

6
Melancholy Consequences

OF TWO

Sea Storms,

Being, an Account of the

SHIPWRECK

a PORTUGUESE SHIP, on her passage from
GOA to MADRAS, in the year 1782 on board
of which was DONALD CAMPBELL Esq; of
Barbeck,

(as related in his journey to India.)

AND A

NARRATIVE OF THE LOSS

OF THE

WALSEWELL East-Indiaman,

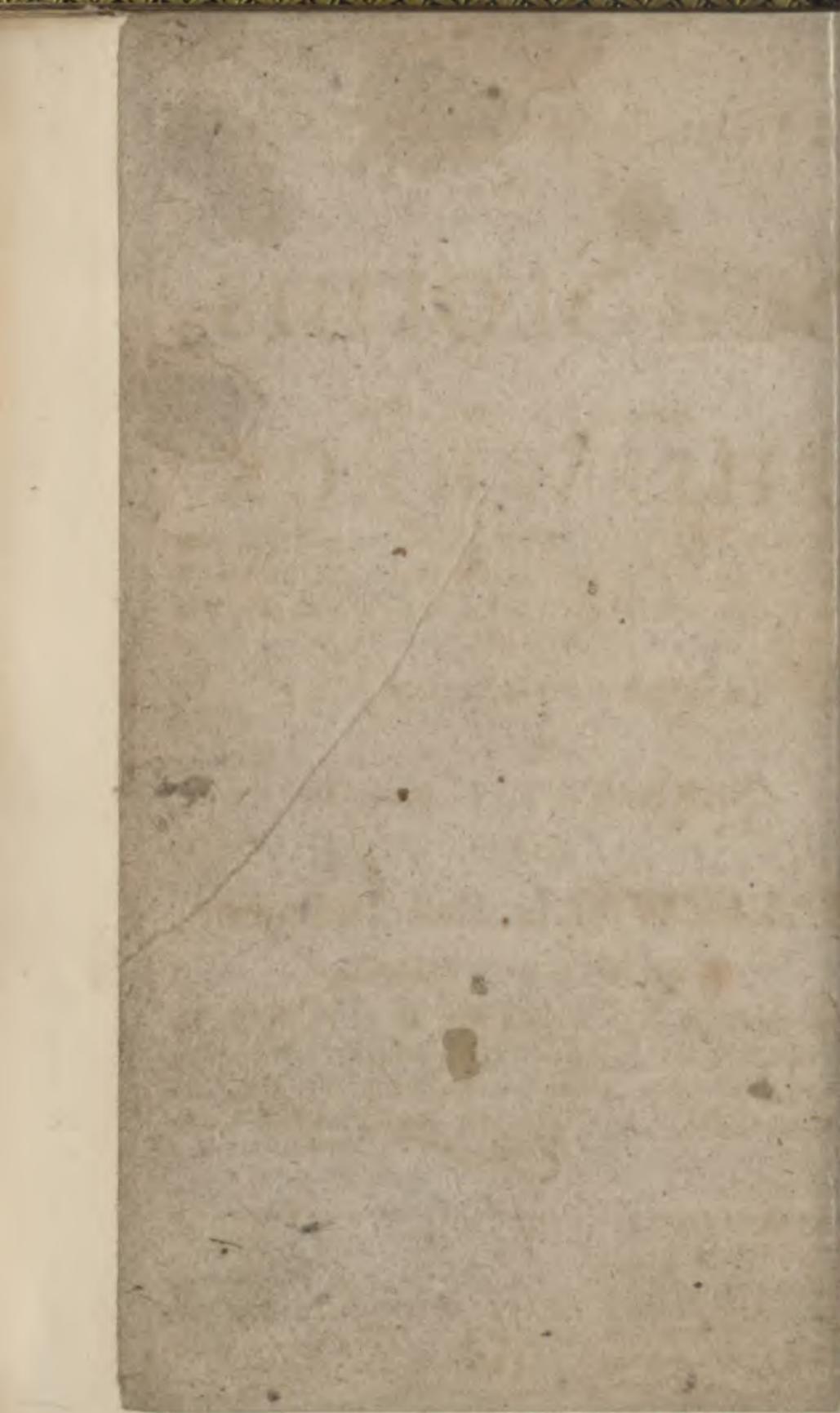
Capt. RICHARD PIERCE;

fortunately Wrecked at the Isle of PURBECK,
coast of DORSETSHIRE January 6th 1786;
compiled from the communications of the two
Chief Officers who escaped the dreadful Cata-
strophe.

