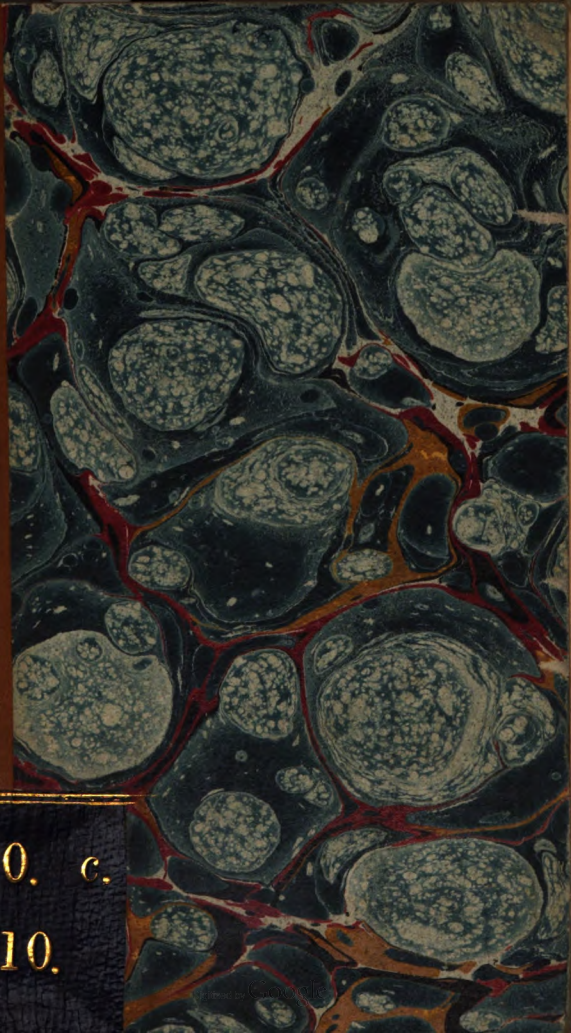

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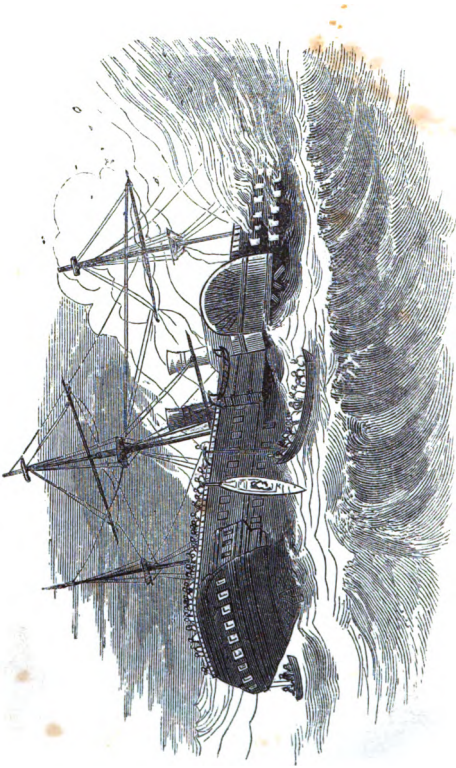
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SORROW ON THE SEA :

BEING

AN ACCOUNT OF THE

LOSS OF THE STEAM-SHIP "AMAZON,"
BY FIRE.

LONDON :

PUBLISHED BY J. MASON, 14, CITY-ROAD;

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SORROW ON THE SEA.

THE compiler of the following account was himself, some twenty years ago, on board a burning ship in the midst of the stormy ocean, far from human aid ; and, though a gracious Providence interposed to save, the occurrence is one never to be forgotten. The scene of alarm and confusion is indelibly printed in his memory, and the echo of those agonizing shrieks, and dolorous farewells, has not yet died away. He has thus been in some degree qualified to sympathise with the parties in this catastrophe, and to appreciate the thrilling interest of the scenes he here endeavours to describe.

