting details as to their extraordinary voyage. Lamont said that on the raft they clung together for the sake of warmth. They did not feel hungry or thirsty, though all their confused waking dreams and visions were connected with food in some shape. Probably their being immersed in the sea prevented their feeling thirsty, while they derived

some relief from alternately chewing at a medal which Lamont had received from the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society. It was a silver medal, the edges all bitten, jagged, and indented with tooth-marks, with an effigy of Nelson on one side, and his immortal Trafalgar watchword, "England expects every man to do his duty." It seems the two men talked but little while on the raft, and only about their friends, or to cheer each other, and pray aloud. Sometimes Lamont would fall into a fit of despondency, when Hooper would whisper that God would never have kept them up so long to let them drown at last. They would say to each other, cheerfully, "Well, if you are saved and I die, you will go and see my friends, will you not? Or I will do the same by you." And they gave each other the addresses of their friends.

The appearance of an American vessel almost within hail was very bitter to them. They could see everything that was being done on board,—the cook going into the galley, the movements of the steersman as he put the wheel up and down, and the seamen setting the square foresail. Unable to stand up, they hoisted a coat on a piece of broken board, and shouted until their throats were hoarse; but all in vain. As the breeze freshened, she bore away, and left them alone on the waters. Even then Hooper would not give up all hope. "We're drifting away," he said to his comrade, "towards the Bay of Biscay, and getting into the track of ships." And, to use their own forcible expression, they took to praying "very heavy." Yes, "we prayed aloud, time about.

I reckon," said Lamont, "it was a little wild at times, this praying ; but we always knew what we were about."

Of the seventy-five souls on board the *La Plata* when she set out on her brief and disastrous voyage, seventeen alone survived, fifty-eight perishing with the ship.

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### THE CAPTAIN.

Probably no maritime disaster in connexion with the British Navy caused such painful excitement as the foundering of the *Captain*, in 1870, since the day, eighty-eight years before, when the *Royal George* went down in a smooth sea at Spithead. The loss of life in both cases was terrible, and in both the accident was of a character so strange that none could have for a moment anticipated its occurrence.

The *Captain* was a new ship, and one of the glories of modern naval architecture. She had but recently been added to the Royal Navy, from the designs of Captain Cowper Coles, the inventor of the "turret" principle, by which the heaviest ordnance could be easily manipulated on a vessel's deck under the protection of a shot-proof, revolving tower. Her burden was 4,272 tons, and she had not more than four feet of "free-board." She had four masts, and was fitted with engines of 900 horse-power, nominal. Under steam, and in tolerably smooth water, this monster had proved herself exceedingly manageable ; nevertheless, some naval authorities were still heard to say that she was not to be trusted. Such, however, was not the opinion of her inventor ; nor was it that of

her commander, Captain Hugh Burgoyne, the only son of the veteran general and Peninsular hero, Sir John Burgoyne.

In September, 1870, the *Captain* joined the Mediterranean fleet, under Admiral Sir Alexander Milne, which was cruising off the Spanish coast, for the purpose of testing the qualities of the "ironclads," of which it was chiefly composed. The admiral's ship, the *Lord Warden*, the *Minotaur*, the *Agincourt*, and the *Captain* were sailing in company; the *Captain* closing up the line, somewhat astern of the *Lord Warden*.

On the afternoon of the 6th Admiral Milne and his staff had paid a visit to the *Captain*, to witness from her decks a trial of sailing, in which she was to be matched against the *Monarch*, the *Inconstant*, and the *Bristol*. They remained on board until the evening, but declined Captain Burgoyne's invitation to dine with him, and return to their own ship the next morning. It was about seven o'clock when they left, and the sea was then running so heavily that torrents of water swept the *Captain's* deck, and the admiral's galley was nearly swamped while lying alongside. That some of Sir Alexander Milne's party did not feel the confidence which was felt by Captain Burgoyne, may be inferred from the fact that, on reaching their own ship, they were heard to thank God they were safe on board again.

The wind freshened rapidly, and by midnight a fierce south-westerly gale was blowing. Then the admiral signalled to reef sails, and, until about half-past one, all his ships rode securely on the troubled sea. The *Captain* was then steering north-west,

under treble-reefed fore and main-topsails, and fore-topmast staysail.

A few minutes later a sudden and terrific squall struck the fleet, making the weighty and massive ironclads reel before its force. Immediately the signal was given to tack ; and now for two hours the vessels were buffeted about by the fury of the wind, their strong topsails being riven as though made of paper. It was a night of toil and anxiety, and gladly did men and officers hail the first glimmer of daylight. Naturally those on board each ship eagerly looked round over the grey, troubled waters to see if their comrades were safe. The immediate question was, "Where is the *Captain*?" She had disappeared, nor was any trace of her as yet discernible. The most obvious (and comforting) conclusion was that, not having noticed the admiral's signal to tack, she had held on her course—in which case she would by this time have been many leagues away to the north-west. But those who had all along mistrusted the sea-going qualities of the turret-ship already began to fear the worst.

When the full daylight shone over the still troubled sea, the melancholy fate of the *Captain* was placed beyond the range of doubt. Pieces of wreck and the body of one of her crew were picked up. It was evident that in the squall the great ship had gone down, and it was supposed that the five hundred men and officers on board of her had perished. Fresh evidences of the fate of the ship quickly accumulated. "All day yesterday, and again this morning," said an officer of the *Inconstant*, in a letter to his father in England, "we have been employed in picking up the



*Captain's* boats, fragments of spars, upper works, and, what is more ominous still, bits of polished mahogany that formed part of her fittings between decks. Nobody permits himself to hope. . . We picked up to-day a portion of the bowsprit, with some poor fellow's black handkerchief tied to it. He had evidently attempted to make himself fast."

The admiral's official report of the events of that terrible night was as follows:—"The *Captain* was astern of my ship, apparently closing under steam. The signal 'Open order' was made, and at once answered; and at 1.15 A.M. she was on the *Lord Warden's* lee-quarter, about six points abaft of the beam. From that time until about 1.30 A.M. I constantly watched the ship; her topsails were either close-reefed or on the lap, her foresail was close up, the mainsail having been furled at 5.30 P.M.; but I could not see any fore and aft set. She was heeling over a good deal to starboard, with the wind on her port side. Her red bow-light was all this time clearly seen.

"Some minutes after, I again looked for her light; but it was thick with rain, and the light was no longer visible. The squalls of wind and rain were very heavy, and the *Lord Warden* was kept, by the aid of the screw and after-trysails, with her bow to a heavy sea, and at times it was thought that the sea would have broken over her gangways. At 2.15 A.M. (the 7th) the gale somewhat subsided, and the wind went round to the north-west, but without any squall; in fact, the weather moderated, the heavy bank of clouds had passed off to the eastward, and the stars came out clear and bright; the moon, which had given



considerable light, was setting; no large ship was near us where the *Captain* had been observed, although the lights of some were visible at a distance."

But fortunately the nature of the catastrophe that had deprived the Navy of a splendid ship and the country of five hundred valuable lives\* was not left long a matter of speculation. In a few days it became known that eighteen men had escaped; and from the accounts of the survivors we are enabled to put together the following narrative:—

When the middle watch was set at midnight, Captain Burgoyne, who had remained on deck on account of the threatening aspect of the weather, gave some orders as to the set of the sails. Before these could be carried out, a tremendous sea struck the vessel on the weather beam, completely flooding her low-lying decks. In a moment, the captain and the men composing the watch found themselves waist-deep in water, the ship being on her beam-ends, and quivering from stem to stern in her efforts to right herself. In these she failed, and, turning right over, she was speedily floating with her keel uppermost; all who were below being suffocated, no doubt, by the inrush of the billows!

The watch were left struggling with the waves; but in about ten minutes, catching sight of the ship's steam-pinnace life-boat at a short distance off, keel

\* Among those on board the *Captain* who perished with her were Captain Cowper Coles, her designer, the second son of Mr. Childers, the then First Lord of the Admiralty, and a son of Lord Northbrook.

uppermost, they swam towards her. With some difficulty, nine or ten men, including the captain and a seaman named Heard, managed to scramble on to the keel. When they had time to look around, not a sign of the turret-ship was visible; but through the mist loomed the huge form of one of the vessels of the squadron. Raising their voices, they shouted, "Ship ahoy!" until they could shout no longer; but the noise of the wind and waters effectually drowned their cries.

The pinnace was sorely beset by the raging waves, and the men were frequently washed from its keel, regaining their positions, however, by the assistance of their comrades. After a while the ship's second launch, with ten men in her, contrived to get alongside, and to take most of the little company on board. A sudden lurch, however, parted the two boats before Captain Burgoyne and Heard could reach the launch. Heard now tried to induce his commander, whom he describes as perfectly calm and collected, to make a final effort for life.

"Come, sir," he said, taking him by the hand, "let us jump."

Captain Burgoyne answered, "Save your own life, my man."

As the distance between the pinnace and the launch continued to increase, Heard exclaimed, "Will you come or not, sir?" and when the captain replied, "Jump and save yourself; I shall not forget you some day," he ventured on the dangerous leap, and happily succeeded in reaching the launch. Captain Burgoyne was never seen again.

One of the survivors has recorded as follows his recollections of the last moments of the unfortunate *Captain* :—

“At a quarter past twelve, midnight of the 6th, morning of the 7th, the ship *Captain* was on the port tack, close hauled, with the wind about N.W., very squally, with rain and heavy sea.

“About midnight, the ship made a heavy roll to starboard, and before she had time to recover, a heavy sea struck her, and threw her on her beam-ends.

“She then turned bottom upwards, and went down stem first. From the time of turning over to the time of sinking was about *ten minutes*. Going over, the water ran down the funnel, but did not drown the shrieks of the stokers.

“The report when she sank resembled a tremendous explosion. Not a soul could get up from below, as the whole happened in an instant. All the men saved, but one, belonged to the watch on deck.

“David Dryburg walked along the ship’s side as she turned over, and finally along her bottom. She was not knocking about much. All had confidence when she recovered from the first heavy lurch ; but she failed to recover from the second, heeling gradually over till she capsized.”

With regard to the other boat—the second launch—by which the men who clung to the keel of the pinnace were rescued. It appears that, just as the vessel was going down, three seamen, one of whom was named Hirst, sprang overboard ; but not in time to swim out of the range of the whirlpool

caused by her descent. They were sucked under at first ; but Hirst came up again, and striking against a floating spar, bound himself to it with his black silk neckerchief. But he was soon washed away, and must have perished, had he not discovered the launch floating close at hand, and contrived to get hold of her stern. Several men had already stationed themselves on the top of the canvas covering ; and they now proceeded to right the boat as best they could. It was not long after that they fell in with the pinnace, as already described. Being then eighteen in all, including Mr. May, the gunner, they made an effort to put the launch about, and bring her head up to the sea. In the attempt, she filled, and two men were washed out of her.

They then set to work to bale the water out with their caps, and made a second effort to put the boat's head to the sea. It was unsuccessful. They had only nine oars ; one was used for steering, the other eight were shipped in the rowlocks for pulling ; but they were of little avail with so heavy a boat, and so she was suffered to run for shore before the wind and the sea, and she arrived in safety at Corcubion in the evening.

In accordance with the rules of the service, Mr. May, the gunner, was tried by court-martial, but, of course, he was acquitted, and at the same time commended for his cool and intrepid conduct. The court decided that the catastrophe was caused by the pressure of sail upon the *Captain*, which, however, would not have imperilled a ship constructed on sounder principles. There can be no doubt that her

freeboard was too low, and that she did not possess sufficient stability.

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### THE EURYDICE.

Since the foundering of the *Captain* there has been no such catastrophe in the British Navy as the loss of the *Eurydice*, off the Isle of Wight, on the afternoon of Sunday, the 22nd of March, 1878. In several respects, too, the cases resembled each other. Both calamities were sudden, unexpected, cruelly and terribly fatal. If in the case of the *Captain* the loss of life was numerically greater, yet in that of the *Eurydice* it was in proportion more overwhelming, there being but *two* survivors out of at least 368 on board. In appearance, indeed, there could be no greater contrast than between the heavily-armoured turret-ship, with her four feet of "free-board," plunging, like some ocean monster, through the Biscay waves on a stormy night, and the full-rigged wooden frigate, with towering masts and spread of snowy canvas, as she swept bird-like over the fresh, breeze-awakened waters of the Channel on a bright spring day, scarce three miles off the shores of old England, and watched in admiration by many observers. Yet the immediate cause of the catastrophe that thrilled the country with amazement and sorrow was in each case the same—an overpressure of sail, resulting in the complete and well-nigh instantaneous capsizing of the doomed ship.

The *Eurydice*, 921 tons, built in 1843, was at one

time reckoned among the smartest sailing ships in the Navy. In 1877, she was converted into a training-ship for young seamen, since, upon a vessel of this sort, lads and young men can learn much more of practical seamanship than it is possible to teach them on board an armoured, steam-aided ship of the modern type. In the November of the same year, the *Eurydice* started on a cruise, her commander, Captain Marcus Hall, having been specially selected for his experience and ability in dealing with young and raw hands. The training-ship *Martin* accompanied her from Portsmouth, and at Madeira she was joined by the *Liberty*, a vessel of the same class.

Having completed her allotted cruise, the *Eurydice* made sail from Bermuda for home on the 6th of March, 1878. She was not spoken during the voyage, and nothing was seen or heard of her till she was sighted off Bonchurch, Isle of Wight, on that fatal Sunday afternoon. She was then seen, at half-past three o'clock, bearing for Spithead, under all plain sail and studding-sails on fore and maintop-masts, hurrying, as was supposed, so as to reach her anchorage before nightfall. Sheltered by Dunnose Head, a well-known landmark between Shanklin and Ventnor, the vessel was in comparatively smooth water. The day was fine ; the long cruise was over ; the Atlantic had been crossed ; home was now in sight. Before evening the cables would have rattled out merrily through the hawse-holes, the sails would have been furled, and the brave ship at rest. As we have said, there were at least 368 persons on board,



for, besides the crew, a number of men were coming home invalided from Bermuda.

On shore (as afterwards appeared) several persons were watching the *Eurydice* through glasses. The afternoon was very still, but a heavy bank of clouds was coming up from the nor'-west, and the mercury was falling. Still, the speeding ship held on her course towards Dunnose. Then, suddenly, at ten minutes to four, the wind veered round from west to east, and a gale, laden with blinding snow, came sweeping down from the sea. Many people throughout the south of England subsequently recalled the sudden storm of that Sunday afternoon.

But, after all, it was merely a passing spring snow-storm. It soon cleared away, and all was bright again. But where was the *Eurydice*, with her brave show of canvas? Watchers from the shore looked, rubbed their eyes, wiped their glasses, and looked again; but they looked in vain, till, at length, they saw the topmasts, with sails still set upon them, standing out of the water some two and three-quarter miles E.N.E. from Dunnose Point!

No one had seen what had happened during those few minutes; but Captain Jenkins, of the *Emma*, a collier trading from Newcastle to Poole, had noticed the coming squall at 3.45. He, too, lost sight of the *Eurydice* when the snow-storm struck her, and he, too, saw the masts sticking out of the water when the air cleared. He fancied he heard a shout, and forthwith, sending a man into the rigging, a poor fellow was soon discovered floating about in a cork jacket. The collier lowered her boats, and then beat up towards the scene of the catastrophe.



The boats picked up four men. One was drawn direct on board the *Emma*. Not another human creature was to be seen. Of the five thus rescued, one died before he could be got on board from the boat. Then the *Emma* was put about for land, with her colours half-mast high. When she reached Ventnor two more were dead, one of them being Lieutenant Tabor, second in command.

There remained but two men living to tell what had happened on board the *Eurydice*. One of them, a youth of nineteen, named Fletcher, was so exhausted that for some time he was unable to give any information. Not even subsequently had he much to tell. He was below when the squall struck the ship; he heard a cry, rushed on deck, seized a life-buoy, and jumped for his life. At first he was drawn down by the sinking ship, but, rising again, he managed to keep afloat till picked up by one of the boats of the *Emma*.

The other man, a sailor named Cuddiford, was able to give a clearer account, and it is from his narrative that we gather all that can ever be known of this sad catastrophe. The following statement is taken from the newspapers of the time; it is practically the same as the evidence subsequently given by the man at the inquest. "At a quarter to four the watch was called to take in lower studding-sails. I was on deck to tend the lower tack and let it go. The captain gave orders to take in the upper sails. The wind was then freshening. The captain ordered the men to come down from aloft, and then to let go the topsail halliards. . . . The water was then

running over the lee netting on the starboard side, and washed away the cutter. The fore-topmast studding-sail was set. The wind was about a point abaft the port beam. I caught hold of the main truss, fell, and caught hold of the weather netting, and got on the ship's side. We could see her keel. She righted a little before going down, ringing the mizzen-topsail out of the water. She then went gradually over from forward, the greater part of the hands being at the fore part of the ship, outside. She then turned over, bringing the port cutter bottom upwards. I and another, Richards, cut the foremost gripe, and then saw the captain standing on the vessel's side near the quarter boat, and the two doctors struggling in the water. I swam some distance, keeping over my head a life-buoy which I had found, and then picked up some pieces of wreck which I gave to some of the men in the water. I then came across the copper punt, full of water. Five men were in it. The sea capsized the punt, and they all got on the bottom. They asked me if there were any signs of help. I told them that the best thing they could do was to keep their spirits up. One of them was just letting go his hold. . . . I next saw Mr. Brewer, the boatswain, with a cork life-belt on; he was struggling strongly. I then saw Fletcher in the water, with a cork belt. I lost sight of him during the snow. About five minutes afterwards the weather cleared up. I saw Fletcher again, and we kept together. Then we saw land, but finding it too rough we turned our backs to the land and saw a schooner. The schooner bore down on us, sent

a boat, and picked up two officers that I had not previously noticed, with a wash-deck locker. A rope's end was thrown to me from the schooner, and I was then picked up. I judge that I was in the water one hour and twenty minutes. . . . The ship capsized about ten minutes before four o'clock. The captain was giving orders at the time, and was carrying out his duty. . . . The Hon. Mr. Giffard went to the wheel to help at the time the water was coming over the lee netting, in consequence of an order being given to put the helm up. . . . I believe some of the main-deck ports were open to let in air to the main-deck mess. I don't think the hands were turned up, there was hardly time for that. I saw most of the men forward take off their clothes and jump off before I lost sight of them in the squall. When the snow cleared up the ship was gone down."

Admiral Foley, who visited the wreck as soon as possible, was of opinion that the crew were in the very act of shortening sail when the vessel went down. In this opinion he was supported by the pilots engaged in clearing the wreck. They found that the top-sails had been let go, and that the mizzen topsail was actually resting on the cap. The squall, however, was evidently too sudden and powerful for the crew to relieve the ship in time. There is also reason to think that the ports on *both* sides were open, and that the water rushed in on the starboard side and prevented the vessel righting.

An inquest was held on the bodies of Lieutenant Tabor and the other two men who had died after being taken out of the water. The principal witnesses

were Cuddiford and Fletcher, the two survivors, and Captain Jenkins, of the *Emma*, who had picked them up. The jury found that the deceased had been "accidentally drowned by the capsizing of H.M.S. *Eurydice* by a sudden squall, and that no blame whatever can be attached to the captain, officers, and men of the ship."

When we consider the circumstances of this wreck, the vessel's position—within a few miles of a familiar shore—the fact that the catastrophe was known to numbers on shore almost immediately after its occurrence—that help was not far off—and yet that there should have been but *two* survivors out of so large a number of men, for the most part in the full vigour of life, it seems as though nothing was wanting to complete the startling and heartrending nature of the calamity.

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We may conclude this section with two curious stories—that of the sole survivor of the brig *Neptune*, and that of the extraordinary coincidence by which the crew of the sinking German barque, *Frederick Scalla*, were provided with another ship in which they were enabled to steer safely into port.

(1). The brig *Neptune* was a small coasting vessel trading between Boulogne and Cette. Laden with wine-casks, she started from the latter port in December, 1821, with a crew of eight men. Day by day the weather, fair at first, grew more threatening,

till a terrible storm was raging. The *Neptune* was lost, as many another coaster—old and under-manned, it may be—has been lost since. But the special interest of this story is found in the personal narrative of the one man who survived the catastrophe. He was a seaman named Bénigne Bouret, and the tale of his extraordinary escape and terrible sufferings is told in the French work “*Annales Maritimes et Coloniales*,” under date of 1822.

When off Barcelona, and about ten leagues from land, the little vessel—she was only 150 tons—experienced the worst of the storm. Sail was taken in, and she ran with bare poles before the furious tempest. Several wine and brandy casks had broken loose, and it was impossible to secure them. The ship leaked alarmingly, and the pumps had to be constantly kept going.

The final catastrophe, as well as what followed, may be described in the words of Bouret for the most part:—

“The wind continued to increase in violence. At half-past nine it was my turn at the pump. The ship heeled over sadly, receiving a succession of seas broadside on, which made it rear and stagger like a drunken man. A few minutes later I perceived that we were falling more and more to leeward, and, looking from the opposite side, I could see that part of the vessel suddenly lifted up. I sprang forward to seize the shrouds, when I heard the lieutenant exclaim, ‘Look at the ship!’ and another voice, ‘Have mercy, O God!’ At the same moment, the brig capsized. I clung convulsively to the rigging, though retaining

but a glimmering of consciousness, which I soon lost altogether. How long I remained in this state I cannot tell. At length, the ship having righted herself, the ripple of the waters on my face restored me to my senses. I opened my eyes; once more I could see the lightnings cleaving the gloomy clouds which swept across the heavens, and my first thoughts rose in prayer and thanksgiving to God.

“Still I clung to the shrouds; and at a favourable moment climbed to the main-yard, calling out several times. No one answered . . . . At length a voice seemed to articulate a few words which I could not understand. Then I carefully let myself down along the side of the ship which was raised above the water. I caught sight of Voisin, the apprentice, seated on the shrouds, with the ship-dog beside him. He clasped my hand, sighing, ‘It seems that all our comrades have perished; what will become of *us*?’”

“Towards eleven o’clock, the mizen-mast and bowsprit broke at a few feet above the deck . . . . only the main-mast and main-topmast stood. The ship, relieved of this weight, rose a little, and Voisin and I clambered to the topmast . . . . Overcome with fatigue, and soaked to the skin, though the waves no longer reached us, we fastened ourselves securely in the main-top, and indulged in a prolonged sleep.

“The weather continued the same throughout the 25th. We were unable to descend to the deck, on account of the waves which covered it at intervals with the greatest violence. We could see the casks forced out of the hold, and soon afterwards dashed

into fragments. We caught sight of two brigs at a few leagues distance, beating to windward. The sky, overspread with dense clouds, brightened occasionally; our clothes had dried; and the hope that these vessels might close with us enabled us to pass the night in tranquillity.

“On the 26th we saw a brig, which I presumed to be one of those we had sighted the day before, running towards us, and for some minutes were plunged in an ecstasy of joy. In the afternoon it passed to leeward, at no great distance from us. We could distinguish the people on board. It would seem, however, that they did not see us, for she kept on her course, and gradually receded from sight. Towards evening, the weather becoming clear, we thought we could detect on the horizon two points of land.

“After a restless night, we saw once more the dawn of day. Alas, it came but to pour light on our bitter sufferings, which would soon terminate, we thought, in the peacefulness of death!

“About mid-day, perceiving a cloak upon the ship’s bulwarks, I resolved to descend in the hope of extricating it, in spite of the waves that broke over the vessel . . . . Having reached the deck, I was forced to cling to the stump of the main-mast to prevent myself being carried away by the waves . . . . Shortly after, we saw the dead body of a sailor float out of the cabin. The unfortunate man, whose fate we envied, had his head still resting on his arm, as if death had come upon him in his sleep . . . .

“On the 28th, the waves ran very high, and nearly overwhelmed us in the main-top; wet to the skin,



cold, hungry, and athirst, we suffered tortures which no language can describe.

“The ship dog had remained, meanwhile, on the fore-castle. The sea would carry it off; then it swam back to its post. It fixed its eyes upon us, and wailed and moaned in the most pitiable manner. At night, more particularly, its howlings were frightful; and they added, if that were possible, to the terrors which perturbed us. On this day his strength seemed spent; however, he struggled against death, until a wave engulfed him.

“On the 29th, as on the day preceding, no sail was visible; and we were cheered by no gleam of hope. My comrade suffered such cruel pains in the stomach that he told me, even if we were saved, he did not think it possible he could ever again take any food. Feeling myself stronger than he was, and not having lost all my courage, I endeavoured to support and console him. Thirst tormented me more cruelly than hunger; and I opened my mouth to inhale the breeze, trusting it would afford some slight relief.

“Thus glided by the few days of existence which still remained to us. When our sufferings and the rolling sea allowed us to enjoy a few short moments of calm, all the horrors of our position broke upon our imagination. I wept when I thought of my wife and children; my wife who, on my parting from her, had suffered greatly, as if from a presentiment that she should see me no more.

“Up to the 1st of January no accident interrupted the sombre monotony of our torment, which was continually increasing. The wind blew violently;

the ship heeled over more and more. In one of her movements, a wave swept over our heads . . . we undid our fastenings and removed to the other side of the main-top . . . I turned to assist my companion, but could not see him. As soon as I could catch sight of him, I threw him a rope, which he seized ; but, with a failing voice, he almost immediately said, ‘ My efforts are useless ; I can no longer endure my sufferings ; I would rather die.’ He let go the rope and disappeared.

“ Then I was alone . . . my mouth was so dry that I could no longer breathe ; I choked.

“ On the 2nd I was still strong enough to descend the rigging. I took some water and washed my face, mouth, and hands. I felt some relief.

“ Nine days had passed since I had tasted food, and my energies were exhausted. . . . Continually growing drowsy, painful dreams wearied my imagination. . . .

“ In this state I passed through the day of the 3rd and the following night. My sight was troubled. The sky seemed on fire, the stars of enormous magnitude, the radiance of the moon so dazzled my eyes that I could not support it.

“ On the 4th of January, at daybreak, I threw my feeble glances round the horizon, but no object was visible. Alas ! another day of suffering ! And I fell into a deep slumber or swoon. How long I remained unconscious I cannot tell. Suddenly, I thought I heard some voices saying, ‘ Rise up ; you are saved.’ It was but a freak of my imagination ; no one was near me. The voices again aroused me.

I opened my eyes, and perceived, at no great distance from me, the canvas of a ship, on which the sun shone with all its splendour. A moment afterwards a boat drew near ; the crew released me from my bonds, and carried me on board their ship, which proved to be the Dutch galliot *Good-Hoope*. Its commander, Captain Klein, hastened to bestow on me every attention which my unfortunate situation demanded. When I was somewhat restored, he told me that he had sighted the submerged ship, and thought everybody on board had perished, but had ordered his crew to approach the wreck as closely as possible, in case there should be a survivor. To this generous resolution I owed my life.

“After a few days’ sail we arrived at Toulon, and my sad experiences were over.”

(2.) The story of the *Frederick Scalla*, with which we conclude this chapter, will afford a relief to the mind after contemplating so many distressing pictures. Probably no stranger coincidence ever occurred than that which brought this vessel and the *F. J. Merryman* together in mid-ocean, each to afford to the other the help that was so urgently needed at the moment.

In September, 1884, the *Frederick Scalla*, from Stettin to New York, with a cargo of salt, encountered a furious gale in mid-Atlantic. She was dismasted, her rudder and boats carried away, and her hull left rolling helplessly in the trough of a raging sea. Her started timbers let in the water, and it seemed but a question of time how long the vessel would float.

Fortunately, the nature of her cargo delayed the fatal issue. The crew of eleven men, worked hard at the pumps, and the salt, dissolved into brine by the action of the incoming water, was gradually discharged, thus lightening the vessel considerably. But the end was only postponed. After nine days of incessant toil, the men were almost exhausted; there were four feet of water in the hold, and it did not seem possible that the vessel could be kept afloat many hours longer. Captain Hoffschied and his brave men had well-nigh abandoned hope.

The last day had come. The *Frederick Scalla* was in a sinking condition, when suddenly the weather, after being thick and foggy during the morning, cleared up a little, and discovered a large brig at no great distance! But evidently there was something wrong about her. There were signs of confusion aloft, and no living creature was to be seen on deck. What could it all mean? The Germans, unable to control their own vessel, and destitute of boats, had to await the chances of the wind driving the strange ship within hail in order to solve the mystery of her abandoned, ghostlike appearance.

Meanwhile, we may tell to our readers the story of the brig. The *F. J. Merryman* had sailed from Boston, bound for Sierra Leone with a general cargo, her company consisting of eighteen souls. Sierra Leone was duly reached, the cargo discharged, and the brig proceeded to Bathurst on the West African coast. On her arrival, the mate and a sailor were seized with "climate fever." They died, but the authorities prohibited the crew from landing in order

to bury the bodies, nor were they permitted to drop them overboard. Others of the crew sickened, and, as a last resource, natives were hired to row the dead bodies out to sea, and bury them there. Such, however, was the panic ashore, that when these natives had done their work, the people would not let them land, and the brig's people were forced to keep and feed them on board for thirty days. Eventually, the men's health improved, and the brig was permitted to enter Bathurst and receive a cargo of hides. Hands were wanted to replace those who had died, but no one was found willing to ship in a vessel that was regarded as plague-stricken. At last a native African was induced to sign articles, and with this substitute the brig set sail.

But the unfortunate vessel had not been many days at sea when the fatal malady broke out again. First the captain was seized with fever and died. The next to perish, within ten days of the death of the captain, was the second mate, a Swede. Thus the only men on board capable of navigating the ship were taken. Then a man died from fear; he said he was sure he would be the next to be seized by the fever, and he expired on the following day. As fast as the crew died they were buried in their clothes; in other words, they were hastily dropped overboard; there was no room for sentiment in the face of a malady that had desolated the brig so that in a few weeks, the only survivors were two negroes and two white men. Sickness and anxiety had wasted these men until they were too feeble to haul upon a rope, or to revolve the wheel. In this manner

day after day passed, when one morning a vessel was seen that was taken to be a steamer without masts. This proved to be the German barque *Frederick Scalla*, and thus in the most extraordinary manner were two vessels brought together, one sinking, the other helpless for the want of men, and each, therefore, exactly calculated to serve the other in her dire extremity.

Gradually the two vessels drifted towards each other till they were not more than a couple of hundred yards apart. The Germans examined with wonder the apparently abandoned craft. Suddenly, while they were looking, a woolly head was thrust over the bulwark rails, and a negro was seen earnestly to examine the wreck of the barque. The black face vanished ; but the African presently reappeared, accompanied by another negro and a white man. All three then fell to work to run up a distress-signal. This was, no doubt, regarded as superfluous labour by the sinking Germans, who bawled to the three men that their vessel was going down ; to which the others replied by imploring Captain Hoffschied to send some hands and a navigator aboard the brig to take care of her, and steer her for her port, otherwise there was no chance of their ever getting home. Captain Hoffschied was greatly astonished, and shouted to them to send to the barque, as they had no boats left ; but the answer was that the negroes and the white man were too weak to steer their brig, and were, consequently, quite unable to lower their boats and ply a pair of oars. However, when they saw that the brig was drifting away from possibly

the last chance of rescue that would be offered her, the three men, by dint of extraordinary exertions, got their boat overboard, and after a great deal of manœuvring, and many risks and narrow escapes, the whole of the people of the German barque were transferred to the brig. The scuffling and singing out, one to another, of the Germans, as they crawled over the brig's side, brought up a fourth man from the cabin. His eyes were on fire with fever, and his cheeks hollow with suffering. He joined the two negroes and the other white man who were seated near Captain Hoffschied, and whilst the crew of the abandoned barque ran about making sail on the brig, the story of their luckless voyage was told.

The German barque still floated, and such provisions as could be come at, were taken from her in order to victual the brig, which was very badly off in this respect. Shortly after, the *Frederick Scalla* settled down low in the water, and finally disappeared. The *F. J. Merryman* was then got under way by her new crew, and Captain Hoffschied had the pleasure of bringing his strangely acquired command safe to New York. Probably this is the only instance of a disaster at sea in which it would be impossible to say which were the rescuers and which the rescued!



## CHAPTER III.

## COLLISIONS.

A LANDSMAN is apt to think that, when one ship is run into by another in the open sea, it must be the result of sheer stupidity or of the grossest carelessness. And such, no doubt, is generally the case. The "rule of the road" at sea is distinctly laid down, and ought to be well-known by every ship-master. And yet misunderstandings will at times arise; a pilot or captain will lose his head at the critical moment; a wrong order may be given, or a right one incorrectly repeated; a sudden change of course may cause confusion or come too late, and then the mischief is done! A crashing and rending of timber; a few warning shouts or cries of terror, and, within a few minutes, the proud ship that had been gliding over the waters, may be sinking—a crushed and shattered wreck, to which the terrified crew and passengers cling in vain! It seems strange and most pitiful; yet such things have happened, and that sometimes in broad daylight, and in fine weather. Take, for an example of this, the tragic story of the

*STRATHCLYDE.*

The *Strathclyde* sailed from London for Bombay in February, 1877, having on board twenty-five passengers and a crew of forty-seven men. She passed

safely through the Downs and the Straits, and, having left her pilot at Dover in the course of the afternoon, proceeded on her voyage, steering out from the land so as to get sufficient sea-room.

By and bye a steamer was noticed some two miles astern, further out, and coming right down Channel. It was evident that the vessels were moving along two gradually converging lines that must finally intersect at an acute angle. The steamer proved to be the *Franconia*, Captain Keyn—a German vessel, bound for the West Indies—much larger and faster than the *Strathclyde*, and pursuing a rate of speed which brought her nearer and nearer to the latter. In these circumstances, the rule of the road, by sea as by land, requires that the pursuer, the swifter and the stronger, shall take such measures as will prevent injury to the pursued. There was nothing for the *Strathclyde* but to hold on her course steadily; and she was further justified in doing this by another well-known rule, which enjoins that when two vessels approach each other on the same tack, that which is to port, or on the left side, shall give way.

Half an hour glided by, and the *Franconia* and *Strathclyde* were so close as to be in evident danger of a collision. The captain of the latter then steered more towards the shore, so that the German vessel might pass in a parallel line, or at worst sheer off from her side. But it was too late. Owing to the confusion and excitement of the moment, the steamer's head, instead of being put in the opposite direction, was turned in-shore. The engines were reversed, but not in time to check her headway. On she came,

and struck the unfortunate *Strathclyde* twice, nearly amidships, cutting her down to the water's edge, and causing her to sink almost immediately.

So far, this accident, occurring on a smooth sea, in open daylight, is only remarkable as affording a glaring instance of bungling stupidity and bad seamanship. But the shameful part of the tale remains to be told. The people of the *Franconia* seem to have been seized with a contemptible terror. As a fact, they were not in any immediate danger, for though the steamer had suffered considerably, it is admitted that she would easily have floated for a couple of hours. A few people scrambled from the sinking ship on board her destroyer. They implored the captain to lower his boats and not to desert their companions now struggling in the water. But Keyn absolutely refused. He steamed away for Dover with all possible speed, leaving the victims of his own mismanagement to their fate. A few were picked up by some fishing-boats that had witnessed the disaster from a distance; but the great majority perished. It seems that the English pilot on board was as bad as the German captain. This man, Porter, was not ashamed to admit, when under examination at the official inquiry, that he "never considered the saving of life from the *Strathclyde*, his own life being as good as those of others; nor did he look to see if the *Strathclyde* sank."

Captain Keyn was tried for manslaughter at the Central Criminal Court, and, after a patient investigation of all the circumstances of the disaster, found guilty.

A recent writer forcibly contrasts the conduct of Keyn with that of the master of the screw-collier *Savernake*, only a few weeks later. The accident occurred in the same crowded thoroughfare, only somewhat lower down. A large Dutch trader, the *Vesuvius*, homeward bound from Odessa, was making her way up Channel when she was run down off Hastings by the *Savernake*. The air was hazy at the time, and was further obscured by the smoke from the steamer's funnel, so that neither ship was aware of the danger till the moment of collision. The *Vesuvius* sank in a few minutes, and the collier was so damaged that she only kept afloat by dint of incessant labour at the pumps. But there was no panic, nor cowardly suggestion that one life was as good as another. The *Savernake* stood by till the thirty-two persons from the *Vesuvius* were safe on board; then steamed straight for the land, distant five miles, and ran upon the open Sussex beach!

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The very next year, and not many miles from the spot where the *Strathclyde* went down, another accident occurred, also in broad daylight, and attended with a lamentable loss of life.

### THE GROSSER KURFÜRST,

a German ironclad, sailed from Wilhelmshaven for Plymouth on the 29th of May, 1878, in company with the *König Wilhelm*, flagship, and the *Preussen*. The day was beautifully fine, and the progress of the

German vessels down the Channel was watched with interest by numbers of persons on the Folkestone Lees and elsewhere. It was about ten o'clock in the morning when Dover was passed. From the shore the three ships appeared to be in line, with but a short distance between them ; as a fact, however, the *Preussen* was furthest from the shore and astern of her companions, while the *Grosser Kurfürst* was nearest to the shore and leading, the *König Wilhelm* being in the middle. A light wind from S.W. was blowing at the time.

When off Folkestone a Norwegian barque was noticed beating off the shore, which was distant about five miles. In order to make sure of clearing her, the *Grosser Kurfürst* ported her helm a little, her example being followed by the *König Wilhelm*. The Norwegian having got clear, the ironclads would naturally resume their course, but, unfortunately, the steering apparatus of the flag-ship (which had been previously found defective) refused to act, and the vessel's head failed to come round. The danger of a collision was at once evident, and everything that time would permit seems to have been done to avert it. The *Grosser Kurfürst* went full speed ahead, while the engines of the *König Wilhelm* were at once reversed, but owing to the enormous weight of vessels of this class it is impossible to stop them very speedily. In a few minutes the mischief was done. The *Grosser Kurfürst*, failing to get across the bows of her consort, was struck on the port quarter abaft the mizzen-mast, and completely smashed in by the "ram" of the *König*

*Wilhelm*. There was no use trying to close the water-tight compartments, and no time to lower the boats. Captain Montz is described as giving his orders with the utmost promptitude and coolness, but in seven or eight minutes the huge mass of iron sank amid a cloud of steam from the exploding boilers. People on shore who had been watching the three ships rubbed their eyes and looked again, only two were visible.

Fortunately, the accident occurred in a situation where numbers of fishing-boats were within easy reach. These, together with the boats lowered from the *König Wilhelm*, rendered all the assistance possible. The fishing lugger *Emily* picked up twenty-seven out of the hundreds of human beings that, in a moment, were struggling in the water. The *Susannah* rescued eighteen, the *Six Brothers* seventeen. A steam tug put out from Folkestone as soon as possible, and numbers of other craft, including several life-boats, quickly made for the scene of the disaster. Needless to say, all these arrived too late. Only those close at hand could render effectual assistance. We may be thankful that, in one way or another, 218 lives were saved, the total on board having been 487. The brave captain was picked up insensible, but was brought round by restoratives; on the other hand, three men who were taken out of the water alive subsequently sank from exhaustion.

As for the *König Wilhelm*, so tremendous was the force of the collision that she herself sustained considerable damage. Indeed, but for the promptitude of one of the officers, who rushed below and

closed the foremost water-tight bulkhead, she also would probably have foundered. As it was, the weight of water that had rushed in sank her bows several feet below the stern. In this disabled condition she proceeded in the course of the afternoon to Portsmouth.

This untoward catastrophe excited the greatest sympathy throughout the entire country, and in Folkestone especially a painful interest was long sustained. The first three bodies that were recovered were buried in the cemetery with military honours, a large number of the residents taking part in the procession. Subsequently no less than thirteen bodies were conveyed together to the same resting-place, each coffin being placed on a gun-carriage drawn by four horses. Other funerals of two and three at a time were more quietly conducted, while the remains of the senior Lieutenant, Schwerin, were conveyed to Germany. After a time a suitable monument was erected by the German Government to the poor fellows who had met with a fate so untimely, and who now lie close together, far from their fatherland, in the well-kept cemetery, hard by which the hurrying "continental trains" to Folkestone and Dover pass day after day.

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We have seen how sudden and fatal may be the injury inflicted by one vessel on another even in the clear light of day, but no doubt the majority of collisions take place at night or during the prevalence of thick or foggy weather. At such critical times,



the utmost vigilance is called for on the part of those in charge, but even the greatest care has sometimes been unavailing to prevent a catastrophe. And, alas, there have been instances where proper caution seems to have been conspicuously absent, and where a terrible loss of life has been the result of criminal carelessness or incredible stupidity. In illustration of this, and while still in the narrow and crowded waters of the English Channel, we must put on record the miserable story of

### THE NORTHFLEET.

The emigrant-ship *Northfleet*, bound for Australia, with three hundred and seventy-nine souls on board, under the command of Captain Knowles, sailed from the river Thames on the 13th of January, 1873. She was delayed in her passage down Channel by persistent headwinds, and was compelled to cast anchor under shelter of Dungeness on Tuesday, the 21st.