.....
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MELANCHOLY CONSEQUENCES

OF TWO

SEA STORMS, &c.



An account of the Shipwreck of a Portuguese Schooner, on her passage from Goa to Madras—in the year 1782, related by one of the Sufferers.

IT was now the eighteenth of May when we sailed from Goa. The hemisphere had been for some days overcast with clouds; some light showers of rain had fallen; and it certainly did not tend to raise my spirits, and free me from my anxious apprehensions, to hear that those circumstances denoted an approaching gale of wind. I observed, moreover, that the vessel was much too deep in the water, being greatly overloaded—that she was in every respects defective, and, as the seamen say, ill-hand, and in short very unfit to encounter a gale wind of any violence. I coined, however, to

yield to those united impressions, and determined to proceed.

“ On the nineteenth, the sky was obscured by immense fleeces of clouds, surcharged with inflammable matter; and in the evening, the rain fell in torrents, the firmament darkened apace, sudden night came on, and the horrors of extreme darkness were rendered still more horrible by the peals of thunder which rent the air, and the frequent flashes of lightning, which served only to shew the horror of our situation, and leave us in increased darkness: mean time the wind became more violent blowing on the shore; and a heavy sea, raised by its force, united with it to make our state more formidable.

“ By day light on the morning of the twentieth the gale had increased to a furious tempest; and the sea, keeping pace with it, ran mountain high; and as it kept invariably to the same point, the captain and officers became seriously alarmed, and almost persuaded that the south-west monsoon had set in which, if it were so, would render it absolute impossible for us to weather the coast. All the day, however, we kept as close as the violence of the weather would allow us to the wind; but the sea canted her head so to leeward, that she made more lee than head-way; and the rigging was maintained with the work, that we had little hope of keeping off the shore, unless the wind changed, which there was not now the smallest probability. During the night there was no intermission of the storm: many of the sails blew into ribbons; some of the rigging was carried away, and such exertions were made, that, before morning, every stick that could possibly be struck was down upon the deck.

“ About seven o'clock on the morning of the

twenty-first, I was alarmed by an unusual noise upon the deck, and running up, perceived that every remaining sail in the vessel, the fore sail one excepted, was totally carried away. The sight was horrible, and the whole vessel presented a spectacle as dreadful to the feelings as mortifying to human pride. Fear had produced, not only all the infirmities of dependency, but all the mischievous effects of insanity. In one place stood the captain, waving, stamping, and tearing his hair in handfuls from his head—here, some of the crew were cast upon their knees, clapping their hands, and praying, with all the extravagance of horror painted in their faces—there, others were flogging their imaginations with all their might, calling upon them to allay the storm. One of our passengers, who was purser of an English East Indiaman, had got hold of a cask full of rum, and with an air of distraction and deep despair imprinted in his face, was stalking about in his shirt. I perceived him to be on the point of serving it about, in large tumblers, to the undismayed people; and well convinced, that, far from alleviating, it would sharpen the horrors of their mind, I went forward, and with much difficulty prevented him.

Having accomplished this point, I applied myself to the captain, and endeavoured to bring him back (if possible) to his recollection, and to a sense of what he owed to his duty as a commander, and his dignity as a man: I exhorted him to encourage the sailors by his example; and strove to raise their spirits, by saying that the storm did not appear to me by any means so terrible as some I had before experienced.

While I was thus employed; we shipped a sea on the starboard side, which I really thought would have sent us down. The vessel seemed to sink be-

neath its weight, shivered, and remained motionless—it was a moment of critical suspense; fancy made me think I felt her gradually descending—I gave myself up as gone, and summoned all my fortitude to bear approaching death with becoming manhood.

“Just at this crisis, the water, which rushed with incredible force through all parts of the vessel, brought out floating, and nearly suffocated, another English passenger; who was endeavouring to take a little repose in a small cabin boarded off from the deck: he was a very stout young man, and full of true spirit. Finding that the vessel was not, as had thought, going immediately down, he joined me in exhorting the captain to his duty: we persuaded him to throw the guns overboard, as well as a number of trunks and packages with which the vessel was much encumbered; and with some little exertion, we got the pumps set a going.”