Having carefully examined the accounts given by the survivors, the object has been to furnish a clear and correct narrative of events, and, at the same time, to indicate the important lessons which this mysterious and distressing calamity is fitted to teach. The God who made the world continues to superintend and govern it: His eyes behold, His wisdom plans, allows, or appoints, and His gracious power controls, the various events of earth. God is

in everything; in the balmy breeze, and in the desolating blast,—in the shadows, as well as in the lights, of life. He mingles the cup of His people, and fixes the bounds of their habitation. His providence includes the little affairs of humble individuals, as well as the great events of mighty empires. Thus the Divine Redeemer teaches that a sparrow falls not to the ground without His notice, and that the very hairs of our head are numbered. There is a special purpose of wisdom and mercy connected with everything; but that purpose is, for the most part, concealed from the knowledge of mortals; and in those instances wherein the purpose is partially unfolded, the means of its accomplishment are often profoundly mysterious, being not only unlikely in themselves, but involving, in many cases, disappointment, disaster, and sorrow. Nevertheless, it is our joy to know that, while “clouds and darkness are round about Him, righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne.” It requires no common attainment in heavenly wisdom to interpret the providence of God; and it behoves us to be on our guard against an error into which we are apt to fall,—that of construing all the sufferings and calamities of life into Divine judgments on transgressors. There is indeed a God that judgeth in the earth; but listen to the Saviour’s warning voice: “Suppose ye that these Galileans,” whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices, “were sinners above all the Galileans,

because they suffered such things? Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Of a multitude of His matters God giveth not account to man. Still, there are lessons of instruction, rebuke, and admonition, in the occurrences of life. The Lord utters His voice in them all. May we hear it, and be wise.

CHAPTER I.

THE SHIP: HER CARGO AND COMPANY.

"They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep."—Psalm cvii. 23, 24.

THE Royal Mail Steam-Packet Company's ship "Amazon," 3,000 tons burden, was built by Messrs. R. and H. Green, of Blackwall; launched on the 28th of June, 1851; and fitted with engines of 800 horse-power, by Messrs. Seaward and Capel, of Millwall, Poplar. On December 16th she arrived in Southampton tidal-dock, and was declared the finest ship that had ever appeared in those waters. She is described as being the largest timber-built steam-ship ever constructed in England. She was 310 feet in length, with a breadth of

beam of 42 feet, and 72 feet over the paddle-boxes. She was considered capable of carrying fourteen thirty-two pounders, and two ten-inch pivot-guns of 36 cwt. each, on her main-deck: her coal-boxes were constructed to carry 1,000 tons of coal: she could accommodate 360 troops below, allowing each man twelve superficial feet: her engines were fitted in a framework independent of the vessel, and no perceptible vibration was felt when standing on deck over them. Her interior was fitted in a very elegant style; and the cost of the vessel is stated at upwards of £100,000 sterling. She was placed as one of a fleet of new steam-ships serving between this country and the West Indies. It was expected that she would make one of the quickest voyages to be recorded in the steam-navigation of the Atlantic,—that she would accomplish the distance between Southampton and St. Thomas, 3,622 miles, under fourteen days. The packets previously upon this station had been found not sufficiently powerful to maintain that degree of speed and regularity required by the increased demand for more rapid communication with our West-Indian colonies. She had on board a valuable cargo, with specie value £20,000 sterling, and also a considerable quantity of quicksilver, for mining purposes in Mexico. The value of the specie, quicksilver, cargo, &c., when added to the value of the ship, gives a total amount of property of little less than £200,000 sterling.

In Holy Scripture we read of "gallant ships;" and to none might this epithet be applied more appropriately than to the "Amazon." She was large, powerful, and beautiful; a noble specimen of naval architecture; an imposing triumph of human skill. But the mightiest works of man, when battling with the elements, are but things of nought. The lightning's flash, or the crackling flame,—the mountain-billow, or the hurricane's blast,—demonstrate the febleness of man, and proclaim that God alone is great.

According to the statement of the Secretary of the Company, the crew, engineers, and people of the "Amazon" amounted to one hundred and twelve persons; and, in addition, there were fifty passengers on board. She was commanded by Captain William Symons, a gentleman of known and tried ability and courage. He had but recently distinguished himself by great bravery in the Isthmus of Panama, where, by his intrepidity and coolness, he prevented the slaughter of a great number of American passengers by the infuriated natives; and where, under a heavy fire of musketry and cannon, he succeeded in conveying gold-dust, to the value of £2,000,000, in the boats of the "Medway," on board the United States' mail steam-ship "Cherokee;" and, further, in rescuing the passengers under circumstances of imminent danger, and placing them safely on board the steamer. Just prior to the sailing of the "Amazon," Captain Symons

received the subjoined letter from the United States' Mail Steam-ship Company, of New-York, accompanied by a magnificent silver speaking-trumpet:—

*Office of the United States' Mail Steam-ship
Company.*

New-York, November 4th, 1851.