There was no change of wind next day, and accordingly the vessel remained at her anchorage throughout the Wednesday. At nightfall the proper lights were displayed and the watch duly set. It was cold, and no one who could help it remained on deck. Then came the awful catastrophe, of which one of the survivors gives a vivid and detailed description. We extract the following from his narrative:—

“Most of the emigrants had gone to bed and were dropping off to sleep, but I and three other fellows

were playing cards at the second table from the mid-ship hatchway. The doctor had been round and ordered them to their berths, as he would not allow playing at so late an hour. Some of us were talking, laughing, and joking innocently, when suddenly I heard a voice on the deck cry out, 'Ship ahoy!' I was wondering what it meant, when I heard a gurgling noise like water, and immediately afterwards a tremendous crash. I rushed upstairs at once. One of my mates got up, dropped his cards on the table, and, turning pale as a sheet, ran to his bunk in fright, and endeavoured to hide himself. The other two followed me. . . .

"When we reached the deck it was dark, and yet not so dark that we could not see around us. . . . Just as we got up there was another crash, and we heard the mate, who was a north-country man, shouting to somebody, though we could not at the moment see either him or them. As we ran towards him we saw a large vessel right against us, with her bow so near that I could have jumped on to her, and a lot of men running about on her deck, 'jabbering' in a tongue that we could not understand. Then the mate turned to me and said, 'I can't understand what they say. You run down below and tell that French fellow to come up; perhaps he can talk to them,' for we had a 'French fellow' among us.

"As I was turning round to go down, I saw the foreigner bearing round with her stern to ours, and a lot of her crew running to the bow with a piece of tarpaulin, which they threw over the figure-head so as to hide her name. With that she backed water, and

got clear of us. The mate was shouting to them all the time, and when he saw this he cried out, 'Ship ahoy! stop and save us, for we have over four hundred emigrants on board,' but it was useless, for she continued to back-water, and then shot ahead across our bow, and was away with her black smoke driving in our faces before we could say many words to each other."

The pumps were manned almost immediately, and blue lights burned as signals of distress. An attempt was made to fire a cannon, but unfortunately it failed to go off. In a short time it was discovered that the pumps were quite useless against the tremendous influx of water, and they were accordingly abandoned.

"All this time," continues the narrator, "those that were below were coming up slowly, and one by one, looking round cautiously as they stepped on deck, with a wild expression in their faces, as if they could not believe it, and did not exactly know what was going on. There were several women who rushed up first and began to scream and cry. But the captain told them to go down again and be quiet, and wait till they were called, as they could do no good. And so all of them except two went down again, and their husbands mostly with them, all very scared." A pathetic and life-like picture, truly! *All very scared!*

This same actor in the terrible, bewildering drama continues:—"I went below, however, to look after some of my friends. I saw one, Jem Thomson, lying in his bunk with his clothes over him, and I pulled

them off and shook him, and cried out to him that he had better come on deck, for the water was rising to the main-deck ; but he looked at me in a stupid sort of way, and groaned, and shook his head. ‘ God help me ! ’ said he ; ‘ I may as well be drowned here. O God, have mercy on me ! ’ I tried for a moment to pull him out, and drag him along with me ; but he was like a log, and wouldn’t help me more than a baby.

“ They were groaning and crying all round me. Some of them were getting their boxes out, and some were putting on their clothes : and when I told them it was useless to stay down below, they asked me what was the matter, and was it really so bad as some of us had told them ? I could stop no longer ; so I ran up the foremost hatchway, past the bell, which I had quite forgotten (the captain had bidden him go and ring it as loud as he could), and as I came along I saw the mate and the storekeeper and two or three of the sailors pulling away at the ropes of the foremost life-boat.

“ The wind was beginning to blow and whistle through the rigging, and I could see that the fore part of the vessel was sinking near the level of the water. The mate cried out to me to give him a hand in lowering the boat for the captain’s wife and the women ; and I took hold of one of the ropes, but, as they were somewhat confused, or the pulleys would not work, we were unable with all our efforts to get the boat down. As I looked round, I saw the crowd on the deck getting thicker and thicker ; and I noticed the captain’s wife coming along wrapped

up in a rug, and looking as pale, poor lady, and as sad as if she were going to die that moment!

“There was a terrible panic, I can tell you, among the strong, rough men, when it became apparent that the vessel was sinking. The wild rush for the boats, and the mad confusion which took place, were like the trampling of a herd of buffaloes. Poor Captain Knowles, brave as a hero all the time, was nevertheless angered at the reckless selfishness of the men, and he drew a pistol and threatened the big fellows who were leaping helter-skelter into the boats. He said:—‘The boats are not for such as you; they are for the women and children.’

“So much confusion prevailed on board, that no one seemed to know what could or should be done. About a dozen women had come upon deck, and were sobbing and crying among the men, and refused to go down again. I cast my eye along the other side of the ship, and saw a knot of men round a boat, which they were lowering. The captain’s voice rose now and then above the praying and crying, but I do not know that any one paid attention to him.”

Despite the threats and entreaties of captain and boatswain, the men continued to throng into the boat. Captain Knowles discharged his pistol several times and wounded one man, who, however, kept his place in the boat. At length Mrs. Knowles was got on board, and the boat, in charge of the boatswain, pushed off. The captain was heard to cry out, “Take care of my wife, boatswain;” to which the man replied, “I will, captain; if she goes, I will go with her.” Then “the captain stood on the deck

very quietly, looking at the ship as she went down, and waving his hand to his wife." This boat contained nine persons only,—Mrs. Knowles, the boatswain, four navvies, and three ordinary seamen.

The end that came so quickly—probably within *twenty minutes* after the collision—was now close at hand. A frantic but unavailing effort was being made to clear the boats on the deck between the main and mizen-masts, but it was found impossible to move them. There was no time to spare. "The ship was going down fast," continues the account from which we have been quoting, "and we others, seeing nothing else for it, jumped on the top of the pile of boats. One poor fellow who jumped up with me held out his hand, and said, 'My last moment's come; if you should live to get ashore, tell mother I was thinking of her when I went down.'

"'All right,' was my reply, 'I will; and if I should go and you should get ashore, tell my mother likewise that my last thought was of her.'

"It was curious, but I did not know who he was, nor did he know me, though of course we could not think of it at the time. It would have been hard for either of us to deliver the message; but he is all right, and can carry his own message, as I hope to do mine.

"In another minute the sea rose to the level of the poop, and the crowd which stood shrieking there seemed to mingle with it and all disappear in white foam. Then I myself was struggling in the water, and was just thinking to myself what a long time I was in being drowned, when I came up, and

putting forth my hands, got hold of some rigging. I clung to it; to my surprise I found it did not sink; and presently others came up and got hold of it.

“It was the rigging of the main-mast that I had chanced to rise against; but the other two masts were also above the water, and we could see figures clinging desperately to them. Here we hung for two hours and a half, the wind growing colder and colder, and the sea rising higher and higher. Some of the men were getting benumbed, and when a steamer once came within sight of us, and passed on without heeding our screams for help, they became desperate, and said they must let go; but we cheered them up, and at last a pilot-boat came alongside, and took us off.”

The following account by another survivor, was published at the time in a London paper:—

“Near the women’s hatchway I came upon a lot of women clustered together. I did not stop to speak to them, for I was looking towards the boats, thinking that perhaps I might get hold of one of them yet. They were all turned upside down, and knocking about. Two of them were half floating in the sea, and tearing away at their ropes; and some of the men were trying to turn another up, and get into it. While I was running towards that one, and holding on by the bulwark, I felt a shaking of the deck, and a fearful shout from for’ard. At the same moment the deck seemed to be taken from under my feet; there was a crash, and another; the masts seemed to be giving way. Everybody clung to everybody else, and begged and prayed to be saved; and one woman



came up to me, and gave me her baby, saying, 'For the love of God, save this innocent thing!' But I could not do anything, for I felt the last had come.

"And so it had, for in a moment the water seemed to rise to my lips, and rush into my ears and eyes, and it pressed upon me from all sides, and knocked me against the side, and I was under,—I could feel *that*. So I gave a lift up and struck out, my boots going away of themselves, and my jacket getting as heavy as a ton of bricks. But I was up again and afloat; so I swam for the bulwarks, when I was knocked over again and sucked under. I don't know how I managed to get off clear.

"I have some recollection of being laid hold of several times, and kicking and tearing myself away. I think I remember other figures coming to me and trying to take hold of my shoulders; but I felt I had got some life in me yet—just enough for myself, and no more—and I struggled hard for that little bit. I thought of nothing but keeping afloat until I was clear and away from the wreck, for she was sucking under me and drawing me down. At last I got clear, and out of reach of those who were trying to swim, or drifting about on bits of wood, the boats, and life-buoys. How I kept afloat, and was picked up, I do not remember."

Out of the three hundred and seventy-nine persons on board the *Northfleet* when she dropped anchor off Dungeness, only eighty-six were rescued; while of the forty-one or forty-two married couples and their children—in all, one hundred and forty-three persons

—only three men, a woman, and two children escaped. Those that were saved owed their lives to the exertions of the crews of the *Princess* pilot-cutter, the *City of London* steam-tug, and the *Mary*, of Kingsdown, a lugger. The last-named fell in with a boat-load of “navvies,” who had left women and children to perish, and cut themselves adrift without oars or rudder. The *Princess* was cruising to see if any vessel wanted a pilot, when her captain observed the *Northfleet's* rockets, and supposing that his services were required, answered them in the usual fashion. On standing towards her, however, he saw that she was sinking, and immediately lowered his boats, which took off several persons clinging to the upper spars of the wreck. The *City of London* was also aroused by the rockets, and steamed at once to the scene of disaster; her crew succeeded in saving thirty-four. And it was by this vessel that the boat with the captain's wife in it was picked up.

In many respects there is no sadder tale of “sea-sorrow” than that of the *Northfleet*. Almost three hundred lives lost within a few minutes, on a comparatively quiet sea, close to a well-known shore, and within hail almost of numbers of craft—outward-bound ships, like herself, detained by head-winds; fishing-boats, such as may at times be seen by the hundred in the great bay formed by the long projection of Dungeness; pilot-cutters, and steam-tugs on the look-out for employment: it was, indeed, a hapless, cruel fate.

It only remains to add that no doubt is entertained that the author of this terrible catastrophe was the

Spanish screw-steamer *Murillo*. It was found impossible to bring home the crime, at least to the satisfaction of a Spanish Court. But none the less does the man who could cruelly go on his way, leaving hundreds of his fellow-creatures to certain death, no doubt to avoid delay, responsibility, and, perhaps, censure, deserve our scorn and reprobation. We may hope there are not many such as he.

## CHAPTER IV.

## AMONG THE BREAKERS.

THIS chapter will chiefly be a record of disasters on the shores of Great Britain and Ireland. Towards England the great bulk of the world's commerce gravitates, and as the mariner nears our rock-bound, storm-vexed coast, the dangers that beset him are apt to increase. What the sailor most dreads in a storm is a lee-shore near at hand. Many a brave ship has crossed thousands of miles of ocean, has weathered terrific gales, and surmounted giant billows, only to meet her sad fate when home was almost or actually in sight. Or the case may have been reversed. The ocean-going vessel, bound perhaps, for the antipodes, may have failed to clear the "narrow seas" of England, and may have perished with her living freight before her voyage was properly begun. Then again, if we would understand why it is that our English shores are indeed "wreck-strewn," we must bear in mind what an enormous coasting trade is ever being carried on round these islands, and consider the hundreds of steamers that day and night are ever passing to and fro across the English and Irish Channels and the German Ocean.

We commence with an account of a shipwreck that, probably, attracted keener interest and sym-

pathy than any other that has ever occurred on the English coast ; it is the lamentable tale of

### THE ROYAL CHARTER.

The *Royal Charter* was an iron-built vessel of 2,756 tons ; her length was 338 feet, and her width 41 feet ; and she was fitted with a screw driven by an engine of 200-horse power. She was splendidly equipped in every respect, and had become well-known for her rapid passages to and from Australia, between which country and England she habitually traded.

The return voyage from Melbourne, commenced on the 26th of August, 1859, was no exception. She incurred, indeed, some danger in rounding Cape Horn from icebergs, which were mistaken at first for clouds ; and off the South American coast she encountered a violent tempest, which, however, she rode out bravely. On the whole, the voyage was prosperous, and, as usual, exceedingly rapid ; the coast of Ireland being sighted about the fifty-fifth day after leaving Melbourne.

On nearing home, the numerous passengers, among whom the utmost harmony had prevailed during the voyage, presented a handsome testimonial to Captain Taylor, in acknowledgment of his skilful and careful seamanship, and of his gentlemanly attention to the comforts of all on board. A testimonial was also presented to the Rev. Mr. Hodge, a clergyman of the Church of England, who had gratuitously conducted the religious services of the ship during the passage.

On Monday, the 24th of October, the *Royal Charter* arrived at Queenstown, where she landed some dozen of her passengers in a boat, and from whence the captain telegraphed to Liverpool the news of his quick and prosperous return. He then proceeded on his voyage.

About eleven o'clock in the forenoon of Tuesday, the 25th, the *Royal Charter* spoke the steam-tug, *United Kingdom*, and took on board eleven riggers who had been assisting in working a ship to Cardiff, and to whom the captain granted a passage to Liverpool. The wind at this time was blowing fresh, and was veering round to east-north-east. It continued to increase in violence throughout the day, had risen to a gale by nightfall, and soon after midnight was blowing a perfect hurricane.

When the *Royal Charter*, after passing Holyhead, arrived off Point Lynas, at six o'clock, it was already dark. Here signal-rockets were thrown up, and guns fired, in the hope of attracting the attention of a pilot, but none made his appearance.

The position of the ship now became critical, owing to the exceptional violence of the wind, and the proximity of a dangerous lee shore. There were on board, as passengers, two other sea-captains, Withers and Adams; and these gentlemen seem to have been the only persons at this time who realised the dangers of the situation. Captain Taylor, finding that his vessel was making lee-way, and gradually drifting towards the land, held a consultation with them, the particulars of which did not transpire.

At ten o'clock the anchors were let go, while, to

lessen the terrible strain upon them, the engines were kept working full speed to windward. Several hours of terrible suspense—of alternating hope and fear—succeeded. The alarm became general, and few, if any, of the passengers remained in their berths. None were allowed on deck ; but from time to time, Captain Taylor went down to them, and encouraged them with the assurance that all would be well ; and in these attempts to abate the general alarm he was seconded by Captain Withers and Dr. Hutch, the Government medical officer.

At about two in the morning the anchor chains parted. The captain now held another consultation with his professional brethren, and, as a result, the mainmast was ordered to be cut away. With some little delay this order was carried out, and shortly after the foremast was also sacrificed. But these measures were of no avail, and, in spite of all that could be done, the ship struck the sands at about four o'clock, and immediately swung round, broadside on. The captain now gave orders to have the vessel hardened on the sand by the action of the screw ; and, apparently with a view to quiet the apprehensions of the passengers, he went down into the saloon and ordered coffee to be prepared. He again assured the ladies that they need not be alarmed, and expressed his confidence that, with God's help, they would all get ashore at daybreak.

As soon as there was light enough to see, a Maltese seaman, named Rogerson, volunteered to endeavour to make his way through the surf, and to carry a line by which a hawser might be made fast to the shore.



His offer was accepted, and tying a cord round his waist, he jumped overboard. The land was not more than ten yards distant; but a tremendous sea beat over the ship like a cataract, and rendered the attempt almost desperate. But the brave fellow succeeded, and thus the hawser was got ashore and fastened to the rocks. To the hawser was fixed a boatswain's chair, which could be pulled to and fro by men at each end. Some of the country-people were already on the spot, and by their assistance about a dozen of the seamen were drawn ashore.

Had the vessel held together long enough numbers might have been saved in this way. But the stoutest ship could not long withstand the tremendous force of the seas that in swift succession were delivering their assaults on the hull of the doomed *Royal Charter*. The end came suddenly; at about seven o'clock the great ship snapped in two.

In a moment over four hundred helpless human creatures were struggling in the raging sea. Then the end came. Multitudes were drowned, many crushed among the fragments of the ruined ship, and about twenty washed more dead than alive on the shelving rocks.

Soon after breaking amidships, the vessel parted again at the fore-hatch, throwing some fifty of those who yet remained into the sea, where they were all drowned. The captain, with all the superior officers, perished; Mr. Stephens, the chief officer, being killed by the falling of the rigging. Not one of the ladies or one of the children escaped. Captain Taylor, after making every exertion to save others, was seen,

with Mr. Dowie, struggling to reach the shore, when both were struck on the head by a boat falling from the davits, and seen no more.

Several of those who were ultimately saved owed their lives to the Anglesea peasantry, who, linking hands with each other, were enabled to enter the water, and thus drag the unfortunates ashore.

Some further details as to the hours of agonising suspense, both before and after the ship struck, may be gathered from the evidence given before the Coroner's jury by some of the few survivors.

Mr. Carew Taylor stated that on Tuesday night, when the gale became so strong, opposite the Skerries, the ladies and many of the passengers became exceedingly nervous. For his own part, he had such confidence in the captain, officers, and ship, particularly as she had gone through such long voyages, and was now near home, that he went to bed at ten o'clock. He could only doze, and was aroused in an hour or two by the fearful storm. He knew that they could not be going more than a mile an hour; for they had been dodging Holyhead all day and all the evening. He heard a voice in the cabin, crying out, "Come directly; we are all lost! I will take your child; come along directly!" He knew the voice to be that of Captain Withers, a passenger, who had lost his own vessel in the South Pacific. He jumped out of bed, hastily put on a few articles, and ran up on deck. He heard the ship bump, bump, heavily, two or three times against the ground.

On going into the general saloon, he found it crowded with ladies and gentlemen in the utmost state

of terror. Families were all clinging to each other—the young children were crying out piteously, while parents were endeavouring to soothe them. The Rev. Mr. Hodge instituted a prayer-meeting, and a great number of passengers fervently participated in the service. The ship struck, however, so fearfully, and the huge waves came down upon her with such tremendous force, rushing into the cabins through the skylights broken by the falling rigging, and through the hatches, that all became absorbed in the idea of personal danger. Captain Withers came into the cabin, and said, “Now, ladies, you need not be at all afraid ; we are on a sandy beach, and imbedded in the sand : we are not ten paces from the shore, and the tide will leave us dry ; you will all be safe.” Dr. Hutch and Captain Taylor came down afterwards, and made similar representations, which had the effect of greatly allaying the excitement. Great order was consequently kept on board, and perfect discipline.

At half-past five o'clock the bumping went on worse than ever, until at last the water came rushing in. When daylight began to peep, he was knocked by the force of the waves beating the ship with great violence against the side of the saloon, and the screams were now dreadful. It was impossible to know what to do. He went on deck, but with the greatest difficulty maintained his equilibrium. At this moment a great sea came against the broadside, and divided the ship into two, just at the engine-house, as one would smash a pipe-stump, and the sea washed quite through her.

Having made up his mind that he had best jump overboard on the lee-side, he attempted to descend by

a rope, but fell into deep water, which was here so thickly strewn with timber, &c., that his head had to open up a passage. He was a good swimmer, and was able to keep afloat. His senses were nearly knocked out by the floating timber, and he was repeatedly thrown ashore, and as often washed back again, until some people on shore, who watched him, managed to catch him . . . . While drifting about, he saw a poor fellow astride on a large spar, who had on a life-belt ; but some one clung to him, and both were drowned. He was momentarily fearing that his brains would be knocked out by a large yard that came on the weather-side of him ; but, strange to say, it was carried over him, and both were pitched on shore together.

A second survivor from among the passengers tells the story of Captain Taylor coming down and ordering the coffee "which they never lived to drink." One of the mates then called the captain on deck, and shortly afterwards they learned that she had parted with her port anchor. About two o'clock he went on to the poop, and could see land. He saw numbers jump overboard, as the land seemed so near, but he only saw one get ashore. He let himself down by a rope on the lee-side, and made a spring out to clear the masses of people huddled about the shore side of the ship. He had on a life-belt, but the struggle was so desperate, that he had not the slightest hopes of being saved. He held on to a spar, and was ultimately washed on to a rock, where he held on by grasping the sea-weed, until two men came to him, just as another wave was going to nip

him back. It was his opinion, that if they had commenced operations for saving life earlier, a greater number would have been saved. All were waiting as patiently as could be, in the hope of the tide leaving them ; but the tide must have been flowing at the time they thought it was ebbing.

A third passenger stated that he was washed by a huge wave from the poop, and left well in on the land, but was quite unconscious how he got ashore.

With regard to the statements quoted above as to "the delay in commencing operations for saving life," and also as to the mistake he imagines to have been made as to the state of the tide, it is important to compare the evidence of Barton, one of the riggers taken on board from the *United Kingdom*. He states that the tide was ebbing about the last quarter of the time during which the vessel was on the shore. He then describes the absolute darkness which rendered it impossible to take any active step till daylight. It was dark as pitch, he says ; they could not see their hands before them. The boats were all in readiness, but they were in total ignorance as to what sort of a coast it was ; and the sea was so rough, that no boat could have lived five minutes in it ; under these circumstances, the boats were given up. They made up a tar-barrel, ready to be set fire to as a torch, to send ashore, to light the coast and let them know what kind of a place it was ; but the ship thumped so heavily, and the danger was so imminent, that the idea was not carried out. About six o'clock, the dawn of light, they saw a man on shore, to whom they called. He seemed quite bewildered at what

he saw, and ran to fetch assistance. He brought five or six men to the shore. In the meantime the hawser had been got ashore by Rogerson, and a boatswain's chair was fastened, so that it could be hauled to and from the ship and shore. The men got into it one by one and were hauled to land. They commenced landing parties in this way at half-past six o'clock, and had got about a dozen ashore, when the ship suddenly parted in two, giving way amidships.

Charles Dickens in his "Uncommercial Traveller" presents us with a striking picture of the wreck as it was seen from the land:—

"A man, living on the nearest hilltop overlooking the sea, being blown out of bed at about daybreak by the wind that had begun to strip his roof off, and getting upon a ladder with his nearest neighbour, to construct some temporary device for keeping his house over his head, saw from the ladder's elevation, as he looked down by chance towards the shore, some dark troubled object close in with the land. And he and the other, descending to the beach, and finding the sea mercilessly beating over a great broken ship, clambered up the stony ways, like staircases without stairs, on which the wild village of Llanallgo hangs, in little clusters, as fruit hangs on boughs, and gave the alarm. And so . . . the scattered quarrymen and fishermen inhabiting that part of Wales came running to the dismal sight—their clergyman among them. And as they stood in the leaden morning, stricken with pity, leaning hard against the wind, their breath and vision often failing as the sleet and



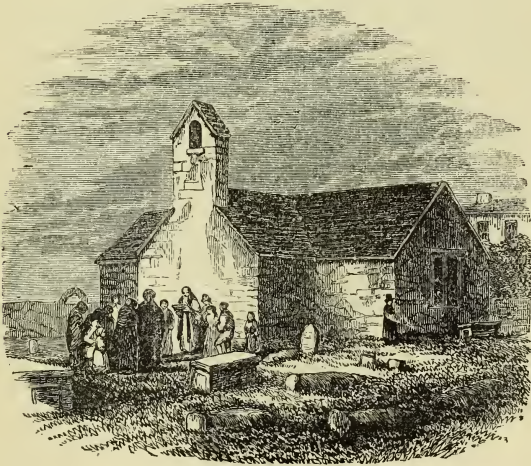
spray rushed at them from the ever-forming and dissolving mountains of sea, and as the wool which was a part of the vessel's cargo blew in with the salt foam and remained upon the land when the foam melted, they saw the ship's life-boat put off from one of the heaps of wreck. And first there were three men in her ; and in a moment she capsized, and there were but two ; and again she was struck by a vast mass of water, and there was but one ; and again she was thrown bottom upward, and that one, with his arm stuck through the broken planks, and waving as if for the help that could never reach him, went down into the deep."

We are told that no attempt was made to launch the boats, so probably the three unfortunates got into the life-boat as she was being washed away from the ship by the force of the waves.

When Dickens visited Llanallgo, the divers were at work :—" They were bringing up from the bottom of the sea the gold they had found on the preceding day—some five-and-twenty thousand pounds. Of three hundred and fifty thousand pounds worth of gold, three hundred thousand pounds worth, in round numbers, was at that time recovered. The great bulk of the remainder was surely and steadily coming up. Some loss of sovereigns necessarily took place ; indeed, at first sovereigns had drifted in with the sand, and been scattered far and wide over the beach like sea-shells. So tremendous was the force of the sea, that it beat one great ingot of gold deep into a strong and heavy piece of the ship's solid ironwork, in which, also, several loose sovereigns that the ingot



had swept in before it had been found, as firmly embedded as though the iron had been liquid when they were forced into it. It was remarked of the bodies that came ashore, too, that they had been stunned to death, and not suffocated. Observation, both of the internal change that had been wrought in them, and of the expression of the countenance, showed that death had come to them in a merciful and easy form."



Llanallgo Church, Anglesea.

He next describes the church and graveyard. The former was at the time disused, having been converted into a dead-house, where the bodies brought thither from the shore lay, for a time, awaiting identification. If not claimed, the dead were interred in their clothes in large graves capable of holding four

coffins. One such grave Dickens saw ready open, and also a couple of the hastily-formed yet neat and suitable coffins. Mr. Hughes, the clergyman, displayed wonderful kindness and ability. He kept a register of the dead, with a note of such marks, either on the person or dress, as might lead to identification. Thus several bodies were exhumed by sorrowing relatives, even after it had been found necessary to bury them in the first instance. When Dickens visited the scene, one hundred and forty-five bodies had already been interred in that little country graveyard.

The total number of persons lost by the wreck of the *Royal Charter* was four hundred and fifty-nine; only thirty-nine being saved out of the four hundred and ninety-eight on board when she struck. Her cargo of merchandize, which was small, was valued at £5,000 only; but she carried a large quantity of Australian gold, the value of which was greatly in excess of the amount stated above. The whole of this, with the exception of a small percentage, has been recovered by the divers, whose operations Charles Dickens watched.

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The *Royal Charter* was homeward-bound; it seemed to those five hundred men and women as though their troubles and dangers were over. Contrast with this the story of a ship outward-bound, with a yet larger number of souls on board, all looking forward to a long voyage and picturing

to themselves that far-off land where they hoped to find a safe and happy home ; it is the story of

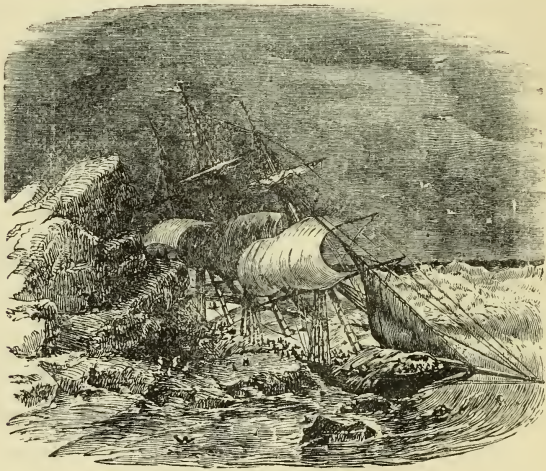
### THE TAYLEUR.

This magnificent vessel of 1,800 tons burthen, commanded by Captain Noble, left the Mersey, for Melbourne, on Thursday, the 19th of January, 1854, with all her berths occupied. She is stated to have had six hundred and twenty souls on board ; the adult passengers numbering four hundred and thirty-six, the crew eighty, and the rest being made up of ship-servants, young persons, and children.

Shortly after entering the Irish Channel, the ship encountered rough weather, which increased to a tremendous gale ; and, from causes not sufficiently explained, but supposed by some to be connected with a defective state of the compasses, and by others attributed to the alleged fact that the ship would not answer her helm, she was driven out of her course, and on Saturday morning was drifting towards the Irish coast, and off Lambay, a few miles north of Malahide. At twelve o'clock she struck on the rocks, and filled so rapidly that in half-an-hour she had sunk in seven fathoms water, only a few of the spars appearing above the surface.

Mr. W. Jones, one of the cabin passengers, gives the following account of the sad catastrophe :—  
“About twelve o'clock, a friend came down to the cabin where I was, and said, ‘There is land close to us, and they are afraid the ship will go ashore.’ I proceeded on deck, when a horrible scene of con-

fusion met my eye. Before us, at a short distance, rose the bleak and rocky island of Lambay, round the base of which the waves were dashing furiously ; while the vessel, quite unmanageable in the hands of the crew, was drifting towards it with fearful rapidity. The deck was crowded with passengers, male and female, who, perceiving their danger, were in a state of almost frantic terror. The captain attempted to wear the ship, but she would not pay-



Wreck of the *Tayleur* on Lambay Island.

off, and continued to drift towards the rocks. . . . .  
. . . . . At this moment I heard the chain running out with the anchor. The first mate called out 'Hold on!' but both anchors were let go: they snapped like glass.

"And now began a scene of the most frightful

horror—some running below to get what they could, others praying, some taking leave of their friends, wringing their hands, and beseeching them for help. The vessel, after striking, lay so close upon the rocks, that several persons attempted to jump ashore. The first person who jumped on the island struck his head against the rocks, and fell back into the water with his head frightfully cut, and, after struggling a short time, sank. The next person who jumped from the vessel made good his footing, and was followed by several others—I believe the Chinese and Lascars belonging to the crew. They also succeeded in making good their landing, and, as soon as they had done so, scampered with all haste up the rocks, never attempting to assist those on board.

“Several now swung themselves on the rocks, which were but a few feet from us. I managed to swing myself on shore, and retained the rope in my hand: I passed the end of it up to some of those behind, and by this means a great many were enabled to come ashore.

“To attempt to paint the heartrending scene on board the ship would be impossible—wives clinging to their husbands, children to their parents—women running wildly about the deck, uttering the most heartrending cries—many offering all they possessed to persons to get them on shore. . . .

“The doctor of the ship—a most noble fellow—struggled hard to save his wife and child. He had succeeded in getting about half-way to the shore on a rope, holding his child by its clothes in his teeth; but just then the ship lurched outwards, by which

the rope was dragged from the hands of those who held it on the lower rocks, and was held only by those above, thus running him high in the air, so that the brave fellow could not drop on the rock. Word was now given to lower the rope gently ; but those who held it above let it go by the run, and the poor fellow, with his child, was buried in the waves. But in a short time he again appeared above the water, manfully battling with the waves and the portions of the wreck that now floated about him. He at length swam to a ladder that was hanging by a rope alongside the ship, and got upon it. After he had been there a minute or two, a female floated close to him : he immediately took hold of her on the ladder, tenderly parted the hair from her face, and appeared to be encouraging her ; but in another minute she was washed from his hold, and sank almost immediately. He then got up again into the ship, and tried to get his wife on shore ; but they both perished. He deserved a better fate.

“ The scene was now most truly awful. The most desperate struggles for life were made by the wretched passengers ; great numbers of women jumped overboard, in the vain hope of reaching land ; and the ropes were crowded by hundreds, who, in their eagerness, terror, and confusion, frustrated each other’s efforts for self-preservation. Many of the females would get half-way, and then become unable to proceed further, and, after clinging to the rope for a short time, would be forced from their hold by those who came after them. *Three women only, out of two hundred, were saved.* One



of these had got part of the way across, where she hung some time by her two hands over the foaming waves ; her husband then came on the rope, and managed to assist her to the shore : they had children tied to their backs. Of the whole number who fell into the water, not above five were saved. I saw one fine girl, who, after falling from the rope, managed to get hold of another one which was hanging from the side of the ship, and which she held on by for more than a quarter of an hour, the sea every moment dashing her against the side of the ship ; but it was impossible for us to render her any assistance. . . .

“The ship’s stern now began to sink. She made a lurch, and all the ropes were snapped asunder. The scene was most harrowing. Every wave washed off scores at a time ; we could see them struggle for a moment, then, tossing their arms, sink to rise no more. At length the whole of the ship sank under water. There was a fearful struggle for a moment, and all, except two who were in the rigging, were gone.

“The coast-guard, who had been apprised of the wreck, now came up ; but all they could do was to attempt to save the two who were in the rigging. They managed to get a line to one of them, by fastening two lines, at the end of each of which was a piece of wood, to a single line, and guiding it from the rock to the spot where the poor fellow was, so that he could reach it ; they then dragged him ashore. There was one fine young man left in the top, but they could not reach him ; and when he



saw them going away, his cries were heartrending. About two o'clock the next morning, the coast-guard managed to reach him, after he had been on the top fourteen hours. You may fancy the poor fellow's joy at his deliverance.

"We found we were on Lambay Island, three miles from Rush, and thirteen miles from Dublin. The steward of Lord Talbot, whose property the island is, threw open the house, which they call a castle, for us, as also did the coast-guard. Here you would see some limping, with their legs sprained, others without shoes or stockings; here one with nothing but his shirt, there another with nothing but his trowsers.

"The first day I had neither shoes nor stockings. We were served out with oatmeal and potatoes, and a pig was killed for us. We managed to make a good meal at the house of the coast-guard man at which we were stopping; and beds were made for us in all the rooms by spreading straw on the floor. We were almost starved with cold. The night was dreadful, and we were, many of us, almost naked and wet through; in this state we lay all night.

"The next day was worse than the day before. When we went out to the wreck, we found the bodies were lying piled one over another, most of them almost naked, and several persons were getting all they could from the dead bodies. It was enough to make the stoutest heart shudder. One poor female was lying on the ground, naked all but her stays, totally uncovered. In this state she was left. The coast-guard said the men who saved the things had a

right to them. The captain said he had nothing to do with it.

“About six o'clock we were told that a steamer was in sight. Through the day, I offered anything if they would put me across to Rush, as I wished to telegraph home that we were safe, before the news of the wreck arrived; but, for some reason, they appeared to wish to keep us all on the island in this wretched state. God grant that we may never witness such a scene again.”

At the official inquiry, the pilot who took the *Tayleur* out of the Mersey stated positively that the ship “answered her helm, and steered like a fish,” and also that there was nothing defective about the compasses. Nevertheless, the verdict of the coroner's jury attributed the catastrophe by which such a lamentable loss of life was brought about to “the highly culpable neglect of the owners, in permitting the vessel to leave the port without compasses properly adjusted, or a sufficient trial having taken place to learn whether she was under the control of her helm or not.”

The total number of persons lost by the wreck of the *Tayleur* must have been about three hundred. One would-be passenger probably owed his life to his own stupidity. In the darkness and confusion, when the tug was casting off her charge at the mouth of the Mersey, he somehow found himself “in the wrong boat.” When the mistake was discovered the tug put about with the intention of putting him on board the emigrant ship, but the *Tayleur* was now under full sail, and could not be overtaken.

*Nolens volens*, the muddle-headed passenger had to return to Liverpool, leaving his belongings to go to Australia, or, as it turned out, to be wrecked on the Irish coast. Doubtless he did not afterwards regret his mistake.

### THE FORFARSHIRE.

This shipwreck has a place in our catalogue chiefly because it is with it that the name of GRACE DARLING is associated.

The *Forfarshire* steamer, of 300 tons, Captain John Humble, sailed from Hull, on her voyage to Dundee, on the 5th of September, 1838, at half-past six in the evening. She carried a valuable cargo, and had on board sixty-three persons in all, of whom forty or forty-one were passengers, the remainder consisting of crew, engineers, firemen, &c.

On arriving off Flamborough Head the boilers were found to be leaking. Considerable delay was thus caused, and the matter was so serious that two of the engine fires were extinguished by the water, and it was necessary to keep the pumps constantly going. However, after a while the defect was temporarily patched up, and the vessel got under weigh again. Still, she was evidently in no fit condition to endure any special stress of weather.

The night passed without further accident, but in the course of the following day the wind rose and the sea ran high. About six o'clock on Thursday evening the *Forfarshire* passed through the "Fairway," between Fern Islands and the land, and

entered Berwick Bay about eight o'clock, with rather a stiff sea running, and the wind blowing strong from N.N.E. By this time the leakage from the boilers had increased to such a degree that the fires were with difficulty kept burning, while two men employed to pump water into the boilers were unable to keep them supplied.

The wind now increased to a storm, and owing to the violent motion of the vessel the engines became useless, and the engineer reported that they would no longer work. This was about ten o'clock, the vessel being off St. Abb's Head. As there was great danger of her drifting ashore the sails were hoisted fore and aft, and she was put about, in order to get her before the wind and keep her off the land. From some cause or other this attempt failed, and it was speedily found that without her steam the vessel was unmanageable. No endeavours were made to anchor; it was probably felt that, in face of a gale such as was then raging, all attempts of the kind would be useless. As the tide was setting strongly to the south, the ship was borne in that direction.

The night became thicker and more tempestuous. Torrents of rain were pouring down, and there was so dense a fog prevailing that it was impossible to discern the situation of the vessel. By and by, in confirmation of the fears of all on board, breakers were discovered close to leeward, and the next moment, the Farne lights becoming visible, all doubts were at an end as to the imminent perils that awaited them. The captain attempted to run the ship between the Farne Islands, but she refused to

answer her helm, and at three o'clock on Friday morning she struck, with terrible force, on the outer, or Longstone Island.

At this terrible crisis, the master lost his self-possession entirely, and his wife, who was on board with him, demanded, in cries of despairing anguish, that assistance and protection which he was in no condition to render. A number of sailors, at the head of whom was the chief mate, bent on self-preservation, began lowering the larboard quarter-boat. The shrieks and cries of the women, as they rushed upon deck, mingled with the roaring sea, the dashing breakers, and the screams of innumerable wild fowl disturbed in their resting-places, produced a scene which baffles description.

When the ship struck, most of the cabin passengers were asleep in their berths. The steward having run down to give the alarm, one gentleman, Mr. Ruthven Ritchie, of Perthshire, seizing his trousers, rushed upon deck. He was just in time to see the sailors leaping into the boat: with extraordinary dexterity and presence of mind he grasped a rope, swung himself off into it, and thus saved his life.

He had himself no clothing all the time he was in the boat, save a shirt and a pair of trousers, and he was employed the whole time in baling out the water with a pair of shoes. The escape of the boat seemed little short of a miracle. There was but one small outlet by which it could avoid being dashed to fragments among the breakers, and through that outlet the men rowed without being aware of it. After being exposed throughout that terrible night, they were picked up by a Montrose sloop at eight o'clock

the following morning, and carried into Shields. Nine was the number of those who thus escaped,—among them Mr. Ritchie was the only passenger.

The vessel in the interim had gone to pieces. She had struck abaft the paddle-boxes, and those who were below had scarce time to rush upon deck, when, striking again, she separated into two parts. The stern, quarter-deck, and cabin were instantly carried away, with all upon them, through a channel called the Piper Gut, which runs between the islands—a place dangerous even in moderate weather—but which, in a storm, becomes terrific. The fore part of the vessel, in which were the captain, his wife, and a few of the passengers, remained fast on the rock. Ere long, the captain, with his wife in his arms, was washed off and drowned. The situation of those who remained seemed hopeless. Each succeeding wave threatened to engulf them; and as their strength grew feebler, the raging billows assaulted them with increasing fury. Numbed with cold, they could hardly hold on to the wreck, while from time to time huge billows rolled completely over them with a force that literally rent the clothes from their persons, and reduced them to a state of utter exhaustion.

Towards morning the cries of the unfortunate people on the wreck were heard by Grace Horsley Darling, who, with her father, Mr. W. Darling, kept the outer Farne lighthouse. Grace awoke her father, and as soon as day broke he launched his boat, and prepared to go to the rescue. But noticing the state of the tide and the weather, the old man hesitated to proceed till his heroic daughter, having discovered that some living people were still clinging to the



wreck, seized an oar and stepped into the boat. The old man followed her, and together they rowed off to the wreck, through a sea in which a boat could hardly be expected to live. The father, with much difficulty, and after many attempts, succeeded in landing on the rock ; and, to save the boat from being dashed to pieces, the daughter rowed off and on amidst the furious billows, which, but for her dexterity in the



guidance of the little coble, would have hurled it in fragments among the breakers. By the exercise of the utmost skill and caution, the nine survivors on the wreck, consisting of five of the crew and four passengers, were got into the boat and conveyed to the lighthouse. Here their wants were supplied for some days by the same kind hands which had de-



livered them from death, since, owing to the state of the weather, the mainland could not be reached till the Sunday.

The number of persons lost in the *Forfarshire* was about forty-five ; those saved amounting to eighteen—nine in the boat, and nine rescued by Grace Darling and her father. Only five of these were passengers, out of more than forty that were known to have embarked at Hull.

Mr. Walter White, in his book on “Northumberland and the Border” gives an interesting and picturesque description of a visit paid by him to the Longstone lighthouse. Grace Darling’s sister, he says, a quiet-looking, middle-aged woman, of respectful manner, welcomed them to the lighthouse, and led the way to the sitting-room. Presently old Darling, Grace’s father, came up, and apparently, as a matter of course, showed his visitors a copy of the letter which he wrote the day after the fatal wreck in September, 1838, to inform the Secretary of the Trinity Board of the adventure which made his daughter’s name illustrious among those of heroic women.

