



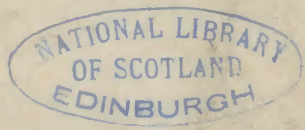
LATEST ACCOUNT
 OF THE
LOSS OF THE COMET,
 ON THE MORNING OF FRIDAY THE 21ST OF
 OCTOBER, 1825,
 WITH
 A LIST OF THE PASSENGERS AND THE
 BODIES FOUND.



(From the Glasgow Free Press of Wednesday.)

Greenock, Monday Mornng.

We last night saw John M'Lellan, one of the under-stewards, who was saved. The following is his statement, and nearly in his own words:—When the concussions of the vessels took place, he was descending the steps which lead to the cabin. He hastened down; and seeing John Heron (another of the stewards, whose body has been found) resting on his right arm, apparently asleep; he cried to him;



“Johnny, haste ye, the boat will sink!” Heron rose upon his legs, and rubbing his eyes, replied to him in a manner as though he deemed his messmate was joking; but he had scarcely uttered half-a-dozen words, when the water, to use his own expression, came ‘rushing in like a burn.’ All that were below now rushed towards the stair leading to the deck in the greatest confusion, many of them screaming in a pitiable manner. As soon as M^r Lelland reached the deck, Captain Sutherland, who was earnestly speaking to his lady, having hold of her hand, turned round to him, and asked—‘Steward, will you be able to make for shore?’—He made no answer, not knowing what to think of the matter. In the course of a few seconds, he heard one of the crew, M^r Lachlan he thinks, express his fears that they would all be lost; upon which he pulled off his shoes, buttoned up his fustian jacket, and ascended one of the ropes affixed to the funnel. When he was a little way up, Captain Sutherland made another appeal to him, but he was out of breath with climbing, and could make no answer. He was too much affrighted, at this time, to notice what was going forward on board the Ayr, but saw their own crew and passengers all clustering together, and called to the crew of the other vessel to save them by the most earnest appeals. On looking round, he observed the vessel sinking at the bow end. The screams that were uttered were dreadful in the extreme. Mrs Sutherland exclaimed, ‘Oh, my God! my God! she’s sinking—we’re lost!’—and clasping her husband round his neck, sunk with him into the abyss of waters.—Miss Duff, he also states, had been married to the captain nearly five weeks, and not only the five days, as stated in the papers of Saturday. She was celebrated, in the Highlands, for her beauty and accomplishments. Every one on deck was clinging either to the person next them, or parts of the vessel. The piercing cries and groans which were uttered at this moment baffle all description; sleeping or waking, he says, they are uppermost in his mind. He would choose to amuse himself in any way,

rather than fall asleep, so strongly do the horrors of this catastrophe work upon his imagination. He climbed to the top of the rope, where the heat was so intense that he could scarcely hold on : he held fast, however, and when the boat sunk, he went down with her. When rising towards the surface of the water, he hit against something which he supposes to have been a human body, which again sent him down. He immediately rose to the surface a second time, and found himself surrounded by the passengers and crew, clinging, some to each other, and some to parts of the luggage that floated. He describes himself, at this time, as almost numbed by the coldness of the water. After swimming for a few minutes, he observed a person making towards him, but thinking he might cling to him, and being much fatigued, he did all in his power to evade him. He deems this person to be the captain of the Comet, who was saved. He swam at random for some time but recovering at length somewhat from his fright, recollected the wind blew to shore, and accordingly took that course. He passed one of the females, Rachel M'Kellar, who arrived safe on shore. She was holding on with both hands, by a pole, which she had probably laid hold of in going down, and the wind having caught her upper garment, she floated quickly towards the beach. When M'Lellan was a short distance from the shore, he swam against a wooden box : he was nearly exhausted and numbed in his legs. He laid hold of the box, and rested his chin on the top of it, but he could not support himself sufficiently against the returning waves, and was consequently every few minutes under water.—Had it not been for this box, providentially cast in his way, he says he must have perished.”

Greenock, Friday Evening.—The following are particulars we have gathered from another of the crew. He says that the pilot of the Comet wished a light to be exhibited in the lantern, but he was told ‘there was no light to spare till such time as they should arrive at Greenock, as there were but few candles on board.’ This denial was made by

the Captain, or one of the Stewards, but he cannot now say which of them it was. The collision took place about half-past one. The moon, to the best of his recollection, went down an hour before. The dancing had ceased some time, and the majority of the passengers were conversing in groups on various parts of the deck. After the concussion, the *Ayr* swung in on the *Comet's* larboard paddle-box. Sutherland, the carpenter of the *Comet*, shoved off the stern of the *Ayr*,—and, while doing so, he heard one of the persons on board of her call out, 'set on the engine,' which was done on the instant, and she bore off. Sutherland, was cast away on the coast of Holland in 1817, at the time the *Albion* smack of Leith, bound for Hamburg, was lost; and in 1818 he was on board the *Stirling* steam-boat when she exploded at Grangemouth.