The name of the English passenger just mentioned was Hall. He was a young man of a most amiable disposition, and with it possessed all that manly spirit that gives presence of mind in exigencies of danger. He and Capt. Campbell having, with great difficulty, got some hands to stick to the pumps, stood at the wheel, at once to assist the men, and prevent them from quitting it: and although hopeless, determined that no effort practicable on their parts should be wanting to the preservation of the vessel. The water, however, gained upon the pumps, notwithstanding every effort, and it evidently appeared that they could not keep her long above water.

At ten o'clock the wind seemed to increase, and amounted to a downright hurricane: the sky was to entirely obscured with black clouds, and the rain fell so thick, that objects were not discernible

from the wheel to the ship's head. Soon the pumps were choaked, and could no longer be worked: then dismay seized on all—nothing but unutterable despair, silent anguish, and horror, wrought up to frenzy, was to be seen; not a single soul was capable of an effort to be useful—all seemed more desirous to extinguish their calamities by embracing death, than willing, by a painful exertion, to avoid it.

At about eleven o'clock they could plainly distinguish a dreadful roaring noise, resembling that of waves rolling against rocks; but the darkness of the day, and the accompanying rains, prevented them from seeing any distance; and if it were a rock, they might be actually dashed to pieces on it before they could perceive it. At twelve o'clock, however, the weather cleared up a little, and both the wind and the sea seemed to have abated: the very expansion of the prospect round the ship was exhilarating; and as the weather grew better, and the sea less furious, the senses of the people returned, and the general stupefaction began to decrease.

The weather continuing to clear up, they in some degree discovered breakers and large rocks without the view of them: so that it appeared they must have passed quite close to them, and were now fairly jammed in between them and the land.

“In this very critical juncture,” says our traveller, “the captain, entirely contrary to my opinion, adopted the dangerous resolution of letting go the anchor, to bring her up with her head to the shore: but, though no seaman, my common sense told me that she could never ride it out, but must inevitably go down. The event nearly justified my judgment; for she had scarcely begun at an hour before an enormous sea rolling over her, overwhelmed

ed and filled her with water, and every one on board concluded that she was certainly sinking. On the instant, a Lascar, with a presence of mind worthy an old English mariner, took an axe, ran forward and cut the cable."

On finding herself free, the vessel again floated and made an effort to right herself; but she was almost completely water-logged, and heeled to larboard so much, that the gunnel lay under water. They then endeavoured to steer as fast as they could for the land, which they knew could not be at any great distance, though they were unable to discover it through the hazy weather: the fore-sail was loosed; by great efforts in bailing, she righted little, her gunnel was got above water, and they scudded as well as they could before the wind which still blew hard on shore; and about ten o'clock the land appeared at a small distance ahead.

The love of life countervails all other considerations in the mind of man. The uncertainty they were under with regard to the shore before them which they had reason to believe was part of Hydruntine's dominions, where they should meet with the most rigorous treatment, if not ultimate death, was forgotten in the joyful hope of saving life, and they scudded towards the shore in all the exulting transports of a people just snatched from the jaws of death.

This gleam of happiness, however, continued not long: a tremendous sea rolling after the broke over their stern, tore every thing before it: the masts in the steerage, carried away the rudder, shattered the wheel to pieces, and tore up the wing-bolts of the deck—conveyed the men who stood at the wheel forward, and swept them overboard. Captain Campbell was standing, at the time, near

wheel, and fortunately had hold of the taffarel, which enabled him to resist in part the weight of the wave. he was, however, swept off his feet, and dashed against the main-mast. The jerk from the taffarel, which he held very tenaciously, seemed as if it would have dislocated his arms: it broke, however the impetus of his motion, and in all probability saved him from being dashed to pieces against the mast.

“I floundered about,” says he, “in the water to the foot of the mast, till at length I got on my feet, and seized a rope, which I held in a state of great embarrassment, dubious what I should do to extricate myself. At this instant I perceived that Mr. Hall had got upon the capstern, and was waving his hand to me to follow his example: this I resolved to do, though it was an enterprise of some danger and difficulty; for, if I lost the hold I had, a single motion of the vessel, or a full wave, would certainly carry me overboard. I made a bold push, however, and fortunately accomplished it. Having attained this station, I could the better survey the wreck; and saw that the water was nearly breast-high on the quarter deck (for the vessel was deep-stowed); and I perceived the unfortunate Englishman standing where the water was most shallow, and watching with patient expectation its rising, awaiting death: I called to him to come to us, but he shook his head in despair, and said, in a lamentable tone, “It is all over with us! God have mercy upon us!”—then seated himself with seeming composure on a chair which happened to be lying about in the wreck of the deck, and in a few minutes afterwards was washed into the sea along with it, where he was speedily released from what ten thousand times worse than death.