Mr. White afterwards went up to the lantern, and out upon the gallery, whence, as the tower is sixty-three feet in height, the view over the islands is ample and richly varied. The old man pointed out the course which he and his daughter took on their way to the wreck ; and explained that his wife had helped to launch the boat, that Grace knew how to pull an oar, but that to pull half a mile or more through a furious sea was no easy task for a girl.

“My eye roved over the scene as we talked.

looking down on the twenty-seven isles and islets as on a panorama. Here, nearly six miles from the shore, the isolation appears somewhat awful; and we may think that the courage of the residents was tried in the storm some years ago, which brought in such tremendous waves that they had to seek the upper chambers of the lighthouse. The Longstone, rising but four feet above high-water mark, is swept by every gale with fierce drifts of spray and foam; hence its vegetation is of the scantiest, including but five kinds of plants, among which the sea mat-grass predominates. Far different from the present scene: for now children are at play on the rock; the poultry look as if the weather were always fine to them; clothes are hanging out to dry; and two boys, who have just come in from fishing, are cleaning and washing their capture, throwing the refuse over the stern of their boat, and the young gulls hovering round, dart down with a shriek, and seize the dainty morsels sometimes before they touch the water.”\*

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A passenger-steamer wrecked on a calm, fine night, while steering its regular course along a familiar shore, and but six survivors to tell the tale of the mishap! Such a catastrophe is not common; and how little do the hundreds of busy travellers

\* Grace Darling lies buried in Bamborough Churchyard. In 1846 a monument was erected to her memory; on it she is represented as a full-length, recumbent figure, the hands are crossed, but an oar is held to her side by the right arm.

who, night after night, take their berths on board our coasting and cross-channel boats, think of the dangers they may have escaped during the hours of quiet sleep! How terrible to be hurriedly roused; to rush on deck half-asleep; to mingle with the wild, bewildered throng of the helpless; and, then, within half an hour, to find oneself struggling for dear life on the wreck-strewn surface of the pitiless midnight sea! It is a story such as this that we have now to tell—the story of the

### PEGASUS.

The *Pegasus* was a well-built and well-found steamer, which, for some years, had been engaged in the trade between Hull and Leith. Her master, Captain Miller, was an excellent seaman, and having formerly commanded one of the London and Leith smacks, was well acquainted with the navigation of the coast.

She left Leith at half-past six in the evening of Wednesday, the 19th of July, 1843, with twenty cabin passengers on board, and a rather larger number in the steerage, including a detachment from the 56th Foot. Her crew amounted to fourteen, all told.

It was a calm and pleasant evening, though a slight haze rested on the water. At half-past ten the *Pegasus* steamed past Berwick Harbour. At midnight she was off the coast of Holy Island, and steering for what is termed the Fairway, a channel between the Farne group of islands and the main-

land. It is a considerable width, and deep enough for the largest ships, but the numerous sunken rocks that stud it render the passage very dangerous. However, lights and buoys are stationed at every critical point ; and we are told that on the night in question, the buoy which marked the Goldstone Rock, as well as the Farne Lights, was clearly discernible. None the less, while proceeding at full speed, the *Pegasus* struck upon the Goldstone, which was at the time completely under water. The shock was so slight as to alarm very few of the passengers ; and some minutes elapsed before they understood the real character of the position in which they had been suddenly placed.

Immediately after the accident, the captain ordered the engines to be reversed. When the vessel got clear, it was found that the water was rushing in with terrible rapidity ; her head was accordingly put straight for the shore, which was distant two or three miles. But the time was too short. The rising water extinguished the fires, the engines ceased to move, and within half an hour of the moment when that slight concussion had disturbed the sleeping passengers, the *Pegasus* had gone down by the head in deep water.

Of the fifty or so on board, but six survived—the mate, the engineer, the carpenter, one seaman, and two passengers. Several of these persons gave accounts of the catastrophe, which enable us to realise the scene with painful distinctness. The whole story shows how lamentable and fatal were the results of indecision, panic, and want of discipline.

We first quote from Mr. Hood, the engineer :—  
“ We left Leith,” he says, “ at about twenty minutes past six o’clock on Wednesday evening, and passed Berwick harbour about half-past ten. It was a very good night, but a little hazy on the water. The wind was light from the north and the sea smooth. About half-past twelve I was in the engine-room, which is on deck, the engine being a single one, when I found the vessel had struck against something. I instantly threw the engine out of gear, and whilst I was in the act of doing that, the captain, who was on the bridge between the paddle-boxes looking out, shouted to me to stop, and put her back. I stopped, and backed accordingly, and that brought the vessel clear. Then the master ordered me to turn ahead; and after that was done, I found the water coming in rapidly.

“ One of the seamen was on the bridge with the captain looking out. When I observed the water coming in, I went up to the master and told him, when he ordered the man at the helm to put the vessel about, with the intention of running her ashore. The man did so, and we continued going ahead towards the shore from that time till about a quarter past one o’clock, when she went down. When I came from the bridge—having told the master of the water coming in—I went again into the engine-room, and saw the water coming in very fast.

“ I then went to the man at the wheel, and told him how the water was coming in, and urged him to get the vessel ashore as fast as possible. In returning

to the engine-room from doing that, I met the mate coming out of his berth, as the watch was just being changed at that time. I told the mate the vessel was making water very fast, and that he was to pay particular attention to the man at the wheel. I then went into the engine-room, and remained there, sometimes standing outside of the door, till I saw the water up to the top of the cylinder-cover. The steam was then nearly exhausted, and the engine was stopping. I then left the engine-house, and went up to the quarter-deck, when I found that the two boats had been lowered into the water, and both of them swamped. The larboard boat, I understood, had been swamped in being lowered down, and the starboard one by the rush of the people to get into it. I then went forward, and to the top of the foremast, in order to see if there were any boats near; but I saw none, and returned to the quarter-deck.

“ I then found that the vessel was fast going down head foremost. Just then I saw the master, and we shook hands, he exclaiming at the time, ‘ Alas! alas! we are all going to the bottom.’ The captain complained of the boats being lowered down without his knowing it. We stood together for a short time, and then the master, I think, went forward; but I never saw him afterwards. The vessel then took a heavy lurch to the larboard side. The second mate was near me, and I asked him to get a piece of loose wood that was lying near. It was thrown overboard to endeavour to save ourselves by. He threw it over, and we jumped into the water immediately afterwards, and got hold of it. The vessel, in recovering

from the lurch, threw us on the deck again with the wood to which we were clinging. I then clung to the after-mast, and went up it as high as I could get ; but there were two ladies higher up it than I was.

“ When I had been a minute or so upon the mast, the vessel went down ; and when I found myself amongst the water, I threw myself off, and swam a short time till I got hold of the gangway plank. There was a passenger on it at the time. After I had got on it, the apprentice-boy got on it also ; and we all three continued on it till about three o’clock in the morning, when the boy got exhausted and fell off. The passenger remained on it for about an hour longer, and he then fell off also ; and I remained on it till the *Martello* steamer came and picked me up. It was then about half-past five on Thursday morning.

“ I found nothing the matter with me when in the water ; but immediately on getting out, I found I could not walk. The mate, William Brown, was picked up before I was. . . . After I had been a good while on the plank, I saw William Brown in the small boat a short distance from me, and we spoke to each other several times. I saw the boat before Brown got into it. He had, I think, first laid hold of the engine-house hatch, and had seized the boat as it was floating past him. When I went up the foremast, George Taylor, the carpenter, came up after me, and he was taken from it by the *Martello*, along with one of the passengers. Daniel Campbell, the fireman, got into one of the boats, and was picked up in it by Mackwell, one of the Holy Island



fishermen. There was a good look-out kept all the time. The master and crew were quite sober ; and I cannot account for the boat having got upon the rock. I knew nothing about the position of the buoys or lights. I understood the boats were lowered by the passengers without the approbation or knowledge of the master."

The passenger seen by Hood clinging to the foremast with Taylor, the carpenter, was a man named Hildyard, the son of a clergyman, at Beverley. He gives the following narrative of his own escape:—

"I have for several years followed the trade of a seaman, but I was going to Hull as a passenger by the *Pegasus*. I think it was about half-past twelve when the vessel struck : I was below at the time, but when I heard the crash I went on deck. I was at once aware, from the violence of the concussion, that the ship had struck on a rock. I ran forward, and looked into the forecastle, and found her fast filling with water. I perceived the captain and mate in earnest conversation on the cross-bridge between the paddle-boxes. I heard the captain order the engine to be reversed, which was immediately done.

"I then went aft, and found the people all rushing into the boats, men and women. I got into the star-board boat, but finding it crowded with people who knew nothing about the management of a boat, I got up again, and the boat soon afterwards swamped. I heard some passengers eagerly asking the captain what was best to be done ; I did not hear his answer, but he did not seem much agitated.

"Seeing the steamer fast sinking, I took off my hat,

boots, and stock, and helped myself to two or three fathoms of rope, with the view of lashing myself to something, if I should afterwards be able to do so while in the water. Two rockets and a blue-light were burned by order of the mate, as a signal of distress. I think about half-an-hour elapsed from the time the vessel struck till she went down ; it was certainly not more. I was standing on the after-part of the larboard paddle-box when she went down, and I sunk with her. I was about half a minute under water. I felt myself caught by the legs by some one, but I got quit of them. When I rose to the surface, the top part of the funnel and the stern of the quarter-deck were just disappearing. The first thing I got hold of was the accommodation-ladder, which I got astride of. I perceived about eight feet of the foremast standing out of the water, and the carpenter clinging to it. I asked him if there was room for two, and he said there was. I then proceeded to lash the ladder with my rope to the mast-head, and we both of us stood upon this ladder, which was under water, until we were picked up by the *Martello*. When we left it, there was only about two feet of the mast visible. If we had been much longer, we could not have held on. Just before the vessel went down, I saw a woman climbing up the main rigging ; but she must have gone down with the vessel, for I never saw her again."

The other passenger who escaped was also a seaman by profession, though on this occasion he was travelling as servant to an invalid gentleman.

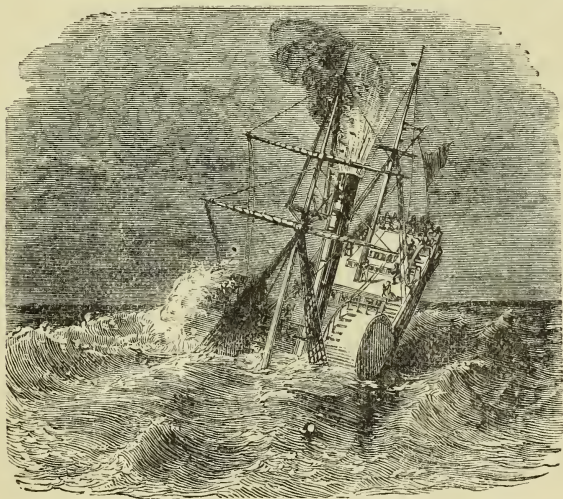
This man's name was Baillie, and his account contains some interesting details. It is as follows:—

“I have been a seaman for about eighteen years, but was recently in attendance upon Mr. Torry, who was one of the passengers on board the *Pegasus* when she went down. I think it was about twenty minutes past twelve when the vessel struck: I was down in the cabin lying on a sofa; and when I found that the vessel had struck, I ran on deck, and having seen the state of matters there, I went down to the cabin for Mr. Torry. I told the passengers below that I believed the ship had struck, but they did not seem to comprehend what I meant. Some of the passengers (chiefly the ladies) were in bed.

“When I reached the deck with Mr. Torry, I saw the crew in the act of lowering the boats. I put Mr. Torry in the starboard-quarter boat, when it was in the act of being lowered; and when it had reached the water I sprung in myself. There were then about nine of us in the boat. A lady, I remember, was sitting in the bow. When we were in the boat, there was a cry from the quarter-deck to ‘stick to the ship.’ At that moment the engines were set in motion; and, the boat being hooked to the ship by the stern, but unhooked from it at the bow, the back-water raised by the paddles filled the boat and upset her, throwing the passengers into the sea. I got hold of the ship's rudder-chain; and the chief-mate having thrown a rope to me, I got into the ship again.

“Seeing the danger increasing, I undressed myself, to prepare for swimming for my life, and laid my

clothes upon the companion. By this time the engine had stopped, and the ship was fast settling by the head. Looking around me, I saw the Rev. Mr. Mackenzie on the quarter-deck praying, with several of the passengers on their knees around him. Mr. Mackenzie seemed calm and collected. All the passengers around him were praying too; but Mr. Mackenzie's voice was distinctly heard above them all. I heard the captain say that we must do the



Ship Sinking.

best we could for ourselves. I saw a lady, with two children, close beside me on the companion, calmly resign herself to the Almighty: the children seemed unconscious of the danger, for they were talking about some trifling matter.

“When I found the vessel fast filling, I leaped

overboard ; and the engineer and I were first drawn into the sea by the suction occasioned by the vessel sinking. I soon got up again, however, and got hold of a plank and the steps which led to the quarter-deck. The stewardess attempted to get hold of me, but I extricated myself from her to save my own life.

“ By this time the scene was a most dismal one: the surface of the water was covered by the dead and the dying—the screeching was fearful. One of the firemen also attempted to get hold of the plank which I had, but I swam away from him. I remained floating about till half-past six, when I was picked up by a boat from the *Martello*. I was then about a mile from the wreck ; and the people in the *Martello* did not for some time observe me, till I attracted their attention by waving a stick. One little boy kept himself afloat for above three hours on part of the skylight covering, and made great exertions to save himself, but he sank at last. His body was warm when picked up. I was once wrecked before, about twenty years ago, off the coast of St. Domingo, when I was three days and three nights on a reef. It was the experience I learnt then which gave me an idea of taking off my clothes before leaping into the sea.”

The *Martello* was the companion ship to the unfortunate *Pegasus*—the one vessel plying from Leith to Hull, while the other was performing the return voyage in the opposite direction. The steamers ought to have passed each other a couple of hours after midnight ; but the July morning was already

pouring its light over the sea when the *Martello* came upon the scene of the disaster. Assisted by some Holy Island fishermen who were returning after a night at sea, the steamer picked up the few fainting survivors, and carried them to Leith. The fireman, Campbell, to whom Hood alludes, was in a most exhausted condition. He was found sitting erect in a sunken boat in a state of frigid collapse—the film of death already glazing his eyes. He was brought round, however, by means of restoratives, and we are told that his first incoherent inquiry was as to the state of the boiler fires! Perhaps he had stood faithful to his charge and watched the hissing water as it rose and stopped the engines.

There seems no doubt that Captain Miller, though a good seaman, lost his presence of mind and became utterly bewildered at the critical moment. Still, he can hardly be blamed for the orders given to the engineer. It seems very doubtful if the vessel could have been kept on the rock in such a way as to prevent her slipping off and sinking. The shore being so near and the night so fine, he might have reasonably hoped to run the steamer aground before she sank; and had the engine fires not been so quickly drowned, the entire crew and passengers might have been saved in this way.

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It may now suffice to narrate, somewhat briefly, a few additional instances of wrecks upon our British shores. Some of them are of interest as illustrating



the noble efforts made by those on shore—coast-guard men, life-boat crews, steam-tug captains, and others, to rescue those who oft times were perishing before their very eyes.

### THE SCHILLER.

For loss of life, this wreck, which took place upon the Scilly Isles on the 7th of May, 1875, must rank immediately after that of the *Royal Charter* and the *Tayleur*.

The *Schiller* was an iron steam-vessel, built at Glasgow in 1873. She was of 3,600 tons register, was rigged as a brig, and belonged to the "Eagle Company" of Hamburg, between which port and New York she regularly plied. She left New York on the 27th of April, having on board a crew of 120, 264 passengers, and a general cargo. Her run across the Atlantic was made with a fair wind and in favourable weather, until about the 4th of May, when a thick haze came on, with driving storms of rain, preventing the captain from taking those observations which would have revealed his exact position. On the evening of the 7th, the haze deepened into a fog.

It was known that the vessel must now be near the entrance of the Channel, and, accordingly, at about half-past nine o'clock, the engines were "slowed" and the ship's course altered so as to keep her (as it was hoped) in mid-channel and far away from the land. It was too late. The vessel had been driven blindly ahead at dangerous speed. She was far out of her course, and in half an hour she drove full upon



the Retarrier Ledge, near the Bishop's Rock Lighthouse on the Scilly Isles.\*

It was soon found that no human effort could dislodge her; and the captain and officers addressed themselves to the task of saving life. Rockets were fired, and guns discharged at frequent intervals; but, unfortunately, these signals were unseen or unheeded. Efforts were next made to lower the boats; but two were crushed by the fall of the funnel, and the others were carried away by the violence of the billows, which shook the *Schiller* from stem to stern.

Meantime, the usual scenes of distress were passing on board. Mothers clasped their children, wives

\* The Scilly Islands lie about thirty miles from the Land's End, and consist of about forty islands, of which six are inhabited, and numerous rocky islets, frequented only by the ocean-birds. The principal are—St. Mary's, with an area of about 1,600 acres; Treseo, about 700; St. Martin's, 550; St. Agnes, 350; Bryher, 300; and Samson, 80. Mr. Dorrien Smith is the "lord," or proprietor of the island, and a very excellent lord we believe he has proved himself to be. The Bishop's Rock Lighthouse was erected in 1858. It is built of granite, and its vane rises to an elevation of 147 feet above high water. The foundations, consisting of four courses of masonry, were laid in a hollow excavated in the surface of the rock; and the first stone in the fifth course was laid on the 16th of July, 1852. The stonework of the tower was carried up, season after season, until its completion on the 28th of August, 1857; and the light—a fixed bright dioptric light of the first order, illuminating the surrounding seas, and visible, in clear weather, at a distance of fourteen miles—was exhibited on the 1st of September, 1858. The lighthouse is situated about seven miles from Hughtown, the capital of St. Mary's, and thirty-two from the mainland.

embraced their husbands. Some knelt in prayer ; others showed a calm indifference to the horror of their position ; others shed silent tears ; not a few exhibited the wildest terror ; and the bravest and readiest provided themselves with safety-belts or spars, so that when the ship went to pieces they might have a battle for life. The masts were shattered and planks torn by the crashing of the ship against the rocks, and ever and anon a swoop of waters rushed over the decks, and carried away a seaman or a passenger, for whom there was no help.

Hope revived for a while when life-boats arrived from St. Mary's, and, at no small hazard to their gallant crews, got alongside, and, after much difficulty and no little danger, took off forty-one persons. These were chiefly women and children. But soon after the last boat had put off, laden to the gunwale, the ship broke up, and the sea was strewn with fragments of wreck. No fewer than three hundred men, women, and children perished on this fatal night !

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### THE CHUSAN.

In the case of the steamer *Chusan*, we have another instance of timely service being rendered by a life-boat from the shore, though it appears that, had the boat been more promptly manned, more might have been accomplished in the way of saving life. There are some special features about this wreck, the story of which may, therefore, be briefly told.

The *Chusan* was a paddle-steamer, 1,380 tons, built in the Clyde for a local service between Shanghai and Hankow. She was launched on the 17th of September, 1874, and on the 16th of October she steamed to Waterford, whence she was to proceed direct to China. In consequence, however, of damage sustained by one of the paddle-wheels, it was resolved to take her back to the Clyde for repairs. Accordingly, the *Chusan* left Waterford, having on board fifty persons—a crew of forty-six, the captain's wife, child, and sister-in-law, and a gentleman passenger who wished to proceed to China.

The voyage up the Irish Channel was prosperous enough until the Maidens—a group of islets north of Belfast, marked by a light—were passed. Then the weather became tempestuous, and, with a south-westerly wind, it was dangerous to keep too near the Irish coast. Accordingly the vessel bore away toward the Mull of Galloway. The curious pyramidal rock, Ailsa Craig, was left on the starboard beam, and afterwards the course was made towards Pladda. The gale continued, the wind gradually changing to the north, and about three o'clock in the morning blowing strongly from the north-west. The *Chusan* was then kept in as straight a course as possible to run between the Cumbrae Islands; but her great breadth of beam, and her freeboard, which exposed so much surface to the heavy running sea, made her steer very badly, until at length she scarcely answered her helm.

It became evident, at length, that she would not lie far enough up to get into the mouth of the Clyde,

and it was therefore decided to run for Ardrossan Harbour, the lights of which were plainly visible. On shore the approach of the *Chusan* was watched with keen anxiety, for the gale then raging was stronger, in the belief of old seafaring men, than any which had been experienced on the coast for years.

As the *Chusan* approached the harbour her position became very critical, for the wind blew from the north-west, the night was dark, and the sea rolled heavily. Strange to say, she cleared the Horse Isle, which forms a natural breakwater at the mouth of the harbour, in safety, though it is probable that in the darkness the pilot never noticed it. Right in front now lay a dangerous obstacle, the Crinan Rock, upon which were several feet of water, as it was within an hour of full tide. As she drew more into the channel, those on shore who were acquainted with the position of the rock perceived that she was in imminent danger. She ran well up the leeward entrance into the harbour, until the Crinan Rock lay on her starboard beam; and then, caught either by the swing of the tide or by a sudden squall, she closed in upon the perilous obstacle instead of keeping away; and though the engines were backed immediately, she still luffed up to windward, and, striking hard just aft of the forward stokehole, was soon a complete wreck.

In the grey dawn of day the sad view was watched by numbers of persons on shore, who could hear the cries and see the struggles of the sufferers. The harbour steam-tug, taking out the life-boat which was unable to make head against the storm, after

a time succeeded in reaching the wreck. Several persons were now rescued, but many, especially the coloured seamen, perished before any assistance could be given.

A Glasgow newspaper gave the following account at the time. We learn from it the end of the captain of the ill-starred *Chusan*.

“The captain, with his wife and child, and several of the crew, were clinging to a spar, and a line having been passed to them from the steam-tug, some of the men were rescued. The captain was observed holding his wife and child, and striving desperately to prevent them from being washed away. He succeeded in getting them attached to the line, but the men in the tug being unable to pull all three on board, the captain relaxed his grasp of the rope, and thus, to save his wife and child, was drowned. One man, who was himself hanging to the boom, along with the captain’s wife, seeing her child washed from her enfeebled arms, rescued it on two occasions. Another, who was caught between some floating spars, sank and perished just as assistance came within his reach. Captain King, one of those on board, was clinging to the boom, when a wave flung him on the deck. He contrived to lay hold of a piece of wood, and struck out for the shore. After swimming a short distance, he was observed by the tug, which steamed towards him and picked him up. Several of the men supported themselves on floating pieces of wreck, and in this way endeavoured to reach land.”

When the *Chusan* struck on the Crinan Rock she

broke in two like a snapped stick. While the stern very quickly sank, an extraordinary thing happened to the fore-part : it sailed right on into the harbour, passed between the breakwaters, and took up a position among the ships that were lying at their moorings. There were three negroes on board, of whom two got safely to land, but the other was drowned in the attempt.

Altogether some fifteen or twenty persons were saved, and had there been a proper rocket apparatus available, and a little more smartness displayed in getting out the life-boat, very few, save three men who were washed away from the wheel, need have perished.

The mate, who gave an interesting account of the whole affair, observes, quietly and with a sort of unconscious humour, "I was not at all pleased with the life-boat arrangements of this part of the coast, for I and the pilot were hanging on to the mast for hours before we were taken off."

Who, under such circumstances, could feel pleased?

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### *THE DEUTSCHLAND.*

We may conclude our catalogue of wrecks upon the English coast with the story of this vessel, lost upon the night of the 5th of December, 1875. There are some circumstances—not pleasant ones—connected with this case that make it desirable to

narrate the event, under which a considerable loss of life was incurred.

The *Deutschland* was a German emigrant ship, bound from Bremen to New York. In addition to her crew, she had on board one hundred and twenty-three passengers ; in all she carried some two hundred and twenty-two persons and a heavy cargo. On approaching the Channel from the German Ocean, she encountered stormy weather, and at four o'clock on the morning of Sunday, the 5th, a strong gale was blowing, and, as a measure of precaution, the speed of the ship was reduced one-half. The snow-drift preventing a good look out, the lead was heaved every half-hour, but the exact position of the vessel does not seem to have been known, and the first intimation of danger which her captain recognised was the appearance of breakers through the veil of snow. He immediately ordered the engines to be reversed ; but the propeller broke before the ship could answer ; and the wind being right astern she drifted on to the sand-bank known as the Kentish Knock.

An anxious night was passed, but as yet the danger did not seem imminent. Rockets were sent up with a view of attracting assistance from the shore ; but the snow still falling heavily, they were probably not of much use. They were answered, however, from the Knock lightship, some two miles distant. The night was very dark, and now, as the tide rose, the waves began to sweep over the decks. The captain distributed a number of life-belts, and "wished for the day."



Monday morning came, but it brought no sign of help. An effort was made to lower the boats, but they were all stove in or swamped save one, the fate of which shall be told in due course. Having first upset and then righted again, it drifted away from the ship with three men in it. Nothing now remained for the crew and passengers but to take refuge in the rigging. This they did, but, owing to cold and exhaustion, many dropped off, fell into the sea, and perished miserably.

Once more it was night, and once more the rockets blazed the alarm into the dark sky. Now, at length, they were answered from the shore. The weather moderated somewhat, and on Tuesday morning the Harwich tug *Liverpool* came alongside and took off the perished and well-nigh despairing survivors—136 in number. They were taken to Harwich, some twenty-five miles distant, one child dying during the transit. Unfortunately, there was no life-boat at Harwich, and a Trinity House pilot who was on board the *Deutschland* as a passenger, gave it as his deliberate opinion that without a life-boat, help could not have been rendered any sooner than it was.

The fate of the boat was sad indeed. Three men, August Bock, the quartermaster, a passenger, and one of the crew, got into her as she was being lowered; but in lowering she capsized, and being attached only by a three-inch rope, which broke with the strain, she went adrift. She righted, however, and the three men clambered into her; but one of them was so severely injured in the capsizing, that he did not live above an hour. There were no oars aboard, but

Bock and his comrade hoisted the sail, and beat up in the direction in which they supposed the land to lie. Owing to the intense cold and the want of provisions, Bock's companion gradually fell into a state of stupor, and, in spite of all entreaties, refused to move or to exercise himself in any way which would keep up a free circulation of the blood. In the course of Monday afternoon he gradually sank into the bottom of the boat, and just before nightfall ceased to breathe. Throughout that Monday night Bock crouched under the side of his little bark to shelter himself as far as he could from the severity of the weather, holding the sail with one hand, and with the other guiding the tiller. As he sped onwards, he caught sight of several vessels, but none that he could hail or make for. On Tuesday morning he passed the Nore light-ship, and hailed it, but as the wind was blowing strongly, the men on board did not hear him. Soon afterwards he saw another light, which proved to be that on Garrison Point, near Sheerness, and steered the boat towards it until she grounded.

That *twenty-eight hours* should have elapsed between the time of the *Deutschland's* grounding and the rescue of her surviving people is sad and startling. A good deal of ill-feeling was entertained and expressed by Germans at the time ; but no one seems to have been to blame. It was a misfortune that no life-boat was stationed at Harwich ; and probably had telegraphic communication (such as it is now sought to establish generally) existed between the Knock light-ship and the shore, more might have been done in the way of directing succour to the

scene of the disaster. As it was, the coroner's jury stated in their verdict that every credit was due to the captain and men of the *Liverpool* for the part they had played.

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The majority of the stories we have to tell of wrecks in "foreign parts" will fall under our Second Division, since they are chiefly of interest in connexion with the after adventures of the survivors. But there remain three or four narratives which may properly come in here. They are selected chiefly as examples showing the great number of lives that may be imperilled or lost in a single disaster at sea. This is so in each instance; but the name that we place first has a special glory attached to it—

### THE BIRKENHEAD.

Towards the close of 1851 the *Birkenhead* steam troop-ship sailed from the Cove of Cork, under the command of Captain Salmond, for the Cape of Good Hope, having on board a large number of soldiers, intended to fill up vacancies in the colonial army, with the usual proportion of wives and children. Lieutenant-Colonel Seton, of the 78th Highlanders, was in charge of this military force.

The outset of the voyage was not propitious. The ship was buffeted by incessant winds during her passage from Cork to the Bay of Biscay. However, she arrived safely at Simon's Bay, Cape of Good

Hope, on the 23rd of February, 1852, where she received despatches from the Governor of the Cape, ordering that the troops should be landed at Algoa Bay and Buffalo River. Accordingly, two days later, the *Birkenhead* steamed away from her anchorage, the night being calm, clear, and windless, and the land not more than three or four miles distant, so that the fires burning on the long line of low, blue hills which skirt the shore served as so many beacons to direct the vessel's course.

Suddenly, about two in the morning of the 26th of February, a tremendous shock crashed through the vessel from stem to stern. The stillness of the night and the calm of the sparkling waves had probably lulled to some extent the watchfulness of those in charge of the ship, which had struck upon one of the hidden rocks abundant in those seas,—a broken, rugged rock, something like the jagged summit of a granite mountain, surrounded by deep water. A huge rent had been torn by the splintered pinnacles of this rock in the port-side of the *Birkenhead*, under water, and just in front of one of the paddle-wheels.

The scene that followed may be well described in the words of Captain Wright, of the 91st Regiment:—

“The sea was smooth at the time, and the vessel was steaming at the rate of eight and a half knots an hour. She struck the rock, and it penetrated through her bottom, just aft the foremast. The rush of water was so great, that there is no doubt most of the men in the lower troop-deck were drowned in their hammocks. The rest of the men and all the officers came on the deck, when Lieut.-Colonel Seton called all the

officers about him, and impressed upon them the necessity of preserving order and silence among the men. He directed me to take, and have executed, whatever orders the commander might give me.

“Sixty men were immediately put on to the chain-pumps on the lower after-deck, and told off in three reliefs; sixty men were put on to the tackles of the paddle-box boats; and the remainder of the men were brought on to the poop, so as to ease the forepart of the ship. She was at this time rolling heavily. The commander ordered the horses to be pitched out of the first gangway, and the cutter to be got ready for the women and children, who had all been collected under the poop awning.

“As soon as the horses were got over the side, the women and children were passed into the cutter, and under the charge of Mr. Richards, master’s assistant; the boat then stood off about a hundred and fifty yards. Just after they were out of the ship, the entire bow broke off at the foremast, the bowsprit going up in the air towards the foretop-mast, and the funnel went over the side, carrying away the starboard paddle-box and boat. The other paddle-box boat capsized when being lowered. The large boat in the centre of the ship could not be got at.

“It was about twelve or fifteen minutes after she struck that the bow broke off. The men then all went up on the poop, and in about five minutes more the vessel broke in two, crosswise, just abaft the engine-room, and the stern part immediately filled and went down. A few men jumped off just before she did so, but the greater number remained to the

last, and so did every officer belonging to the troops. All the men I put on to the tackles, I fear, were crushed when the funnel fell; and the men and officers below at the pumps could not, I think, have reached the deck before the vessel broke up and went down.

“The survivors clung, some to the rigging of the mainmast, part of which was out of water; and others got hold of floating pieces of wood. I think there must have been about two hundred on the drift wood. I was on a large piece along with five others, and we picked up nine or ten more. The swell carried the wood in the direction of Point Danger. As soon as it got to the weeds and breakers, finding that it could not support all that were on it, I jumped off and swam ashore; and when the others, and also those on the other pieces of wood, reached the shore, we proceeded into the country, to try to find a habitation of any sort where we could obtain shelter. Many of the men were naked, and almost all without shoes. Owing to the country being covered with thick, thorny bushes, our progress was slow; but after walking until about three p.m., having reached land about twelve, we came to where a waggon was outspanned, and the driver of it directed us to a small bay, where there is a hut of a fisherman: the bay is called Standford’s Cove. We arrived there about sunset; and as the men had nothing to eat, I went on to a farmhouse about eight or nine miles from the cove, and sent back provisions for that day.

“The next morning I sent another day’s provisions, and the men were removed up to a farm of Captain

Smales, about twelve or thirteen miles up the country. Lieutenant Girardot, of the 43rd, and Cornet Bond, of the 12th Lancers, accompanied this party, which amounted to sixty-eight men, including eighteen sailors.

“ I then went down to the coast, and during Friday, Saturday, and Sunday I examined the rocks for more than twenty miles, in hopes of finding some men who might have drifted in. I fortunately fell in with the crew of a whale-boat that was employed in sealing on Dyer’s Island. I got them to take the boat outside the sea-weed, whilst I went along the shore. The sea-weed on the coast is very thick, and of immense length, so that it would have caught most of the drift-wood. Happily the boat picked up two men, and I also found two. Although they were all much exhausted, two of them having been in the water thirty-eight hours, they were all right the next day, except a few bruises. It was eighty-six hours, on Sunday afternoon, when I left the coast, since the wreck had taken place; and as I had carefully examined every part of the rocks, and also sent the whale-boat over to Dyer’s Island, I can safely assert that, when I left, there was not a living soul on the coast of those who had been on board the ill-fated *Birkenhead*. . . . All the bodies that we met with were interred. There were not many, however, and I regret to say it could be easily accounted for. Five of the horses got to the shore, and were caught and brought to me. . . .

“ The order and regularity that prevailed on board from the time the ship struck till she totally disap-



peared, far exceeded anything that I thought could be effected by the best discipline ; and it is more to be wondered at, seeing that most of the soldiers were but a short time in the service. Every one did as he was directed, and there was not a murmur or a cry amongst them until the vessel made her final plunge. I could not name any individual officer more than another. All received their orders, and had them carried out as if the men were embarking, instead of going to the bottom : there was only this difference, that I never saw any embarkation conducted with so little noise and confusion."

This testimony of Captain Wright, as to the order and subordination that prevailed, is corroborated by that of another of the survivors, who writes : " It struck me as being one of the most perfect instances of what discipline can effect, and almost led me to believe that not a man on board could have known that the vessel was likely so soon to go down."

When the *Birkenhead* broke in two, crosswise, at the moment when the stern part was filling and sinking, the commander called out, " All those that can swim, jump overboard and make for the boats." But Colonel Seton, and the officers with him, who were then standing on the poop, besought the men not to do as the commander said, as in that case the boats with the women must be swamped. Not more than three of the men made the attempt.

Captain Salmond and Colonel Seton were both observed in the water, and both perished. Sergeant Drake, of the Royal Marines, says he found himself in the water, and the captain close to him, swimming

for a plank, when something (probably a falling spar) struck the captain on the head, and he went down.

Cornet Bond gives the following account of his own escape: "I had one of Mackintosh's life-preservers, which I inflated whilst in the water. The sea at this time was covered with struggling forms; whilst the cries, piercing shrieks, and shouts for the boats were awful. I swam astern in hopes of being picked up by one of them. I hailed one sixty yards off, but could not reach it, as they pulled away, I suppose, for fear of too many attempting to get in. I then turned round and made for the shore, about two miles distant, which I finally succeeded in reaching a little after five o'clock a.m., by swimming only. Two men, who were swimming close to me, I saw disappear with a shriek, most probably bitten by sharks. I fortunately hit upon a landing-place, but owing to the great quantity of seaweed I had to struggle through, and being quite exhausted, it was not without much labour that I gained the shore. I then walked up a sort of beaten track from the beach, in hopes of finding some habitation. Whilst doing so, I perceived my horse at a short distance standing in the water on the beach."

"Probably bitten by sharks!" In these words reference is made to what must have been one of the most terrible features of this awful catastrophe. Lieutenant Girardot, of the 43rd Regiment, one of those who reached the shore, afterwards stated that "nearly all those that took to the water without their clothes on were taken by sharks. Hundreds of them were all around us, and I saw men taken by them

quite close to me ; but as I was dressed (having on a flannel shirt and trousers) they preferred the others."

We must now return to the three small boats which, under the charge of Mr. Richards, were lying at a short distance from the wreck. So soon as the *Birkenhead* sank, they threw the gear overboard to lighten the boats, and picked up several persons from the water, until the number they carried amounted in all to about seventy-eight. Thus loaded, the crew feared to attempt a landing on an unknown and surf-beaten coast, and pulled away in the direction of Simon's Town. After daylight a breeze sprang up, causing them some alarm ; but a woman's shawl being spread on a boat-hook in the second cutter, it served at the same time as a sail and to steady the boat. While slowly progressing, they descried a coasting schooner bearing down towards them, which proved to be the *Lioness*, Thomas E. Ramsden, master. The sufferers were immediately taken on board this vessel, which then crowded on all canvas for the scene of the disaster.

Mrs. Ramsden, the master's wife, happening to be on board the *Lioness*, the women and children were supplied with clothes, and everything was done to make them comfortable. In like manner the master and his crew distributed their own spare clothes amongst the men, many of whom were almost naked, not having had time to dress before the water rushed into their berths.

It was past two o'clock in the afternoon when the *Lioness* arrived off Point Danger. Nothing remained of the *Birkenhead* save a few broken spars, and the

main topmast and topsail yard, to which from thirty to forty poor fellows were clinging in a state of utter exhaustion from cold, hunger, and nakedness. These were all speedily rescued by the boats.

The total number on board the *Birkenhead* was about 631 ; of these 193, *including all the women and children*, were saved. Four hundred and thirty-eight perished. Honour to the brave !

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### THE ATLANTIC.

This vessel, one of the magnificent "White Star" screw-steamers, sailed from Liverpool to New York on Saturday, 28th of March, 1873, having on board the enormous number of *nine hundred and thirty-one persons* ! In crossing the Atlantic she encountered a series of fierce equinoctial gales which seriously impeded her progress. This state of things continued till the 31st, and then, as the weather grew worse and worse, Captain Williams changed his course and bore away for Halifax, Nova Scotia.

No immediate danger being apprehended, the Captain retired at midnight, after giving instructions to the officer of the watch to have him called at three o'clock. Knowing that they were now approaching a dangerous coast, his design was at that hour to change the vessel's course, so as to lie off shore till daylight. But, apparently, Captain Williams had been at fault in his calculations, for when three o'clock came it needed no human voice to rouse him !

Just at that hour the watch was changed, the customary salutation, "All's well," was exchanged; then came the sudden cry of warning, "Breakers ahead," and before anything could be done the noble vessel was driven by all the force of her engines upon the cruel rocks!

It was soon found that nothing could move her. She lay hard and fast, with the pitiless billows beating against her sides. Away went all the boats on the port side; and as she speedily heeled over, those on the starboard were also rendered useless. The captain and officers were now on deck, and advised the passengers to secure themselves to the rigging, as their only protection against the wild waves which were sweeping the decks in swift succession.

The consternation on board the *Atlantic* when she was thus suddenly brought up on the rocks was terrible. At first the passengers could not realize what had happened. Some thought the boiler had burst, some that the ship had struck on an iceberg. Hundreds of the steerage passengers were drowned in their berths, while of those who succeeded in gaining the deck, scores were washed away by the waves. Then the fore-boom broke loose, and, swinging to and fro, crushed all who came within range of its terrific sweep. It is said that some, bewildered or frantic with sudden terror, flung themselves headlong into the sea, and were lost to sight in an instant.

One means of escape only remained. At a distance of about one hundred and fifty feet rose an elevated rock, and to this point the seamen contrived to carry

five lines, affording a frail and dangerous communication with the ship. Between the rock and the shore was a further distance of one hundred yards, and this passage was also bridged by a rope, which Mr. Brady, the third officer, and two quartermasters carried across by swimming. It is said that about two hundred persons succeeded in getting on the rock by means of the life-lines; while about fifty accomplished the yet more perilous passage from the rock to the shore. Many perished in the attempt, owing not only to the violence of the sea, but also to the intense cold, which benumbed the fingers with which they clung to the rope.

Thus the remaining hours of darkness were passed. At dawn of day a small boat put off from the land, which proved to be Meagher's Island, and succeeded in reaching the rock. She was not able to render much assistance; but Mr. Brady having got on shore succeeded in procuring three larger boats. Backwards and forwards they plied through the raging surf, rescuing numbers from the rock and from the rigging of the steamer.

Mr. Firth, the chief officer, had a narrow escape. Together with thirty-two passengers, one of whom was a lady, he had taken refuge in the mizzen rigging. By degrees the number lessened—some being rescued by the boats, and some washed away by the sea—till only Mr. Firth, the lady, and a boy remained. The sea had now risen to such an extent that the boats could no longer approach the wreck; but the boy, being washed off, made a courageous effort, swam skilfully and steadily, reached one of the boats, and

was taken on board. Mr. Firth then caught hold of the unfortunate lady, and lashed her to the rigging as a final resource, though neither for him nor her did there seem any hope.

Their perilous condition was observed on shore by a clergyman, a Mr. Ancient, who bravely put off in a small boat, accompanied by four volunteers, to attempt their rescue. Mr. Ancient succeeded in obtaining a footing in the main-rigging, from which he flung a rope to Mr. Firth, who fastened it round his body, sprang into the sea, and was hauled on board the boat. It was found unnecessary to make any effort on behalf of the unfortunate lady; she was frozen to death.