TO CAPTAIN SYMONS, commanding the
Royal Mail-Packet Company's Steam-
ship "Medway."

SIR,

CAPTAIN WINDLE, of the "Cherokee," one of this Company's steamers, has reported to us the prompt and efficient aid, rendered by yourself, and the officers under your command, in the recent affray at Chagres, by which the mails, treasure, and passengers were promptly and securely placed on board the "Cherokee."

I beg you to accept, on behalf of this Company, my best acknowledgments for this high act of courtesy, characteristic alike of British honour and humanity, and honourable to your flag, yourself, your officers, and your men.

Allow me also the pleasure to tender you the accompanying speaking-trumpet, as a slight testimonial of the Company's appreciation of your character and services.

I am, with great respect,

Your obedient servant,

M. O. ROBERTS.

Captain Symons was only provisionally appointed to the "Amazon," in consequence of the absence from England of Captain Chapman of the "Tay," who was destined to be her permanent Commander, the Directors intending Captain Symons to assume the command of the new steamer "Orinoco," then not quite ready to take her station on the main line of the West-India mail-service. It may, indeed, be remarked, that all the officers, engineers, and crew of "the Amazon" were picked men, and were selected for the new ship from their previously known abilities and intelligence. How often are the most important events, and indeed the entire course of our lives, determined by the most trivial, and apparently accidental, circumstances! The casual visit of a friend, or a trifling accident, detains us; a slight cold or headache interferes with our engagements; and, though we heed them not, these little things are followed by the weightiest results. They are the first links in the chain that binds us to our lot in life. An illustration of this is supplied in the case before us. Lieutenant Brady, R.N., the Admiralty agent of the "Amazon," was sent on board at the last moment, to take charge of the mails, in the place of Lieutenant Wilkinson, R.N., who was prevented from embarking by a sudden indisposition, and whose life has thus been providentially preserved at the expense of that of Lieutenant Brady, an officer well-known and highly respected. The lesser

evil here was made to shield him from the greater. The sudden indisposition saved his life. If we have learned to recognise in little things the providence of God, we shall be saved from impatience, anxiety, and murmuring when our plans and purposes are thwarted. Among the passengers on board the "Amazon" was Mr. Eliot Warburton, a name well known in the world of letters. He was deputed by the Atlantic and Pacific Junction Company to effect a friendly understanding with the tribes of Indians who inhabit the Isthmus of Darien. It was also his intention to make himself perfectly acquainted with every part of these districts, and with whatever referred to their topography, climate, and resources. But the mission, important and interesting as it was, is unfulfilled; the plan is frustrated by a dreadful death.

Another of the passengers was one of the deputies to the Congress of New-Granada, a Commissioner of the Company already named, empowered by them to negotiate for some modifications of the very important concessions recently granted by the legislature of New-Granada to the agents of the Company, in reference to the construction of a ship-canal. But man's purposes must yield to His "who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will."

We cannot be wholly unaffected in witnessing a number of persons on board a ship proceeding to a distant port: our thoughts are in a moment busy with their various motives,

plans, and anticipations. Some are leaving, and others are returning to, their native land, their friends, and home. These are going on pleasure, those in quest of health ; this man on business, that for gain ; while others go to promote the interests of science or religion. The herald of the Cross is there, whose commission is "to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." The merchant is there with his goods : he has made his calculations and his purchases, and now proceeds with articles of use, or ornament, or luxury, to a far-distant market, to sell, and get gain. He is fagged with the toils and anxieties of business, and hopes that change of scene, sea-breezes, and a sunny clime will recruit him. Here is the clever engineer, who goes to superintend the erection of machinery ; and there is the instructor and the trainer of the young, who seeks for a home in a distant land. The romping child and the grey-haired man are there. Friends and relatives are crowding round. The hour of sailing is at hand, and the last interchanges of affection and friendship take place. Children part with a loved father, the wife with her husband, and the sister with her brother, friend with friend. Hands are shaken, words of farewell are spoken ; and from many hearts the prayer ascends, "God speed the 'Amazon,' and send her a prosperous voyage !"

CHAPTER II.