During this universal wreck of things, the ho-

ror I was in could not prevent me from observing a very curious circumstance, which at any other time would have excited laughter, though now produced no other emotion than surprise. We happened to be in part laden with mangoes, of which the island of Goa is known to produce the finest in the world, some of them lay in baskets on the poop a little black boy, in the moment of greatest danger, had got seated by them, devouring them voraciously, and crying all the time most bitterly at the horrors of his situation!

“The vessel now got completely water-logged and Mr. Hall and I were employed in forming conjectural calculations how many minutes she could keep above water, and consoling one another on the unfortunate circumstances under which we met lamenting that fate had thus brought us acquainted only to make us witnesses of each other's misery and then to see one another no more.

“As the larboard side of the vessel was gradually going down, the deck, and of course the capster became too nearly perpendicular for us to continue on it: we therefore forsook the necessity of quitting it, and got upon the starboard side, holding fast to the gunnel, and allowing our bodies and legs yield to the sea as it broke over us. Thus we continued for some time: at length the severity of the labour so entirely exhausted our strength and spirits that our best hope, seemed to be a speedy conclusion to our painful death; and we began to have serious intentions of letting go our hold, and yielding ourselves up at once to the fury of the waves.

“The vessel, which all this time drifted with the sea and wind, gradually approximated the shore and at length struck the ground, which for an instant revived our almost departed hopes; but soon found that it did not in the smallest degre

ter our situation. Again I began to yield to
 despair—again I thought of letting go my hold,
 and sinking at once: it is impossible, thought I,
 to escape—why, then, prolong, for a few mi-
 nutes, a vainful existence that must at last be given
 up? Yet, yet, the all-subduing love of life suggest-
 ed, that many things apparently impossible had
 been done; and I said to myself, If life is to be
 lost, why not lose it in a glorious struggle? Should
 I survive it by accident, life will be rendered dou-
 ble sweet to me, and I still more worthy of it by
 proving my fortitude.

While I was employed in this train of reflec-
 tion, I perceived some of the people collecting to-
 gether, talking, and holding a consultation: it im-
 mediately occurred to me, that they were devising
 some plan for escaping from the wreck, and getting
 to shore: and, so natural is it for man to cling to
 his fellow creature for support in difficult or dan-
 gerous exigencies, that I proposed to Mr. Hall to join
 in, and take a share in the execution of the plan.
 Observing to him at the same time, that I was
 determined at all events to quit the vessel, and trust
 to the protection and guidance of a superintending
 providence for the rest.

As prodigality of life is, in some cases, the ex-
 ercise of virtue and courage—so there are others in
 which it is vice, meanness and cowardice. True
 courage is, according to the circumstances under
 which it is to operate, as rigidly tenacious and vigi-
 lant of life in one case, as it is indifferent and re-
 luctant of life in another; and I think it is a very strange
 contradiction in the human heart (although it often
 happens), that a man who has the most unbound-
 ed courage, seeking death even in the cannon's
 mouth, shall yet want the necessary resolution to
 make the exertions to save his life in cases of ordinary

danger. The unfortunate English purser could not collect courage sufficient to make an effort to save himself; and yet, I think it probable that he would have faced a battery of artillery, or exposed himself to a pistol shot, if occasion required, as soon as any other man. Thus it appears at first view: but may not this seeming incongruity be explained by saying, that personal courage and fortitude are different qualities of the mind and body, and depend upon the exercise of entirely different functions?

“Be that as it may, I argued with myself, in the height of my calamitous situation, upon the subject of fortitude and dejection, courage and cowardice; and, notwithstanding the serious aspect of affairs, found myself listening to the suggestions of pride—what a paltry thing to yield, while strength is left to struggle! Vanity herself had her hint, and whispered, “Should I escape by an effort of my own, what a glorious theme of exultation!” There were I confess, transitory images in my mind, which co-operating with the natural attachment to self preservation, made me persevere, and resolve to do it while one vestige of hope was left for the mind to dwell on.