All through this trying time, Captain Williams remained on the wreck, issuing his orders with admirable composure, and doing everything that courage and ingenuity could suggest on behalf of those committed to his charge. It was not till his hands and feet were frozen that he was taken off by one of the boats and brought safe to shore. No doubt he had been to blame, and, at the Court of Inquiry, subsequently held, he was severely censured for not having used the lead and kept a sharp look-out when approaching what was known to be a dangerous and treacherous coast. But, in consideration of his courage and devotion, when the catastrophe came, his certificate was only suspended for two years.

As we have said, there were no fewer than nine hundred and thirty-one persons on board the *Atlantic*; of these, four hundred and eighty-one, including two hundred and ninety-five women and children, perished.



That so many as four hundred and fifty were saved, was due in a great measure to the noble exertions of Captain Williams and his officers, and the gallantry of the fishermen of Meagher's Island—led, as they were, by Mr. Ancient, and stimulated by his example of intrepidity and self-denial.

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There were several catastrophes in the days of the great war with France, by which hundreds of brave seamen were lost to the British Navy. The story of the burning of the *Queen Charlotte* has already been told. We add the following narratives.

### THE SCEPTRE.

The century that witnessed the foundering of the *Royal George*, with probably twelve hundred souls on board (of whom only about three hundred were rescued), was just closing.

It was the 1st of November, 1799, when the *Sceptre*, a sixty-four gun ship, employed as a convoy for merchant-vessels between the Cape and India, lay at anchor in Table Bay, having just returned from Bombay after a perilous voyage. The officers were giving an entertainment to their friends from shore. It was a calm and beautiful night; the winds and waves were hushed, and no sounds were to be heard save those of mirth and revelry.

Soon, however, the weather began to change, and, by the morning of the 5th, a stiff north-west gale was

blowing. Still no danger was anticipated, and the *Sceptre* was dressed with flags in honour of "Guy Fawkes' Day."

In the afternoon the gale increased, and the bay being exposed to the north-west, the Captain, Edwards, took all proper precautions for the safety of his ship. Top-masts were struck and yards lowered; but, as the afternoon advanced, the tempest increased in fury. First, the best bower anchor gave way, and the vessel began to drift in shore. The sheet-anchor was let go, and subsequently another, with two guns attached; but nothing could hold the doomed ship. For hours signal guns were fired and the ensign hoisted downwards; but those on shore—including several of the *Sceptre's* own officers—were powerless to give aid. A boat was launched for the purpose of carrying a cable to the *Jupiter*, another man-of-war that was riding in the bay, but the frail craft was instantly capsized and the crew drowned.

It was now eight o'clock in the evening, and further horror was added to the scene. The cry of "Fire" arose, and those on shore could see the thick clouds of smoke rolling up from the hatches. What chance was there now between the two terrible elements? The vessel drifted at the mercy of the waves, and, at ten o'clock, took the shore broadside on.

Never losing his presence of mind, Captain Edwards ordered the main and mizzen masts to be cut away, and the fore-mast having gone by the board of itself, there seemed yet a chance for the dismantled ship. It was but for a moment. The *Sceptre* floated towards the beach, where, if thrown up high enough, succour

might be given. But it was not to be. A huge billow descended on the deck ; the port-side was driven in, and the vessel was a wreck. Numbers leaped into the sea in the desperate hope of swimming to shore. Not one succeeded in doing so.

About half an hour later the poop was washed away, and carried towards the shore. Seventy or eighty men who were upon it seemed likely to be saved, and the people on the beach, eager to help, crowded to the spot where they thought the wreck would be driven. But, alas ! at the critical moment, a tremendous wave, striking the poop, capsized it, and rolled it over and over, while every man who clung to it perished.

But the last scene had still to come. The wreck, to which a few officers and men were still convulsively clinging, heeled towards the shore ; then it fell off again, cloven fore and aft, and literally split open in two places—before the main-chains and abaft the fore-chains. In a few moments it vanished from the sight of the awe-stricken spectators on the beach. Thirty or forty seamen and marines still clung to the bow, the waves continuously breaking over them. They kept their hold, however, in the hope that the remaining signal-gun might, by its weight, prevent the bow from capsizing ; but the timbers, unable to withstand the fury of the tempest, suddenly parted, the gun rolled from side to side, and the unhappy men shared the fate of their companions. It is recorded that, during that awful time, while threatened with instant death, many of these men were lost in stupor, with their hands locked in the chain-plates.

The night was dark, and it was but little that those

on shore could do. Huge fires were kindled along the beach for the purpose of guiding any poor wretches that might be struggling for dear life on those gloomy waves. Soon, by the glare, the vessel herself became visible. She appeared, it is said, like a huge castle looming in the distance. Then came the last terrible crash and the last agonising cry of anguish and despair. By the light of the torches, waved on high, could be distinguished the forms of men struggling vainly amid raging billows and masses of wreckage.

It was now possible to afford some little aid to those who were battling for life. Holding the one to the other for safety, the watchers on shore seized any poor fellow that the waves brought within their reach. In this way fifty were saved; six officers, fortunately for themselves, were on shore when the gale sprang up; the rest, including the captain, together with two hundred and ninety seamen and marines, perished during that fearful night.

For hours the inhabitants of Cape Town and the soldiers of the garrison searched the shore. Among the others they found a son of the captain, dead, with an open Bible clasped firmly to his breast! In the morning, three waggon-loads of dead bodies were collected and interred in a common grave. The captain's body was not found; but those of the other officers were buried, with military honours, on the following Sunday.

*THE ST. GEORGE AND THE DEFENCE.*

Yet another tale of the same period, and one that tells of a still greater sacrifice of life, as well as of the loss of two noble ships.

In November, 1811, the *St. George*, a three-decker of ninety-eight guns, carried the flag of Rear-Admiral Reynolds in the Baltic. In convoying a fleet of homeward-bound merchant-ships, she had a narrow escape of being wrecked, having been driven on a sand-bank, where she lost her masts and rudder. However, having been got off, she reached the port of Gottenburg in safety on the 2nd of December.

On the 17th, having partially made good the damage she had suffered, the flag-ship, accompanied by the *Defence* and *Crecy*, sailed for England with a fleet of merchant-ships in charge. On the 23rd, when off the coast of Jutland, a fierce north-westerly gale was encountered. The *St. George*, with her temporary rudder and make-shift rigging, was in no condition to weather the storm. She would not steer, and fell away before the wind. The anchors were now the only hope; but they proved unequal to the strain upon them, and between five and six o'clock in the morning, the vessel took the ground.

On sounding the well, the carpenter reported ten feet of water in the hold. Steadily and rapidly it rose. In half an hour the people were driven from the lower deck; at ten o'clock the main deck was flooded, and all hands were obliged to crowd on the

poop. All the boats, save one, were stove in or washed away.

So the day passed. Many perished through the intense cold ; numbers were washed away or crushed by the falling spars. There seemed no hope of deliverance ; but none the less, every man remained steady at his post. At eight o'clock in the evening, fourteen men took to the remaining boat ; but it was soon capsized and all in her drowned.

The end was now at hand. A tremendous sea carried away the poop, and all that were upon it. At this time, the admiral and the captain perished. There may have been still about two hundred men alive. They employed themselves, as a last resource, in constructing a raft, on which a few adventurers might carry a rope ashore. A topsail-yard and a cross-jack-yard having been lashed together, ten men embarked on the crazy structure ; but the waves soon rent asunder the hastily-secured spars, and swept five men away ; the others gained the shore, but one of them almost immediately died of exhaustion. Three of the crew had previously been carried off the poop at the moment of its separation from the hull of the ship, and, strange to say, had been safely washed ashore.

Thus, out of a complement of seven hundred and fifty officers and men, only *seven* escaped with their lives. These poor fellows were in a sad condition, but received from the Danes the most generous and kindly assistance.

But the story of that day's disaster is only half told. The *Crecy* and *Defence* were also in imminent

peril. The captain of the former, however, seeing that he could give no help to the flag-ship, prudently put about in time, and standing to the south, succeeded in getting his vessel out of danger. Unfortunately, however, Captain Atkins, of the *Defence*, considered himself bound to keep near the Admiral, inasmuch as he had not received the signal to part company. "I will never," he said, "abandon my Admiral in the hour of danger and distress." A noble sentiment dictated the words ; but the result was truly disastrous.

The morning came, and at six o'clock all hands were summoned to wear the ship. But it was too late. A huge sea breaking over the decks washed away the men from their posts. The masts went by the board, and finally the vessel was hurled on the shore with a terrific crash. Almost immediately she became a complete wreck, and began to go to pieces. One of the few survivors thus describes his experience :—"After the ship went to pieces, I got on one side of the booms that were floating among the rest of the wreck. At that time every man except two, John Platt and Ralph Jeasel—two of the men who were saved—were washed off. Myself and several more were at the same time swept off the mizzen-top. I then made the best of my way from one spar to another, until I got on one side of the booms. At this time about forty men regained their position upon the booms, when another sea washed all off except four. I got on the booms a second time, and spoke to John Brown, and told him I thought we were approaching the shore. There



were then about twenty men on them, but when we reached the shore there were only six left.

“Two Danes on the beach came to our assistance. My foot got jammed in amongst the small spars, and my comrades, seeing that I was unable to get off the raft, were coming to my help, when the Danes made signs to them to be quiet. One Dane made three attempts before he succeeded in reaching the raft, and the third time he was nearly exhausted; he managed to get hold of my foot, and wrenched it out, and carried me on shore. I was then taken up to a shed to wait for some carts which were coming for us, most of us being unable to walk. In about ten minutes a number of gentlemen arrived on horseback, and some carts came down upon the beach. We were then placed in them and driven to a small village called Shelton. On the road the man who drove the cart spoke to a woman, and asked her if she had any liquor. She replied by drawing a bottle from her pocket, and made each of us take a dram, which I believe was in a great measure the saving of our lives.

“We soon arrived at the houses in the village, where we were stripped and put to bed, and treated by the inhabitants with the greatest hospitality and kindness. . . . In the evening, a gentleman who spoke English came to our bedside, and told us that there was another ship on shore to the southward of us, which appeared to be a three-decker, lying with her stern on shore. We knew directly it could be no other than the *St. George*.”

Of the whole complement of men on board the

*Defence*, amounting to five hundred and ninety-three, only *six* escaped with their lives. In that one night, therefore, there perished on that bitter coast over 1,300 men, only *thirteen* surviving to tell of the horrors they had witnessed, and of their own providential deliverance from the fury of the tempest.

END OF PART I.

## PART II.



## CHAPTER I.

## BOAT VOYAGES.

WE have now, in accordance with our plan, to give some examples of the vicissitudes, strokes of good fortune, romantic adventures, prolonged dangers, or agonising sufferings which the survivors from a shipwreck may be destined to experience.

The first instinctive cry when danger becomes imminent on board ship is "To the boats!" But, alas, too often the boats, specially provided in view of such emergencies, have indeed proved a "delusion and a snare." Owing to defective tackle, or some other cause, it has been found impossible to lower them. Or it is discovered that the "long-boat" has been comfortably stowed away on deck, and made a convenient receptacle for a vast variety of miscellaneous articles, which, in the last minutes of hurry and panic, cannot be cleared in time. Or, again, the boats, improperly lowered, become regular "death-traps," tilting their wretched occupants over by dozens into the sea, or capsizing as soon as they touch the angry water.

But still, with all their drawbacks, the ships' boats

are, at times, the only resource ; and among the most interesting and exciting narratives in connection with disasters at sea are those which tell of the marvellous voyages that have been undertaken, and, in several instances, successfully carried out, in open boats. Such tales of patient fortitude, resolute endurance, and persevering skill show us what human nature is capable of. They show us, too—as, indeed, many of these sea-stories do—how powerful is the force of example, and how even one man of resource and courage can inspire confidence and raise those who look to him for guidance well-nigh to the level of heroism.

First in a list of this sort must ever be placed the name of the

### LADY HOBART,

and that of her brave and skilful commander, Captain Fellowes. The following narrative is condensed from the graphic and detailed account given by Captain Fellowes.

The *Lady Hobart* sailed from Halifax for England on the 22nd of June, 1803. At the outset, Captain Fellowes was in luck. When scarce two days at sea, he fell in with and captured a French schooner, *L'Aimable Julia*. A volunteer prize-crew was put in charge, and then the *Lady Hobart*, with the French captain on board, proceeded on her voyage. We now quote from Captain Fellowes :—

“ *Tuesday, 28th June.*—Blowing hard from the westward, with a heavy sea and hazy weather, with

intervals of thick fog. About one in the morning, the ship then going by the log at the rate of seven miles an hour, struck against an island of ice with such violence that several of the crew were pitched out of their hammocks. Being roused out of my sleep by the suddenness of the shock, I instantly ran upon deck. The helm being put hard a-port, the ship struck again about the chest-tree, and then swung round on her heel, her stern-post being stove in, and her rudder carried away, before we could succeed in our attempts to haul her off. At this time the island of ice appeared to hang quite over the ship, forming a high peak, which must have been at least twice the height of our mast-head ; and we supposed the length of the island to have been from a quarter to half a mile.

“The sea was now breaking over the ship in a dreadful manner, the water rushing in so fast as to fill the hold in a few minutes. Hove the guns overboard, cut away the anchors from the bows, got two sails under the ship’s bottom, kept both pumps going, and baling with buckets at the main hatchway, in the hope of preventing her from sinking ; but in less than a quarter of an hour she settled down to her fore-chains in the water.

“Our situation was now become most perilous. Aware of the danger of a moment’s delay in hoisting out the boats, I consulted Captain Thomas, of the navy, and Mr. Bargus, my master, as to the propriety of making any further efforts to save the ship ; and as I was anxious to preserve the mail, I requested their opinion as to the possibility of taking it into

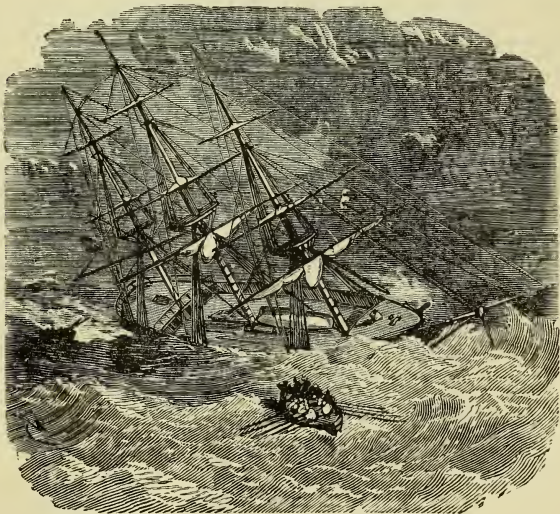
the boats, in the event of our being able to get them over the ship's side. These gentlemen agreed with me that no time was to be lost in hoisting them out, and that, as the vessel was then settling fast, our first and only consideration was to endeavour to preserve the crew. . . . .

“Having fortunately succeeded in hoisting out the cutter and jolly-boat, the sea then running high, we placed the ladies in the former. One of them, Miss Cotenham, was so terrified, that she sprang from the gunwale, and pitched into the bottom of the boat with considerable violence. This accident, which might have been productive of fatal consequences to herself, as well as to us all, was unattended by any bad effects. The few provisions which had been saved from the men's berths were then put into the boats, which were quickly veered astern. By this time the main-deck forward was under water, and nothing but the quarter-deck appeared. I then ordered my men into the boats; and having previously lashed iron pigs of ballast to the mail, it was thrown overboard.

“I now perceived that the ship was sinking fast; I called out to the men to haul up and receive me, intending to drop myself into the cutter from the end of the trysail-boom, fearing she might be stove under the counter; and I desired Mr. Bargas, who continued with me on the wreck, to go over first. In this instance, he replied that he begged leave to disobey my orders; that he must see me safe over before he attempted to go himself. Such conduct, and at such a moment, requires no comment; but I

should be wanting to myself, and to the service, if I did not faithfully state to their Lordships any circumstance, however trifling ; and it is highly satisfactory to me to have this opportunity of recording an incident so honourable to a meritorious officer.

“The sea was running so high at the time we hoisted out the boats, that I scarcely flattered myself we should get them out in safety ; and, indeed,



nothing but the steady and orderly conduct of the crew could have enabled us to effect so difficult and hazardous an undertaking ; and it is a justice to them to observe that not a man in the ship attempted to make use of the liquor, which every one had in his power. Whilst the cutter was getting out, I perceived one of the seamen (John Tipper) emptying a



demijohn, or bottle, containing five gallons, which, on inquiry, I found to be rum. He said that he was emptying it for the purpose of filling it with water from the scuttle-cask on the quarter-deck, which had been generally filled over-night, and which was then the only fresh water to be got at : it became afterwards our principal supply. I relate this circumstance as being so highly creditable to the character of a British sailor.

“ We had scarcely quitted the ship when she suddenly gave a lurch to port, and then went down head-foremost. I had ordered the colours to be hoisted at the main-topgallant-mast head, with the Union downwards, as a signal of distress, that if any vessel should happen to be near to us at the dawn of day, our calamitous situation might be perceived from her, and she might afford us relief.

“ At this awful crisis of the ship’s sinking, when it is natural to suppose that fear would be the predominant principle of the human mind, the coolness of a British seaman was very conspicuously manifested by his (John Andrews) exclaiming, ‘ There, my brave fellows, there goes the pride of Old England !’

“ I cannot attempt to describe my own feelings, or the sensations of my people. Exposed as we were in two small open boats upon the great Atlantic Ocean, bereft of all assistance, but that which our own exertions, under Providence, could afford us, we narrowly escaped being swallowed up in the vortex. Men used to vicissitudes are not easily dejected ; but there are trials which human nature alone cannot

surmount. The consciousness of having done our duty, and a reliance upon a good Providence, enabled us to endure our calamity ; and we animated each other with the hope of a better fate."

Captain Fellowes next describes the two boats and the way in which the crew and passengers were distributed. In the cutter, twenty feet long by six feet four inches wide, there were in all eighteen persons, "which, together with the provisions, brought the boat's gunwale down to within six or seven inches of the water." In the jolly-boat, fourteen feet long, there were eleven persons packed.

"The only provisions we were enabled to save," continues the narrative, "consisted of between forty and fifty pounds of biscuit ; one demijohn, or vessel containing five gallons, of water ; a small jug of the same, and part of a small barrel of spruce beer ; one demijohn of rum, a few bottles of port-wine, with two compasses, a quadrant, a spy-glass, a small tin mug, and a wine-glass. The deck lantern, which had a few spare candles in it, had been likewise thrown into the boat, and the cook having had the precaution to secure his tinder-box, and some matches that were kept in a bladder, we were afterwards enabled to steer by night."

The admirable forethought and quiet courage of Captain Fellowes come out well in what follows :—

"The wind was now blowing strongly from the westward, with a heavy sea, and the day had just dawned. Estimating ourselves to be at the distance of 350 miles from St. John's, in Newfoundland, with a prospect of a continuance of westerly winds, it

became at once necessary to use the strictest economy. I represented to my companions in distress that our resolution, once made, ought on no account to be changed ; and that we must begin by suffering privations, which I foresaw would be greater than I ventured to explain. To each person, therefore, was served out half a biscuit and a glass of wine, which was the only allowance for the ensuing twenty-four hours, all agreeing to leave the water untouched as long as possible. During the time we were employed in getting out the boats, I had ordered the master to throw the main-hatch tarpaulin into the cutter ; which being afterwards cut into lengths, enabled us to form a temporary bulwark against the waves. I had also reminded the carpenter to carry with him as many tools as he could : he had accordingly, among other things, put a few nails in his pockets ; and we repaired the gunwale of the cutter, which had been stove-in in hoisting her out. Soon after daylight we made sail, with the jolly-boat in tow, and stood close-hauled to the northward and westward, in the hope of reaching the coast of Newfoundland, or of being picked up by some vessel. Passed two islands of ice, nearly as large as the first. We now said prayers, and returned thanks to God for our deliverance. At noon (Tuesday), observed in lat.  $46^{\circ} 33'$  North ; St. John's bearing about W.  $\frac{3}{4}$  N., distant 350 miles."

And so this most remarkable narration is continued from day to day :—

" *Wednesday, June 29.*—This day was ushered in with light variable winds from the southward and

eastward. We had passed a long and sleepless night, and I found myself, at the dawn of day, with twenty-eight persons looking up to me with anxiety for the direction of our course, as well as for the distribution of their scanty allowance. On examining our provisions, we found the bag of biscuit much damaged by salt water ; it therefore became necessary to curtail the allowance, to which precaution all cheerfully assented."

A dense fog and drenching rain adds to the misery of the situation. No observation was possible ; but St. John's, for which they were beating up against a westerly wind, is estimated as 310 miles distant. "One of the ladies again read prayers to us, particularly those for delivery after a storm, and those for safety at sea."

*Thursday, June 30*, was another miserable day. "The sea was mostly calm, with thick fog and sleet ; the air raw and cold." For the first time the ladies are induced to take their allowance of spirits, "which afforded them immediate relief, and enabled them to resist the severity of the weather." A piece of a ham is discovered in the jolly-boat, and "a small bit, about the size of a nutmeg, was immediately served out to each person." The remainder is thrown overboard, lest by eating it thirst should be increased. St. John's is judged to be distant 246 miles. No observation.

"*Friday, July 1*.—During the greater part of the last twenty-four hours it blew a hard gale of wind from the west-south-west, with a heavy confused sea from the same quarter ; thick fog and sleet through-

out ; the weather excessively cold, for the spray of the sea, freezing as it flew over the boats, rendered our situation truly deplorable. It was at this time that we all felt a most painful depression of spirits. The want of nourishment, and the continued cold and wet weather, had rendered us almost incapable of exertion. The very confined space in the boat would not allow of our stretching our limbs ; and several of the men, whose feet were considerably swelled, repeatedly called out for water. On my reminding them of the resolution we had made, and of the absolute necessity of our persevering in it, they acknowledged the justice and propriety of my refusal to comply with their desire, and the water remained untouched."

A gale springs up, and the jolly-boat, which had been in tow of the cutter, has to be cast off, and is soon lost in the fog. The cutter itself is hove-to in the following manner : "by heaving the boat's sail loose over the bow, and veering it out with a rope bent to each yard-arm, which kept her head to the sea, so as to break its force before it reached us."

The men, again and again, fancy they see a sail, and the captain is even forced to put the boat out of her course to convince them of their error. "As I then saw, in a very strong point of view, the consequences of such deviations, I took occasion to remonstrate with them on the subject. I represented with all the force of which I was capable, that the depression arising from disappointment infinitely over-balanced the momentary relief proceeding from such delusive expectations ; and I exhorted them

not to allow such fancies to break out into expression. Under all these circumstances, the ladies particularly, with a heroism that no words can describe, afforded to us the best examples of patience and fortitude."

The description of this miserable 1st of July, is thus concluded:—"We all joined in prayer, which tranquillised our minds, and afforded us the consolatory hope of bettering our condition: on these occasions we were all bare-headed, notwithstanding the incessant showers. At noon, St. John's bore W. by N.  $\frac{3}{4}$  N. distant 148 miles. No observation."

The entry for the next day is given in full:—

"*Saturday, July 2.*—It rained hard during the night, and the cold became so severe that almost every one in the boat was unable to move. Our hands and feet were so swelled that many of them became quite black, owing to our confined state, and the constant exposure to wet and cold weather. At daybreak I served out about the third of a wine-glass of rum to each person, with a quarter of a biscuit, and before noon a small quantity of spruce beer, which afforded us great relief.

"During the first part of this day it blew strong from the southward and westward, with foggy weather; towards noon, moderate breezes from the northward and eastward.

"At half-past eleven a.m. a sail was discovered to the eastward, standing to the north-west. Our joy at such a sight, with the immediate hope of deliverance, gave us all new life. I immediately ordered the people to sit as close as possible, to prevent our

having the appearance of being an armed boat ; and having tied a lady's shawl to the boat-hook, I raised myself as well as I could, and, from the bow, waved it as long as my strength would allow me. Having hauled close to the wind, we neared each other fast, and in less than a quarter of an hour we perceived the jolly-boat. Our not having recognized her sooner was owing to an additional sail having been made for her, out of one of my bed-sheets, which had been accidentally thrown into the boat, and was set as a bonnet to the fore-sail.

“I cannot attempt to describe the various sensations of joy and disappointment, which were by turns expressed on all our countenances. As soon as we approached the jolly-boat, we threw out to her a tow-rope, and bore away to the north-west.

“We now mutually inquired into the state of our respective crews, after the late dreadful gale. Those in the jolly-boat had suffered from swelled hands and feet, like ourselves, and had undergone great anxiety on our account, concluding us to have perished. The most singular circumstance was, their having steered two nights without any light ; and our meeting again after such tempestuous weather, could not have happened but from the interposition of Providence. Fearing a similar accident, we made a more equal distribution of our provisions ; and having received from the jolly-boat two bottles of wine and some biscuit, we gave them some rum in return.

“Our hopes of deliverance had now been buoyed up to the highest pitch. The excitement arising from our joy began perceptibly to lose its effect ; and to a state of artificial strength succeeded such a



despondency, that no entreaty, nor argument, could rouse some of the men even to the common exertions of making sail.

“To the French captain and several of the people who appeared to have suffered most, I now, for the first time, served out a wine-glass full of water. I had earnestly cautioned the crew not to taste the salt-water; but some of the unhappy men had, nevertheless, taken large draughts of it, and become delirious; some were seized with violent cramps and twitching of the stomach and bowels. I again took occasion to point out to the rest of them the extreme danger of such indiscretion.

“Performed divine service. At noon, St. John’s bore W. by N.  $\frac{3}{4}$  N. distant 110 miles. No observation of the sun.”

On *Sunday, July 3*, the misery of the voyagers was at its height. “The cold, wet, hunger, and thirst which we now experienced, are not to be described, and made our situation very deplorable.” On this day the French captain, in a fit of delirium, jumped overboard and was drowned. Captain Fellowes was very much affected by this circumstance. For the first time, his indomitable spirit seems to have given way. “I was seized with such melancholy, that I lost all recollection of my situation for many hours; a violent shivering had seized me, which returned at intervals; and, as I had refused all sustenance, my state was very alarming: towards night I enjoyed for the first time, three or four hours’ sound sleep, a perspiration came on, and I awoke as from a dream, free from delirium, but painfully alive to all the horrors that surrounded me.”

A terrible gale ensues, and it is only by constant labour, vigilance, and skill that the boats are kept afloat. Towards evening the weather moderated, and indications of land are eagerly noticed,—some pieces of rock-weed, and the wing of an aquatic bird. The captain continues:—

“This event afforded us great hopes of our approaching the land; and all hands were eagerly employed in observing what passed the boats. About this time a beautiful white bird, web-footed, and not unlike a dove in size and plumage, hovered over the mast-head of the cutter; and notwithstanding the pitching of the boat, it frequently attempted to perch on it, and continued fluttering there until dark. Trifling as this circumstance may appear, it was considered by us all as a propitious omen. The impressive manner in which it left us, and returned to gladden us with its presence, awakened in us a superstition, to which sailors are at all times said to be prone. We indulged ourselves on this occasion with the most consolatory assurances, that the same Hand which had provided this solace to our distresses, would extricate us from the dangers that surrounded us.”

The omen proved propitious, for now the last day of suffering was about to dawn. During Sunday night such of the men as were not absolutely exhausted were encouraged to keep at the oars, lest the boats should drift away from the land that was calculated to be now close at hand, though invisible on account of the fog. Let the brave captain tell the conclusion in his own words:—

“*Monday, July 4.*—As the day dawned, the fog became so thick, that we could not see very far from the boat. During the night we had been under the necessity of casting off the jolly-boat’s tow-rope, to induce her crew to exert themselves by rowing. We again lost sight of her; and I perceived that this unlucky accident was beginning to excite great uneasiness among us. We were now so reduced, that the most trifling remark, or exclamation, agitated us very much. I therefore found it necessary to caution the people against being deceived by the appearance of land, or calling out till we were quite convinced of its reality, more especially as fog-banks are often mistaken for land. Several of the poor fellows, however, repeatedly exclaimed they heard breakers; others the firing of guns; and the sounds we did hear resembled the latter so much, that I concluded some vessel had got on shore, and was making signals of distress; the noise afterwards proved to be the blowing of whales, of which we saw a great number.

“Soon after daylight the sun rose in view for the second time since we quitted the wreck. It is worthy of remark that, during the period of seven days that we were in the boats, we never had an opportunity of taking an observation, either of the sun, moon, or stars, nor of drying our clothes. The fog at length beginning to disperse, we instantly caught a glimpse of the land, within a mile distance, between Kettle Cove and Island Cove, in Conception Bay, fourteen leagues from the harbour of St. John’s. Almost at the same moment, we had the inexpressible satisfac-

tion to discover the jolly-boat and a schooner in shore standing off towards us.

“I wish it were possible for me to describe our sensations at this interesting moment. From the constant watching and fatigue, and from the languor and depression arising from our exhausted state, such accumulated irritability was brought on, that the joy of a speedy relief affected us all in a most remarkable way: many burst into tears; some looked at each other with a stupid stare, as if doubtful of the reality of what they saw: several were in such a lethargic state, that no consolation, no animating language, could rouse them to exertion.

“At this affecting period, though overpowered by my own feelings, and impressed with the recollection of our sufferings, and the sight of so many deplorable objects, I proposed to offer up our solemn thanks to Heaven for our miraculous deliverance. Every one cheerfully assented; and as soon as I opened the Prayer-book (which I had secured the last time I went down to my cabin), there was an universal silence; a spirit of devotion was so singularly manifested on this occasion, that to the benefits of a religious sense in uncultivated minds must be ascribed that discipline, good order, and exertion, which even the sight of land could scarcely produce.

“The service being over, the people requested to have a pint of grog each; but, fearful of the consequences of such an indulgence, I mixed some rum and water, very weak, and distributed to every one a small quantity.”

The sufferers were now taken on board the schooner;

but the wind being off shore, the landing-place at Island Cove was not made till four o'clock in the evening. Captain Fellowes describes the women and children of the village coming down and assisting to lift the exhausted men out of the vessel, and subsequently helping to carry them over the rocks.

But though the poor fisher-folk did what they could to relieve the wants of their guests, Captain Fellowes found it necessary to push on for St. John's as soon as possible, the village affording "neither medical aid or fresh provisions, of which we stood so much in need ; potatoes and salt fish being the only food of the inhabitants." A schooner was hired for the voyage, and on the 7th the party started, in three divisions ; the most infirm were placed on board the schooner, while the rest were divided between the two boats. But there was still rough weather to be encountered.

"At two p.m. made sail with the jolly-boat in tow, and the cutter in company, and stood along the coast of Newfoundland with a favourable breeze. Toward dusk it came on to blow hard in squalls off the land, when we lost sight of the cutter, and we were obliged soon after to come to anchor outside of St. John's harbour. We were under great apprehensions for the cutter's safety, as she had no grapnel, and lest she should be driven out to sea ; but at daylight we perceived her and the schooner entering the harbour ; the cutter, as we afterwards learnt, having had the good fortune to fall in with a fishing-vessel, to which they made fast during the night."

Wild and dark as the night was, the captain, with

the ladies and some others, landed at about midnight. They might have been more comfortable had they restrained their impatience and remained on board their schooner till daylight ; but probably they had had enough of the sea.

“ We wandered for some time about the streets, there being no house open at that late hour ; but we were at length admitted into a small house, where we passed the remainder of the night on chairs, there being but one miserable bed for the ladies.”

But now their toils were over.

“ Early on the following day, our circumstances being made known, hundreds of people crowded down to the landing-place. Nothing could exceed their surprise on seeing the boats that had carried nine-and-twenty persons such a distance over a boisterous sea ; and when they beheld so many miserable objects, they could not conceal their emotions of pity and concern. I waited on Brigadier-General Skerrit, who commanded the garrison, and who immediately, upon being informed of our situation, ordered down a party of soldiers to take the people out of the boats, and with the utmost kindness and humanity, directed beds and every necessary article to be prepared for the crew.

“ The greatest circumspection was found necessary in administering nourishment to the men. Several of the crew were so much frost-bitten as to require constant surgical assistance ; and it was determined they should continue at St. John’s until they were in a fit state to be transported to Halifax ; I hired a schooner for that purpose.”

Here we may part company with brave Captain Fellowes. Being anxious to return to England, he embarked at once—on the 11th of July—with his wife and some of the passengers. The voyage home was not without its dangers, delays, and casualties; but finally, on the 3rd of August, the captain of the *Lady Hobart* and his friends found themselves safe at Bristol.

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Besides Captain Fellowes, of the *Lady Hobart*, Captain Theaker, of the

*LORD ELDON,*

deserves a place. No less skilfully and coolly did he navigate his boats, laden down to within a few inches of the surface of the water, across hundreds of miles of sea. Indeed, his voyage was four times as long as that so successfully accomplished by Captain Fellowes, but it was made in more genial latitudes, and upon a sea comparatively safe. The captain of the *Lord Eldon* also enjoyed the advantage, of which he most wisely availed himself, of having had plenty of time, during the progress of the suppressed conflagration, to victual and prepare his boats. Still, it was no small achievement to navigate two open boats over a thousand miles of ocean, and to arrive at the port that was steered for almost exactly “up to time!”

We could wish for a sailor's detailed log of this voyage; but must content ourselves with the account of the passenger from whom we have already quoted a description of the fire.



When the ill-fated *Lord Eldon* exploded, the three boats lay upon the desolate ocean, four hundred and fifty miles from the nearest land, and a thousand from the island of Rodriguez,\* for which Captain Theaker resolved to make. He was influenced in his choice by the fact that Rodriguez lay more in the line of the "trades," and in a calmer sea than the nearer land, which was Diego Garcias, the largest of the Chagos Islands.

The long-boat contained the captain and twenty-five others, including the three ladies and an infant of four months old. Each of the two smaller boats held ten persons. We now quote from the passenger who sailed in the long-boat.

"About eleven, we rigged the boats and got under sail. We carried a lantern lashed to our mast in the long-boat, to prevent the others from losing us during the night; and at daybreak we sent them sailing in all directions to look for ships. While the wind was light, they could outsail us; but when it blew strong, and the sea was high, the difference of speed was rather in our favour, as the weight and size of the long-boat enabled her to lay hold of the water better.

"On the third day the change of moon appeared, and the weather began to look threatening; but as we were in the 'trades' we did not fear foul or contrary winds. During the night it blew fresh, with rain: we had nothing at all to shelter us, and the sea, dashing its spray over us, drenched us, and

\* Rodriguez lies E.N.E. of Mauritius, in lat 19° 30' S., and long. 63° 50' E. It is about twelve miles long, very fertile, and well supplied with water.

spoiled a great part of our biscuit, though we happily did not discern this until we were no longer likely to want it. The discomfort and misery of our situation was very great. There was a large water-puncheon in the boat, on the top of which I slept nearly every night that we passed in the boats. The ladies were in the stern of the boat ; and H——, myself, the doctor, and a Bombay lieutenant, in the body of it, with the men.

“In the course of the next day the weather grew worse, and one of the small boats, in which was Mr. Simpson, the mate, with several others, was split by the sea. She came alongside, and we put the carpenter into her, who made what repairs he could, but with little hope of their ultimate safety. We then fastened a piece of canvas along our weather gunwale, having lashed a bamboo four feet up the mast, and fixed it on the intersection of two stanchions at the same height above the stern. The cloth was firmly lashed along this, so as to form a kind of half-pent roof. But for this imperfect defence we must have been swamped ; and we still shipped seas to such an extent that four men were constantly employed in baling. In the evening it blew hard, with a tremendous sea ; and not thinking the damaged boat safe, we took in her crew, and abandoned her. We were now thirty-six passengers, stowed as thick as we could hold, and obliged to throw over all superfluties ; and we had not more than eight inches of clear gunwale out of water.

“That miserable night I shall never forget ; a single wave might have overwhelmed us. The re-

membrance of my past life crowded on my mind. I felt parted from this world, yet could not divest myself of a certain feeling that we should be saved. I recommended myself to Him without whose permission the waves had no power to harm us, and resigned myself to meet death ; and when I thought of the short struggle that might usher us into eternity, it was no longer with calmness ; there was regret at the thought of what those would feel who waited my return.

“Wet, crushed, and miserable, the night passed away, and morning broke ; and though the weather was still very bad, I again felt that hope had not entirely deserted me. A tremendous sea came rolling down, and I drew in my breath with horror ; it broke right over our stern, wetted the poor women to their throats, and carried off the steersman’s hat. The captain cried out, encouragingly, ‘That’s nothing—it’s all right ; bale away, my boys!’ He told us afterwards that he did not expect us to live out the night. Harassed as he was in mind and body, he never let us despair ; he stood on the bench the whole night, and slept none for nearly forty-eight hours.

“Morning broke ; the weather moderated a little, and we enjoyed some comparative comfort. We had daily three small meals of biscuit and jam, with three half-pints of water, with brandy. The men had a gill of spirits allowed them daily. We had plenty of cigars, and whenever we could strike a light, had a smoke, which we found a great luxury. The ladies were most wretched ; for they could not move, and

any little alteration in their dress could only be made by drawing a curtain before them ; but they did not utter one repining word.

“ On the thirteenth evening we began to look out for Rodriguez ; the captain telling us not to be too sanguine, as his chronometer was not to be trusted to after its late rough treatment. The night fell, and I went forward to sleep, and, about twelve o'clock, was awoke by the cry that land was right ahead. I looked, and saw a strong loom of land through the mist. The boat was brought-to for an hour ; then made sail, and ran towards it, and at half-past two it appeared still more strongly. We then lay-to till daylight. I attempted to compose myself to sleep, but my feelings were too strong, and I betook myself to smoking.

“ With the first light of dawn Rodriguez appeared six miles ahead, and by eight all were safely landed. A fisherman, who came to show us the way through the reefs, received us into his house, and proceeded to feed us, and in the meantime sent to tell the gentlemen of the island of our arrival. Two came down immediately, and having heard our story, said that our preservation was almost miraculous. We set off in two parties, the married men to the house of one, and the single to that of another : the crew were taken inland, and encamped. They gave our bundles to the negroes, and took us to their houses, where everything they had was set before us—clean linen and a plentiful dinner. We then retired to bed, and enjoyed what we had been strangers to for a fortnight—a sound sleep.”

Among daring boat voyages that—or rather those—undertaken by the people on board the French steam-packet

### DUROC

must take a place of honour.

The *Duroc*, bound from New Caledonia to France, grounded on the Mellish Reef, situated one hundred and sixty leagues N.W. of the former place, on the night of the 12th of August, 1856. A sandbank, rising a few feet above the surface, afforded a refuge to which, when daylight came, the crew and passengers were transferred. Provisions and stores of all sorts—including an apparatus for distilling sea-water—were brought from the wreck in boats. Tents were erected; and a large pinnace, to measure fifty feet in keel, was at once put in hand.

On the 25th of August, three boats set sail, leaving thirty-one persons, with four months' provisions, on the reef. The expedition was under the charge of M. Magdelaine, Captain de la Vassière remaining at the scene of the shipwreck. The largest of the three boats had fifteen men, the other two nine each. M. Magdelaine's orders were to make the coast of Australia, at Cape Tribulation, the nearest point of land, and to proceed as far as Torres Strait, where it was hoped he might fall in with some vessel.

Trouble soon began. On the 27th a tremendous sea was running. The boats were small and deeply laden, and shipped a great deal of water. M. Magdelaine, while "taking the meridian" at noon, was swept clean out of the long-boat by an enormous wave.

When almost exhausted, he was rescued by the gig ; but it was not till evening that he was able to regain his own boat, which had only been saved from sinking, when filled to the gunwale, by the exertions of the men. " Everything was thrown overboard, while with shoes and buckets they set to work to bale out the water." A dispiriting commencement, surely !

On the evening of the 30th, the fifth day of the voyage, Cape Tribulation was made. " I took in a full supply of fresh water here," says M. Magdelaine, " in spite of the presence of some natives, and the difficulties of disembarkation."

On the 9th of September they arrived at Port Albany, where they thought they might find an English settlement or a ship. But bitter disappointment awaited them ; and finding the springs dried up and provisions scarce, they resolved to make for Coupang, in the Island of Timor.

On the 20th, the water-casks were filled at Possession Island, and the remaining biscuits—about ninety pounds—divided, which would allow of a daily ration of three ounces and a half to each man for ten or twelve days.

" I attempted," writes M. Magdelaine, " to raise the moral condition, now somewhat lowered, of men fatigued by fifteen days of privations of every kind, and taking once more to the open sea, confided myself to the care of Providence, who had already guided us so happily, and had saved us, in the midst of difficulties, from the additional misfortune of sickness or disease."

On the 17th, a terrible and unlooked-for misfortune came upon them. It fell dead calm !

“On the 18th I attempted to make the men row; but the heat and want of water prevented their continuing the exercise.

“On the 19th, the minds of some amongst us were seized with terror, and I resolved to profit by it to make a last effort, rowing straight for the middle of the Island of Timor, which I estimated to be about thirty leagues off.”