THE DEPARTURE AND PROGRESS.

“ Her march is o'er the mountain-waves,
Her home is on the deep.”

THE “Amazon” left Southampton on Friday, January 2d, 1852, at half-past three o'clock in the afternoon, on her first voyage, with the usual mails for the West Indies, the Gulf of Mexico, Spanish Main, &c.

Nothing could be more auspicious than her departure from Southampton Waters. She was accompanied by the mail-tender, crowded with the friends of the ship, the passengers, and the Captain,—by whom they had just been hospitably entertained on board,—and, with a hearty English cheer at parting, they invoke a safe and prosperous voyage.

She proceeded at the rate of some eight knots; and in the evening encountered strong head-winds and rain, in the Channel. About eight o'clock she was stopped in her course, on account of what is technically termed “hot bearings;” in other words, the heating to redness of the axles, and other moving parts of the engines, by the excessive friction of the new machinery. At noon, on Saturday, the “Amazon” was in latitude 49° 12' north, and longitude 4° 57' west, steering west by south, half south, with an increasing fresh breeze.

At half-past nine P.M. she was again stopped on account of "hot bearings." After two hours' delay from this cause, she proceeded, the wind still increasing.

The ship was now about 100 miles west-south-west of Scilly, in the midst of a stormy sea, at the entry to the Bay of Biscay, a region which has witnessed many a disastrous and heart-rending scene, and now to witness another, almost unparalleled in the suddenness of its occurrence, and surpassing in horror most of the disasters which, since the burning of the "Kent" East-Indiaman, have been made known to the world.

On the eve of some great event, how often are we conscious of a strange impulse on the mind, awaking thoughts which scarcely shape themselves into a definite form, and yet produce uneasiness and apprehension! We have a sort of premonition of something special about to happen. It appears to have been so in this instance. Mr. Neilson, one of the survivors, gives the following account:—
"Between eight and nine o'clock, I was walking the deck with Mr. Best, of Barbadoes, speaking of the state of the engines, on which they were then pumping. 'You appear very anxious about those engines,' said he: 'is there any danger?' 'None,' said I, 'as long as there is plenty of sea-room; but with our engines stopped on a lee-shore, I would not give much for our chance of escape in such a night as we are likely to have, from the

appearance of the weather.' 'I hope,' said he, 'there is no chance of fire, as we should have two elements to contend with.' 'I hope not,' I replied; 'for we should have three, as it is evidently going to blow a gale, and we must then look to the fourth for our refuge.' 'God forbid!' said he: 'three to one are fearful odds! Good night:' and he went below. I then proceeded to the engine-room, and found the bearings very hot. I mentioned to one of the engineers my apprehension for the night, and recommended to slacken speed. While we were yet speaking, the bearings became so hot, that the contents of the grease-cup burst off like so much steam. Mr. Angus, the chief engineer, who had been most constant in his attention, was immediately on the spot; stopped the engine, slacked the caps, and applied the pumps, for two hours, before we could proceed. At about half-past eleven the engines were again put about, and I went on deck, and joined Captain Symons; who stated his apprehensions of a heavy gale before morning, when he expected rain, and a change of wind to the northward. We conversed till midnight, when he went below. Being partially conversant with machinery, I felt anxious about the state of the engines, and walked the deck until half-past twelve, when I again went to the engine-room, leaving Mr. Vincent, midshipman of the watch, on deck. The engines were then going at three quarters' speed, and the engineer in attendance, putting

his hand on the bearings, told me all was going quite comfortably ; and I accordingly retired to rest." And so had all retired to rest, except the watch on deck, and the persons in attendance on the engines.

The noble ship careered in the gale, and, like a mighty thing of life, urged on her way. She cut through the billows, and scattered the foam, while the stroke of her engines responded to the blast. Who among the sleepers dreamed of the danger at hand? Who, as he beheld the setting sun, had gazed upon it as on that which he must see no more? Who among them lay down to rest, anticipating that he should so soon be summoned to rest in the embrace of death, far down in the caverns of the deep? Who, among them all, listened to the stroke of "eight bells," at the midnight hour, and heard in those solemn tones the knell of their last day?

"So stately her bearing, so proud her array,
The main she will traverse for ever and aye;
Many ports will exult at the gleam of her mast.
Hush! hush! thou vain dreamer, this hour is her
last!"

CHAPTER III.