“Observing as I said before, the people confining together, and resolving to join them, I made effort to get to the lee shrouds, where they were standing, or rather clinging; but before I could accomplish it, I lost my hold, fell down the hatchway (the gratings having been carried away with the long boat), and was for some minutes entangled there among a heap of packages, which the violent fluctuations of the water had collected on the side. As the vessel moved with the sea, and water flowed in, the packages and I were roiled together—sometimes one, sometimes another foremost; so that I began to be apprehensive

ould not be able to extricate myself: by the merest accident, however, I grasped something that lay in my way, made a vigorous spring, and gained the shrouds. Mr. Hall who followed me, in seizing the shrouds, was driven against me with such violence, that I could scarcely retain my hold of the rigging.

Compelled by the perilous situation in which I was, I called out to him for God's sake to keep his hold, for that I was rendered quite breathless and almost out: he generously endeavoured to make way for me, and, in so doing, unfortunately lost his hold, and went down under the ship's side. Never, never shall I forget my sensations, at this melancholous incident—I would have given millions of worlds if I could have recalled the words which made him give; my mind was wound up to the last pitch of anguish: I may truly say, that this was the most bitter of all the bitter moments of my life, compared with which the other circumstances of the shipwreck seemed lessened—for I had insensibly acquired an unusual esteem and warm attachment for him, and I was doubtful whether, after being even the innocent occasion of his falling, I ought to take further pains to preserve my own life. All those sensations were passing with the rapidity of lightning through my thoughts, when, as much to my astonishment as to my joy, I saw him borne by a returning wave, and thrown among the very packages from which I had but just before, with such labour and difficulty, extricated myself. In the end he proved equally fortunate, but, after a much longer and harder struggle, and after sustaining much more injury.

“ I once more changed my station, and made my way to the poop, where I found myself rather more sheltered—I earnestly wished Mr. Hall to be

with me, whatever might be my ultimate fate—and beckoned him to come near me; but he answered by shaking his head, in a feeble, desponding manner—staring at the same time wild'y about him: even his spirit was subdued; and despair, perceived, had begun to take possession of his mind.

“ Being a little more at ease in my new station than I had been before, I had more time to deliberate, and more power to judge. I recollected, that according to the course of time, the day was gone, and the night quickly approaching; I reflected, that for any enterprize whatever day was much preferable to night; and above all I considered, that the vessel could not hold long together—! therefore thought, that the best mode I could adopt would be, to take to the water with the first buoyant thing I could see; and, as the wind and water both seemed to run to the shore, to take my chance in that way of reaching it. In pursuance of this resolution, I tore off my shirt, having before that thrown off the other parts of my dress—I looked at my sleeve buttons, in which was set the hair of my departed children—and, by an involuntary act of the imagination, asked myself the question, “ Shall I be happy enough to meet them where I am now about to go?—Shall those dear last remains, too, become prey to the devouring deep?”—In that instant, reason, suspended by the horrors of the scene, gave way to instinct, and I rolled my shirt up, and very carefully thrust it into a hole between decks, with the wild hopes that the sleeve buttons might yet escape untouched. Watching my opportunity, I saw a log of wood floating near the vessel, and waving my hand to Mr. Hall as a last adieu, jumped after it. Here, again, I was doomed to aggravated hardships—I had scarcely touched the log when a great sea snatched it from my hold: still a

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 come near me, I grasped at it ineffectually; till at
 it was completely carried away, but not before
 and cut and battered and bruised me in several
 es, and in a manner that at any other time I
 ould have thought dreadful.

Death-seemed inevitable; and all that occur-
 e to me now to do, was to accelerate it, and get
 of its pangs as speedily as possible; for, though
 ew how to swim; the tremendous surf rendered
 mming useless, and all hope from it would have
 o ridiculous. I therefore began to swallow as
 ch water as possible; yet, still rising by the
 ant principle of the waves to the surface, my
 ner thoughts began to recur; and whether it
 that, or natural instinct, which survived the
 porary impressions of despair, I know not; but
 deavoured to swim, which I had not done long,
 n I again discovered the log of wood I had lost
 ing near me, and with some difficulty caught
 ardly had it been an instant in my hands,
 n, by the same unlucky means I lost it again. I
 often heard it said in Scotland, that if a man
 throw himself flat on his back in the water,
 quite straight and stiff, and suffer himself to sink
 the water gets into his ears, he will continue to
 t so for ever: this occurred to me now, and I de-
 mined to try the experiment: so I threw myself
 my back in the manner I have described, and
 myself to the disposal of Providence; but was it
 g before I found the truth of the saying: for I
 ated with hardly an effort, and began for the first
 e to conceive something like hopes of preservation.
 After lying in this manner, committed to the
 irection of the tides, I soon saw the vessel—
 it was at a considerable distance behind me.
 eliest hope began to play about my heart, and
 fluttered with a thousand gay fancies in my
 d: I began to form the favourable conclusion,

that the tide was carrying me rapidly to land from the vessel, and that I should soon once more touch *terra firma*.