What a scene it must have been—these panting, panic-stricken men, bending to their oars for dear life! But how quietly does their commander record it all!

“I wished to set the example in my own person, and taking advantage of the coolness of the night, we did not quit our oars from five in the evening until daybreak, though we had but a pint of water to quench our thirst throughout our arduous and prolonged toil.”

Soon, however, they had their reward. “At sunrise, land rose before us, in a line of upwards of twenty leagues in length. The sight re-animated the courage of every individual, and seemed to inspire him with new strength.”

But their troubles were not yet over. On the 21st they had to move forward along the coast in search of water and food. It was not till nightfall on the 22nd, having had no food since the morning, that the adventurous voyagers entered the port of Coupang. It was four weeks since they had left the reef!

Meanwhile, the castaways, under the captain, were working away at their big boat. On the 29th of September, she was launched, being appropriately



named the *Deliverance*. Captain de la Vassière, and the thirty persons (including his own wife and daughter) who had been left on the reef, embarked on the 2nd of October. The very same voyage was made, and, curiously enough, in the same number of days; for it was the 30th of October when the *Deliverance* made Coupang.

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### THE MEDUSA.

The horrible story of the *Medusa's* raft must be told, if only to show how terrible may be the results of utter selfishness, forgetfulness of duty, and want of forethought and discipline. A voyage that might have been accomplished in safety—almost in comfort—had a Fellowes, a Theaker, or a Magdelaine been in command, was characterized by the most frightful suffering, and by bloodshed, cannibalism, madness, and despair; in a word, by accumulated horrors such as have (as it has been said) “branded the modern *Medusa* with a name of infamy worse than that of the Gorgon.”

In July 1816, the French frigate *Medusa*, being then on her voyage to Senegal, and having the new Governor of that colony, and a large number of troops on board, struck on a sand-bank, and became a wreck. The land was but fifteen leagues distant, the sea was calm, and there were six boats available. Further accommodation, however, was demanded for

the rescue of the large number of persons on board, and accordingly a large raft was constructed. There seems to have been no very pressing need of haste, yet everything was done in a state of wildest confusion, hurry, and heedlessness. The raft was sixty feet long, and upon it one hundred and forty-seven landsmen, soldiers, and officers were crowded, there being but ten sailors, under the command of a midshipman. The planking was badly secured, and there were no bulwarks of any sort to break the force of the waves, "probably, because those who ordered its construction had no intention of committing themselves to it." Charts, instruments, spars, sails, and stores of all sorts were deficient.

"Scarcely had fifty men set foot on this raft than it sank at least two feet." Then all the flour was thrown over, nothing being retained in the way of provisions except a few barrels of wine and some water. At the last moment about twenty pounds of biscuit was thrown on board. The whole was reduced to a paste by the salt-water, but even in this state it proved valuable. By the time the hundred and forty-seven passengers were got on board, the raft was *three feet under water*; the poor wretches were huddled together, unable to move, and up to their middles in the sea.

The idea was that the boats, unitedly, should tow the raft to land, and it is said that the officers had sworn not to abandon their helpless comrades. One by one, however, the boats cast off the tow-ropes, till the first lieutenant was the only one who stuck to his duty. In a few minutes, he, too, finding his unaided exertions of no avail, cast off, and the unfor-

tunate and helpless crowd on the raft, heard the barbarous and fatal cry, "Let us abandon them!"

The rest of the tale may be told, for the most part, in the words of one of the few survivors by whom the narrative was supplied to the *Journal des Débats*, September, 1816.

"In truth, we refused to be convinced that we were entirely abandoned till the boats were almost out of sight. Our consternation was then extreme . . . . All the seamen and soldiers yielded to despair, and it was only after prolonged efforts that we succeeded in calming their fears."

The *first day* was "passed in tolerable tranquillity. A little biscuit, soaked in a small quantity of wine, made up our first repast; and it was the best we enjoyed while we remained on the raft. Some order was established in the distribution of our wretched pittance."

They still clung to the hope that the boats would return, but night closed over the deep and they were still alone! The wind freshened, the swell increased, and the chapter of horrors began.

"During the hours of darkness, a great number of our passengers who had not got 'seamen's leg's' fell over one another; and most cruel were the sufferings of all until day arrived. Then, what a spectacle presented itself to our view! Ten or twelve unfortunate creatures, with their limbs entangled in the interstices left between the timbers of the raft, had been unable to disengage themselves and had lost their lives. Several others had been carried off the raft by the violence of the sea; so that by morning we were already twenty fewer in number."

A *second day* of hope deferred, and yet clung to in desperation, and then once more darkness closes down upon the doomed throng.

“The sea raged more terribly than on the preceding night; and the men, unable to hold fast to the raft, either fore or aft, crowded towards the steadiest part, the centre. Those unable to reach it, perished almost to a man; and such were the hurry and press of the people in their wild endeavours to save themselves, that not a few were suffocated by the weight of their comrades, who fell upon them every moment.”

But there was worse to come. “The soldiers and sailors, giving themselves up for lost, fell to drinking, and drank to such an excess that they lost their reason. In this state their deliriousness reached such an extreme that they conceived the intention of murdering their officers, and destroying the raft by cutting the ropes which united its different parts. One of them, armed with a hatchet, advanced to carry out this ferocious design, and had already begun to sever the fastenings, which was the signal for revolt. The officers rushed forward to restrain the madman and his companions, and he fell dead beneath the well-directed blow of a sabre . . . . We assumed a defensive position, and the struggle began. One of the rebels raised his weapon against an officer; he fell immediately stricken with many wounds. This firmness appeared for a moment to intimidate his comrades; but closing in their ranks, they withdrew a little to meditate their plans. A sailor, feigning to repose himself, had begun to cut the ropes with a knife . . . . We rushed upon him . . . . The combat

soon became general. The mast broke, and falling upon Captain Dupont, who still remained insensible, broke his thigh. He was seized by the soldiers, who flung him into the seething waters. We perceived this, however, in time to save him. We then placed him on a barrel, but he was torn from us by the mutineers, who wished to dig out his eyes with a knife. Roused with such ferocity, we charged them with unexampled ardour, dashing through the lines which the soldiers had formed, sabre in hand; and many of them paid with their lives the penalty of their madness . . . . After a second charge, the violence of the rebels gave place to a signal of cowardice; most of them threw themselves on their knees and asked pardon."

It was now midnight and all was quiet for a time, but in an hour the revolt broke out afresh. The men, mad with drink, again attacked their officers. The frantic fight was renewed, and soon the raft was covered with the dead and dying. "Those of our adversaries who were unarmed endeavoured to rend us to pieces with their teeth. Many of us were cruelly bitten; I, myself, had severe wounds on the legs and shoulder."

The *third day* dawned. "A great number of the madmen had flung themselves headlong into the sea; and on a careful examination we found that during the terrible hours of darkness, sixty-five of our antagonists had perished. We had lost only two of our party."

The discovery was now made that during the night two out of three barrels of wine, and, worse still,

the only two casks of water, had been thrown into the sea. There remained but one barrel of wine, and no food for the sixty-seven persons that still survived.

And now commenced the scenes that render this chapter of maritime adventure in all probability the most revolting on record.

“Those who survived that terrible night I have endeavoured to describe flung themselves ravenously on the dead bodies with which the raft was covered and cut them up in slices, which some, even in that very instant, greedily devoured. At first a great number of us refused to touch the horrible food, but after a while, yielding to a want more powerful than the ordinary sentiments of humanity, we saw in this frightful repast the only, though most deplorable, means of prolonging our existence, and I proposed—I acknowledge it—to dry those bleeding limbs, so as to render them a little more supportable to the taste. Some, however, still retained courage enough to refuse the horrible food, and these received a somewhat larger ration of wine.”

The writer introduces the above disgusting statement in the following high-flown fashion :—

“I shudder with horror while I retrace that which we put in practice. My pen drops from my hand. A mortal coldness freezes all my limbs, and my hair stands on end. Father of heaven! dare we still raise towards Thee our hands dyed with the blood of our fellow men? Thy clemency is infinite, and Thy paternal goodness has already granted to our repentance the pardon of a crime which was never

voluntary, but forced upon us by the most awful necessity!"

We can hardly accept the plea of necessity, when we consider that this frightful scene was enacted on the *third* day, when the people on the raft had only passed one day absolutely without food, and even upon it had been well supplied with wine. But there was worse to follow on that doomed craft.

On the *fourth* day ten or twelve more deaths occurred. "We reserved one of their bodies for our sustenance, and committed the others to the deep."

In the course of this afternoon a fortunate circumstance occurred. A shoal of flying-fish got under the raft, and through the numerous openings in the ill-constructed deck a number were captured. A fire was made by means of a steel and flint and some dried gunpowder, and the fish was broiled. "But to this wholesome fare we added a portion of that sacrilegious flesh which roasting rendered endurable, and which the officers and myself now touched for the first time." Thus they actually became cannibals with other food in their mouths!

During the night there were fresh disturbances and renewed scenes of bloodshed. On the sixth day the number was reduced to thirty.

"The survivors were in the most deplorable condition. The salt water had taken the skin completely off our lower limbs, and as we were covered with wounds and bruises, it kept us in a state of incessant irritation. Not more than twenty of us were able to keep on our legs and walk about. Nearly all our wine and store of fish were exhausted; of the latter



we had about a dozen, and of the former a sufficient quantity for four days' consumption. In four days, we said, all will be spent, and death will be inevitable. Seven days had passed since we were abandoned. We calculated that if the boats were not swamped on the coast, they would occupy at least three to four days in reaching St. Louis; some time would then be necessary to despatch vessels in search of us, and these would require some time to reach us. We resolved to hold out as long as possible.

“In the course of the day two soldiers crept behind the only cask of wine which was left; they pierced it, and drank from it with a pipe. We had all taken an oath that any man resorting to such a stratagem should be punished with death. This law was carried into immediate execution, and the two culprits were cast into the sea.

“Only twenty-eight of us were now alive, and out of the twenty-eight not more than fifteen seemed able to exist for a few days longer; the others, emaciated, hungry, athirst, fatigued, and covered with large wounds, had lost their reason. However, they shared in our rations, and might, before their death, consume forty bottles of wine—forty bottles, which were to us of inestimable value. We held a council. To put the sick on half rations was to retard their death by a few moments; to leave them without provisions was to doom them to the protracted agony of death by famine. After a long deliberation, we resolved to throw them into the sea. By doing so, we should secure to the survivors provisions for six days, at the rate of three quarts a day.

“The resolution taken, who was to execute it? The habit of seeing death constantly at hand—our wild despair—the certainty that we must all perish unless we had recourse to this cruel expedient—everything, in a word, had hardened our hearts, and they had become insensible to every other feeling but that of self-preservation. Three seamen and a soldier had agreed to act as doomsmen. We turned our faces aside, and shed bitter tears over the fate of these unhappy creatures.”

Crocodile's tears, some may be inclined to think! The writer of the narrative tries to justify this deliberate act of wholesale murder by showing that when the fifteen survivors were rescued they had but one ration of wine remaining; but he ignores the fact that a sail might have appeared at any time, and that for men who did not scruple to feed on the flesh of their dead comrades, there would probably have been a sufficient supply without having recourse to crime,—that is, if the thirteen were really in the desperate and dying condition he describes.

Five more days were spent on the raft, marked by deepening gloom and increasing misery. “Even in our sleep our imagination depicted the mangled limbs of our unhappy comrades, and we invoked death with loud cries. A burning thirst, intensified by the rays of a fiery sun, consumed our very blood. . . . We were convinced that not above twelve or fifteen bottles of wine remained in our cask, but we began to experience an invincible disgust at the flesh which had hitherto served as our nourishment.”

On the morning of the 17th of July, twelve days

after the departure of the boats, a sail appeared. The usual alternation of hope and fear, of joy and agony, followed. The vessel was at a great distance, but the anxious watchers made her out to be a brig. Signals of all sorts were made, but apparently they remained unnoticed. The ship disappeared, and the wretched castaways passed from the delirium of joy into an agony of despair.

“For my part, I envied the fate of those whom I had seen perish at my side. I then proposed to draw up a record of our sad experiences, to append to it all our signatures, and to attach it to the upper part of the mast, in the hope that some day it might reach our families.”

But deliverance was at hand. In two hours the brig reappeared, bearing down directly upon them. She proved to be the *Argus*, a vessel specially despatched in search of them. The few survivors of the surging, fighting, blaspheming throng that had crowded the raft at starting were taken on board—“fifteen miserable creatures, with fierce, hollow eyes, and gaunt, emaciated bodies, unexpectedly rescued from what seemed an inevitable death.”

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As a relief to the above gloomy narrative, we may place at the conclusion of this chapter the curious and interesting story of

### THE PROSERPINE.

Here, though there was some loss of life, the end was

happier than any of those concerned could have anticipated, and throughout, those who were companions in adversity displayed the utmost fellow-feeling, cheerfulness, and good discipline.

The *Proserpine*, a frigate of twenty-eight guns, Captain James Wallis, sailed from Yarmouth for Cuxhaven on Monday, the 28th of January, 1799, having on board the Honourable Thomas Grenville, with despatches of importance for the Court of Berlin. On arriving off Heligoland on the Wednesday following, she took on board a pilot, and steered for the Red Buoy, and there cast anchor for the night. The other buoys at the entrance of the river having been removed to prevent the entrance of a hostile fleet, it seemed doubtful whether the vessel could safely proceed up the channel; but the pilot, on being consulted, affirmed that there was not the slightest danger to be apprehended from making the attempt, and guaranteed the safe arrival of the vessel at Cuxhaven, provided that the captain would proceed only between half-ebb and half-flood tide, during which time he could observe the situation of the sands, and could easily steer by well-known landmarks. Accordingly, in reliance upon these assurances, the ship was, on the following morning, got under way, and, preceded by the *Prince of Wales* packet, which had accompanied her from Yarmouth, commenced her passage up the Elbe. All went well until about four in the afternoon, when, the weather being hazy, with a sudden fall of snow, it was found necessary to come to an anchor.

Some hours before midnight the wind began to

blow in a gale from the east, attended with a storm of snow so heavy and dense as to shut out the view of everything else ; and when the tide began to flow in the direction of the wind, ponderous masses of ice were drifted against the ship. All hands were ordered upon deck, and every exertion was made to fend off the floating ice ; but it was with the utmost difficulty that the cables were saved from injury, and the vessel enabled to hold her ground. Thus the night was passed.

When daylight came, it was seen that the masses of ice had been carried by the tide up the river, that the *Prince of Wales* packet had been driven on shore a wreck, and that below the *Proserpine* seaward the water was clear. The captain, therefore, warned by the fate of the packet, and seeing that it was not possible to proceed to Cuxhaven, got his ship again under way, and stood out to sea, intending to land Mr. Grenville, whose mission was of the utmost importance, on some part of the coast of Jutland.

All danger was now supposed to be past, and the frigate was running out to sea, under her fore-top-mast-staysail, when, at about half-past nine o'clock, she struck with great force upon the Scharhorn Sand, which lies six miles north-west of Newark Island. Soundings were immediately made, and showed only ten feet of water. An attempt was then made to carry out an anchor by means of the boats, but the shoal ice was returning so fast that this could not be done. All hands were now summoned to assist in shoring up the ship, so as to make her heel towards the bank, instead of falling into the current. This

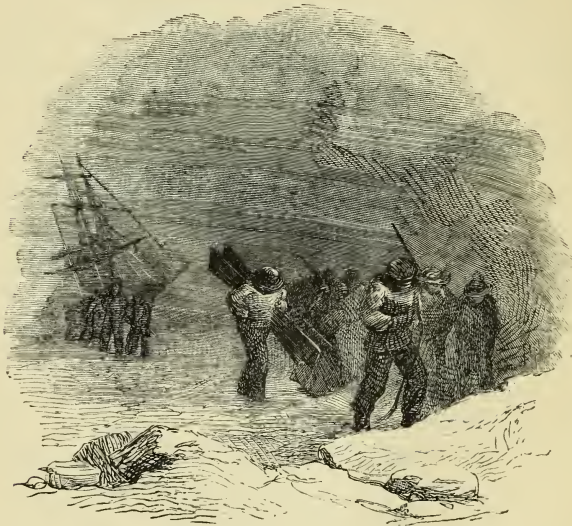
they were fortunately enabled to accomplish, and when the tide ebbed the *Proserpine* still maintained her position on the bank. But the next tide brought heavier masses of ice, which carried away the shores, tore the copper from the starboard quarter, and cut the rudder in two. In the hope of saving the vessel at high water, Captain Wallis now proceeded to lighten her: most of the guns and good part of the stores were thrown overboard, and the casks of wines and spirits were stove. Notwithstanding the opportunity thus presented to the men, so perfect was the discipline that there was not a single instance of intoxication among them.

The hope of saving the vessel at high water proved delusive. When the time of flood came, which was not before ten o'clock at night, it was found that the heavy gale from the south-east kept back the tide so effectually, that there was less water round the ship by three feet than there had been at the moment when she struck. The situation of all on board was now most critical, and their sufferings were dreadful. They could only expect that when the tide ebbed the ship would be rent in pieces by the shocks of the floating ice. The night was bitterly cold; all around was veiled in impenetrable darkness; and the fast-falling snow, beating against their faces, wrapped them in its icy folds. The decks were so slippery that it was scarcely possible to stand, much less to take active exercise, and all they could do was to crouch under any sheltering object, and screen themselves as they best might from the driving blast. Thus passed the fearful night, and when at last the



morning broke it brought little relief; for now the wind had increased, the drift of ice had reached as high as the cabin windows, and, from the concussion of the heavy masses, the ship had suffered so much, that it appeared to every one but too certain that she would soon go to pieces.

It was now proposed by Mr. Grenville that the crew, as the only means of saving their lives, should



endeavour to effect their passage across the ice to Newark Island. The attempt appeared to Captain Wallis to present but little prospect of success. Newark was six miles off; they had no guide to direct them; they were exhausted by cold and fatigue; they were buried in a dense fog, and a heavy snow-storm was falling; and the chance



seemed small indeed of their finding their way for such a distance over a shifting field of ice. Still, in this desperate undertaking, the only remaining hope of safety appeared to rest, and as the crew were unanimous in wishing to make the trial, he at length gave his consent.

No time was lost in carrying out the plan. The people were divided into four companies, each under the leadership of an officer. A number of the men who had suffered least from fatigue were chosen to carry planks, to be laid down over dangerous spots or across chasms in the ice, while others were provided with a long line of rope extended between them, which might be readily made available in case of any one falling between the rifts. Each man also took with him what provisions he could.

The journey was commenced at half-past one on Saturday afternoon, and by three o'clock every man had left the ship, Captain Wallis and Lieutenant Ridley, of the Marines, being the last to quit the deck. It was a terrible expedition. Their route lay directly in the teeth of the cruel wind, which blew the blinding snow-flakes in their faces, and these in a few moments became solid lumps of ice depending from the hair and eye-brows. Insensibly they were turned from their proper course, and for some time they were travelling in a direction which, if continued, would have carried them seaward—or at any rate to such a distance from the shore as would have ensured their perishing from cold during the night. This fatal mistake was happily avoided in consequence of one of the party having a compass in

his pocket, by consulting which they were enabled to resume the right track. For hours they struggled on, plunging through the deep snow, clambering over huge blocks of ice, and sometimes wading through pools of water up to their middle. Two of the party were women, one of whom had scarcely ever been on board a ship until the day before the *Proserpine* sailed from Yarmouth. This unfortunate creature, the wife of one of the sailors, had been delivered of a dead child during the first day at sea, and now, in her weak state, had to traverse the ice in the face of a pitiless storm. The other was a robust woman, accustomed to seafaring life, and she had with her a healthy infant of nine months old. Most strange to say, although the strong, hearty mother and her healthy child were both frozen to death in attempting this fearful passage, the delicate invalid survived, and, after a journey of indescribable toil and danger, arrived safely at Newark. Here the whole ship's company were received with great kindness by the few villagers, who readily afforded them the shelter of their huts; though, from their extreme poverty, they were able to render them but little assistance in any other way.

When the muster was made on the following morning, it was found that of the whole of the frigate's company, amounting to about 300 souls, twelve seamen, besides the woman and child already mentioned, were all that were missing. These twelve had perished from the intensity of the cold and the fatigues and hardships of the passage over the ice, and the number was remarkably small, considering

the privations and dangers which the whole party had had to encounter. Many of the men were badly frost-bitten, but these all ultimately recovered.

The gale and the snow-storm lasted for several days, the crew suffering much in the meanwhile from want of proper food and raiment. Their stores were now nearly exhausted, and the few needy inhabitants of the island were quite unable to replace them. It was absolutely necessary, therefore, that part of them, at least, should proceed to Cuxhaven. Having secured the services of some of the islanders as guides, a party set out accordingly on the 6th of February, at eight in the morning, Mr. Grenville, with the secretary of the embassy, and some of the servants, accompanying them. But the land journey proved hardly less trying and perilous than the transit over the ice. They had to ford a river of considerable width, plunging up to their waists in water, and struggling against the tide, on which large flakes of ice were floating and sweeping along with a force which rendered it barely practicable to maintain a footing. Providentially they reached the opposite bank in safety, and arrived in the evening at Cuxhaven without the loss of a man.

Captain Wallis had remained behind at Newark, with a party of officers and men, in the hope of saving some portion of the frigate's stores. On the 8th, the master, Mr. Anthony, set out with a small party to the ship, to fetch bread, of which all were much in need, and to ascertain the condition of the vessel. Having reached the frigate with much difficulty, they found her almost a wreck, lying on

her beam-ends, with seven or eight feet of water in her hold, partly broken up, and only kept together by the pressure of the ice, in which she was in a manner embedded. Such being the state of the *Proserpine*, it was thought by Captain Wallis inadvisable to incur the risk of visiting her again. On the 10th, however, the weather having in some degree cleared up, Mr. Anthony, taking with him the surgeon, one midshipman, the boatswain, and two seamen, set out to visit the wreck a second time. To the great alarm of the captain and those remaining with him at Newark, the men did not return during the day. Night came on, and still they were absent; and as the tide was flowing, it was now too late for them to cross the sands. Captain Wallis hoped that they might have judged it safe to remain on board, and that they would return in the morning. But a violent storm came on during the night, and when the morning broke, and he looked out for the wreck, not a vestige of it was to be seen! It seemed but too evident that the spirited volunteers, who had gone to fetch provisions from the wreck, had perished with her. The following is Captain Wallis's description of the event, in a letter to Vice-Admiral Dickson:—

“ They got on board, but unfortunately neglected, until too late in the tide, to return, which left them no alternative but that of remaining on board till the next day. About ten o'clock at night the wind came on at south-south-east, and blew a most violent storm; the tide, though at the neap, rose to an uncommon height, the ice got in motion, the velocity

of which swept the wreck to destruction (for in the morning not a vestige of her was to be seen), and with it, I am miserably afraid, went the unfortunate officers and men ; and, if so, their loss will be a great one to the service, as, in their different departments, they were a great acquisition to it.

“The only hope I have is that Providence, which has so bountifully assisted us in our recent dangers and difficulties, may be extended towards them so as to preserve their lives, by means of a boat or otherwise ; but I am very sorry to say my hopes are founded on the most distant degree of human probability. This melancholy accident, happening so unexpectedly, added to my other misfortunes, has given so severe a shock to my health and spirits, as to prevent me hitherto undertaking the journey to Cuxhaven, where the survivors of the ship’s company now are, except a few who are here with me, with whom I shall set out as soon as we are able.”

But the mournful presentiments of Captain Wallis were not realised, and a different fate was in store for the gallant fellows whose loss he deplored. They had reached the wreck at ten in the morning, and there had busied themselves in collecting such stores as were most wanted on shore. While thus engaged, they had forgotten to watch the tide, and saw, when it was too late, that it would be impossible to make good their retreat that day. During the night the wind changed to south-south-east, and blew a gale, and the tide rose so high that it floated the ship, with the surrounding mass of ice, without their being aware of it, so that, in the morning, to their dismay,

they found themselves drifting out to sea. Here was a worse peril than any they had yet encountered. They were but six in number—too few to manage the vessel, even if she would float ; while they knew that if the ice which buoyed her up were to be washed away, she would in all probability founder at once. Instead of giving way to despair, however, they set to work ; they sounded, and found eleven fathoms of water between the ice ; they fired minute-guns ; they rigged and worked the pumps ; and, in order to lighten the vessel, they threw overboard nearly all the remaining guns. They next prepared the tackles for lowering the boat ; and thus, by keeping themselves constantly employed, prevented their minds from dwelling on the miseries of their situation, while they kept up their strength by partaking heartily of the abundant provisions within their reach.

On the morning of Tuesday, the 12th, they descried land on their lee, and hoisting signals of distress, fired several guns in the hope of attracting attention and receiving assistance. Shortly afterwards the ship struck upon a rock about a mile and a half from the island of Baltrum. They then tried to launch the cutter, but failed, as the sea was hampered with ice—and they were compelled to remain another night on board. On the morning of the 13th, they launched the boat and pulled for land ; but the ice lay so thick towards the shore that they were obliged to drag the boat over it. After prodigious efforts they had at length to abandon the boat, and then, by leaping from one piece of ice to another, they finally reached the land, and were safe. The inhabitants

received them kindly, and gave them the shelter they needed ; but no representations could induce them to refrain from plundering the ship, which they thoroughly ransacked, giving a part of the provisions to the unfortunate Englishmen, and appropriating to themselves the arms and stores of every kind.

On the 16th, the river and estuary of the Elbe were sufficiently clear of the drift ice to allow of their sailing for Cuxhaven, for which place the six adventurers started in the cutter, which had been fortunately recovered, and arrived thither in safety on the 22nd. There they joined the party who had accompanied Mr. Grenville from Newark ; and there, on the following day, they were present to welcome the arrival of Captain Wallis and the rest of the crew of the *Proserpine* !

Thus, after all their varied hardships and hairbreadth escapes, the frigate's crew were once more brought together with a total loss of only fourteen of their number. Through all their dangers and sufferings, not a man of them was ever heard to murmur, or known to disobey a single command. They displayed unflinching courage and discipline in the midst of anxiety and danger ; and to their own fortitude and perseverance in the hour of peril they owed, under Providence, their final deliverance.

When the navigation of the Elbe was quite free, they were all despatched by different packets to England, where they arrived in safety.



## CHAPTER II.

## REEFS AND SANDBANKS.

MANY a good ship has owed her destruction to a partially-submerged sandbank or hidden reef situated in the open sea ; hundreds of miles, it may be, from the nearest land. Nothing can be conceived more miserable than the fate of the wretched people who crowd together on some such speck of land, not knowing but what they may be clean washed away by the rising tide, and at best utterly destitute of food and shelter save such as they can by degrees secure from the wreckage of their ship. Yet in such a condition people have contrived to keep themselves alive for days and weeks, and have even succeeded in establishing something like comfort in their narrow abode. This, at least, is the impression we get from the story of

*THE CABALVA,*

which, on account of the curious circumstances attending it, we may be allowed to tell at some length.

The *Cabalva* was a vessel of 1,200, tons, belonging to the East India Company. She sailed on the 14th of April, 1818, from Gravesend for China direct, with about one hundred and thirty men on board, and a

miscellaneous cargo of cloth, muslin, iron, lead, beer, stationery, Spanish dollars, watches, perfumery, &c.; of which cargo we shall hear anon.

We are indebted to Mr. Francken, the sixth officer, for a lengthy, and at the same time interesting and amusing, account of the voyage, and of the fate of himself and his companions. Space will not permit us to give any of the details supplied in this regular seaman's "yarn" of the earlier days of the voyage—of a leak that "kept the pumps jogging day and night without intermission," of the "usual ceremonies observed upon crossing the line," and of the drunkenness, and even mutiny, that followed. In due time the Cape was passed; and we take up the narrative when the *Cabalva* had reached well-nigh the middle of the Indian Ocean. The story of the final catastrophe is thus graphically told:—

"*Tuesday, the 7th of July.*—At four o'clock in the morning the watch was relieved as usual, and I was called on deck to keep the morning watch under the second officer. I received orders to keep a good look-out ahead; and having relieved the fourth officer, I stationed two men on the fore-yard, and one on each cat-head, and mustered the fore-castle watch, and walked the waist, expecting to receive orders for washing the deck.

"It was now the darkest part of the night, being about an hour after the moon's setting, and as long before daylight; but the stars were glittering above, the sky was cloudless and clear, and the wind moderate, and we were going under easy sail, with a breeze on the quarter, at the rate of seven miles and

a half an hour. The people were lying down on the decks to sleep, and soon everything was quiet, except the sea breaking against our bows, the snoring of the sailors, and the doleful shrieking of many birds that were flying over our mast-heads. I had been walking the waist nearly half-an-hour, looking at the stars, and little aware of our danger, when the men that were stationed aloft sang out repeatedly, one after another, 'Breakers on the larboard-bow! hard a-port! hard a-port! it's too late! it's all over! hard a-port!'

"I was immediately aware that there was no time to lose, and repeated the words to the officer of the watch, while I ran aft to the wheel; the helm flew to a-port, the ship rounded to; she scraped along the rocks several seconds, and then stopped at once with a shock that affected her whole frame, shaking the masts like a leaf, and spinning the wheel round like a top, till the helm was hard a-starboard again, which threw the man at the wheel clean over to leeward, and left him apparently lifeless; and as I never saw him afterwards, I suppose he was either killed on the spot or disabled from saving himself. One of the men, likewise, whom I had stationed on the fore-yard-arm, not being able to hold on, was flung off, and either killed or drowned.

"Everybody ran up from below; the last shock had thrown most of them out of their hammocks and cots; the rest were too much frightened to stop any longer between decks. The upper deck is in a moment crowded with people, most of them half naked, presenting an awful scene of confusion, noise,

and terror ; the loud commanding voices of the captain and officers are heard now and then between a horrid confused noise of howling and lamenting, of crashing and parting beams, ribs, masts, and yards, and of the overwhelming surf that violently washes over all every time. ‘Clear away the boats!’ is the cry ; but this is a great deal easier said than done ; a great many sing out, but very few set to work ; the surf is knocking the ship about so dreadfully, that we can with difficulty keep our legs. ‘Cut away the mainmast ! cut away the foremast ! stand clear of the masts !’ Everybody secures himself as well as he can, full of anxious expectation ; an awful silence ensues for a few minutes ; then we hear the repeated blows of hatchets and tomahawks, and down they tumble, masts, yards, and sails, with a tremendous crash.”

At length the day breaks, and portions of the reef on which the ill-fated *Cabalva* had struck are visible in several directions. Amid much confusion—everyone striving and pushing for himself—the cutter is cleared and launched. Several of the officers, the surgeon, and the sole passenger embark, but Captain Dalrymple and Francken remained behind. The narrative continues :—

“I crawled on the forecastle, and took a good hold round the best bower-anchor stock, in order to look out for land, ships, or anything consolatory. The *Cabalva* is now washed quite in two, the poop and forecastle being the only parts out of water, and over these the surf is constantly breaking. The captain, and most of the people that had been left, are swimming to leeward of the wreck, between a

variety of timber, masts, yards, ribs, and spars, half afloat and half drowning. I saw at a distance the large cutter before-mentioned, with about thirty people in her, dancing over the surf with a wonderful liveliness until she touched the rock, when a tremendous surf broke over her, and washed every soul clean out, dashing them against the rocks: and she would most likely have turned broadside to the surf before, and been swamped with all the party, as they had no oars, had not Mr. M'Kenzie, one of the petty officers, made fast a rope to the wreck before they shoved off, the slack of which he eased out of the boat as the waves drove her along, and thus kept her end-on to the reef. Soon after I saw Mr. Grant, the surgeon's assistant, a most amiable young man, and one of my best friends, striking out from the wreck with a great deal of courage, and trusting too much to his own swimming; he struggled with the surf for some time, till he was obliged to give over the hard contest, and sunk before my eyes."

In some unexplained way the long-boat, which Francken says was large enough to hold all that were left behind, now got clear of the wreck. The captain, who had been struggling in the water on the lee-side of the ship, and some twenty others, including Francken himself, got into her. But, unfortunately, the boat was stove in by contact with some floating wreckage, and the whole party are once more in the water. After describing several pathetic incidents, Francken explains how he finally got to the rock—which was not more than 150 yards distant.

“Shortly after I had an opportunity of seeking safety on a large raft of booms, which was now breaking adrift from the wreck, and was enabled to pick up several fellow-sufferers by heaving a rope’s end to them to lay hold of. The captain, with much difficulty, crawled to this raft from the mainmast, upon which he had again taken refuge after the destruction of the long-boat. I had jumped upon it from the forecastle ; two midshipmen and sixteen or twenty sailors likewise managed by different methods to get upon it ; and we are now floating towards the rock. The spars unfortunately turn broadside to the surf, which rolls them about so furiously that few can keep their hold ; and I lift up my hands to heaven with the utmost gratitude, when I think of my safe deliverance from so perilous a situation ; several get their arms and legs broken, for every one tries to keep uppermost ; the stronger ones tread upon the shoulders and heads of the weaker. But it is impossible to give an idea of the scene to one who did not behold it ; for myself, every time I saw the surf coming, I let go the spars, and took to swimming till it was over ; then laid hold of them again. After twelve or fourteen succeeding surfs the raft was thrown on the rock. Captain Dalrymple, whom I particularly noticed, although it was not in my power to assist him, was missed after the second surf, and never seen afterwards alive. Six or seven sailors shared his fate ; the rest reached the rock, quite exhausted and sadly bruised, where they found others sitting down in a state of inactivity, lamenting and howling, instead of trying to better their situation.

We had left behind, on board the wreck, the fifth officer and five or six sailors, who shortly after came on shore (if such a term can be applied to rocks covered to our middle with water) in the captain's cutter. I got on the rock, safe, but bruised all over, and naked, and received a hearty welcome from my companions in misfortune."

All who remained alive had now reached the rock; these numbered about one hundred and twenty-five—only seventeen, including the captain, having been drowned. The following description of the scene, though graphic, and not without a comic element, is very sad, displaying, as it does, the condition into which ignorant and desperate men will sink when without leadership or control of any sort. The coral reef on which the *Cabalva* had struck was now laid bare by the ebbing tide.

"It is covered with the valuable contents of the *Cabalva's* hold, and with pieces of wreck; bales of cloth in abundance, casks, cases, spars, trunks, chests, &c., are strewed about the rock to a great extent. The people are in a state of unruly confusion, and nobody is acknowledged as a head; every one is his own master, and helps himself to his own liking; bales of cloth are cut open, and from these some covering is procured to keep off the scorching rays of the sun, which now became intolerable; some are regaling themselves over casks of brandy, beer, and wine; some plundering and destroying whatever comes in their way, instead of assisting their weak, helpless shipmates; some are attempting to build a raft; others are mending the boats, or trying to do



so; others again are wandering towards some low sandbanks, which extend along the horizon to the N.W., at a distance of three or four miles; while the officers are busily employed in knocking in the heads of the spirit and wine casks, and endeavouring to establish some sort of order.

“ The people are all nearly drunk, and nothing to be done for the common good. Several attempts were made to build rafts, in order to save ourselves at high water, as the boats were very much stove in, and, besides, could not take one quarter of the people; but they were given over in the very beginning for want of volunteers to do the work. Meanwhile the water is rising fast, and it is evident that the rock will be overflowed in a short time.

“ I soon perceived that nothing would be effected towards our safety at present, and walked off very much disgusted at the behaviour of our shipmates, directing my course to the above-mentioned sandbanks, without knowing to what purpose, for they appear just as likely to be overflowed at high water as the rock which I leave; five or six sailors follow me, each provided with a bottle or two of port wine; but there is not a morsel of anything to eat to be found about the rock. We walked on very slowly over hard, uneven rocks, barefooted, and up to our middle in water, and were fortunate enough to meet with a young shark on our passage, which was killed after half-an-hour's chase, and promised a very good meal for ten or twenty men; we dragged him along behind us, and arrived about noon on a little sandbank, four or five feet above the surface of the sea,

and only about one hundred and forty yards in length and eighty in breadth, where part of our people were assembled.

“The company exhibited a most ludicrous spectacle. Some were wrapped in pieces of cloth of the most glaring and brilliant colours, some in muslins and silks, most of them wearing a sort of turban ; but some had bonnets or fancy caps, which had been sent out to China as private trade ; all had muslin, cloth, or beautiful skins wrapped round their feet, on account of their being very much lacerated while wading from the wreck to the sand barefooted, for not a single pair of shoes had we been able to save. They were all provided with a decent stock of cherry brandy or wine, and of course pretty far gone ; some were asleep, some quarrelling, some boxing, some skylarking, some catching birds, which appeared very much astonished at our arrival, and eyed us so closely that we caught eight or nine before they began to be shy. I spoke to several of the most steady-looking sailors, in order to induce the company to return to the wreck, and to save some provisions and water before the ship went totally to pieces ; but they answered me in such fine and elegant terms, and made such long harangues and speeches, that I soon gave over the task, convinced that there was not a sober man amongst them, and lay down on the sand, tired, worn out, and bruised all over, in order to take an hour’s rest, if possible, till the noonday’s heat was past.”

Still, the officer’s remonstrance seems to have had some effect, and, when he awoke, he found that there

had been brought from the wreck "seven pieces of pork, three buckets of fresh water, and some dozen bottles of wine."

The flowing tide washed on to the sandbank, which was situated three or four miles to leeward of the wreck, a great variety of articles—most of them useless, "such as lavender-water, perfumed soap, hair, tooth, and clothes-brushes, stationery, pomatum, &c." However, some gunpowder, secured in a copper barrel, was also washed up; and thus—a spark being procured by means of a razor struck against a piece of glass—the castaways were enabled to light a fire. Towards evening a tent was erected, and covered with cloth. It could only shelter thirty-five or forty persons, and Mr. Francken complains that the officers "and all that went under the name of gentlemen before had the satisfaction to see their own servants, cooks, sweepers, and sailors taking possession of it very comfortably, while they were shut out for the night in rain and cold."

The next day an effort—though but partially successful—was made to establish some sort of discipline and order, as the following extract will show:—

"*Wednesday, the 8th of July.*—What little provisions and drink remained were given in charge of the officers, with the consent of all the well-meaning people, to be divided equally among the crew. Those who acted upon the principle 'every one for himself,' and who were unfortunately more numerous than the other party, ate, drank, and destroyed whatever came in their way, and never got sober. As we had a very scanty meal on the preceding day, an

early breakfast was served out this morning, consisting of a small slice of fat pork about two ounces weight, and a dram of beer in a coffee-cup; biscuit, flour, or any vegetable substance was nowhere to be found. We set out in different parties, determined to make as much of the day as possible. The strongest and heartiest volunteered to wade back to the wreck—the fore-castle and poop being still visible between the breakers—partly to get provisions and water, but principally to secure the large cutter. Another gang went to the adjoining sandbanks, where a variety of cases, casks, and pieces of wreck were washed up. The weak, sick, and lazy—among the latter of whom I was sorry to see some who ought to have set a very different example—stopped at *home*, as well as some working hands to erect a flag-staff, to enlarge the tent, and to spread out plenty of cloth in the sun, and dry it against the night. Some, who would not submit to discipline, were strolling about in all directions, without any particular object in view.”

Francken formed one of the party which had volunteered, under the direction of Mr. Sewell, the chief officer, to visit the wreck. They suffered great hardships; but the whole is described with the utmost good humour:—

“After having waded up to our middle for two hours over hard uneven rocks, we fell in with the large cutter, with the people that had been left behind (on the reef where the vessel struck) yesterday; she was loaded with arms, cutlery, oars, watches, dollars, wine, brandy, beer, muslin, cloth, one drowned sheep,

twelve drowned fowls, and a pine cheese, all heaped one upon another, like a Blackwall hash. Mr. M. was lying on his back in the midst of all, with six or seven pieces of muslin wrapped round his left leg, increasing it to the thickness of his body, and told me with a sad countenance, that he should never have the use of his left leg again. 'Oh, Francken,' said he, 'it is either broken, or out of joint! I have been in a fever all night, and have had nothing to quench my thirst but port wine and brandy; I am sure I shall never get over it.' I pitied him, notwithstanding my suspicions that he was under the influence of those liquors, of which I understood he had taken large potations during the night. While we were consulting how to convey him to the tent and to the doctor, a grog-tub floated by, which we picked up, emptied the water out, put a cage with three live canary-birds in it for a seat (each of which birds afterwards served a man for his day's allowance), and then lifted the patient in very carefully; I likewise put in a broken bottle to bale the water out. About the same time a live pig, standing upon the lid of a chest, came floating by, trembling all over; this was considered a most valuable prize, and taken in tow directly, when I beheld, to my surprise, my own name cut upon the lid, which gave me good reason to suspect that my chest had been plundered. Ten of the party now set out on their way home, loaded with several useful articles. I had the charge of my friend in the grog-tub, which I shoved before me; another man attended the floating pig behind; three or four sailors followed him, dragging through the

water three live pigs and two live sheep saved from the wreck; the rest, loaded with drowned fowls, muskets, pistols, &c., closed the procession.