THE ALARM AND CATASTROPHE.

“They are faint-hearted; there is sorrow on the sea.”
—Jer. xlix. 23.

THE night was dark, the moon was obscured by clouds, and the wind had increased to a severe gale. About a quarter to one, on Sunday morning, Mr. Vincent was on the quarter-deck; Mr. Treweeke, the second officer, who had charge of the watch, was on the bridge; and Dunsford, the quarter-master, was standing directly under him, to receive orders. Dunsford says,—happening to look up to Treweeke, he saw him leaning listlessly against the railing of the bridge: while looking at him, he saw him suddenly start upright at something apparently towards the engine-room. Treweeke had discovered flames rushing up from thence. In a moment an alarm was given, and Treweeke ordered Dunsford to call the Captain. It is customary when the Captain is called in the night, for the messengers to make as little noise as possible, in order that the passengers may not be disturbed. Dunsford, however, considered the fire so alarming, that he was, he says, rather boisterous in calling the Commander; so much so, that he disturbed the passengers, for he heard

the word "fire" called out in several cabins. When Captain Symons opened his cabin-door, Dunsford said, "There is a fire on board, Sir." The Captain said, "Whereabouts is it?" "In the engine-room," was the reply. While this conversation was passing, Roberts, boiler-maker, who had been on duty in the engine-room, ran to the main-deck, intending to work the hose on the fire: the water-engine, however, could not be started, in consequence of the fire and smoke which were coming from between the boiler and the bulk-head: when he found no water could be got, he gave an alarm on the spar-deck, that the ship was in flames, and just then the fire-bell rang. The Captain rushed on deck in his shirt and trousers, and promptly and vigorously issued such orders as the emergency required. Every attempt was now made to subdue the fire: wet swabs, and other loose things, were placed on the gratings of the spar-deck hatch; and a hose was brought to play on the main-deck, but quickly abandoned, in consequence of the excessive heat. Buckets were called for; but by the time they were ready, the fire was too great for them to be of any real service, as the flames were now pouring—through the oil and tallow store-room, and the waste store-room, in which the brooms and other things were kept—up the hatchway with resistless power. The deck-pump was worked, until the men were forced to retire. The wind was at this time blowing half a gale from the south-west;

and the vessel was going eight and a half knots.

The flames now rushed up the main and fore hatchway in a bright mass, spreading with the most appalling and destructive rapidity, defying all attempts to subdue them. Every possible exertion was made; every means employed; but all was vain: only a few minutes had transpired from the first alarm of fire being given, before the dreadful truth broke in upon the minds of all, that the ship was doomed.

No power of description could possibly give an adequate impression of the awful scene. The crackling and roar of the devouring element mingled with the hoarse voice of the gale. Horrid light broke away over the dark and stormy deep, and the snow-crested billows were reddened in the glare. But far above the roaring and crash of wind and waves and fire, rang the shrieks of the helpless sufferers on board the ill-fated ship.

Captain Symons ordered some hay, between the engine-room and crank-gratings, to be thrown overboard: two trusses were hove over the ship's side, but the fire soon ignited the main-body, the hen-coops on each side, and the paddle-boxes; and the men were driven from the deck.

"For God's sake, Mr. Roberts," shouted the Captain, "put her before the wind." This Mr. Roberts attempted, but it was some time before she payed off. The ship now went at

the rate of twelve or thirteen knots dead before the wind.

Clouds of smoke filled the engine-room, and extinguished the lamps. The intense heat, and the suffocating vapours, compelled the men to retire.

Captain Symons asked Mr. Angus, second engineer, if he could go below, and stop the engines? Angus declared this to be impossible; and, in answer to a second question from the Captain, stated, that, in about ten minutes, or a quarter of an hour, the engines would stop of themselves.

Several of the crew, during an awful pause, were standing near Mr. Roberts, the chief officer, imploring him to give them orders: they said, "We are willing to obey you, Sir, whatever command you give us: tell us what we shall do?" He looked at them for a moment, calmly, though suffering, apparently, great distress of mind; and, without speaking a word, he went below.

While the ship was going a-head at so great a rate, and so long as there was any hope of overcoming the fire, the Captain was most earnest and frequent in forbidding, and strenuous in endeavouring to prevent, any boats from being lowered: "Don't lower away the boats: keep fast the boats for awhile, and try to save the ship." He did try. What mortal man could do, he did; but, alas! in vain.