A poor woman, the wife of Donald M'Intyre, residing at Eaglesham, but a native of Bonaw, with her family, consisting of six children, were all lost. She has been picked up, together with her infant and two daughters. Three of the sons are still missing. The unfortunate woman was pregnant, and within a few months of the time of her accouchment. Thus was this poor man, at one fell swoop, bereaved of wife and children, and left a solitary being in the world.

(From the *Glasgow Herald* of Friday.)

Thursday, 27th Oct.—This morning, the weather being very calm, the business of trawling with the boats was resumed at an early hour, and before seven o'clock, the body of a man with fustain jacket and trowsers and a black vest was found; he is supposed, from certain certificates found in a pocket-book on his person, to be either Lewis or Donald M'Kay, a son of George M'Kay, belonging to the parish of Duthil; Peter Sutherland, the carpenter of the *Comet*, says he is Donald M'Kay, by trade a smith, and that

he was on his way from Invergordon to Glasgow to seek employment; and this account is by no means improbable, from the coincidence of a smith's leather apron being among the articles washed ashore on the day of the accident. From the decayed state in which the bodies are which are got now, it is rendered indispensable to have them quickly coffined and interred; and except by their dress, or documents found upon them, their nearest relations are unable to identify them.

Greenock, one o'clock, Thursday.—Every effort is making to raise the bodies, but up to this period we have heard of only one being found, supposed to be of the name of Mackay; he had in his pocket about £8. Yesterday, three bodies were found, viz. the fireman, and two young women;—total number of dead bodies, 50; and those saved amount to 13; making in whole 63 accounted for, and 15 can be enumerated as still missing. Sir Joseph Radcliffe's servants were buried on Tuesday, and were attended to the grave by Sir Joseph, accompanied by his brother-in-law, Colonel M'Donald, who acted as chief mourners; and on this melancholy occasion a body of mourners were present, who also assisted at the interment of five others early in the day, of whom three were of Donald M'Intyre's family, who lost his wife and six children. All are claimed but the soldier of the 45th, and two young women raised yesterday, and the body found this morning.

(From the Glasgow Chronicle of Saturday.)

On Wednesday the search for the remaining bodies of the sufferers of the Comet was renewed. Three bodies were found. One of them was the fireman, named M'Kenzie, and has been claimed by his wife. The others were, a young woman, seemingly between twenty and twenty-five, and a girl from ten to twelve years of age. The car-

penner supposes the former came on board at Oban. She was dressed in a brown gown, chocked apron, and had a string of coral beads round her neck. The girl had on a brown great coat, and red comforter. An old man and two girls had a narrow escape. They came on board at Crinan, and on the boat stopping for some time at a port on the voyage, went ashore on some business that rendered them about one minute too late for pursuing their journey.

On Wednesday morning Mr Rankine measured the depth of the water where the Comet sunk, and the distance from shore, preparatory to the adoption of measures to raise her, when the former was found to be 15 fathoms at half tide, and the latter 186 yards and a half.

A very handsome scarf was brought up supposed to be the property of the much lamented Mrs Captain Sutherland. From the weight at first attached to the drag, there is every reason to believe that that unfortunate lady's body was with the scarf, from which it parted on the getting up.

(From the Edinburgh Courant of Monday.)

The body of Mrs Sutherland was found on Friday about mid-day—but so dreadfully mutilated that it was found impracticable to take the corpse from the water. It was therefore kept floating, and the coffin that had been prepared for its reception brought down to the side of the river, and the body then placed in it. Shortly afterwards it was carried to Glasgow, where the remains of her gallant husband lay, and yesterday, (Sunday) the last sad offices were performed, and both were interred in one grave. The body of Mr M'Alister was also found on Friday afternoon. A report was in circulation in town yesterday that the Comet had been raised by the assistance of two steam-boats, and thirteen bodies found in the cabins. We were unable, however, to trace this report to any authentic source.

On looking back to this melancholy catastrophe, it may be some consolation to the friends of the unfortunate sufferers to know that nothing could possibly exceed the humanity shown by the Magistrates, gentlemen, and community of Greenock and the immediate vicinity of Gourrock. Not only has the most unremitting activity been displayed, since the morning of the fatal day, in searching for the bodies—the utmost possible respect and delicacy observed to the remains of the dead—but the most soothing and consoling attention paid to the feelings of the numerous persons who were hourly arriving, in anxious enquiry after lost relatives. The conduct of all concerned, in short, has been such, as to reflect the very highest credit on the inhabitants of Greenock.