“While we were wading back to the tent, the chief officer discovered that there was a conspiracy amongst the people that had spent the night in the boat, which would have proved fatal to us all had it been carried into effect. We had noticed some mysterious behaviour amongst them directly after our arrival; they objected to our taking anything out of the boat, and behaved very improperly to the chief officer; but, seeing our superior number, they were obliged to comply, and one of the party discovered the whole plot, which was the following:—‘They intended to have gone to sea in the cutter this forenoon, without a compass, without sails, without a rudder, and without any plan of navigating her.’ They certainly would all have perished within the first day or two; and this boat, our only hope of safety, would have inevitably been lost.

“Nothing particular happened on our way to the tent,” continues the philosophic Francken, “except that in wading we were obliged to strike out for our lives now and then when we got into deep water; my patient was continually complaining of his left leg, and employed in bailing the water out, which rushed in in great quantities whenever he inclined on either side of the tub. About five o’clock in the evening we arrived on the sandbanks, very much exhausted, and were received with great joy on account of our success. The grog-tub was dragged on the sand, the patient taken out very carefully, and

carried to the tent by the third officer and two sailors, who put him down before the doctor, after having been cautioned by him in the words, 'Ease me down gently; take care of my left leg!' The doctor now takes off the pieces of muslin one after another, then overhauls his leg very carefully, and at last protests that there is nothing the matter with it. This rather disconcerted the patient, who kept swearing to the contrary; but we had no time to enjoy his confusion, for upon hearing the distant sound of three cheers, everybody tumbled out of the tent, except the patient, who took up his residence in one corner for good. These cheers came from the chief officer and his party returning from the wreck with the large cutter, after having dragged her three miles over the rocks and sand; we gave three cheers in return, and hauled the boat upon the beach, close to the tent, ready for the carpenter to repair her.

"We assembled to dine about six o'clock in the evening, upon a dram of beer and drowned fowls (half a leg, or half a wing, being about every man's allowance), and found our situation considerably better.

"Our provisions now consisted of six live pigs, five live sheep, twenty-four dead fowls, fifty pieces of pork and beef, a little keg of flour, three casks of beer, four dozen of wine, one dozen of cherry brandy, and five pine cheeses; but no biscuits, and no water. We likewise had saved a sextant, a quadrant, Horseburg's 'Directions for the East Indies,' and Norie's 'Navigation,' several muskets, pistols, and cutlasses, a frying-pan, knives, forks, and plates. The party that



had been travelling to the adjoining sandbank returned with twenty pieces of pork, and nothing else; they all appeared to be nearly intoxicated, and said that they had left behind five or six companions on one of the sandbanks, three or four miles from our encampment.

“An officer’s watch was set at eight o’clock in the evening, partly to watch the motions of the water, to look out for ships, and to keep the fire in, but principally to take care of the provisions; they carried pistols about them loaded with gunpowder and pebbles, and it was generally agreed upon that they should shoot the first man that came within four or five paces of the provisions, which were put together close to the tent, and encompassed with a rail.

“Our feet being dreadfully mangled by our constantly walking upon sharp coral rocks, we dressed them carefully with pomatum, and wrapped them in muslin, that they might be in some measure recovered for the next day’s service; and this we were obliged to repeat every evening.”

The next day, Thursday, July 9th, “was spent less unpleasantly than the preceding, and at daylight every one went to work, except the sick, lazy, and drunk.” The carpenter and his mates are busy with the cutter; the sailmaker adapts sails, and the boatswain manufactures ropes out of pieces of muslin twisted together! The tents are enlarged, and a flag-staff erected.

While Sewell explored the sandbanks, Francken headed a party to the wreck. Here, in the cuddy, they find, to their astonishment, a sailor sunk in

drunken sleep close by a nearly empty cask of brandy. The poor wretch is put on a raft, together with some sail-ropes and two or three dozen of wine, and piloted back to the tents.

Fortunately, the captain's cutter was recovered on this occasion, albeit in a very damaged condition. The following extract presents a sad picture of senseless avarice and drunken depredation:—

“We met two sailors of the mutinous, drunken set, a little way from the wreck, both wading, like ourselves, up to the middle in water, and wrangling, one with another; one had a hat full of watches, seals, rings, &c.; the other had a muslin belt tied round his body full of dollars, and wanted to make a bargain for a gold watch. ‘I’ll give you four dollars, Bill.’ ‘No.’ ‘Come, here are eight for you.’ ‘He did not wait for an answer, but made a grab in his worthy companion’s hat, and hauled out a whole fist full, spilling a great many valuables into the water. They now put their loads on a piece of rock which was above water, and set to, to fight it out fairly on the spot; but we did not wait for the issue, and passed by very quietly without taking any notice, considering watches and dollars the most useless things we could meet with.”

The chief officer, Mr. Sewell, on his return from the sandbanks, reported that he had buried several bodies—one of which was supposed to be that of Captain Dalrymple. He brought with him some valuable supplies, but had been compelled to leave some of his men behind on account of their insubordination and drunkenness.

The gang of mutineers formed a settlement on a bank to which the suggestive name of Beer Island was given. On the next day Francken and Mr. Sewell paid these worthies a visit ; it is described in the following extract :—

*“Friday, the 10th of July.*—The carpenter and sailmakers continued their work in fitting out the large cutter ; strong parties set out again for the wreck and for the sandbanks ; and some began to try their luck by fishing ; while others stopped at home to repair the tents, and to prepare and cook the victuals. The number of sick, lazy, drunk, and grumbling people decreased from one-half to one-third part of the whole company : some of the men made trousers from the Company’s cloth, using twisted strips of muslin for thread.

“The chief officer and myself set out again with a party for the distant sandbanks, which were now a more likely place to get provisions and drink than even the wreck ; and after two hours’ walk, sometimes up to our necks in water, sometimes over soft dry sand, we arrived at the habitation of the mutineers. My surprise was great ; I thought we looked like a parcel of wild fellows at home, on our own sandbank ; but upon seeing these I found a wide difference.

“They had placed twenty casks of beer on their heads, and ranged them in a semicircle, each cask making the back part of a little tent, in order to be handy for tapping, which they did by staving in the head, and baling out the beer with a globe lamp ; they had very few provisions, but had caught some

fish, which they were frying over the fire when we arrived. They all had arms, cutlasses, pistols, fowling-pieces, carving-knives, &c.; most of them had merely a piece of cloth wrapped round their waist, and a turban on their head, the remaining part of the body being naked, and assuming a copper colour, partly from the rays of a nearly vertical sun, and partly from filthiness. Every one had a large knife and a bottle of wine or brandy fastened to his waistband, and a cutlass, a pistol, or a musket hanging round his shoulder, fastened to a broad strip of cloth. Three or four, more sober than the rest, were fishing, and caught a great many in the following manner:— At low water, a quantity of fish were left in a little pool in the sandbank by the flood; the men got a long piece of broadcloth, and dragged it through the pool, by which means they caught enough to last the whole day. It appeared that nearly the whole of their sandbank overflowed at high-water, and that the sea then approached within five or six feet of their tents, which made their situation even more perilous than ours. However, the thought of drinking as much beer as they liked made them forget all dangers; and their number increased to twenty-five before we left them. All their wine and brandy had been hid in the sand previous to our arrival, and as we were weak, and not much inclined to fight, we could not take any casks of beer along with us; and set out on our return, without interfering with their property. I must, however, do them the justice to say that they civilly permitted us to drink with them.

“ We built a raft of spars that we picked up along the beach, and loaded it with thirty pieces of pork, three dozen of wine, and two little empty kegs, which we intended for the large cutter ; this we dragged about a mile through the water, and arrived at our own settlement about six o'clock in the evening. After the usual allowance of meat and beer, accounts of provisions and drink were cast up. Four butts of water, five pieces of pork, and a little keg of lime-juice were the only articles saved from the wreck this day ; and, according to all accounts, it was not likely that we should get any more from that quarter. The watch was set at eight o'clock in the evening, as usual ; the orders for the night were principally to keep up a good large fire in case of any ships passing by, and to keep a good look-out for the Beer Island gang, who kept up a tremendous fire till midnight, and then, most likely, all fell asleep, for the fire went out.”

The next day was Saturday, July 11th. The latitude and longitude having been taken, the shoal was ascertained to be the Cargados Garrados Reef, to which the Mauritius, distant 250 miles S.W. by S., was the nearest inhabited land. It was accordingly resolved to get the large cutter ready for sea as soon as possible, and to despatch her, with a few hands, for assistance to the Mauritius, Bourbon, or Madagascar, whichever might prove most easy of access. Unfortunately, however, among all the treasure-trove they had collected, a compass was searched for in vain ; nor was there any hope of getting one from the wreck, the afterpart of which was now under

water. The day was spent chiefly in fishing, hooks being made out of "the inside works of chronometers," and nets out of strips of muslin and linen.

The scene must, at this time, have been strange and picturesque to a degree. Let us again listen to Mr. Francken:—

"The number of tents had increased by this time to upwards of sixteen, all covered with cloth of different colours—blue, red, black, brown, and yellow. The people divided themselves into different messes, the same as on board; and every mess had a tent of their own. We continued to serve out two allowances a day—one in the morning at seven o'clock, the other in the evening at six o'clock, each consisting of about two ounces of meat and a dram of beer. Mr. B., the fourth officer, was appointed steward-general, and had the care of the provisions; a most laborious, responsible, and unpleasant charge, creating a great deal of discontent and grumbling among the people, who thought it a matter of course to abuse the steward, although he managed most admirably well, and with the utmost integrity. He was employed from morning till night in cutting equal-like portions of meat for every individual, and in taking care of our live-stock, now consisting of five pigs and five sheep. The pigs principally fed upon scented soap and pomatum, sometimes upon grounds of beer: a bale of hay was luckily washed on shore for the sheep, and they were put upon allowance as well as ourselves.

"The officers and midshipmen, Mr. Ayres (the purser), Mr. H. (the passenger), and Mr. W. (the surgeon), were all in one mess, and occupied the

largest tent, of which it may not be out of the way to give a short description, in order to convey some idea of the rest. It was ten or twelve feet high, and covered with red and blue cloth; two elegant globe lamps were suspended from the ceiling with strips of muslin, and wax candles kept alight all night. In one corner stood a midshipman's chest, containing the nautical instruments, books, and the pine cheeses, in the other all our wine and cherry brandy lay buried in the sand. Muskets, pistols, cutlasses, dirks, boarding-pikes, tomahawks, carving-knives, &c., were hanging and sticking about in different parts. The sandy floor was covered with pieces of cloth, muslin, cotton, or other stuffs. Little white jars of Naples soap and pomatum, letter-paper, pens, pencils, hair-brushes, combs, and a great many useless articles, were scattered about in all directions."

Our worthy friend, Mr. Francken, who seemed keenly alive to the comic element, even in the midst of suffering and danger, adds the following amusing sketch of some of the inhabitants of this parti-coloured and grotesquely-furnished abode:—

"Mr. H., the passenger, sat in the further corner upon some bales of cloth; he was considered a lucky fellow, because he had got a shirt, a pair of trousers, a coat, a hat, and a snuff-box. He possessed, moreover, a pair of shoes, the only pair in the party, and for which, from his mode of life, he had no use; however, it did not appear to strike him that he was particularly fortunate, to judge by his looks and expressions. In the opposite corner Mr. M. had taken up his residence for good on the midshipman's



chest, appearing to be particularly fond of a sedentary life ; he was very careful of his left leg, and always kept at least eight pieces of muslin wrapped round it, for nobody could persuade him that there was nothing the matter with it. Another gentleman was generally lying on his back, between the two, half naked, and seldom opening his mouth, unless it was for something to eat or drink, to scold or to quarrel. He appeared to be very partial to "Rob Roy," and was frequently lamenting because he had only the second volume, the other volumes being washed on shore on Beer Island ; but we understood the Beer Island gang were not willing to deliver them up."

The event of this day was the discovery of water, to the surprise and joy of all. "We drew a jugfull directly, and had a regular swig all round. It was of a milky colour, and a little brackish, but a great blessing notwithstanding."

On the next day, Sunday, one of the midshipmen, a lad of fourteen, came over from Beer Island, at the head of twelve companions, but "quite in a friendly way." Apparently, there had been a fight, and some of the wounded were anxious to procure assistance from the doctor. The midshipman gave a "very favourable" account of the Beer Island community. "The day is principally spent among them in drinking, fighting, sporting, fishing, and cooking, and half of the night in drinking and fighting only." As an offset to this, we are told that "one of the fore-top men had been elected chaplain, and read prayers every night out of a Common Prayer-book that had been washed ashore."

No work was done on this day ; and in the after-

noon all hands assembled for worship round the large cutter. Mr. Ayres, the purser, delivered a discourse, which Francken professes to give *verbatim*. It commences, "Fellow shipmates and companions in misfortune! When we look round us and contemplate our situation, &c." The language is so high-flown, and the whole address so *very* "suitable to the occasion," that we may be pardoned for suspecting that Mr. Francken drew as much from his imagination as from his memory; and was, perhaps, aided by a "clerical friend" after his return to England. We may believe, however, that the purser did his best to impress his hearers with a sense of thankfulness to the kind Providence that had, so far, watched over and protected them.

On the Monday, the cutter is almost ready for sea, and a crew of ten, including Francken in command, is chosen. All the preparations were carefully and intelligently made.

"The day passed under necessary preparations for the voyage; and we were employed in getting everything ready, so as not to occasion any detention in the morning; and in the evening I had a little conversation respecting the navigation of the boat with Mr. Ayres, whose active exertions for the common good, and great presence of mind and perseverance, were conspicuous on all occasions. We knew the trade wind to blow within about four points of S.E. by E., and therefore proposed to keep the boat close upon a wind till we should be in the latitude of the Isle of France, by which means we expected to weather upon the island; and afterwards bearing up,

and keeping her head due west, as near as we could without a compass, we hoped to succeed, under the guidance of Providence, in making that island. A quadrant, Norie's 'Epitome of Navigation,' two watches, and a log-reel, were the only instruments we had for navigating the boat; neither compass nor chart was to be found."

An adequate stock of provisions is laid in, and all things put in readiness for an early start. That night Francken was excused from taking his watch. Being thus free, he went for a solitary ramble along the shore. The description that follows is striking, and we seem to feel more sympathy with the writer, whose account is in some places rather flippant in tone:—

"My companions are asleep in their tents, except the watch-officer, who is stirring the fire, and gathering fuel round the beach; the roaring of breakers overwhelms the crackling and blazing noise of the flames; the sky is totally clear; the moon, in the act of setting, throws a pale lustre over the level surface of the sea, that extends towards the west, unlimited except by the horizon. Towards the north, an endless chain of low sandbanks, and, at a considerable distance in that direction, the watch-fire of the mutineers. Towards the south, nothing but breakers, occupying the horizon like an immense wall of water, and showing the wretched remains of the *Cabalva*, now and then, between white splashing foam. Our cutter standing close by the watch-fire upon the beach, ready for launching, calls to my mind the heavy and responsible charge of the next

morning's undertaking, which was no less than a voyage of nearly two hundred and fifty miles on the main ocean in an open boat, without chart and without compass, and on the success of which depended, in all probability, the lives of a hundred of my fellow-creatures. I began to take in view several of the constellations, endeavouring to make out with accuracy the four points of the compass, which I considered to be the most essential thing on our expedition, and principally the Southern Cross, as our guide to south and north; and the Scorpion, Venus, and Mars, and the Half Moon, with respect to east and west. After this I returned to my berth; and, recommending myself, and the cause I was about to engage in, to my heavenly Father, I laid myself down, and slept very soundly till day-break."

On Tuesday, July 14, at five o'clock in the morning, the forlorn hope of the castaways commenced their voyage. We may give the story of those adventurous days at sea in Francken's own words:—

"Having shoved off from the western side of the sandbank, amidst the repeated cheers and prayers of the *Cabalva's* crew, we set the mizen and foresail, and scudded before the wind until we got outside of the rocks and clear of the breakers; when we, in our turn, answered our companions on the bank with three hearty cheers, close-reefed our sails, and hauled upon a wind. The quick motion of the boat, combined, perhaps, with the weakness of the stomach from long fasting, produced now a violent sea-

sickness in every one except myself; and my companions had for some time this to contend with in addition to their toils and dangers.

“The weather being very squally, and raining all day, we were unable to get an observation at noon, and were often obliged to take the foresail in and heave-to under a close-reefed mizen. By the bearing of the sun and the direction of the wind, we guessed our course to be S.S.W.; the rate of sailing between five and six knots an hour. At sunset we were enabled to make a more accurate estimation of our course; knowing the sun’s true western amplitude to be about W.N.W., we judged our true course to be about S.W. by S. A long night now followed, wherein we sought in vain for sleep, as the sea was constantly washing over, and kept us employed in baling out the water.

“The sky being pretty clear, I saw most of the principal constellations; and knowing the Southern Cross to be only  $30^{\circ}$  from the south pole, I considered our course to be S.S.W.; the rate of sailing between four and five knots. Two ounces of meat and a dram of beer were served out on the first day to each person.

“*Wednesday, the 15th of July.*—The sun rising clear in the morning, our course appeared to be S.W. by S., knowing the sun’s true eastern amplitude to be about E.N.E.; and this, by the bearing of the sun and the direction of the wind, appeared to be our course all day; the rate of sailing being about five knots.

“At noon we got a pretty accurate observation, but

were obliged to heave the boat to, in order to keep the instruments from getting too wet ; latitude by observation  $18^{\circ} 30'$  south. The difference of time between the watch that was set on the sand-bank, and the apparent time at the boat, was five minutes, or  $1^{\circ} 45'$  of longitude, which made our longitude in  $58^{\circ} 44'$  east ; but we did not know how far to trust to this, as both the watches were wet, and perhaps not to be depended upon. We were, however, in hopes of making the Mauritius next day, if the wind continued as it was, and determined to heave the boat to from eight in the morning till noon, in order to get another observation before we bore up to the land, for we had been always lying close upon the wind.

“We continued our course under a close-reefed foresail and mizen, keeping her head to the wind as near as the sea would allow us, which often rose to a prodigious height in the squalls, so as to engage the whole attention of the man at the helm ; for the least inattention would have occasioned the shipping of heavy seas, and, most likely, the swamping of the boat. Indeed, the helm was obliged, during the continuance of the squalls, to be put hard down every four or five minutes, to turn the boat’s head to the mountainous billows, which would have sunk her at once, if they had struck her on the side ; and it was wonderful to see with what liveliness she passed over those huge waves, which, however, wetted us continually, so that although our little bark was as tight as a bottle, yet three hands were employed constantly day and night in baling her. Nor were we without much apprehension and alarm for the fate of our

unfortunate messmates whom we had left behind, fearing that, during these squalls, the sea, as it frequently does in bad weather, would make clean over the sand, and sweep them off, which, as we learned from Horseburg's Directions, had not long before happened to several French fishermen, who had taken up a temporary residence upon it.

"The sun not setting clear, and the night being boisterous, squally, and rainy, we could only guess our course by the wind to be S.W. by S., till it cleared up for a while at two o'clock, when I saw, to my surprise and sorrow, by the bearing of the Southern Cross, that we had broken off to S.W. by W., and I was afraid of getting to leeward of the island. Our rate of sailing during the night was between five and six knots; but now we unluckily carried away the logship with most part of the line; in consequence of which we were obliged to guess at the rate of sailing, as well as at the course. This discovery of our real course was a cruel disappointment, for now we began to despair of being able to regain the ground we had lost, and were upon the point of giving over all hope of reaching Port Louis, and bearing away for Bourbon.

"*Thursday, the 16th of July.*—The breaking of daylight, after a long, cold, wet, and sleepless night, filled us with new vigour and hope, although the weather continued to be squally, and the sky cloudy and hazy; but it is impossible to describe our sensations, when, in about half an hour, we saw *land* on the larboard bow, which we soon after knew to be Round Island, close to the Mauritius.



“ Being a good way to leeward of the land, we endeavoured to work to windward as quick as possible, and clapped the mainsail close-reefed on her ; but the weather continuing squally, and the wind fresh, we soon were obliged to take it in again ; notwithstanding which we gained upon the land considerably, and found ourselves abreast of what we thought to be Port Louis, at noon, although twelve or fourteen miles to leeward of it. The wind now drawing round to south, and right in our teeth, we could not gain an inch of ground by working to windward ; we therefore took the sails in, got the oars out, and pulled for about two hours ; but the sea running high, although the weather was fine, we soon found how little good we did, and set the three lugs with all reefs out. Night coming on fast, our situation got alarming ; for we feared, not without reason, that we should be blown off the island again, and so be under the necessity of standing on for Bourbon.

“ In the meantime we saw a ship coming out of the harbour about five o’clock in the afternoon, running before the wind with all sails set, which we supposed was sent to assist us, as our English ensign had been hoisted all day, union down, and we had been firing muskets every now and then. We sailed after her with all possible expedition, and passed close by her under her stern, firing muskets as fast as we could load them, waving pieces of cloth, and hallooing out ; but she proceeded on her passage without taking the least notice ; and we lost a good deal of ground by bearing up for her.

“ Fortunately, we got a slant of wind after sunset,

which enabled us to work in shore ; but not knowing the entrance of the harbour, and the night being rather hazy, we made a rope fast to one of the ballast bags, and came to an anchor in nine feet of water, close under the land, at two o'clock in the morning, without having any idea how far we were from Port Louis. The watch being set, we wrapped ourselves up in wet cloth, and tried to get a little sleep, although the rain was pouring down in torrents. Two double allowances of pork and one of cheese, two drams of cherry-brandy, two drams of beer, and two cakes, had been served out in the last twenty-four hours.

“ *Friday, the 17th of July.*—At daybreak we weighed, and pulled the boat four miles close along shore, when, to our great satisfaction, we discovered the harbour, and got safe in by about eight o'clock. As we passed through the harbour, the people of the ships came running on deck, staring at us with surprise ; and when we got to the landing-place, a crowd of people of all descriptions gathered round us. Our appearance must have been strange and truly ludicrous ; out of the ten persons in the boat only one had a hat ; the rest wore turbans of muslin, or the ladies' fancy caps before-mentioned, made of cloth or leather, and trimmed with fur, and which could only be made to stick on the head by splitting them up behind ; about three had jackets ; the rest wore their sand-bank mantles of different coloured cloth, with two holes for the naked arms ; three had trousers ; but there was no shirt, no stockings, no shoes among all the party. Our feet and legs, and

indeed every part of the body, were completely sodden with rain and sea-water ; in addition to which, our faces and arms had been exposed to the scorching rays of a nearly vertical sun ; so that, upon the whole, we had much more the appearance of savages, or natives of Otaheite, than Europeans. The people who crowded about us asked us a thousand questions ; but I must gratefully acknowledge that they were as anxious to relieve our wants as to learn our history : they brought us bread, coffee, grog, and fruit,—in short, whatever could be wished for ; and many of them invited us home to their houses. Mr. Ayres went ashore immediately, and stated our business to the Company's agent ; while I got the boat secure and everything taken out of her."

Help was now readily obtained, and Francken boasts that, to the credit of British naval promptitude, the *Magicienne* frigate was able to make sail within an hour, having in that short interval "rove all her running gear, bent all her sails, and got top-gallant and royal masts and yards up." Francken, Ayres, and two of the crew took ship on the frigate in order to act as pilots. The *Magicienne* was accompanied by the brig *Challenger*.

Our friend, the sixth officer, being now, for the first time during so many days, free from responsibility, went to bed, like a sensible man, and slept for *seventeen hours*.

The weather was boisterous throughout Friday and Saturday, and it was not till Sunday that the line of breakers on the sandbanks were discerned on the larboard bow. The dearly-acquired local knowledge

of Francken and Ayres now proved useful. "Had it not been for Mr. Ayres and myself, the frigate would hardly have found her way in, for the French pilot appeared to be very ignorant of the place, and, to our utmost joy, we discerned soon after the flag-staff of our shipmates, then the wreck of the *Cabalva*, then the tents, and lastly the sandbank. Captain Purvis, of the *Magicienne*, saluted them with a gun every ten minutes, which they answered by letting off large quantities of gunpowder. The chief officer, with eight hands, met us at the entrance of the bay in the captain's cutter; the sea was running very high, and we expected to see her swamp, but luckily we picked her up safe, although in a very leaky state. Mr. Sewell was heartily congratulated on board the frigate, and gave us a short account of what had happened on the sand-bank since the departure of the large cutter."

The narrative put into the mouth of Mr. Sewell is as follows. It shows that the relaxation of discipline and order was by no means confined to the avowed mutineers.

"We were not able," he said, "to save a single article from the wreck, or from the sandbanks, after you left us; but got more successful in the fishing way. The Beer Island gang became more numerous every day, but we were not afraid of any serious disturbance while their beer and wine lasted. These fellows used to catch turtle-eggs in considerable quantities, and principally fed upon them; on the whole, they behaved better than might have been expected. The captain's cutter was repaired with all

possible expedition, and in her we intended to make discoveries to the northward, in order to find, if possible, some spot more elevated above the surface of the sea. We brought together a good deal of timber from the wreck, ready for the carpenter to build a flat-bottomed boat, which was to transport all our goods thither, for we almost gave the large cutter and her crew over for lost, on account of the weather having been so very boisterous and squally, the wash of the sea completely covering the sand.

“We were assembled at prayers to-day, when the boatswain, turning his eyes towards the sea, interrupted the service with the words, ‘A sail! a sail! a ship!’ and ran capering upon the sand like a mad fellow. The whole congregation ran towards the beach immediately, where they cheered for some time, and then dispersed in all directions in a terrible confusion and uproar, some getting foul of the provisions and beer, others letting off large quantities of gunpowder, as a signal for the frigate, which always answered them with a gun; others, again, destroying their tents for fun, while others—but they were very few—fell down on their faces, thanking God for the deliverance, and then hastened to take proper measures to quiet the riotous and to attract the attention of the frigate; some got hold of the captain’s cutter, and ran away with it into the sea; I jumped into her, and shoved off with eight hands, leaving the people in a very unruly state, for the officers could hardly keep them from the provisions, but I hope they are brought a little to their senses by this time.”

The rest of the story need not occupy us long. With the exception of the chief officer, who remained on board the frigate in the hope of recovering some part of the cargo, all the shipwrecked people were embarked for the Mauritius on board the *Challenger*. No notice was taken of the conduct of the Beer Island gang. They were received with the others, though some of the men expressed regret at having to leave the sandbank while yet three barrels of beer remained.\*

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But for downright heroism and triumph over circumstances the most unpromising, we must turn from the above somewhat highly-coloured narrative to the story of

### THE TWEED.

The *Tweed*, West India steamship, of 1,800 tons, and 500 horse-power, commanded by Captain George Parsons, sailed from Havana for Mexico on the evening of the 9th of February, 1846. She had on board sixty-two passengers, including two ladies and a female servant, and eighty-nine persons attached to the ship, including officers, engineers, crew, and

\* The East India Company behaved with their wonted generosity on this occasion. They ordered fifty guineas to be divided amongst the crew that accompanied Francken in the cutter from the sandbank to the Mauritius. To the officer himself they presented fifty guineas and a sextant, with the Company's arms and a suitable inscription engraved upon it.

stewardess. She had also a valuable cargo, a part of which was quicksilver, worth about £18,000.

On leaving Havana, the steamer steered west for twelve hours, and ran about eighty miles with a light wind. During Wednesday the wind freshened considerably, with indications of a gale coming on, and no observation of the sun was attainable. At midnight, amidst heavy thunder and frequent lightning, the wind suddenly veered round to the north, and continued to blow from that point, with a considerable sea running, during the whole of Thursday, and on this day also, owing to thick clouds, no observation could be taken.

About half-an-hour after three in the morning of Friday, the 12th, when the passengers and the crew, with the exception of the watch who had charge of the ship, were asleep in their berths, the look-out called, "Breakers ahead!" The captain, who had been walking the deck for the last hour, instantly gave orders to reverse the engines and put the helm a-starboard; but in a few seconds more the ship crashed on a hidden reef with terrible force, and struck four times successively on the rocks; the last concussion seeming to dash in her bottom, and send the machinery, boilers, and funnel up with a jerk. The engines stopped of themselves, and the steam, escaping from the boilers, flew through the hatchways in a thick cloud. The ill-fated vessel had struck on the Alacranes reef, in longitude  $89\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  west, and latitude  $22\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  north, about seventy miles north of the coast of Yucatan.

The passengers now rushed upon deck in their



night-clothes, or but half-clad, while the ship, falling on her starboard side, lay exposed to the rolling billows, which, as they swept over the deck, carried away several persons, together with three of the ship's boats. The vessel then reeled to leeward, striking repeatedly on the rocks, the timbers below rending with the shocks, and grating with a portentous noise. The next moment, as she fell to seaward, a huge wave dashed the starboard paddle-box boat to splinters. Numbers were washed off by the billows which raced over the struggling ship, and many more were dreadfully bruised and maimed by flying pieces of wreckage, or by the sudden opening and closing of the seams beneath their feet, as the vessel, in the throes of dissolution, worked and writhed on her uneasy bed.

Orders were now given to cut away the masts, but it was impossible to go below for an axe, and all that could be done was to sever the lanyards with knives, when the masts snapped short off by the deck one after another, and were driven, shrouds and all, into the raging sea. Two boats still remained on the lee-side, and these were soon crammed with the miserable people. At what was considered a favourable moment they were lowered into the water, but after a brief interval the loud and piercing shrieks from the dark sea told what had been their fate—they had foundered in the gloom, and all on board of them had perished.

A few minutes later, the noble vessel parted asunder; and in one indiscriminate mass, broken timbers, planks, spars, and cordage, mingled with

human beings, were driven pell-mell towards the reef, upon which some were washed alive, and others dying or dead. Those who were able, held on by detached portions of greater bulk, and thus awaited the dawning of the day.

When day at length appeared, no land was to be seen, and all that remained of the *Tweed* was a mass of wreck extending a mile along the edge of the reef, and consisting of timbers, planks, doors, crushed boats, beds, trunks, baggage, barrels, seamen's chests, &c., piled up several feet in height. Stuck fast on the reef was the port side of the vessel from the sponson to the figure-head, with the bowsprit and jib-boom still standing, and to which some forty of the people were seen clinging, while every sea dashed right over them.

Those who had managed to reach the reef found themselves standing in one foot of water; few of them had escaped without injury, while some were dreadfully mangled. Their first thought was to procure clothing to protect themselves from the cold; and such trunks and packages as could be come at were broken open for this purpose. They then sought out the part of the rock inside the breakers where the water was shallowest, and on which it might be possible to erect some place of shelter. As the wreck had occurred at the time of low water, it was feared, and with reason, that as the tide flowed they would all be submerged; still, this dreadful apprehension did not deter those who entertained it from making every exertion for their preservation. It was determined to make an effort to

repair one of the stove-in boats, and on this job all hands set to work zealously. Some oars and odd sails were picked up, and, by a most fortunate providence, one of the ship's compasses was found among the drift uninjured.

By four o'clock in the afternoon the mail-boat was so far cobbled together as to be fit for sea; was rigged with mast and sail, and was victualled with a few bottles of wine, a ham, a bit of cheese, and some oatmeal. One of the passengers had saved a prayer-book; and, having called together all who were on the reef, they returned thanks to Almighty God for His great mercy to them in their hour of need, and besought Him to watch over their little bark, and guide her to a friendly port. The chief officer then took his seat in the stern, with the compass on his knees, and, with eight others, shoved off in silence. When they had proceeded a short distance, they were greeted with three cheers from those left behind, which they returned, and then made for the nearest land, distant about seventy miles.

All this time there were the forty persons yet clinging to that portion of the wreck which still hung together outside the breakers; many of these were from time to time swept off by the waves—some to a grave in the surf, some to be washed alive on to the reef, but more or less bruised or mangled. No help could be afforded them by those on the rock, where the water had now risen to two and a half feet, while the night was fast approaching.

As soon as the mail-boat was out of sight, they set about constructing a fabric of some kind, in which

they might take shelter. As portions of the wreck drifted in from the edge of the reef, they collected them together, and, heaping them in a mass, made at length a rude pile the top of which was above the water. As it increased in size, they squared it as well as they could, and laid flat boards on the surface, thus making a raised platform of about ten feet square, on which were placed the few provisions they had been enabled to save. On this rude floor, after partaking of a ball of oatmeal and flour mixed to a paste with salt-water, and each one drinking a neck of a bottle full of wine—their only meal for the day—they huddled themselves together, and tried to sleep. Few, however, succeeded; for the tide continued rising until it reached the level of their resting-place, and, as the raft shook and swayed, the alarm arose about midnight that it was floating—though happily they managed to keep it firm by ballasting it with heavy casks and stones.

When morning broke on Saturday, the tenants of the raft were horrified to see that the number of the poor fellows clinging to the wreck of the *Tweed*, of which only the framework of one side now held together, had diminished from forty to seven. Nothing, however, could be done to help them, the heavy breakers which still rolled in upon the reef rendering communication impossible. They set about strengthening their raft, and in the course of the day succeeded in doubling its dimensions, and secured it by lashing the parts together with ropes. At four in the afternoon, five poor wretches still clung to the bowsprit of the *Tweed*, and were seen making pre-

parations to leave it on some spars which they had tied together. They launched themselves into the surf, and three of them were fortunately washed upon the reef and saved. There were now sixty-nine souls on the raft, and ten had gone away with the boat—so that of the one hundred and fifty-one persons on board, seventy-two had perished.

The researches made among the masses of wreckage this day enabled the survivors to add materially to their provisions, as they saved, among other things, two live pigs, one live sheep, one dead one, a live dog, some preserved apples, three barrels of flour, one of brandy, one of vinegar, a cask of butter, a box of candles, and a few clothes. Many suffering from intolerable thirst, a little vinegar was served out in the silver top of a smelling-bottle, and this was found considerably to allay the suffering. One of the passengers having had three of his fingers torn off, the doctor dressed the wounds with butter, and tied them up in the tail of a shirt. In a writing-desk a box of lucifer-matches was found, which, as presenting the prospect of a fire, was looked upon as a God-send: on trial, however, the matches were found too wet, and would not light. They were then stuck carefully in some flour, in the hope that tomorrow's sun might dry them so that they would ignite. At dark, having first united in prayer to God, all the people betook themselves to rest, and, having now room to lie down, slept a little better, in spite of the cold and damp.

On Sunday, the burning thirst of the sufferers became insupportable. Vainly did they scan the

clouds in hope of rain ; but the sun burst out as if in cruel mockery. The heat, however, enabled them to dry the matches, and, after many trials, a light was obtained. A fire was now made on an iron slab, and a portion of the dead sheep was cooked, and devoured as "most excellent mutton." At noon, devout thanks were returned to God for his goodness, and then all returned to their work of collecting provisions, catching fish, or strengthening the raft, while the ship's cook made sixty-nine cakes, and baked them in the lid of a trunk. One of the Spanish gentlemen now suggested that means might be found for distilling water, and the engineers at once set about preparing the apparatus. They continued their labours during the night, and before morning had contrived to condense one bottle of precious liquid.

Monday was the fourth day of their existence on the reef. At seven in the morning they united in prayer to God, and then set about the preparation of a floating raft, on which they might venture to sea in case the mail-boat had foundered. At eight the cook was ready with another batch of his cakes, which were served out with a morsel of the mutton or some fish. By nine the distillery was succeeding so well as to produce a bottle of water in fifteen minutes, though the liquid was not very pleasant to the taste.

But what had become of the boat, which had now been gone four days ? The answer being so dubious, there was nothing for it but to work on at the raft. Before noon a goodly framework had been put together, which, when planked, would carry the

whole of them, provisions and all. They were congratulating one another on this success and that of the distillers, who had already a store of six bottles, when some one called out, "A sail! a sail!" All started up with eager looks directed towards the dim white speck in the distance. A sail it surely was; and, having hoisted a signal on two oars, they soon had the indescribable satisfaction of seeing the vessel bearing down right towards them. They were all too much overcome for any wild expression of joy, but they fell silently on their knees, and joined in fervent thanks to the Almighty for His protection. After a while they were seen to grasp each other by the hand, with beaming countenances, but with hearts too full for speech.

After a little, the vessel lay to, outside the reef, and about four miles off; then a small boat was seen making sail for the reef, and, as she drew nigh, Mr. Ellison, the chief officer of the *Tweed*, was observed standing at the bow! The gallant young fellow was hailed with three cheers, and in another minute was reaping the thanks and congratulations of those whom his address and conduct had saved.

From his report it appeared that the mail-boat, in which he had left them on Friday at five in the evening, had cleared the reef with difficulty; she was so leaky that two men were kept constantly busy baling, and so frail that had any one of the party stood up in her bottom he would have gone through. At daybreak on Saturday they had cleared the reef, and passed the small island of Perez. With a calm sea and a fair wind they sailed all that day, and all



the following night, due south. On the dawn of Sunday, land was in sight, distant some six miles, and at the same time they observed a brig in the offing, towards which they made as fast as possible. The brig at first stood away, mistaking them for pirates, but on their making signals she hove to and received them on board. She proved to be the Spanish brig *Emilio*, whose commander was then at Sisal, eleven miles off, whence the vessel had been obliged to slip and run on account of the late gale. The chief mate, M. Villaverde, on hearing the story of the castaways, immediately ran for Sisal, which was reached by eleven in the forenoon, and communicated with his commander, Senhor Bernardino Camp. That generous young officer, without a thought of his cargo, which lay ready for him on the beach, or of his passengers, who were waiting to embark for Havana, made a few hasty preparations, ordered fresh water on board, and hiring a canoe to accompany him, set sail instantly for the reef, which he reached, as already mentioned, at one o'clock on the Monday.

The task of transporting the people from the raft and the reef to the deck of the brig *Emilio* was one of great difficulty and no small peril, and but for the canoe provided by the foresight of the commander, might have hardly been accomplished at all. As it was, only a portion of the sufferers could be taken off before dark ; the rest had to pass the night on the raft, where, however, being no longer short of food, and having the prospect of speedy deliverance, they were able to maintain themselves in comparative comfort.

At daybreak on Tuesday there was no appearance of the brig; but the castaways knew she was not far off, and all, with one accord, returned thanks to the Almighty for their preservation. At eleven o'clock the brig came in sight, but the surf had now so much increased as to double the hazard of embarking in the canoe or the ship's boat; it was therefore agreed that they should endeavour to escape from the opposite side of the reef, and the canoe and boat being drawn across the shallows, they all embarked (Captain Parsons being the last person to leave the raft) in them for the little island of Perez—the canoe carrying forty-two, and the small boat ten. It was a most hazardous experiment, the route lying among shoals and hidden rocks, and every part of the track having to be groped for and felt out with poles. After they had proceeded about four miles, night overtook them, and it was necessary to cast anchor and await, amidst the dashing spray and in the bitter cold, for the return of daylight.

It was not until after the endurance of severe hardships in the open boats that the party reached the island of Perez about two o'clock in the afternoon of Wednesday, the 17th. Here they landed, made a fire, and prepared a meal, of which all stood sorely in need. The brig came round, and taking them all on board, set sail for Sisal about five o'clock.

The *Emilio* reached the roadstead of Sisal at noon on Thursday, the 18th. The Spanish consul allotted quarters for the shipwrecked people, and supplied the poorer passengers with provisions at his own expense. Captain Camp, to whom, under God, they all owed

their lives, advanced money for the present wants of the rest; while the inhabitants of the place vied with each other in showing hospitality to the unfortunates. On the 25th, the whole of the rescued people embarked in the *Emilio* for Havana, where they arrived in safety on the 3rd of March. Here the British consul, Mr. Crawford, took charge of the surviving officers and crew of the *Tweed*, and the passengers separated to their several destinations.

The inhabitants of Havana, struck with admiration of the noble conduct of Captain Camp and M. Villaverde, his chief mate, got up a subscription for their benefit, which soon amounted to the sum of four thousand dollars. The generous-hearted captain and his chief officer did not wish to receive it, and would have relinquished it for the benefit of the widows and families of the lost; but this the donors would not consent to, and very properly enforced their acceptance of the well-merited reward. Their example was followed by her Majesty's Government, and by the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company: the captain and crew of the *Emilio* receiving from these sources about a thousand pounds as an acknowledgment for their prompt, intrepid, and unselfish conduct.

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In contrast to the story of the *Tweed*, we may place that of

### THE NAUTILUS,

with which we conclude this chapter.

On the 3rd of January, 1807, his Majesty's sloop *Nautilus*, commanded by Captain Palmer, was sent

by Sir Thomas Lewis, then commanding the squadron in the Dardanelles, with important despatches, on the voyage to England. The sloop ran, under a fresh breeze from the north-east, rapidly out of the Hellespont, passing two vessels of war under the enemy's colours, off the island of Tenedos. During the day she sighted many of the islands of the Greek Archipelago, and towards evening approached Negropont, in latitude  $30^{\circ} 30'$  north, and  $24^{\circ} 8'$  east longitude; where, owing to the close proximity of a number of smaller islands, the navigation became more intricate.