“ This expectation was a cordial that revived my exhausted spirits: I took courage, and left myself still to the same all-directing Power that had hitherto preserved me, scarcely doubting that I should soon reach the land. Nor was I mistaken; for, in a short time more, without effort or exertion, and without once turning from off my back, I found myself strike against the sandy beach. Overjoyed to the highest pitch of transport at my providential deliverance, I made a convulsive spring, and ran up a little distance on the shore; but was so weak and worn down by fatigue, and so unable to clear my stomach of the salt water with which it was loaded, that I suddenly grew deadly sick; and apprehended that I had only exchanged one death for another; and in a minute or two fainted away.”

*Campbell's overland Journey
Iruia, Page 159—176.*

*Narrative of the Loss of the Halfewell East Indiaman
on the coast of Dorsetshire, January 1786.*

THE Halfewell East-Indiaman, of 758 tons built then, commanded by Richard Pierce Esq. sailed through the Downs on Sunday the 1st of January, 1786, and the next morning being a breeze of Dunnoie, it fell calm.

Monday the 2d of January. at three in the afternoon, a breeze sprung up from the South, which they ran in shore to land the pilot, but very thin weather coming on in the evening, and the wind baffling, at nine in the evening they were obliged to anchor in eighteen fathom water, furl'd their top sails; but could not surmount their courses, the snow falling thick, and freezing as it fell.

uesday the 3d, at four in the morning, a
 gale came on from East-Nore-East, and the
 driving, they were obliged to cut their cables,
 run off to sea. At noon, they spoke with a
 bound to Dublin, and having put their pilot
 aboard her, bore down Channel immediately. At
 in the evening, the wind freshening and com-
 to the Southward, they reefed such sails as were
 d necessary. At ten at night it blew a violent
 of wind at South, and they were obliged to
 a press of sail to keep the ship off shore, in
 which the hawse plugs, which according to a
 improvement were put inside, were washed in,
 the hawse bags washed away, in consequence of
 which they shipped a large quantity of water on the
 deck.

On sounding the well, and finding the ship had
 a leak, and had five feet water in her hold,
 they lashed the main top-sail up, hauled up the main-
 and immediately endeavoured to furl both,
 could not effect it—All the pumps were set to
 on discovering the leak.

Wednesday the 4th, at two in the morning, they
 endeavoured to wear the ship, but without success,
 judging it necessary to cut away the mizen-
 it was immediately done, and a second attempt
 to wear the ship, which succeeded no better
 the former; and the ship having now seven
 water in her hold, and gaining fast on the
 rocks, it was thought expedient for the preser-
 vation of the ship, to cut away the mainmast, the
 ship appearing to be in immediate danger of found-
 ing.

At ten in the morning the wind abated consider-
 and the ship labouring extremely, rolled the
 top-mast over on the larboard side, in the fall,
 the wreck went through the fore-sail, and tore it to

pieces. At eleven in the forenoon, the wind came to the West ward, and the weather clearing up, Berry-head was distinguishable bearing North by East, distant four or five leagues; they immediately bent another fore-sail, erected a main-mast, and set a top-gallant sail for a main-sail, under which sail they bore up for Portsmouth and employed the remainder of the day in getting up a jury mizen-mast.

About two in the morning on Friday the ship still driving, and approaching very fast the shore; Mr. Henry Meriton went into the cuddy, where the Captain then was, and a conversation took place, Captain Pierce expressing extreme anxiety for the preservation of his beloved daughters, and earnestly asking the officer if he could devise any means of saving them, and on answering with great concern that he feared it would be impossible, but that their only chance would be to wait for the morning, the Captain lifted up his hands in silent and distressful ejaculation.

At this dreadful moment the ship struck with such violence as to dash the heads of those who were standing in the cuddy, against the deck above them, and the fatal blow was accompanied by a shriek of horror, which burst at one instant from every quarter of the ship.