(From the Greenock Advertiser of Friday.)

Inquiries are still making, by people yet arriving from distant parts of the Highlands regarding relations, who are in some cases known, and in others supposed to have been on board the Comet. A young man arrived yesterday from Glasgow, and had the body of his cousin, John M'Pherson, which was got on Sunday, disinterred; it was, however, so mutilated that he could not know him—but from the colour of his hair, and the pattern of the vest he wore, he was convinced he was his relation. He says he is a native of Dornoch, in Sutherlandshire. A woman from Glasgow, supposes her father, (whose name is John M'Crea) mother, and brother, to have been on board, as they had expressed their intention of coming in the Comet from Oban. A young lad from Fort William also arrived yesterday, in search of his brother, a young man of 18 years of age, of the name of Kennedy, who was in the boat, and was on his way to Paisley to be a shopkeeper in that town; and several inquiries have been made regarding a poor man of

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the name of Gray, who almost constantly went with the Comet. He used to earn a livelihood by playing the pipes on board, and by taking small parcels and money to and from the different ports at which the Comet was unaccustomed to call. From various accounts it appears that on this occasion he had a good deal of money in charge. The descriptions of a number of people supposed to have been on board, have been left with the Sheriff-Substitute, but amongst the inquiries there are comparatively few who can positively state that their friends were really on board, although the whole show some grounds on which their fears naturally exist. A person, named Charles M'Lean, has been ascertained to have been on board the Comet when she sunk, and saved, in addition to those formerly mentioned. There may still be about fifteen persons supposed to have been on board the Comet when she sunk; and some of these are no doubt within the unfortunate vessel, or in its immediate vicinity, where the drags cannot operate.

(From the Glasgow Herald of Monday.)

Greenock, Nine o'clock, Saturday night.—The body of Mrs Sutherland was found close by the shore, about one o'clock yesterday; and an hour afterwards the body of Mr M'Allister, W.S. was found near the same place: they were placed in coffins previously prepared for them, and about five o'clock the remains of that unfortunate lady passed through this town on its way to Glasgow, accompanied by Captain Warren, who arrived shortly before they were brought to shore. Every thing has been prepared for raising the Comet since last night, but owing to the heavy surf upon the water nothing has been done. There have been two lighters, and two steam boats with the necessary tackling in Gourrock bay ever since, and as soon as the weather settles they proceed to the spot without a moment's delay.

It has been stated in various papers that Alexander Gray, piper of the Comet, was found some days since. This is incorrect, and may cause much inconvenience to many individuals who expected remittances by this honest but unfortunate man, as it has been ascertained that he had from £250 to £300 on his person, to be paid in Glasgow on account of various individuals in the Highlands. The young gentleman whose linens were marked C. B. S. has not been claimed, though asserted otherwise, and it is quite uncertain what his name was: he has been interred, along with some others, a few inches from the surface, lest his friends should wish to claim the body. It was stated that the Comet had her jib set at the moment of coming in contact with the Ayr; this is wrong, as there was no sail upon her from the time she left Rothesay, and previous to this the main-sail was set under close reef.

Greenock, Sunday, Two o'clock.

Captain and Mrs Sutherland were on Saturday buried in the same grave. "They were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided." The funeral was conducted with military honours, and it was also honoured with the regrets and pity of all who witnessed the melancholy, though at the same time splendid procession. The interment was in the burying ground of the English Chapel, Glasgow.

(From the Glasgow Courier of Tuesday.)

The body of the amiable Mrs Sutherland was brought up to Glasgow on Friday evening, and on Saturday, about three o'clock, it was, together with the body of her lamented husband, removed from the Barracks and interred in one grave — "dust to dust, ashes to ashes" in the burying ground of the Old Episcopal Chapel. The military in garrison attended on the occasion, and, sincere mourners, they paid, with

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all the customary military honours, the last token of respect to the remains of their unfortunate comrade and his unfortunate consort, but cut off by a fatal accident in the prime of their days. The scene was altogether very solemn and affecting. Although the hour of interment was but partially known, still a very great multitude assembled to witness the procession, and the windows of all the streets near and through which it passed were crowded with respectable persons to witness the ceremony, and who, as well as those on the streets, evinced by their deportment, the deep interest which they took, and the strong sympathy which they felt, on this melancholy occasion.