As the wind continued fresh, and the night approached with indications of a coming gale, the Greek pilot counselled their lying-to till morning, which was complied with—the vessel resuming her course at daybreak. Steering for Falconera, the *Nautilus* arrived off that island in the evening; but could not see the island of Milo, lying fifteen miles further, owing to the haziness of the weather.

The night set in extremely dark, but the gloom was repeatedly lighted up with vivid flashes of lightning. The wind continued to increase, and though carrying but little sail, the ship went at the rate of nine knots over a rolling sea.

Matters continued in this condition till about half-past two in the morning, when land was descried from the deck, which was believed to be the island of Cerigotto. It was thought that all danger was now left behind. Passing the island, the sloop continued her course until half-past four, when suddenly, at the changing of the watch, the man on the look-out cried,

“Breakers ahead!” Lieutenant Nesbitt, who was on deck, ordered the helm a-lee, but instantly the vessel struck with a tremendous crash. So violent was the shock, that the people were thrown from their hammocks, and unable to stand. Everything was in confusion, and the utmost alarm prevailed. The crew rushed upon deck; the ladders giving way beneath them, and leaving many struggling in the water, which already flooded the under portion of the ship. The captain, who had not gone to bed, ran upon deck, and seeing the situation of the vessel, immediately went round among the people, and did his utmost to quiet their apprehensions. He then returned to his cabin, and destroyed all his papers and private signals.

Meanwhile each returning sea lifted up the ship and dashed her against the rocks with irresistible force; and in a short time the crew were compelled to take shelter in the rigging, where they remained for more than an hour exposed to the fury of the waves, which were incessantly breaking over them. The lightning had now ceased, and the darkness was so intense that it was impossible to see even for the length of the ship. The people had, however, discovered a small rock near them, and they hoped that when the mainmast fell it would form a bridge by which they might reach it. This fortunately happened about half an hour before daybreak, and numbers of them thus reached the isolated rock. In this attempt, unhappily, so great were the panic and confusion, that several of the crew were drowned, and others cruelly maimed and lacerated. Captain

Palmer refused to quit the wreck as long as any man remained in board. In consequence of his remaining to the last, he was severely bruised and injured, and must inevitably have perished, had not some of the sailors, at the risk of their own lives, dragged him through the surf. Attempts were made to save the boats, but one after the other was staved and broken up before their eyes, till it was believed that all of them had gone to pieces.

The hull of the vessel being to windward of them, sheltered the shipwrecked crew a long time from the beating of the surf; but when it broke up they were forced to abandon the small portion of rock which they had reached, and wade to another, which appeared somewhat larger. The first lieutenant led the way, and reached the larger rock in safety; but those who followed him encountered immense quantities of loose spars and pieces of the wreck driven violently about in the channel they had to cross, and many were lamentably bruised and wounded in making the passage. Some had their bare feet dreadfully torn by the sharp rocks, and were almost helplessly maimed.

Daylight came at length, and disclosed to the unfortunates the horrors by which they were surrounded. The sea was covered with the fragments of their ill-fated vessel; many of their companions were seen drifting away on spars and pieces of the wreck; and around them on the rock the dead and dying lay mingled together. They now saw that they had been cast away on a coral rock, almost level with the water, and about three hundred yards long by

two hundred broad. They were twelve miles from the nearest islands, which were those of Cerigotto and Pera. It was reported that a few men had escaped in a small boat; but even if the rumour were true, there seemed no hope that so frail a craft could have weathered out the gale. Deeming that their only chance of rescue lay in some passing vessel, they hoisted a signal of distress at the end of a long pole.

The weather was exceedingly cold, and to resist its inclemency they kindled a fire by means of a knife and flint which a sailor happened to have in his pocket, and some damp powder that was washed ashore. They next raised a small tent with such old boards and canvas as could be got from the wreck, and endeavoured to dry the few clothes they had saved. Thus the day passed away, and a long and miserable night ensued, alleviated only by the hope that their fire, which they constantly feed with fuel, might be seen in the dark, and taken for a signal of distress.

The report concerning the boat was true. When the ship first struck, a small whale-boat was hanging over the quarter, into which George Smith, the coxswain, and nine men, immediately got, and ultimately escaped. After rowing ten or twelve miles against a high sea, they reached the island of Pera. Here they found no inhabitants save a few sheep and goats, and but very little fresh water, which was preserved in a hole in the rock. At first they imagined that all their comrades had perished; but formed a different opinion on observing the fire burning at night. The



coxswain, feeling sure that some of their shipmates had kindled the fire, proposed returning to their relief, and though at first objecting to it, four of his companions finally agreed to accompany him.

It was about nine o'clock on the morning of Tuesday, the second day after the shipwreck, that the unfortunate people on the rock saw the whale-boat approaching, and welcomed its appearance with a shout of joy. The coxswain tried to persuade Captain Palmer to come on board, but he steadily refused. "Never mind me," he said, "save your unfortunate shipmates." Upon consideration it was decided that the Greek pilot should embark in the whale-boat and make the best of his way to Cerigotto, where some fishermen would probably be found who might come to their assistance.

The boat departed with the pilot and as many of the people as it could safely carry; and soon after the wind began to increase, and the clouds to gather with every indication of a storm. In a short time the tempest came on with fury; the billows beat over the rock and washed out the fire, and the men were forced to fly to the highest part, where they were only prevented from being swept away by the surf by holding on to each other, and to a rope fastened round the summit of the rock. In this wretched condition nearly ninety people passed the night.

These deplorable hardships sadly thinned their numbers. When the day dawned, many were found to have perished from cold and privation; more were in the agonies of death; and not a few had gone delirious under the effect of famine and thirst.

It was also feared that the boat had foundered in the storm, as it was impossible she could have reached the island before the gale set in.

Hitherto the crew of the *Nautilus* had been the sport of dire calamity; they were now to be made the victims of an act of inhumanity deserving eternal reproach. Not long after daybreak on Wednesday, they discovered a vessel with all sails set before the wind, steering directly for the rock. They made signals of distress, which were answered by the vessel, which hove-to and then hoisted out a boat. The joy of the miserable creatures, in anticipation of immediate relief, may be conceived! The boat approached till the castaways could see that she was full of men in European dress. When within pistol-shot, there was a pause. The men in the boat gazed for a few minutes on the scene before them; then turned and rowed back to their ship, leaving the famishing and now frantic wretches on that bare rock to their fate! The barbarity of this infamous act was further heightened by the fact that the strange vessel employed itself before their eyes the whole day in picking up the floating property from the *Nautilus*.

With the prospect of inevitable destruction before them, the shipwrecked crew now fell into despondency. In their intolerable thirst many grew desperate, and drank salt water in such quantities as to bring on raging madness and death. When night came they crowded together, and huddled their wet rags around them to keep off the cold; sleep under such circumstances was, of course, impossible. About

midnight they were unexpectedly hailed by the crew of the whale-boat. The shout from the boat was answered by an imploring cry for "Water—water!" but no water could be given them; the coxswain might have brought water could he have found casks or bottles, but he had nothing save some open earthen vessels, and these could not have been carried through the surf. He told them, however, that in the morning they should all be taken off in a fishing vessel, and this assurance in some measure consoled them.

Thursday morning came, and, for the first time, brought sunshine. It was the fourth since the wreck, and the mass of the people, having tasted nothing since the vessel struck, were dying of famine. What could they do? The promised relief did not make its appearance, and famine was gnawing their vitals. There was but one alternative—they must either eat human flesh or sink under the pangs of hunger. They chose the corpse of a young man who had died the preceding night, and ventured to appease their cravings. It does not appear that they derived much relief from the horrible expedient; for before the day declined death had made sad havoc among them. Captain Palmer, who had never murmured, but had exerted himself to the last for the comfort of his crew, died this day; and so did the first lieutenant.

During the following night some of the men resolved upon attempting the construction of a raft, upon which, with a favourable wind, they might reach the island of Cerigotto. With the dawn of the fifth morning they carried their design into execution,

by lashing together a number of the larger spars. Full of hope, they endeavoured to launch it, and had the anguish of seeing it dashed into fragments by the waves. Made desperate by the failure, five of the men embarked on a few small timbers feebly tied together, and, bidding adieu to their companions, were swept away by the current and drowned before their eyes.



On that Friday afternoon, the coxswain came again in the whale-boat, and said that the Greek fishermen would not venture in their boats from fear of the weather; neither would they lend them to him and his comrades. He encouraged them to hope, however, that, as the weather was moderating, the boats would come on the morrow. While he was speaking,

more than a dozen of the men plunged into the sea in the desperate hope of reaching the boat. Two got so far that they were taken in ; but one was drowned, while the others were compelled to return to the rock. Had but half of them reached the whale-boat, she would have swamped, and the destruction of the whole of the crew would have been certain.

When the sixth morning dawned upon the rock, there were but few of the survivors capable of making the least exertion for their safety. But succour had come at last ! When one of them, on looking out to sea, announced the arrival of the long-promised and long-prayed-for deliverance, they were raised suddenly from the lowest state of despair to the most extravagant joy. The boats, led by the faithful coxswain, steered towards them, and reached their rock with a welcome supply of water and food, and surely never was relief more needed.

After slaking their burning thirst and appeasing their appetites, the rescued people gladly bade adieu to the scene of their sufferings. Of the one hundred and twenty-two persons who were on board the *Nautilus* when she struck, fifty-eight had died ; thirty-four of whom had succumbed to famine. About fifty were received into the fishing-boats, and were landed the same evening at the island of Cerigotto, making the number of the saved, reckoning those who escaped in the whale-boat, sixty-four. The fifty had passed six days upon the rock, during which time they had received neither water nor food of any kind, excepting the flesh of their dead comrade.

The first care of the survivors was to send to the

island of Pera for those of their companions who had been left behind when the whale-boat came down to the rock. It was found that they had exhausted all the fresh water, and lived upon the sheep and goats which they caught among the rocks. They had been in great anxiety for the safety of those who had left them in the boat.

Nothing is wanting to perfect the tragic horror of this tale. All this happened, not on some reef in the lonely southern seas, hundreds of miles from the nearest land, nor yet upon the barren ice-bound shores of the Polar regions, but in an island-studded sea, and but a few miles from the dwelling-places of Europeans. Add to this the torture these perishing creatures must have endured in consequence of the fiendish barbarity of the ship's crew that deliberately left them to perish; and, in a less degree, from the repeated but unavailing visits of the coxswain. They seem also to have been singularly unfortunate in that they were unable to save any stores, provisions, or water from the wreck.



## CHAPTER III.

## ON THE CROZET ISLANDS.

AMONG shipwrecks of the "Robinson Crusoe" class, that of the

*STRATHMORE*

must ever hold a foremost place. Forty-nine persons cast away on a remote island, and existing there for nearly seven months, cut off from the inhabited world of men, given up as lost by all who loved them—such is the tale we have to tell. "Stern reality," however, is a different thing from poetic fiction, and as we shall see, the Crozets, on which the people of the *Strathmore* were fain to take refuge, afforded but meagre entertainment compared with Defoe's delightful island, or that yet more luxuriant dwelling-place on which the "Swiss Family Robinson" were fortunate enough to light.

The *Strathmore*, a fine iron clipper, of 1,472 tons, sailed from Gravesend for Otago, New Zealand, on the 19th of April, 1875, having on board fifty passengers, and a crew of thirty-eight men and officers all told. The crew seem, for the most part, to have been a bad lot. They got at some liquor, and, both



before and after crossing the line, a good deal of drunkenness and disorder prevailed. No one, however, imputed any blame to the captain, whose vigilance and good conduct were readily acknowledged by the survivors of this ill-fated voyage.

After the *Strathmore* got into southern latitudes, she was beset for many days by mist and fog. No observations could be taken, and, consequently, the vessel's position had to be guessed at by "dead reckoning." On the 30th of June—which the reader will remember is about mid-winter in the southern hemisphere—the captain calculated that the ship was distant from the Crozets about eighty-seven miles. He made this statement to a passenger—a Mr. Crombie, who gives a graphic picture of the wreck—at about two o'clock in the morning.\* Mr. Crombie then went to bed, but was roused in a couple of hours by a grating noise—immediately after the vessel struck with a horrible crash that shook her entire frame.

Immediately, all was confusion. The order was given to "clear away the boats," but—as has so often

\* That Captain Macdonald was uneasy about his position is shown by the evidence of Allan, the third mate, who was among the survivors. He says:—"About two a.m. of the morning on which she struck, the captain called me into his cabin, and asked me if I would have a glass of grog. I was suffering from toothache, and he gave me some whisky as good for it. He told me then that he was not quite sure of our position, owing to the fog, but that he believed there were five islands thereabouts—which, however, he did not name. I left him in his cabin, and he lay down in his clothes. He appeared very anxious. He was a very careful man."

happened in other cases — they were found to be immovable at the critical moment. Allan, the third mate, describes himself as rushing from one to the other, but not one could be launched. The ship was already sinking; the man was up to his knees in water, and had to take refuge in the mizzen rigging. One boat was indeed launched, but not by the crew. Mr. Peters, the second mate, writes as follows:—

“On reaching the poop, I saw the first mate and some of the crew clearing away the port quarter-boat. I mustered together a few hands to clear away the starboard quarter-boat; but we had no sooner cut the grips, and lifted the boat a few inches with the tackles, than the sea came rolling over the poop, washing away the two men who were knocking out the chocks, the rest of us being more or less washed about. I gathered a few hands together, and tried it again; but by this time the seas came rolling over the poop in quick succession, making it impossible for us to get that boat out, and scattering the men who were working with me, a good many of them being washed overboard and drowned. Those who had been getting the port quarter-boat out had also abandoned her, as she had been stove by a sea, and rendered useless.

“As the ship was now fast settling-down aft, most of those who had been working at the quarter-boats, now got into the port life-boat, and, after cutting the grips, a heavy sea came rolling over the poop, and by nothing less than a miracle floated her clean over the starboard life-boat and starboard davits clear of the wreck, with eighteen of the crew

and passengers aboard of her, a lady being included in the number."

Mr. Crombie, the gentleman already referred to, describes his own escape. He and the other passengers rushed on deck at the first alarm, and found that it was still quite dark. Confusion reigned supreme. The captain seems to have quite lost his head. "Good-bye to you all! It is all over! Save yourselves! To the boats at once!" he is described as crying out. He was afterwards seen walking up and down the poop with his hands behind him. Then came a succession of great waves sweeping the decks; when the third had past, Captain Macdonald and the first mate had disappeared.

Mr. Crombie, who had been among those working at the port-boat under the first mate, now took to the rigging. Here several miserable and anxious hours were spent till the daylight crept up, cold and grey, over the sad scene. Eighteen persons had got away in the life-boat, as we have seen; a number of poor wretches were clinging to the rigging; but, the vessel's deck having sunk under water in a quarter of an hour after she struck, all who had taken refuge on the poop, including six women, had shared the captain's fate and been washed away.

As soon as it was light, Mr. Crombie made his way to the roof of the deck-house, which was still above water. He assisted the second mate, Peters, and the others whom he found there, in launching the gig and the dingy; the former setting off with the second mate and eight persons, the latter with the third mate, and both steering towards the rocks, which lay

about a hundred yards distant, rising from the sea like a lofty, precipitous wall. Eleven, as Mr. Crombie thought, remained on the deck-house, and one in the rigging.

Peters, who had spent the hours of darkness in the mizzen-top, thus describes the way in which the people were landed :—"Seven or eight of us got into the gig, and I told those who were left on board that I would come back for them as soon as we could find a landing. After a great deal of trouble, we found a place where we could scramble ashore, although with great danger to the boat ; but as we were following towards it, I sighted another boat, which turned out to be the port life-boat, with eighteen of the crew and passengers on board. She was full of water, so that they were unable to pull her through the seaweed towards the landing. After putting ashore all but three hands, I returned to the ship ; but as it was impossible to take off that night all who were left, I took those in the mizzen-top first, as being in greater danger than those on the fore-castle-head.

"After a good deal of risk, we got all that were in the mizzen-top aboard the boat, the little boy being amongst them ; whereupon I shouted to those on the fore-castle-head that, though I could not come back again that night, I would fetch them as early as possible in the morning."

The island on which the survivors landed was "a desolate place, a refuge for sea-birds, and devoid of trees." It is described as about two and a half miles in length, and nowhere exceeding half-a-mile in breadth. One of the third-class passengers, a Mr.

Wilson, after giving a detailed account of the wreck, thus describes his experience of the first night and of the day that followed:—"The first thing I did was to knock over a white bird, which was something like a crow. The gig went back once that day, and brought the five out of the mizzen-top. We removed the cover from a boat, and placed it over the oars as a shelter for Mrs. Wordsworth. A fire was lighted, and the white bird and some albatrosses were cooked. There was a fire outside the tent, and some of the sailors gathered round it, and would not move. Some of them appeared to be drunk. The second mate was lying half under the tent, and calling out all night, giving orders as if he were on board. Mrs. Wordsworth was inside the tent, and everything that could be of use was given to her and the child.

"We slept out on the bare rock until about six a.m. or later. Then I crept under the canvas; but a passenger was brought in and laid right over me. He died before I got up, but I was not aware of it until he was moved off. That morning the gig went to the wreck again, and the life-boat and dingy, to try and recover what they could. The gig returned with the rest of the survivors, and some clothes and matches. All that day the boats were picking up wreckage; while we on shore looked out a site for a house. We pitched upon a place half-way up the hill, where there was an overhanging rock; and by nightfall had raised a wall three or four feet high. Its size was about eighteen feet in length by eight feet in width. We stretched a boat-covering

over as far as we could. It was blowing a gale. Very nearly all of us took shelter in this house; but Black Jack and some others went about twenty yards higher up, and established themselves there."

Peters thus describes the part played by himself:—  
"We passed a miserable night, the softest rock being our bed, which was not rendered more agreeable by the coldness of the weather. Coming back from the wreck, we had picked up a few cases of spirits, which were allowanced out during the night to everybody, thereby keeping a little heat in our bodies. I was glad when daylight began to make its appearance, so that I could go back to the ship,—which I found as we had left her the night before. I made the men in the fore-castle-head get all the clothes they could out of the fore-castle, and pass them into the boat, before I took them aboard themselves, most of the persons ashore being only half-clad. Besides the clothes, we also secured a few boxes of matches, which were very useful, and about a dozen biscuits, being all that could be found in the shape of provisions. On landing, we gave the biscuits to Mrs. Wordsworth."

During the night that followed a great and irreparable misfortune occurred—the boats were lost. They had been moored in smooth water, in a place of supposed safety, "Black Jack"—mentioned above—and a man named Vining being left in charge. During the night the wind suddenly chopped round; perhaps the watchmen were careless; at any rate, the boats got adrift. They could not be recovered. "We had the pleasure of seeing them floating about,

bottom up, completely out of our reach," says Peters. "If there had been a beach anywhere in the island, we might have saved them by hauling them up; but the island was so steep and rugged that it was with the utmost difficulty we ourselves could scramble ashore. The loss of our boats was a great misfortune, as we were unable to pick up any more firewood, or go back to the wreck, which I intended to do, in the hope of collecting some provisions, when she went to pieces. During the day some of us walked over the island to have a look at the wreck. Nothing could be seen of her but a few small spars entangled among some of the gear, and thus kept floating over her side."

The condition of the castaways was now truly pitiable. They numbered in all forty-nine, including Mrs. Wordsworth, her son, and a little boy named Walker, of only three years old. They found themselves on a desolate rock, in the midst of an Antarctic winter. There was no wood on the island, consequently fuel was terribly deficient. There was, indeed, abundance of fresh water, and there were sea-birds. Absolutely nothing else save a sort of weed, which they managed to cook and eat. The sea-birds were everything to them—food, fuel, and, after a time, clothing. But what if the stock should fail? The birds might take fright or migrate any day—and then?

The stores obtained from the wreck were not of much importance. On the first day a chest of blankets had been picked up. In the chest were found some knives, forks, &c.; also a couple of



parsols, which proved very useful. The wires, cut down and sharpened, were used as needles, and by means of these, with grass for thread, penguin-skins were stitched together to form clothing. Some cases of confectionery were also found, and the tins proved very serviceable as pots, &c., till they wore out with constant use. In addition to the above, there were saved from the wreck two barrels of gunpowder, one cask of port-wine, two cases of rum, two of gin, one of brandy, and one of preserves. The confectionery above referred to consisted of eight tin cases of sweets. The liquor seems to have been served out somewhat recklessly at first. In five weeks it was nearly all gone ; and then it was resolved that what remained should be kept for medicinal purposes.

Throughout the entire period during which the survivors of the *Strathmore* remained on the island, Peters, the second mate, kept a sort of diary, which has been published. Some extracts from this interesting narrative will give the reader an idea of the life that he and his companions lived throughout the gloomy weeks and months of waiting that they were destined to endure. Taking up the narrative on the 4th of July, three days after the wreck, we find this entry :—

“ Sent two parties out to erect two flagstuffs, going with one of them myself, after which we went round one side of the island and saw our boats—gig, dingy, and life-boat, the two former being bottom up, and the life-boat in halves, and no possible means of getting at them, they having been washed during the night through a sort of tunnel, which led through

underneath our island. We caught a few birds and came down to our hovel. When the other party came in they told me that the ship had backed astern and gone down in deep water ; which I was very sorry to hear, as I had intended to get some gear out of her to build a house with, and some ropes, and, if possible, cooking utensils ; but we afterwards found it to be impossible to get down to her from the cliff without rope.

“ There are to-day about twelve of us laid up with frost-bitten and swollen feet, and of course they are no good for doing any hard work, or hunting birds. Our stock of wood is very limited, and I see no possible means of getting more, as there is no beach, and we have no boats. We had our evening meal of young albatross, white crows, and what we call gray-backs, which we devoured with good appetites, and comforted ourselves afterwards with a small allowance of grog, and then packed ourselves away for the night. As we cannot all sleep under one ledge, some of us had to find other holes in the rock, where we could stow ourselves away,—Mrs. Wordsworth, her son, Mr. Walker and child, getting the best and snug-gest corner of the shanty. We all keep up very well ; Mrs. Wordsworth in particular showing herself to be a true woman, refusing any dainties firmly, unless we all have our share of them. We passed a scrambling sort of a night, being compelled to lie almost piled on top of one another, so as to keep warm and economize room.”

In order to increase the sleeping accommodation, some of the castaways set to work to hollow out a sort

of cavern ; but for want of proper tools their progress was but slow. They also attempted to manufacture signal rockets, but it was not possible to do much, owing to the powder having been saturated with seawater. More successful was the lamp that was devised for the double purpose of economizing matches, and relieving the tedium of a fifteen hour long night. The lamp consisted of a little bottle filled with albatross fat, in which a cotton wick was inserted ; it gave a continuous and satisfactory light.

Most of the entries during July speak of cold and rain, storm and mist. On the 17th a third-class passenger was seized with lockjaw. He died in two days and was decently buried—a chapter from the bible being read by way of a funeral service at the grave. By the end of the month the supply of firewood came to an end ; henceforward their cooking fire was fed with the fatty skins of birds. By this time three huts had been constructed ; in the smallest were three persons, eleven in the next, and in the largest, Mrs. Wordsworth, the child, and the remainder of the people.

The first of August was a Sunday ; and throughout, the day of rest seems to have been religiously observed by abstinence from bird-hunting, by hymn-singing and bible-reading. During this month, certain species of the birds commenced laying, and thus a little variety of diet was obtained. The weather, though still variable, continued to improve ; the worst of the Southern winter was past. On the last day of the month, the welcome cry from those on the lookout, “ a sail in sight ! ” thrilled through every heart.

But soon hope gave way to despondency. The ship was too far distant to perceive the signals made to her, and in a short time she passed beyond and below the horizon of those eager watchers.

On the 1st of September, a large iceberg drifted into the bay, about a mile to the south of the huts. The bergs were welcomed as evidence that the ice was breaking up before the approach of summer. This visitor, however, made the air perceptibly colder for a time.

Next day, Mr. Henderson, who from the first had been in delicate health, expired. This was the second death in the little community ; he, too, was decently and reverently interred.

The following entry, under date of the 4th, presents a graphic picture of the way in which the castaways procured the means of subsistence :—

“ Out early in the morning, but were unable to find many birds. The kind we have been living on for the last thirty or forty days seem to have left us altogether, and what are visible being so shy that we could not get near them ; but when we thought we were going hungry to bed, a great flock of the new birds made their appearance, and, Sunday as it was, we killed between three or four hundred of them, knocking them down among the rocks,—not without great danger to ourselves, as the cliffs where they build their nests are composed of crumbling rocks, which, if you were not very careful, will break off under your feet, and launch you into the sea, a distance of some hundreds of feet.”

On the 13th, another sail was reported in sight ;

and this time the ship came so close in that her hull could easily be discerned. Signals were made from the highest point of land, a blanket, a coverlet, was run up on the flagstaff, and every heart beat quick with alternating emotions of hope and fear! But the sufferers were destined to endure yet another disappointment. On came the vessel, scudding before a stiff southerly breeze. She made her way in safety through the narrow, rock-strewn channels, and so passed on toward the haven where she would be!

Peters gives interesting descriptions of the various species of birds that, from time to time, frequented the island. There were whale-birds and "mutton-birds," both of which lived in holes, so that in places the rocks were completely honey-combed.

But the most welcome as well as most interesting visitors were the penguins, who now began to frequent the island for the purpose of breeding. Their habits were peculiar and amusing, but the voices by no means melodious. When on shore, they arrayed themselves in compact ranks, like a regiment of soldiers. The order they observe is noteworthy: the young birds are collected in one place, the moulting birds in another, the sitting hens in a third, the clean hens in a fourth; and so on. It is said that so strictly do birds in a similar condition congregate, that should one which is moulting intrude among those which are clean it is straightway ejected.

The females hatch their eggs by keeping them close between their thighs; and if disturbed, they move away, carrying the eggs with them. The male meanwhile goes to sea to collect food for the female, which

soon waxes plump and fleshy. After the young one wakes into life, both parents roam afar, and bring home food for it ; with the result that the old birds lose their fatness, while the new-comer grows so corpulent as scarcely to be able to walk. In their roosting-places they sit quite upright ; and they walk erect until they arrive at the beach, when they fling themselves on their breast to confront the heavy sea that awaits them.

Thus the dreary weeks passed by. The appearance of the castaways must, by this time, have been Robinson-Crusoeish in the extreme. Thus, Peters says, on the 19th of October—

“All our boots are done long ago, and we make penguin-skins into things like boots, sewing them with canvas threads, or worsted taken from our comforters or stockings. Penguin-skin boots are a poor substitute for that article, and only wear from one to three days if we walk about, the rocks being so rugged that they soon cut them all to pieces. Our clothes are also getting very ragged, and we are all heartily tired of our banishment from civilized society. If we stop here much longer, we will soon have a slang language of our own which strangers would not understand. We are now almost entirely living on penguins' eggs and young mutton-birds ; but we would willingly exchange the eggs for potatoes.”

On the 23rd of October occurred a third death—that of William Husband, the quartermaster, a man advanced in years.

“The most of us,” writes Peters, “have been busy these last few days washing our bodies and clothes

neither of them being very clean after our three months and a half's wear; but, as we had no soap, and the weather being so cold, we could do nothing towards cleaning ourselves until the eggs got so plentiful, when we found that they were a pretty good substitute for soap."

November came, and with it, fresh legions of penguins. On the 24th, some of the eggs that had been so persistently sat upon were hatched, and the young penguins began to appear.

The 8th of December brought a third terrible disappointment. Between one and two o'clock the look-out man discovered a barque on the north side of the island. She was so close that he could distinctly see her fore and aft stays. A counterpane was soon waving from the flagstaff; and the little company felt so assured of immediate relief that they began to pack up a few curiosities, to carry them down to the boat when it put ashore. Their disappointment was all the greater when the vessel went on her way, either not seeing or refusing to pay attention to their signals.

On Christmas Day Mr. Walker's child died.

The 1st of January completed a half-year of captivity. As in all that time they had seen but three vessels, they were forced to the conclusion that they would have to spend another winter on the island. They began to make preparations accordingly. Thousands of penguin skins were dried and stowed away, while quantities of fat were melted down to provide light and warmth when those terrible fifteen-hour nights should come again. They bore up



bravely meanwhile. Peters opines that the birds will, after the ravages made on them, be somewhat less multitudinous another season; but we "will always manage to pick up a bird now and again," he says cheerfully. The cold, he thinks, will not trouble them so much as it had done previously, "as we are all in a more healthy condition than we were last winter."

The following extract from the diary gives a vivid picture of their condition after six months' captivity:—

"On the first day of the year we are divided into seven lots; thirteen living in the hut that I live in, eleven in another, six in another, two in another, and three huts with four in each—making in all forty-four; which is the half of the crew and passengers that were aboard when the vessel was lost.

"We are now cooking in all sorts of articles, only two of the confectionery tins being in fit condition to boil meat in; and these two, of course, being in the biggest huts—the other huts having to fry their meat on the sides of the old tins, or in stone frying-pans, which can be picked up on the island after a diligent search. Stone frying-pans are only stones hollowed out so that they will hold a little fat to fry the meat with; and, of course, we have to find them hollowed out by nature, as we have nothing to hollow them with.

"As our eggs are all done, we had to look around for another substitute for soap; which we found in the shape of blood from penguins, or the livers of young penguins. It looks rather strange to see two or three of us going away to the gully to wash.

First of all, we go over among the penguins, and stun a few of them by striking them on the heads with our clubs ; then we bleed them by cutting their throats ; and as the blood trickles from them we catch it on bits of rags, which being properly soaked, we run down to the gully ; and, after stripping, we proceed to wash, by rubbing the blood all over ourselves, and then washing it off with water."

On the 3rd of January they commenced the erection of a square tower of turf on the hill-top ; first, with the view of attracting the attention of any passing ship ; and, second, as a kind of shelter for the look-out. The digging of the turf was no light task for men without tools, who were compelled to have recourse to their fingers ; yet by dint of heroic perseverance, a solid structure, fourteen feet six inches square by nine or ten feet high, was erected by the 19th.

Meantime, the cry of "Sail, ho !" had been heard once more. It was on Friday, the 14th, at daybreak ; the watchman had just mounted his post when he saw a bark under all plain sail standing to the eastward. The counterpane was run up and every effort made to attract attention. Again, an interval of terrible anxiety was endured, and once more crushing disappointment was in store for those who had struggled, and hoped, and prayed so long and patiently. The ship passed out of sight !

But the hour of deliverance was at length about to strike. Another week passed, and then, at about 4 p.m., the cry again went up, "A sail ! A sail !" The old signals were displayed, and, as evening was

coming on, a huge fire was kindled. For a while the vessel to which all eyes were clinging, held on her course. Would she, too, pass away—growing smaller and smaller till the last bird-like gleam of white canvas disappeared beneath that desolate horizon? It was a terrible question, and for a time the answer seemed to hang in the balance. Suddenly the vessel's course was altered; she was hauled to the wind and the head put towards the rocky islet! Let Peters describe that long-prayed-for hour:—

“As soon as she came about one mile to the eastward of the island, she backed her mainyards and lowered two boats, to our intense delight. They pulled to the north side of the island, thinking to get a landing there, but found it was impossible to effect it. Our sailmaker asked one of the boats to come as close as it could; which being done, he jumped into the water and was hauled aboard the boat. As soon as they got him aboard, they pulled round to the other side of the island, where we had at first landed; but as it was fast getting dark, the captain, who was in one of the boats, told us he would be unable to take any of us off that night; but directly he knew there was a lady among us, he brought his boat as close as he could safely, and got Mrs. Wordsworth aboard. And being told that her son was on shore, he also took him aboard, besides two invalids and myself; at the same time putting some bread and pork ashore for those that remained, until he should come back in the morning to take them all off. The captain then gave orders to pull back to the ship—which we found out to be the American

whaler *Young Phœnix*, of New Bedford, Massachusetts ; Gifford, commander."

We may conclude our narrative with another extract from the story as summarised by Allan, the third mate. He says :—

"There were six camps ; and the bad characters seemed to keep together. The lady was treated by every one as well as she could be treated. The strong men took from the weak ; for example, they took a pot from us because we were weak. . . . There are two or three caves which run right through the island. We built up a tower of turf to the height of about twelve feet, and put an oar on top ; and when we saw ships we used to signal with blankets. We saw four ships, two of which were very close. The fifth took us off. The captain, as I hear, had gone up aloft to have a look at the islands, and noticed something unusual, and was standing in to see what it was, when the look-out in the crow's-nest reported that he saw our signals. Three boats came off that night, and took away five persons and Mrs. Wordsworth. They brought us beef and bread. Before the boats left the weather became thick. Next morning they took us all off. The captain [Gifford] had wished to leave us on Hog Island until he had finished his cruise ; but the crew would not have it—thinking, as I believe, that he would put into port to land us, and that they would have a chance of bolting. We should have done well enough on Hog Island ; for it is a sealing-station, and there are pigs and rabbits, and a hut and boiler there."

On board the *Young Phœnix* they were treated

with great kindness. But, perhaps, if there be any truth in Allan's surmise, Captain Gifford was glad to escape the necessity of going into port with his self-opiniated crew. On the 26th of January he transferred his passengers to the *Sierra Morena*, Captain Kennedy, who landed them safely at Galle on the 24th of February, close on ten months after they had sailed from Gravesend.

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When the story of the *Strathmore* was told in England there were, no doubt, very many people who had never heard of the Crozets—a few particulars about them may, therefore, be of interest.

The Crozet group consists of five principal islands, and is situated in mid-ocean, about lat.  $46^{\circ}$  S, and long.  $48^{\circ}$  E. They are of volcanic origin, gloomy, precipitous, and repellant—a well-nigh inaccessible abode of ocean birds. Dangerous as these rocks are, outward-bound vessels sometimes approach them for the purpose of testing their chronometers. Whalers, too, occasionally visit them in search of seals and birds. Of the five, Possession Island is the largest, measuring, as it does, some twenty-five miles in circumference. Next in size is Penguin or Inaccessible Island—both these names speaking for themselves. Pig or Hog Island is so called from the number of swine that abound on it; these being the progeny of some pigs left there by Captain Distance in 1834. East Island rises to a height of 4,000 feet. That on which the *Strathmore* was wrecked is called Apostle

Island, and, with East Island, lies at the extreme north-west of the group, distant from the three larger islands some fifty or sixty miles; it scarcely deserves to rank with the other four, being merely a group of rocky islets.

The little archipelago owes its name to a French navigator, M. Crozet, who discovered it in 1772, in conjunction with his superior officer, Marion du Fresne; but for many years very little was known about these remote specks in the southern ocean. Indeed, as the interest in the islands was revived by the story of the *Strathmore*, so it was first excited by the narratives of earlier shipwrecks. We shall give an account of two of these; and it will be seen that in both cases the period of detention was much longer than that to which the people of the *Strathmore* were subjected.

On Christmas Day, 1820, a cutter named the

### PRINCESS OF WALES,

with fifteen men on board, arrived off the Crozet group for the purpose of seal-hunting. The *Princess of Wales* was in charge of Captain Veale, and among the crew was a man named Goodridge, who subsequently published a curious and interesting account of his adventures. From this little work we give some extracts below.

A sealing party, consisting of eight men, was landed in the first instance on Hog Island. Subsequently they were removed to the East Island, the cutter visiting them every week to supply them with

fresh provisions and to take off the skins that had been collected. This continued till the 10th of March, 1821; when the scaling party were visited for the last time, and the vessel stood off from the dangerous, storm-vexed rocks, intending to return on the 18th.

On the 17th, however, a violent gale sprang up and the little craft was obliged to slip her cable and beat off shore as quickly as possible. What followed is graphically described by Goodridge. It fell dead calm; and then the vessel gradually drifted in-shore. The water was too deep for an anchor to bottom, and the seven men on board were absolutely helpless to avert their doom. "Here there was nothing to combat, we were led on by an invisible power; all was calm above us; around us, the surface of the sea, though raised into a mountainous swell, was comparatively smooth." At midnight the cutter struck on an outlying reef, and the men took to their only boat. It seemed a chance whether they would ever make the shore. "The night was dark and rainy, the vessel was pitching, bowsprit under, we were surrounded by rocks, and the nearest shore was a perpendicular cliff of great height. . . . We had not cleared the vessel a quarter of an hour when we were threatened with a new danger—an enormous whale rose very near us and began beating the water with its tail within very few yards of the stern of our boat; but it fortunately did us no injury."

After four hours of toil and peril they made good a landing, dragged the boat up, turned it over, and took refuge beneath it for the rest of the night.



Goodridge had managed to save an overcoat, and they had also thrown into the boat a kettle, a frying-pan, and a "fire-bag," *i.e.*, a waterproof bag, in which the crews of sealing and whaling vessels were accustomed to keep the materials for kindling a fire—tinder, flint, &c., stowed away and ready for use. Next day they saved a bible that had been presented by the Bible Society when the *Princess of Wales* sailed from Gravesend, in reference to which incident Goodridge remarks: "But too often are the gifts bestowed by the Bible Society ill appreciated; and this had undoubtedly been the case with us up to this time; but it soon became our greatest consolation." He notes the fact that, though there were several books on board—works on navigation, log books, &c.—this bible was the only one that came ashore. Nor, when carefully dried, did it seem to have sustained much injury.

"On the next day," continues the narrator, "the wind blew very strong, and we saw to our sorrow that nothing remained of our vessel but the mast, which had become entangled by the rigging among the rocks, and this was the last thing we were enabled to secure."

For three weeks the weather continued wet and boisterous, and the men were forced to shelter themselves, as best they could, under their inverted boat. When the storm moderated their spirits revived, and they set about the erection of a "more commodious dwelling-place." The building is thus described: "The sides we formed of stones and wood saved from the wreck, for there was not a shrub or

tree growing in the whole island ; the top we covered with the sea-elephants' skins, and at the end of a few weeks we were comparatively well lodged. We made our beds of a long grass with which the island abounded ; and the skins of the seals we chanced to kill served us for sheets, blankets, and counterpanes."

Goodridge then describes the manifold services rendered by the sea-elephants : "They served us for meat, washing, lodging, firing, candle-light, shoe-leather, sewing-thread, grates, and tobacco pipes." This last use to which these invaluable creatures were put, illustrates the tendency of mankind to smoke, and to smoke anything that can be at all made available. The bowls of the pipes were manufactured from sea-elephants' teeth, into which the leg-bone of fowl was inserted to form a stem. Tobacco was wanting, but dried grass was made to serve as a substitute. The grates, he explains, were constructed of bones laid across stones, so as to form a primitive gridiron.

The sea-elephant is described as being a species of walrus, but of considerable size, sometimes measuring as much as twenty-five feet long by twenty-eight in circumference. Goodridge says that, "besides the grass, the only vegetable found on the island was a plant resembling cabbage, but so bitter that we could make no use of it." However, they afterwards discovered that, when sufficiently boiled, it became palatable enough ; and we have already seen that this same stuff was eaten and appreciated by the people of the *Strathmore*.

Our informant describes minutely the way in which

their time was apportioned, the hours at which they took their meals, &c. (They had fortunately saved a watch.) They instituted a regular bible reading, and to this he assigns the unanimity and harmony that prevailed throughout the whole period of their detention on the island.

An interesting account is given of the various species of birds frequenting the islands, and whose habits they had abundant opportunities of studying. One species was so voracious that, not only would they pick the bones of a dead sea-elephant clean in a few hours, but would even, unless scared away, unroof the "commodious dwelling" for the sake of the skins that covered it. Of the albatross, Goodridge mentions the curious fact that, in order to keep their nests dry, the bird makes a trench round them to strain off the water if the ground is at all marshy. He describes the penguins, standing upright, with the flippers (short wings), as resembling, at a distance, "a number of young children in white aprons." The smaller birds, who made holes in the rocks, visited the land chiefly at night, being afraid of the larger species. The kingbird, however, though only the size of a sparrow, was a match for the most powerful foes, owing to a needle-like beak with which he pecked the head of his enemy.

They caught the smaller birds by lighting a fire at the foot of a cliff, towards which they flew at night, stunning themselves against the rocks.

Notwithstanding the multitude of birds, the cast-aways at times found provisions very short. The weather was frequently so rough as to render hunting

excursions impossible and fruitless, and it was not feasible to preserve any large quantity of flesh, owing to the dearth of salt; this commodity being only procured, in small quantities, by the slow process of evaporating the sea-water in their frying-pan.

The following is quite in the style of Robinson Crusoe: "Seal skins were, after a few months, in considerable request with us for articles of clothing, as those we used when wrecked were soon worn out. I was fortunate enough to save a great coat; and when my other clothes were entirely worn out, I set to work to manufacture this single garment into a suit. We had sharpened a nail so as to make an awl, and the sinews of the sea-elephant served us as sewing thread. I took out the lining of my said coat, and this, with some contrivance, I converted into a shirt; I then cut off the skirts, and with these I manufactured a pair of trousers, and the upper part served me for a jacket. Thus, from one garment I procured both linen and outer clothing; but it may be conjectured that my wardrobe was not a very lasting one, particularly as I had no change; but I, like other folk who go abroad, kept this suit for my travelling excursions. With my utmost care, however, . . . . I could not keep it in wearing trim any length of time, so was obliged to resort at last, with the rest, entirely to a seal-skin costume, and for more than twelve months, I was without even the comfort of a shirt. As we happened to have neither barber or razor among us, the addition of long beards to our seal-skin dresses and fur caps, gave us anything but a pleasant exterior; however, as we had not to come

in contact with any of the fairer works of creation, we did not much study our appearance; and, on the whole, we formed as grotesque a group as could well be imagined."