Mr. Meriton, the officer, whom we have already mentioned, at this crisis of horror, offered to the despairing crew the best advice which could possibly be given to them; he recommended their clinging all to that side of the ship which lay lowest to the rocks, and singly to take the opportunities which might then offer of escaping to the shore. Having thus provided to the utmost of his power for their safety, he returned to the round-house where by this time all the passengers, and most

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Officers were assembled, the latter employed in
giving consolation to the unfortunate ladies, and
with unparalleled magnanimity, suffering their com-
plicity for the fair and amiable companions of their
adversities, to get the better of the sense of their
danger, and the dread of almost inevitable an-
nihilation. at this moment, what must be the feel-
ing of a Father—of such a Father as Captain
[?]

The ship struck on the rocks at or near Seacombe,
the island of Purbeck, between Peverel-Point,
St. Alban's-head, at a part of the shore where
the cliff is of a vast height, and rises almost perpen-
dicular from its base.

At this particular spot the cliff is excavated at
the foot, and presents a cavern of ten or twelve
feet in depth, and of breadth equal to the length
of a large ship, the sides of the cavern so nearly up-
right as to be extremely difficult of access, the roof
formed of the stupendous cliff, and the bottom of it
strewn with sharp and uneven rocks, which seem
to have been rent from above by some convulsion
of nature.

It was at the mouth of this cavern that the un-
fortunate wreck lay stretched almost from side to
side of it, and offering her broadside to the horrid
blast.

At the time the ship struck it was too dark to
discover the extent of their danger, and the ex-
traordinary horror of their situation; even Mr. Meriton
himself conceived a hope that she might keep together
till daylight, and endeavoured to cheer his
suffering friends, and in particular the unhappy la-
dies with this comfortable expectation, as an answer
to the Captain's enquiries, how they went on,
what he thought of their situation.

In addition to the company already in the round,

house, they had admitted three black women, two soldiers wives, who with the husband of one of them had been permitted to come in, though the seamen who had tumultuously demanded entrance to get the lights, had been opposed, and kept off by Mr. Rogers, the third Mate, and Mr. Brimer fifth, so that the numbers there were now increased to near fifty; Captain Pierce sitting on a chair, or some other moveable, with a daughter on each side of him, each of whom he alternately pressed to his affectionate bosom; the rest of the melancholy afflictees were seated on the deck, which was strewn with musical instruments, and the wreck of furniture, trunks, boxes and packages.

And here also Mr. Meriton, having previously cut several wax candles into pieces, and stuck them up in various parts of the round-house; and lighted up all the glass lanthorns he could find, took his seat, intending to wait the happy dawn, that might present to him the means of effecting his own escape, and afford him an opportunity of giving assistance to the partners of his danger; but observing that the poor ladies appeared parched and exhausted, he fetched a basket of oranges from some part of the round-house, and prevailed on some of them to refresh themselves by sucking a little of the juice. At this time they were all tolerably composed, except Miss Mansel, who was in hysterical fits on the floor deck of the round-house.

But on his return to the company, he perceived a considerable alteration in the appearance of the ship, the sides were visibly giving way, the deck seemed to be lifting, and he discovered other distressing symptoms, that she could not hold together much longer, he therefore attempted to go forward to look out, but immediately saw that the ship was separated in two middie, and that the fore part

ed its position, and lay rather farther out to the sea; and in this emergency, when the moment might be charged with his fate, he chanced to seize the present, and follow the example of the crew, and the soldiers, who were now dragging the ship in numbers, and making their way to a shore, of which they knew not yet the particulars.

Meriton discovered a spar, which appeared laid from the ship's side to the rocks, and on which he determined to attempt his escape.

Accordingly laid him down on it, and thrust himself forward, but he soon found the spar had no communication with the rock, he reached the end and then slipped off, receiving a very violent fall in his fall, and before he could recover his feet he was washed off by the surge, in which he exerted himself by swimming, till the returning dashing him against the back part of the cavern, where he laid hold of a small projecting piece of the rock, but was so benumbed, that he was on the point of quitting it, when a seaman who had already gained a footing, extended his hand, and assisted him till he could secure himself on a little shelf of rock, from which he clambered still higher, till he was out of the reach of the surf.

Rogers the third mate, remained with the main, and the unfortunate ladies, and their companions, near 20 minutes after Mr. Meriton had quitted the ship.