Besides the prosecutions intended by the Public Prosecutor, of the nature of which we are ignorant, we learn, that more than one action is directed to be commenced against the proprietors of the Comet for damages, on the part of the surviving relatives of the sufferers. The proprietors of the Ayr are, we believe, equally liable. How far such actions can be maintained we know not; but they are brought upon the principle of equity, that, in law, steam-vessels which carry passengers should, in the persons of their proprietors be, like mail and stage coaches, liable for damages to those who may suffer by their ignorance and improper conduct. As every individual proprietor is, in such cases, liable to the full extent of the compensation which may be awarded, it will make all and each of them in future pay the utmost attention to the appointment of proper crews to man, pilots to guide, and masters to direct and command such vessels.

(From the Greenock Advertiser of Tuesday.)

We are informed that the poor man Alexander Gray, piper of the Comet, had, on this unfortunate trip, money entrusted to him by people in the Highlands, to the amount

of from £250 to £300, chiefly for individuals in Glasgow. It has been rumoured that his body was got a few days ago, but this is incorrect, none having been found but those noticed in our former papers. A contemporary Journal mentions that the name of the young man whose linens were marked C. B. S., and who has not been claimed, is uncertain. This is not the case. We formerly stated it to be Charles Bailey Sutherland, and from the source of our information, we can unhesitatingly vouch for its correctness. We have to add to the list of those saved a person of the name of Nicol, one of the Comet's crew, whose fortunate escape has hitherto unaccountably passed unnoticed.

We regret that, by an unintentional mistake, the name of a Major M'Alister had been mentioned as one of the sufferers; we are now assured that no such person was aboard, and we can only account for his name having been used from its similarity to that of Mr John M'Alister, nephew to Mr Charles M'Alister, who was unfortunately lost.

A young woman, named Mary Clark, whose father resides here, was formerly prevented from coming with the Comet from Oban, where she had been on a visit to her grandfather. After being on board she felt a little sick, and came ashore again at the suggestion of her friends, until she would somewhat recover, during which time the boat set off. She consequently lost her passage, but to that in all probability she owes her life.

Half past One, p.m.—Our messenger has just returned from Gourrock, which he left within an hour, at which time the vessels on the river had just commenced active operations for raising the Comet. It still blows strong. No other bodies have yet been found.

In addition to the useful suggestions already thrown out, for the guarding against a like occurrence, we extract from the last Glasgow Mechanics' Magazine, the following plans

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suggested by Mr Henry Bell, of Helensburgh, who possesses the entire, though unrequited merit, of having reduced and improved the application of the steam engine to vessels in this country:—

“ I would recommend that each steam boat should be licensed, and numbered as stage coaches; and in these licences, the tonnage of the vessel, and number of horse power of the engine should be inserted. The expense of the license not to exceed one shilling per horse power, on a stamp of 5 per cent. on the value of the license.

“ That all steam vessels at or under twenty horse power be restricted not to carry on board, at one time, more than forty passengers, (children from six to twelve years of age to count as one half passenger,) each passenger to be allowed 56 lb. of luggage; and all steam-boats upwards of twenty horse power, to be at liberty to carry one passenger more for each horse power above twenty. Thus, a boat of fifty horse power would be licensed to carry seventy passengers, independent of the crew; licenses to be taken out annually.

“ That those vessels be navigated by experienced seamen for captains, pilots, mates, &c., and should also have experienced engine keepers of which the proprietors must produce certificates, and for whom they should be responsible, and these peoples' names to be indorsed on the license.

“ That those steam vessels be at least furnished with two lights, one an the bow, and one at the mast head) to be put up at one hour after sun-set, and properly attended to; also an alarm-bell, at night, attached to the engine, and a proper watch kept a-head with a speaking trumpet to direct the steersman of the vessel.

“ That all steam-boats, meeting each other give way to the larboard side, and all steam-boats when overtaken by a swifter one, do the same, and allow them to pass on their starboard side, by stopping their engine as soon as the one over-taking them comes with thirty-feet of their stern; and all sailing vessels to give a sufficient birth for steam-boats

passing with freedom, not being properly attended to, had formerly caused the loss of lives."

CAPTAIN SUTHERLAND.

(From the London Courier.)

Captain Wemyss Erskine Sutherland of the 33d Foot, who was unhappily lost, with his bride, on the west coast of Scotland, was the third son of Captain Sutherland Sciberscross, in North Britain, and only remaining brother of Lieutenant-Colonel Sutherland, of the 5th Foot; and a finer young man, whether in personal appearance, or sweetness of disposition, was seldom to be found in any rank or station in life; he was in his 28th year.