The finding of an invaluable prize is next described. It appears that some Americans had visited the island sixteen years previously, and traces of the hut built by them were discernible. But the sea-elephants had trodden everything into the ground, and without tools it was impossible to make any explorations. But one day a man in search of eggs lighted on a pick-axe. This providentially discovered treasure was soon the means of bringing others to light. A broken pitch-pot still capable of holding a gallon, was unearthed, and converted into a frying-pan. Further researches were rewarded by the recovery of a "broad axe, a sharpening stone, piece of a shovel, and an auger; also a number of iron hoops."

Goodridge now returns to the sealing party whom they had left on the East island. These men very naturally concluded, from the wreckage that came on shore, that the cutter had perished with all hands; but why the seven survivors who knew of their proximity did not seek them out is not explained. Goodridge only says that the majority preferred to remain where they were rather than attempt a crossing to the neighbouring island. It was the sealing party who finally, finding provisions scarce, crossed over to the island on which the vessel had been wrecked. This was not till December, 1821, just nine months after the disaster, and, even then, although Goodridge speaks of the joy of all hands on meeting as better

conceived than described, they did not remain long together, as we shall see.

The party, thus re-united, resolved to take in hand the apparently impossible task of building a vessel in which to escape. Wood was scarce and tools scarcer; but, nothing daunted, they set to work. The details of the enterprise are minutely given by Goodridge, though he himself took but small share in the work. The only reason assigned for the separation that now took place is the scarcity of provisions and the consequent difficulty of filling daily fifteen mouths. This looks suspicious, but for some cause or another, five men—including the captain (Veale), the captain's brother, and the narrator himself—were sent off to the island on which the sealing party had been landed "to seek a livelihood." As soon as the vessel was ready for sea, they were to be fetched back, and then five were to be chosen by lot to embark as a forlorn hope to search those wide and desolate seas for succour.

For over a year the ten men laboured at their ship, having recourse to the most ingenious shifts and surmounting incredible difficulties. At length, in January, 1823, this marvellously constructed craft was pronounced ready for sea. Seven of the hands, accordingly, crossed to the other island in search of Goodridge and his companions. But further misfortunes were in store. The five men being scattered in search of food, could not readily be found. Night came, the wind rose, the stern of the boat was beaten in, and it was not till the 21st that they were able, destitute of tools as they were, to get her into a seaworthy condition.



This delay, however, proved to be the salvation of the whole party. "At about noon," says Goodridge, "while most of us were busily employed preparing for our meal, one of our party who had strayed out on a high point of land near, came running towards us, apparently in great agitation, and, when he approached, for some time he could do nothing but gesticulate, excess of joy having completely deprived him of the power of utterance. Captain Veale, who was with us, not comprehending his meaning, asked what the foolish fellow was at? And he, having by this time a little recovered himself, told us that he had certainly seen a vessel pass round one of the points of the island, and named the direction she was steering. We had so often been deceived by the appearance of large birds sitting on the water, which we had mistaken for vessels at a distance, that we were slow to believe his story."

Finally, two men were dispatched, provided with the means of lighting a fire, in order to attract attention should it really prove that a vessel was off the island. Hours passed, and evening closed in. A night of anxious waiting and debate ensued, and, by morning the castaways were in despair at the non-appearance of the two men.

"We had by this time almost given up all hopes of our expected deliverance, and had gone to a neighbouring Penguin rookery, to gather all the eggs we could collect, to take over to the other island, as part of a sea-stock for those on whom the lot should fall to attempt our rescue in our new-built vessel. Shortly after ten, a shout from one of our companions aroused our attention, and we soon perceived a boat coming round the point. Down went the eggs; some capered,



some ran, some shouted, and all in one way or another, expressed an extravagance of joy ; and three loud cheers from us were quickly answered by those in the boat."

It appeared that the two men sent to report, had very soon sighted a vessel close in shore ; but it was not for some time that they were able, by means of a fire, to attract the attention of those on board. At length a boat was put off, but, when near the shore, the rowers hesitated, so strange and savage was the appearance of the seal-skin clad figures, that, wild with joy, were awaiting them. Being assured, however, after a little, they came on. The two men were taken on board the vessel, which proved to be an American sealing-schooner, the *Philo*, Percival master. It was now too late to attempt to rescue the remaining men, and next morning the *Philo's* boat had to row eight miles before reaching the place where they were encamped.

" Scarcely a month during the year was it sufficiently smooth for a boat to land on the beach adjoining the rookery where we were collecting eggs, but at this time it was perfectly calm ; and, on the boat nearing the land, we all rushed into the water up to our middle, and, taking hold of her on each side, ran her up the sand high and dry, crew and all."

Shortly after the three men who had remained in charge of the now useless craft, to which so much labour had been given, were taken off ; and the *Philo* bore away for the islands of Amsterdam and St. Paul's, distant about 1,100 N.E. of the Crozet group.

The period during which these fifteen men had thus been shut out from the world was one year, ten months and five days. Goodridge says his joy was not unmingled with regret. "Whether it arose from the perverseness of my nature, or from any other cause, I must leave to those more capable of tracing the workings of human feelings ; I can only say, so it was."

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Our next peep at the desolate Crozets is two years later, and it will be seen that, in several respects, the story of the

### AVENTURE

closely resembles that of the *Princess of Wales*. Both were small fishing vessels that had ventured near these lonely rocks in the pursuit of their dangerous calling. The number of the castaways differed only by one ; the period of detention on the islands was the same to within a couple of months ; and in each case, though no life was lost, the little band had the misfortune to be still further reduced by being divided throughout the long weary months of their sojourn.

The *Aventure* sailed from Mauritius on the 28th of May, 1825, for the Crozets, for the purpose of hunting sea-elephants and collecting oil. She was a small schooner of only 55 tons, with a decidedly "mixed" crew of sixteen men — English, French, Spanish, Dutch, and Portuguese.

Being detained on her voyage by fog, snow, and tempest, the little ship began to run short of provisions, and especially of water. Time after time, the men's allowance had to be cut down, till by the end of July it was limited to one wine-glass full in twenty-four hours!

At this time, the *Aventure* had been lying off the Crozets (where there is plenty of water) for a fortnight; but owing to the terrific weather, it was impossible to effect a landing on those exposed and cruel rocks. "The island was covered with snow," says the captain, "the sky was black and threatening, the wind blew furiously. The ocean birds, surprised to see a ship so near the shore, flew around us, screaming loud and hoarse."

But the water being exhausted, it was necessary at all hazards to attempt a landing. A boat was launched, nine men embarked in her, and managed to get safe to the shore. But night closed in, and the increasing fury of the storm rendered a return impossible. Towards midnight, the schooner's cables parted, and her second and only remaining boat was washed away. She had on board only three able-bodied men; the other four being on the sick-list. They manœuvred to haul towards the eastern island; and on the following day, at evening, were close upon it. Devoured by thirst, they now set to work to construct a raft, with the view of reaching the shore, and obtaining a supply of water; but when it was completed, they found themselves unable to steer it towards the land. Night fell, the fury of the gale increased; and, finally, the ship was dashed

upon the reefs, and became a wreck but near enough to the shore to enable the seven men to save themselves.

The little band was fortunate in possessing for a leader a man of remarkable intelligence and courage; while Captain Lesquin was no less fortunate in having for a coadjutor a young Englishman named Fotheringham. These two men were the life of the party; working heartily together, they never despaired. They displayed infinite resource, untiring perseverance, and dauntless courage, and their companions were cheered and shamed by their example.

The first thing done was to light a huge fire. Then, when warmed and partially dried, the men set to to construct a temporary shelter of sails. In a short time, however, this was blown away by a whirlwind, and they had to wait for dawn as best they could, well-nigh smothered in snow.

When the light came they found themselves in a valley, bare of vegetation, and surrounded by hills equally bare. Over the whole scene, the white, deep, snow spread like a shroud. At last they discovered a hollow in the rock, about three feet in height, in which five or six men might be able to take refuge. And there the castaways ensconced themselves, until they were able to build a hut. Fortunately, a considerable quantity of wreckage came on shore. They procured not only a supply of spars, planks, sails, &c., but also some tools, and a number of miscellaneous articles—including a broken pot, a mattress, and a box containing mathematical instruments. In this respect they were more fortunate

than their predecessors of the *Princess of Wales* had been, or than the people of the *Strathmore* were destined to be in after days. A hut was built, and the men made shift to live as best they could on birds, eggs, and the flesh of sea-elephants.

Captain Lesquin adopted an ingenious method by which he hoped to make known the state of captivity in which they were living. He made a number of little bags of sea-wolf's skin, and having enclosed in each a paper indicating their position, he fastened a bag to the neck of every young albatross that he was able to surprise in its nest. He knew that these birds were in the habit of following the whaling ships, and swooping down on the harpooned whale. The seamen often amused themselves shooting the birds, or catching them with hooks; and there seemed just a hope that through one of these involuntary messengers, the deplorable condition of the shipwrecked crew of the *Aventure* might become known.

But this being a mere "off-chance," the ingenious captain set his men to the work of boat-building. For the framework they made use of the wreck of the ship; over it they fixed the staves of casks with stout rope-yarn; and they encased the whole in the skins of sea-elephants, which they also extended in such a manner as to form a deck. This strange, ungainly craft measured sixteen feet in the keel, and six feet in the beam; it carried one mast, with a sail of sea-elephant's skin.

The boat, such as it was, was almost finished, when about eleven o'clock on the 21st of December,

Mr. Fotheringham raised a loud shout, and ran into the hut so pale that everybody thought some great misfortune had occurred. They surrounded and questioned him, but he could not speak: all he could do was to drag M. Lesquin outside, and point to the sea. A ship was plainly visible, and was bearing down towards the island. The castaways hastened to kindle a huge fire, but, unfortunately, it was not perceived, and the ship changed her course.

On the following day she twice reappeared, and again bore away from the island. And thus it happened, day after day; the unfortunate castaways being kept in a state of torture between alternating hope and despair. It was not till the 6th of January that the signal fires were at length perceived, and a boat sent on shore to investigate.

The vessel that had thus tantalized Captain Lesquin and his companions during those anxious days, proved to be a whaler, the *Cape Packet*, which had sailed from Prince Edward Island, had discovered the Crozet group, of which she had not even suspected the existence, and had delayed in their vicinity to pursue the sea-elephant. Captain Duncan received with compassionate interest the unfortunate crew of the *Aventure*, who, clothed in sea-wolves' skins, blackened by smoke, and disfigured by long beards and matted hair, scarcely resembled human creatures. As soon as he had completed his cargo, he sailed for the island on which the nine men despatched for a supply of fresh water had landed. Fortunately these, too, were rescued; and the *Cape*

*Packet* immediately set sail for the Cape of Good Hope, where she arrived on the 5th of March, 1827.

These two parties had been for eighteen months cut off from the life of the world, prisoners on those sea-beaten, lonely rocks.



## CHAPTER IV.

## NATIVE HOSPITALITY.

SEA-ELEPHANTS and penguins may, after all, turn out preferable company to one's fellow-men. Shipwrecked crews have often been treated with very great cruelty by the savage natives of the shores upon which they have been cast. They have been plundered, allowed to starve, held prisoners, or eaten, just as suited the taste or convenience of their captors. Thus, the *St. Paul*, from Hong Kong to Sydney, was wrecked in September, 1858, on the island of Rossal. The captain and eight men went off in a boat to seek assistance, leaving 327 Chinese emigrants on the island. Four months later, when succour arrived, there remained but *one* Chinaman to bring away, *all the rest having been killed and eaten by the natives.*

The two shipwrecks we are about to describe are separated by an interval of many years; but they took place in the same quarter—an uncomfortable one, we may believe, for castaway mariners.

*THE ALCESTE*

was a frigate of 46 guns, under the command of Captain Maxwell.

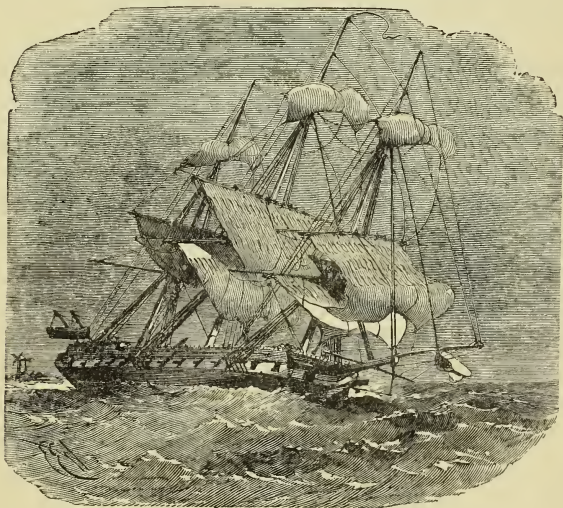
On the 9th of January, 1817, she sailed from Manilla for England, having on board Lord Amherst and suite, then returning from their embassy in China. As the readiest mode of egress from the Chinese seas, as well as that which presented fewer difficulties of navigation, Captain Maxwell made for the Straits of Gaspar, which, according to the charts, were not only wider, but showed a greater depth of water than those of Banca.

The vessel reached the Island of Gaspar on the dawn of the 18th, the Island of Pulo Leat being shortly afterwards visible from the masthead. Though the weather was fine and clear, and the wind not unfavourable, there was a strong current setting through the Straits, and the water, usually clear, was discoloured and opaque. The utmost caution was therefore used ; look-outs were stationed aloft, and others at the fore yard-arms ; soundings were constantly made, which were found to agree with those figured on the charts ; and the captain, the master, and other officers were on deck directing the course of the ship at a moment which all appear to have recognised as a critical one. They were following the exact line prescribed by the sailing directions, when, at about half-past seven in the morning, the *Alceste* struck with a tremendous crash on a reef of sunken rocks, and there stuck fast.

The pumps were instantly manned, but the water rushed in rapidly, and soon filled the hold and flowed over the orlop-deck ; and it was speedily evident that all attempts at saving the ship must be fruitless. Meanwhile, the boats had been lowered

for sounding, and by their reports it appeared that there was deep water in all directions around, and that the *Alceste* had, as it were, spitted herself on a submarine peak. Hence, the only hope of ultimate escape for the crew depended upon her remaining where she was, since, if once dislodged, she must sink in the deep water.

In this imminent peril, the safety of the ambassador and his suite was the first consideration, and



before an hour had elapsed the boats had been lowered, and Lord Amherst and his attendants safely embarked in them. They took with them a guard of marines, and made for the Island of Pulo Leat, about four miles distant, where it was expected that provisions and water would be obtainable.

During the absence of the boats, the crew were

busy, some getting up provisions out of the partially submerged hold, others in constructing a raft. When the boats came back, which was not till the afternoon, it was found that they had had great difficulty in landing the embassy, owing to a natural fence of mangrove trees skirting the island, and growing almost everywhere deep into the water. Worse still, it appeared that there was neither food nor fresh water to be found. This barren spot, however, afforded the only hope of safety, and there was no other course open but to take possession of it as speedily as possible. By eight o'clock in the evening the people were all landed, save a few who remained, with the captain and some of the officers, in the wreck during the night.

The wind rising about midnight, and the vessel heeling under its influence, the topmasts were cut away to prevent her falling over ; the wind, however, fell before daylight, and the ship remained stationary.

When the boats came to the wreck, about six in the morning, they brought no better tidings as to the capabilities of the island. What provisions and stores of any kind could be saved from the ship were forthwith collected and transferred to the island refuge by the boats and the raft. In the course of the forenoon, Captain Maxwell went ashore to confer with Lord Amherst, leaving Mr. Hicks, the first lieutenant, in charge of the wreck. The captain found the embassy in a deplorable condition ; according to the description of Mr. M'Leod, "The spot in which the party were situated was sufficiently romantic, but seemed, at the same time, the abode of ruin and

havoc. Few of its inhabitants (and among the rest the ambassador) had now more than a shirt or a pair of trowsers on. The wreck of books, or, as it was not unaptly termed, 'a literary marine,' was spread about in all directions; whilst parliamentary robes, court dresses, and mandarin habits, intermixed with check shirts and tarry jackets, were hung around in wild confusion on every tree."

In the conference that ensued with Lord Amherst it was agreed that the persons of the embassy should embark in the barge and cutter for Batavia, taking with them a guard of marines to defend them from pirates; and that, if they arrived there in safety, they should despatch a vessel to the assistance of their companions in misfortune. Accordingly, at sunset the same day (January 19), the barge and cutter sailed away from the island, having forty-seven persons on board, and a small stock of provisions. All that could be done for the safety of the embassy being thus accomplished, Captain Maxwell turned his attention to the perils which he might now expect to encounter. The crew, who for the last two days had had scarcely a pint of water per man, were beginning to suffer severely from thirst, and his first step was therefore to set a party digging in search of water. While this experiment was making, he ordered the encampment to be removed to higher ground, away from the foul air of the marshes, and to a point capable of defence, should they be attacked.

The men immediately set to work to establish a defensible position on the summit of a hill, and

thither their small stock of provisions and whatever else could be saved from the wreck was brought. Towards midnight the castaways were relieved by a plentiful shower of rain, which they caught in sheets and table-cloths, which, being wrung out, moistened their parched lips and revived their drooping spirits. Not long afterwards the diggers reported that they had found water, and despatched a small bottle of it, as a sample, to the captain. When the good news became known, such a general rush was made to the well, that sentries had to be stationed to keep the people off and prevent the stoppage of the work.

The next morning Captain Maxwell assembled the whole of the crew, and in a few words made them aware of their actual position, and reminding them that they were still under the obligation of discipline, assured them that it should be enforced for the general good, but that all should share alike until succour should arrive. Throughout the day the well afforded a pint of water per man, if water the liquid can be called, which is described as looking and tasting like diluted milk. However, the men said it made a capital beverage when flavoured with a little rum. During this day but little was saved from the ship, the whole of the stores being deep under water.

On the 21st the men at work on board the wreck descried a small fleet of proahs, full of Malays all armed, pulling towards them. Having no means of defence, their only resource was to take to the boats at once, and push for the land. This they did, but the pirates gave chase, and only retreated when they saw other boats putting off from the shore to their



rescue. The Malays then contented themselves with taking possession of the wreck.

The sight of these ruthless savages, so far from appalling the shipwrecked sailors, had a directly contrary effect. Mr. M'Leod, from whose interesting narrative we now quote at length, says, "Under all the depressing circumstances of hunger, thirst, and fatigue, and menaced by a ruthless foe, it was glorious to see the British spirit staunch and unsubdued. The order was given for every man to arm himself in the best manner he could, and it was obeyed with the utmost promptitude and alacrity. Rude pike-staves were formed by cutting down young trees, small swords, dirks, knives, chisels, and even large spike-nails sharpened, were firmly fixed to the ends of these poles, and those who could find nothing better hardened the end of the wood in the fire, and bringing it to a sharp point, formed a tolerable weapon. There were, perhaps, a dozen cutlasses; the marines had about thirty muskets and bayonets, but we could muster no more than seventy-five ball cartridges among the whole party.

"We had fortunately preserved some loose powder, drawn from the upper-deck guns after the ship had stuck (for the magazines were under water in five minutes), and the marines, by hammering their buttons round, and by rolling up pieces of broken bottles in cartridges, did their best to supply themselves with a sort of shot that would have some effect at close quarters, and strict orders were given not to throw away a single discharge until sure of their aim.



“Mr. Cheffy, the carpenter, and his crew, under the direction of the captain, was busied in forming a sort of abattis by felling trees, and enclosing in a circular shape the ground we occupied ; and by interweaving loose branches with the stakes driven in among these a breastwork was constructed, which afforded us some cover, and must naturally impede the progress of any enemy unsupplied with artillery.”

Captain Maxwell was now fully aware that he must prepare for an attack from the Malay pirates, and he took his measures accordingly. He had but a handful of men, many of whom were unarmed, while the savages were hourly increasing in numbers. In the evening he called a general muster, and had the satisfaction of finding that, notwithstanding their want of the means of warfare, his little band were, one and all, animated with an energetic and resolute spirit, and ready cheerfully to do battle to the last in his defence and their own. “Even the boys had managed to make fast table-forks on the end of sticks for their defence. One of them, who had been severely bruised by the falling of the masts, and was slung in his hammock between two trees, had been observed carefully fixing, with two sticks and a rope yarn, the blade of an old razor. On being asked what he meant to do with it, he replied, ‘You know I cannot stand, but if any of these fellows come within reach of my hammock, I’ll mark ’em.’”

After every precaution had been taken to guard against surprise, endeavours were next made to induce the Malays to come to a friendly parley.

These attempts failing, the second lieutenant, Mr. Hay, was despatched to the ship with the barge, cutter, and gig, tolerably well armed. The pirates fled on the approach of the boats, having first set fire to the wreck, which continued to burn during the whole of the night.

For the next few days all hands were busy in collecting whatever could be got at in the hull of the *Alceste*, now burnt to the water's edge. Their stores were thus increased by several casks of flour, some cases of wine, and a barrel of beer. Thirty-seven boarding-pikes and eighteen muskets were also obtained. By this time the diggers on shore had sunk a second well, and there was now water in abundance.

Things now began to look a little more cheerful. The Malays had disappeared, and though it was presumed that they had only gone for reinforcements, the crew were confident in the reception preparing for them, as the gunner was manufacturing cartridges, and a stock of balls had been cast in moulds made of clay, from lead recovered from the wreck. The best feeling and the most regular discipline prevailed. The captain served out the provisions with the utmost impartiality, and adopted a mode of distribution which made favouritism impossible; at the same time, he took pains to provide that the daily meal, however scanty, should be wholesome and appetising.

On the morning of the 26th two of the pirate proahs were seen approaching the island, as if to reconnoitre. Lieutenant Hay dashed at them at

once with the cutter, barge, and gig, and a desperate struggle ensued. Hay killed two of the savages with his own hand, another was shot down, and a fourth stunned. The remainder then threw themselves into the sea, and were drowned—preferring thus to perish rather than to yield.

Later in the day a number of proahs were seen advancing from the Banca side. These were at first hailed with joy, under the belief that they formed a party sent from Batavia to the rescue ; they proved, however, to contain Malays, who had come thither in search of a certain edible kind of sea-weed. It was thought that they might be induced by the promise of reward to convey a part of the crew to Java, in which case the four boats might have proved sufficient for the passage of the rest. That hope, however, was soon dissipated, for no sooner did the new comers catch sight of the wreck than they all crowded round her, and plundered her of everything they could make off with.

Affairs once more began to look serious. Provisions were growing terribly scarce, and lest they should be all exhausted before the arrival of assistance, prompt preparations must be made for an attempt to escape from the island. It was accordingly resolved that a large raft should be built, capable of carrying all whom the boats could not accommodate.

Meanwhile, the Malays increased in numbers daily and almost hourly. Finally, at dawn on Sunday, the 2nd of March, the whole horde of savages advanced towards the island, yelling, firing their pieces, and

beating gongs. They anchored within a cable's length of the shore.

It was a day of terrible suspense and anxiety. Some vain attempts at negotiations were made, but evidently the pirates were thirsting for plunder and murder, and as proah after proah, to the number of fifty, arrived, they grew more insolent and less careful to conceal their intentions. Towards evening Captain Maxwell assembled his men, and informing them that he was hourly expecting an attack from the pirates, made a spirited appeal to them, and promised them victory. His address was received with three hearty cheers, which resounded far and wide, and produced an evident effect on the savages, who mistook the hurrahs for a war-cry, and stood on the defensive.

The night passed without any attack, but the morning discovered the enemy strengthened by the arrival of ten more vessels, with a hundred additional men. The position of the English grew momentarily more critical, and they began to debate which alternative they should accept—that of making a dash at the pirates, in the desperate hope of being able to fight their way through to their boats, or that of defending their present position until their scanty provisions were exhausted, or assistance arrived from Java.

But now, just when the most critical hour had come, the long-expected and oft-prayed-for help was at hand. It was the 3rd of March—six weeks since Lord Amherst had sailed away. No succour had come, and an attack by the savage Malays, in their

overwhelming numbers, was imminent. One of the officers having climbed a tree, was able to report from his lofty post of observation that something like a sail was visible in the distance. A look-out was immediately sent up with a glass, and, sweeping the horizon, soon announced a vessel standing towards the island under all sail. At this news the anxieties of the shipwrecked crew vanished at once, and gave place to a joy as general and unbounded, while from many a heart sincere thanks were returned to the Almighty for their happy deliverance.

The vessel approaching proved to be the *Ternate*, despatched by Lord Amherst to their assistance. The horde of pirates made a precipitate flight at her appearance, amidst a volley from the now rescued crew. All were embarked on board her, and arrived in safety at Batavia, where the ambassador himself received them hospitably, and had them comfortably provided for.

The ultimate preservation of the crew of the *Alceste* was due, under Divine Providence, to two principal causes; on the one hand, the cool courage and self-denying example of Captain Maxwell, which preserved his men from the influence of panic; and, on the other hand, the cheerful discipline and unsubdued spirit of the crew, to which the captain thus bore testimony on his examination before the court-martial: "I can," said he, "with great veracity assure the Court that from the captain to the smallest boy, all were animated by the spirit of Britons; and, whatever the cause was, I ought not to regret having been placed in a position to

witness all the noble traits of character this extraordinary occasion called forth ; and having seen all my companions in distress fairly embarked, I felt in walking off to the boat that my heart was lifted up with gratitude to a kind Providence that had watched over us."

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We now pass over an interval of nearly seventy years.

Throughout the year 1884 newspaper paragraphs appeared at intervals, under the heading "The Crew of the *Nisero*." Considerable interest was excited, and that interest culminated when it was announced that a number of men who had been long detained by force in a distant and savage country were on their way home. Home at length they came, and were publicly welcomed by the Lord Mayor of London, of which event an account may be found in the *Illustrated London News* for November 8, 1884. Mr. Bradley, third engineer of the ill-fated vessel, subsequently published a narrative of the sufferings endured by himself and his companions ; it is from this work that we glean the following particulars.

### THE NISERO

was an iron screw-steamer of 1,818 tons, built at Whitby in 1878, and launched the same year. On the 12th of June, 1883, she started from Liverpool, bound for Penang and Singapore, having on board a crew of about twenty-seven men, under Mr. S. Wood-

house as captain. The voyage out was not altogether without incidents to mark its progress. Bradley describes the heat in the Red Sea as terrible. He himself was stricken down and remained unconscious for three or four hours, and several more of the men had similar attacks.

On the 7th of July, when seven days out from Suez, the *Nisero* ran on a sandbank near the Twelve Apostles. "I had gone on watch at midnight, and about three-quarters of an hour afterwards the vessel gave three or four heavy bumps, and the engines, which were going full speed a minute before, nearly pulled up short." However, by dint of throwing overboard a hundred tons of coal, and working the engines, the vessel was got off in the course of the day and the voyage resumed. Thus terminated an incident which, had the weather been rough, might have proved fatal to the ship and all on board.

There seems to have been a good deal of unpleasantness between the captain and some of the crew. The following paragraph is significant: "On the Sunday the boatswain was disgraced to ordinary seaman, and the mess-room steward also sent before the mast for laziness. The chief steward had already been reduced to cook, after having been put in irons, and now he was further reduced to common seaman for incompetency." (Whether incompetency to turn his hand to cooking is not explained.)

The next day a storm was encountered, and all the coal that remained on deck was cleared off. "I had heard tell of mountainous waves," continues the engineer, "but then first realised the meaning of the



expression. The spray of some of those that surrounded us went several feet above the main-yard." During the storm "the deck was strewn with flying-fish of various colours and sizes."

Penang was reached on the 22nd of July, and the disrated—and no doubt discontented—boatswain, who had been in irons for three days, was handed over to the police. The man, however, got the best of it before the magistrate. "The case was decided in his favour, his wages were paid up to date, and he received his discharge papers." On this Bradley expresses no opinion, but he significantly adds, "Several other changes in the crew afterwards took place."

For several months the *Nisero* continued to trade in those seas, running as far north as Rangoon and to the island of Java in the south, calling at Penang, Singapore, Batavia, and elsewhere. Finally, on the 28th of October, the vessel steamed away from Sourabaya, as it was understood, for Marseilles. All went well till the 7th of November, when "strange to relate, it was suddenly ascertained that we were rather short of coal, our superiors being of opinion that we had not enough on board to justify our making direct for Point de Galle." Accordingly the ship was put about for Acheen Head (at the extreme north of the island of Sumatra), where it was hoped that a supply might be obtained.

The catastrophe that quickly followed this fatal change of course is best described in the engineer's own words:—

"About eight o'clock on the evening of Thursday the 8th of November, 1883, I turned into my bunk

to get a couple of hours' rest, as I had to go on watch at twelve midnight. I was just on the point of falling asleep, when the violent ringing of the engine-room telegraph roused me to a sense of something being seriously wrong outside. In a second or two I was on deck, never having left my berth so smartly before. What was my surprise, on looking over the starboard gunwale, to behold land a-head! We had been bearing right stem on to it, at full speed, but a couple of seconds before! My first impression on hearing the telegraph was that we were being run foul of by some other vessel; and such, as I afterwards heard, was the first thought that struck all hands. The idea of land never occurred to me, as we did not expect to make Acheen before the morning."

The engines were immediately reversed; but it was too late. The weather was thick and misty, and even after the vessel struck—which she did almost immediately—it was impossible to ascertain the nature of the shore. "All that could be seen was a background of trees, apparently springing from a sunken island."

It being impossible to move the vessel, the order was given to take to the boats. One—a small one—was quickly launched; but it was only after much delay, and by great exertions, that a life-boat was got afloat. The next thing was to provision the boats; this, owing to the way the ship had listed over, was a matter of difficulty. At length, however, all was ready, and the boats were manned. "The second officer took charge of the small boat, in which were

the chief engineer, third officer, and six men. The captain, chief officer, second engineer, myself, and the remaining portion of our company went in the life-boat. The captain and chief officer were the last to leave the ship."

According to our authority, a little scene was now enacted, which goes, perhaps, to strengthen the suspicion that Captain Woodhouse was not on the best of terms with some at least of his men.

"Am I justified, in the opinion of all hands, in leaving this ship?" asks the captain, before quitting the deck.

"Yes, sir," is the prompt reply.

"You are sure you mean what you say?" persists the captain.

"Yes, sir," is again the response.

"Only, on a later date, don't go and make another statement."

"To this," says Bradley, "we made no reply."

The life-boat was the first to reach the shore. When she grounded, the men jumped out and hauled her up as each roller struck and lifted her. The smaller boat had hesitated to put off from the wreck for some time, and her non-appearance began to excite uneasiness. After an hour or so she appeared, however, and at about midnight the whole party found themselves safe together, being twenty-eight in all.

They were safe on dry land, but not, it soon appeared, safe in other respects. A number of natives, well-armed and of threatening aspect, soon surrounded them. Unfortunately, the people of

that part of the island were at war with the Dutch, who had a settlement not far distant, and were not likely to regard any Europeans with a very friendly aspect. However, through the instrumentality of the Chinese cook, who understood something of the language, the nationality of the castaways was explained, and the natives appeared to become more friendly. A present of bananas was brought ; and subsequently the shipwrecked people were invited to accompany their hosts to a village which was reported to be close at hand. This offer they declined, preferring to remain where they were till daylight came. The natives then lighted two huge fires, round which the men were glad enough to crowd. "Unfortunately for us," says Bradley, "the rain fell in torrents, and this added considerably to our already miserable condition. The few hours which we had to pass in this plight, waiting for daylight, seemed as though they would never end. At last, the long-wished-for morrow arrived, and, in spite of our disasters, we could not refrain from passing a joke at the comical appearance we presented. Wringing wet, cold and shivering, drowsy and fatigued, and—in the case of those who had lain down—covered from head to foot with sand, we certainly had a very singular look."

The village near which the wreck took place was called Pougah ; and here a hut was placed at the service of the wet and half-famished crew.

"Our first move on arriving was to get a fire going, to prepare something to drink, and to dry our clothes as best we could. All hands were

bundled into the one hut, which consisted of but one apartment. According to English ideas, there was scarcely room enough in it for the accommodation of more than two or three men. This beautiful dwelling was called our palace. It had originally been the chief's own abode. It was a wooden construction, very roughly put together, and roofed with a leaf resembling the palm in appearance. The roof, being of no very recent date, was very far from being water-tight ; in many places, the sky, in large patches, was visible through it."

Our space forbids us to follow out the story of the long and trying captivity that followed in any detail. Yapatee, the head-man of Pougah, was sufficiently kind and sympathetic ; but the prisoners—for such they soon found themselves to be—were by no means favourably impressed by the Rajah of Tenom, who came, on the following day, to inspect them. This potentate was not easily persuaded that they were not Dutchmen ; and such members of the crew as had light hair seemed likely, for a time, to fare badly.

For several days, the rajah and his people were busily engaged plundering and stripping the wreck. Meantime, the condition of the captives was full of discomfort and anxiety. "Our sufferings at night were terrible," writes Bradley, "from the savage attacks of the mosquitoes, which, without exaggeration, flew about in clouds. We also received much annoyance from ants, cockroaches, beetles, and other insects, of species strangers to me, as perhaps they would be to a more enlightened naturalist."

Upon due consideration, the rajah no doubt concluded that it would be more profitable to hold the Englishmen for a ransom than to kill them. They were removed to a place of safety in the neighbourhood of Tenom ; and there, after a terrible march through tropical jungle and treacherous swamps, established in a hut somewhat superior to that they had occupied at Pougah. It had the advantage of possessing two rooms, so that the officers and engineers had a place apart from the sailors and firemen, &c.

On the 19th of November, the captives were cheered by the sight of a steamer, evidently a man-of-war, slowly steaming southward and lying close in shore. A few days later a packet was received, through a stranger disguised as a pedlar, who slipped it into the hand of one of the sailors. The packet contained two letters—one from a Dutch captain, and the other from a resident on the coast, also a Dutchman. In both the captives were exhorted to be patient and discreet, and assurances of sympathy and assistance were given. Subsequently, supplies in the shape of provisions, clothing, &c., were sent through, and, for the most part, allowed to pass to the unfortunate crew.

It now became a question of terms ; and Captain Woodhouse persuaded the rajah to let him go to Rigas in a Dutch gun-boat in order to arrange matters. The captain went, but did not return. Instead came a letter saying that "their stay would be indefinite." The rajah is described as being in a terrible rage at the non-return of the captain, "and



among ourselves it had a very undesirable effect," says Bradley, "making some low and despondent, and others, to a great extent, surly and disagreeable."

The condition of the captives became daily worse. Bradley describes their Christmas dinner of "rice and a little dried salt fish, with a drink of water to wash it down." Sickness, too, in the form of ague, fever, and diarrhoea, began to show itself; and for some days the chief mate was in a critical condition. Hope revived, however, on receipt of letters from the British consul and Captain Woodhouse. The former stated that he had great hopes that they would soon be set free. The captain excused his non-return by saying that he had not been allowed to go back as he had wished to do. "But he did not say if he had acquainted his friends with the conditions on which he had been released." At this time the rajah professed his willingness to give up the men to an English ship, but not to a Dutch one, without ransom.

The bombardment of Tenom by the Dutch, on the 7th of January, did not better the condition of the captives. They were hurried yet further inland, and compelled to endure considerable fatigue and hardship, though they do not appear to have been treated with intentional cruelty.

On the 19th of February, two of the men made an attempt to escape. Having gone out on a pretended fishing excursion, they had no difficulty in eluding the somewhat lax vigilance of their guards, and so got away into the woods. But the next day they returned, under the guidance of a native, "torn



and bleeding from head to foot, and their clothing, torn off their backs, had been plastered all over with mud and mire." Having lost their way in those terrible, tropical woods, they had become completely exhausted, and were glad enough to find themselves once more in their place of captivity.

But now a gleam of light and hope broke in upon the unfortunate crew of the *Nisero*. "We were all much elated on Friday, the 22nd of February, at the arrival of a letter from Commander Bickford, of H.M.S. *Pegasus*, dated the 19th inst. He informed us that every means were being used to obtain our release, and told us to cheer up, as he had hopes of yet doing something for us ; also that he was accompanied by an English gentleman, a Mr. Maxwell, who was thoroughly conversant with the Malay language and customs, and a favourite among the people." Next day substantial evidences of sympathy arrived in the shape of stores of food—biscuits, tinned meat, and soups, coffee, cocoa, condensed milk, &c. ; also a supply of medicines, pipes, and tobacco. A week later, further supplies arrived, including a bundle of newspapers, "which were eagerly seized on, and their contents devoured by torch-light, it being already dark when they arrived."

Throughout the remaining months of their detention, the Mr. Maxwell, above referred to, continued the staunch friend of the captives, and it seems that they were chiefly indebted to his ingenuity and perseverance, both for such "creature comforts" as they from time to time received, and also for their ultimate release.

But there were some in that little company whose strength could not hold out during the weary period of "hope deferred" that now followed. The first to give in was an Italian sailor, Loscocco, of whose illness and death a pathetic account is given by Mr. Bradley. The poor fellow died on the 23rd of March; and the spot chosen for his grave was destined to become the centre of a little cemetery of seven graves, which the survivors afterwards reverently fenced in and adorned with a somewhat elaborately executed cross.

The second death was that of Fowler, one of the firemen. He was seized with a choleraic attack on the 19th of May, and after a night of great suffering, became unconscious and so passed quietly away. Two days later, the carpenter, Wells, was stricken down and quickly carried off by the same disease. On the 25th of May, a fourth grave was closed over the remains of another of the men, William Armstrong. On the 30th, the chief engineer was reported ill; but he managed to pull through; and on the 1st of June, all hands are spoken of as "fairly well."

Ten days later, a fireman, named Gerraty, died very suddenly. Having taken a cup of coffee in the morning, he was seized with cramp and in two hours was dead. Thus, in three weeks four men had been carried off, making, with the Italian who had died in March, five altogether. For two months there was a respite; then the terrible disease re-appeared, and within a few days, three men were at death's door. One, a German sailor, recovered; but the other two,

Bibby and Murray, expired on the same day, the 21st of August.

So tedious had been the negotiations for their release, and so terrible and swift the blows that death had dealt them, that we need not wonder if, at times, the little band almost lost hope. On the 23rd of August, the *Pegasus* was again cruising off the shore, and Mr. Maxwell submitted an *ultimatum* to the rajah. Terms were at length agreed on, the only question remaining being as to the mode of carrying them out. Naturally, Mr. Maxwell and the commander of the *Pegasus* wished to see the men safe on board before paying the stipulated ransom-money; on the other hand, the rajah was no less anxious to handle the cash before he relaxed his grasp upon the captives. Finally, the matter was arranged by a compromise. An Italian sailor, who was sick, being sent on board, 2,000 dollars were paid down for him; then it was arranged that the firemen and sailors should be released, while the three mates, the chief engineer, and Bradley remained as hostages till the rest of the money, 38,000 dollars, was forthcoming.

And so the affair was ended. A toilsome march brought the captives once more upon the scene of their first misfortunes. They saw the remains of the *Nisero*, just ten months after they had abandoned her; they slept once more in the old hut that had been their first shelter in Sumatra; they feasted their eyes on the English man-of-war and her two Dutch companions that lay at anchor in a sheltered little bay; and then, at length, they were "warmly, one and all, being shaken by the hand by their noble friends,"

Mr. Maxwell, Commander Bickford, and others. After some delay, the whole party were got on board the *Pegasus* amid rounds of hearty British cheers.

Thus ended the ten months' captivity of the crew of the *Nisero*. On the 14th of September, the *Pegasus* arrived at Penang. There the men were lodged in a ward of the hospital, and then they received visits from a tailor, a clergyman, a newspaper reporter, and a photographer! It was soon arranged that they should go home in the *Ajax*, one of Messrs. Holt's liners. On the 22nd of September they sailed from Penang, the *Pegasus* dipping her ensign as a parting salute. The 27th saw the *Ajax* off Point de Galle, and on the 6th of October Aden was passed. They were in the Canal on the 11th, and by the 24th were meeting the Atlantic rollers in the Bay of Biscay.

Mr. Bradley thus concludes his lively and graphic narrative :—

“At eleven o'clock on Saturday, the 25th of October, we arrived in Portland harbour, and our eventful voyagings practically came to a close. We had left Liverpool on the 12th of June the year before. In the fifteen months we had gained the sympathy of two nations, and seen adventure enough to last us for a lifetime.” \*

\* “The Wreck of the *Nisero*, and our Captivity in Sumatra.”  
By W. Bradley, one of the survivors. Sampson Low & Co.,  
1884.

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