At this time the sea was breaking in at the fore of the ship, and reached as far as the main-deck, and Captain Pierce gave Mr Rogers a nod, they took a lamp, and went together into the gallery, and after viewing the rocks for some time, Captain Pierce asked Mr. Rogers, if he thought there was any possibility of saving the girls,

to which he replied, he feared there was not they could only discover the black face of the perpendicular rock, and not the cavern which afforded shelter to those who escaped; they then retired to the round-house, and Mr. Rogers hung the lamp, and Captain Pierce, with his great gun, sat down between his two daughters, and struggled to suppress the parental tear which then fell into his eye.

The sea continuing to break in very fast M'Manus, a midshipman, and Mr. Schutz, a passenger, asked Mr. Rogers what they could do to escape, who replied, "follow me." and they then all ran into the stern gallery, and from thence by the other upper quarter gallery upon the poop, whilst they were there a very heavy sea fell on board and the round-house gave way, and he heard the ladies shriek at intervals, as if the water had reached them, the noise of the sea at other times drowning their voices.

Mr. Brimer had followed Mr. Rogers to the place where they had remained together about five minutes, when on the coming on of the last mentioned sea, they jointly seized a hen-coop; and the first wave which he apprehended proved fatal to several of those who remained below, happily carried Mr. Brimer and his companion to the rock, on which they dashed with such violence as to be miserably bruised and hurt.

Mr. Rogers and Mr. Brimer both however reached the cavern, and scrambled up the rock; on the row shelves of which they fixed themselves, Mr. Rogers got so near to his friend Mr. Meriton as to change congratulations with him, but he was prevented from joining him by at least 20 men were between them, neither of whom could pass without immediate peril of his life.

They now found that a very considerable number of the crew, seamen, soldiers, and some petty officers were in the same situation with themselves, and many who had reached the rocks below, had perished, in attempting to ascend; what that situation was they were still to learn; at present they had not immediate death, but they were yet to encounter cold, nakedness, wind, rain, and the perpetual beating of the spray of the sea, for a difficult, dangerous, and doubtful chance of escape.

A very few minutes after Mr. Rogers had gained the rock, an universal shriek, which still vibrates in our ears, and, in which, the voice of female was lamentably distinguishable, announced a dreadful catastrophe; in a few moments all was buried, except the warring winds, and beating waves; the wreck was buried in the remorseless deep, and no atom of her was ever after discoverable.

Perished the Halfswell.

What an aggravation of woe was this dreadful, tremendous blow, to the yet trembling, and only half saved wretches, who were hanging on the sides of the horrid cavern.

After the bitterest three hours which misery ever endured into ages, the day broke on them; they found that had the country been alarmed by signs of distress which they had continued to utter for many hours before the ship struck, but that from the violence of the storm were unheard, could neither be observed by the people from the shore, as they were completely ingulphed in the cavern, and over-hung by the cliff, nor did any part of the wreck remain to point out their probable place of refuge; below, no boat could live to search them, and had it been possible to have acquainted those who would wish to assist them, with their exact position, no ropes could be conveyed into the cavern to facilitate their escape.

The only prospect which offered, was to creep along the side of the cavern, to its outward extremity, and on a ledge scarcely as broad as a man's hat to turn the corner, and endeavour to clamber the almost perpendicular precipice, whose summit was near two hundred feet from the base.

And in this desperate effort did some succeed whilst others, trembling with terror, and their strength exhausted by mental and bodily fatigue, lost their precarious footing, and perished in the attempt.

The first men who gained the summit of the were the Cook, and James Thompkin, a Quartermaster, by their own exertions they made their way to the land, and the moment they reached it, hastened to the nearest house, and made known the situation of their fellow sufferers.

The house at which they first arrived was Easton, the present habitation of Mr. Garland, Secretary or agent to the proprietors of the Purbeck Quarries, who immediately got together the workmen in his direction, and with the most zealous and animating humanity, exerted every effort for the preservation of the surviving crew of this unfortunate ship; and were procured with all possible dispatch, and every precaution taken that assistance should be speedily and effectually given.

As the day advanced, more assistance was obtained, and as the life-preserving efforts of the survivors would admit, they crawled to the extremities of the cavern, and presented themselves to their protectors above, who stood prepared with the means the situation would permit them to exercise, to assist them to the summit.

*Circumstantial Narrative of the loss of the Halcyon
Compiled from the communications of the
chief Officers, who escaped, Page 10-*