On the 31st of August last, he had married, after a long and singular attachment, Miss Duff, the eldest daughter of Mr Duff, of Muirtown, and niece of Mr Forbes, of Culoden, an elegantly accomplished and amiable young lady, in her 23d year. He was on his way to join the Depot of his regiment at Nlasgow. The affliction of the families of this young couple, on so melancholy a catastrophe, will be more easily imagined than described; but to those who know and can appreciate the ardent attachment that bound them to each other, it will be some consolation, under the mysterious dispensations of Providence, that they met their destiny together.

His Royal Highness the Commander in Chief had been pleased to promote this young man to a Company, in October, 1824, in compliment to his eldest brother's services on the west coast of Africa. On the 10th of Decem-

ber last, he embarked from Barbadoes (where he was stationed with the 93d) on leave of absence for Europe, in the Borodino transport, which vessel, soon after leaving Antigua, encountered a dreadful gale of wind, during which she struck on a sunken rock, where she fixed for the whole of that night, all on board having long given up every hope of saving their lives; but at day-light, as if by miracle, she floated off the rock, and drifted into Bermuda harbour, whence he wrote to the afflicted writer of this notice, that "to whatever period his life might extend, he would probably never be so perfectly reconciled to die as he had been the previous night."

A LIST OF THE PASSENGERS AND THE BODIES FOUND.

Saved.

1. P. Sutherland, carpenter.
2. Peter M'Bride, pilot.
3. John Gillies, fireman.
4. John M'Lelland, steward.
5. M'Innes, the master.
6. James Nicol, deckman.
7. Jean Munro
8. John Cameron
7. C. A. Anderson
10. Rachel M'Kellar
11. A woman, name unknown—her infant drowned.
12. Ewan M'Donald, from Fort-Augustus
13. Charles M'Lean.

Bodies found on the 21st and 22d.

1. Mrs Wright, of Glasgow
 2. and 3. Maid servants to Sir Thomas Radcliffe—Hannah Mitchell one of them
 4. and 5. Two other women—not known
 6. A child, about three years old, ditto
 7. Ditto, do.
 8. Archibald Graham, Corpach
 9. John Bell, flesher, Dumbarton
 10. James Grierson, steward of the Comet
 11. Angus Cameron, Fort William
 12. William Allan
 13. James Miller, Edinburgh
 14. John Reid, Edinburgh
 15. A Girl about 17 years of age—name unknown
 16. Duncan Mackenzie, a trader
 17. An old man from Crinan—name unknown
 18. A woman unknown, supposed the mother of 4 children who were on board
 19. John Dingwall
 20. George Murray, a Highland trader.
 21. James Manderson, engineer of the Comet.
 22. A young woman, named Rose, claimed—and carried to Greenock.
 23. Sailor belonging to Limekilns or Kincardine.
 24. Ronald Mackenzie, piper to Sir Joseph Radcliffe.
 25. A young gentleman, linen marked C. B. S.—surgical instruments found on him—supposed to be a Mr Smith of Inverness.
 26. Mr Angus A. Kennedy, a young gentleman about 14 or 15, going to College.
 27. A young man about 15—unknown.
 28. An Irish Pedlar—name unknown.
 29. Euphan Niven, servant to Mrs Wright of Glasgow.
 30. A young lady, claimed by her brother on the shore.
- Found on the 23d.*
31. John M'Lachlan, a seaman belonging to the Comet.

32. Mrs Wincup, housekeeper to Sir Joseph Radcliffe.
 33. A man—had on a brown coat, yellow buttons, and black trowsers.
 34. Donald M'Brayne, shoemaker, Glasgow.
 35. Sir Joseph Radcliffe's man servant.
 36. A man—had on blue trowsers like a seaman—owned by a cousin.
 37. A young woman, initials J. N. I. with livery servant's great coat on—supposed maid-servant to Sir Joseph Radcliffe.
 38. D. Campbell, Glasgow, claimed and taken by a brother.
 39. Mr Hugh James Rollo, W. S. Edinburgh.
 40. John Herod, supposed second steward of the Comet steam boat.
 41. and 42. Donald Cameron and Alexander M'Kenzie, two of the Comet's crew.
Found since the 24th.
 43. Captain Sutherland
 44. A soldier of the 45th regiment
 45. Donald M'Kay, Invergordon
 46. — M'Kenzie, fireman of the Comet
 47. and 48. A young woman and a girl
 49. Mrs Sutherland
 50. Mr M'Alister, W.S.

STIRLING :—PRINTED AT THE JOURNAL OFFICE,
 4th NOVEMBER, 1825.