The first boat attempted to be lowered was on the port-quarter. Lieutenant Grylls was

lowering the after-fall, when Captain Symons seized him by the arm, and besought him to desist, as he said everybody would be drowned. Lieutenant Grylls then called out to the person by the foremost-fall, imploring him not to lower, as the ship was going so fast. That person, however, by constant and urgent request of the people in the boat, let the fall go, by which means the boat turned over, and, as nearly as could be seen, every one was washed out of her. Seeing this at the moment, Lieutenant Grylls attempted to let go the after-fall, so as to save them; but the fall being jammed, and having fouled, and the boat thus not being clear, her stern hung in the air, for the moment, until cut adrift by some one, when she turned over. The boat contained, probably, twenty-five people,—all drifted astern, clinging to each other, and vainly shrieking for help: seeing them washed away, Lieutenant Grylls turned aside from the appalling sight in horror, and met Captain Symons face to face, who exclaimed, “Poor souls, they are all lost!” Shortly after this, Captain Symons put down a bucket he had in his hand, and said, “It’s all over with her;” and then gave the order, “Clear away the boats, men: there’s no hope.” Immediately afterwards he called out for some one to help him to clear away the port life-boat, which was stowed on the sponson, abaft the port paddle-box, and at the same moment leaped into the boat, using every endeavour to clear

her away ; Lieutenant Grylls followed, and also exerted himself ; but the flames having reached the boat, and Captain Symons's hair having been nearly burnt off his head, he was obliged to run aft ; Lieutenant Grylls was compelled to follow him, both rushing through the flames and fire.

Directly after this, seeing some people clearing away a life-boat on the port-side, next to the last boat, Lieutenant Grylls jumped into her. She was resting on a pair of cranes or crutches, in consequence of which they were obliged to shove her off. Although the falls were pulled up to two blocks, she was canted over on her side before she got clear, and Lieutenant Grylls then saw the stewardess of the vessel hanging on to her side, who implored him to save her. He seized hold of her with both hands. At the same moment, one of the men in the boat besought Lieutenant Grylls to help him to clear away the fall, or they would all be lost ; and Lieutenant Grylls, in consequence of this appeal, requested a man next him to hold fast the stewardess. In lowering the boat, she surged clear of the crutches, and canted upright ; and Lieutenant Grylls saw the stewardess fall into the water with an awful scream : that scream was her last.

The pinnace was also lowered full ; but, by some accident, the after-tackle alone got unhooked, and she was dragged forward by the fore-tackle with such rapidity, that the sea

swept round her sides, and washed every soul out of her.

In lowering the second cutter, a sadly similar accident occurred: the boat had reached the water, when a sea struck her bow, and as the ship rose from the swell of the waves, she lifted the boat perpendicularly by the stern-tackle, and discharged all the unfortunate occupants but two, who hung shrieking across the thwarts.

D. Brown says, he assisted in lowering three boats one after another, the crews of all of which were swept away. He was nearly, or quite, the last man out of the ship. Captain Symons, Mr. Roberts, and Mr. Treweeke remained, and he saw them standing close to the wheel when he left; and one poor fellow near them, who was more than half burnt. The settees were drawn aft, about the wheel, close to the Captain. There were several people dressed there; and he saw Mr. Roberts take a ship's life-buoy off a tall gentleman's neck, to give to a lady; saying, that there were ladies in the ship, and they should have the life-buoys before the gentlemen,—Mr. Roberts calling out for the females to be placed first in the boats. The pen cannot describe that before which the imagination quails. It is impossible for us to realise the horrors of this awful calamity. Even the feeble statement of some of its frightful scenes is sufficient to unnerve and appal. An image of indescribable terror and woe presents itself to the eye. A hor-

rible sound fills the ear. The clank of the engine,—the wail of the tempest,—the dashing of the waves,—the crackling and roar of the flames,—the prayers and shrieks of the troubled and dying,—all mingle as the one rending voice of agony and despair!

It requires no inconsiderable effort even to read the particulars of this tragic story: what must it have been to have witnessed them! To have seen men and women in flames rushing to and fro, and shrieking in anguish; others, who felt that death was inevitable, kneeling on the deck, and crying to God for mercy; some crowded on the bows and bowsprit; others huddled together aft,—all waiting their terrible doom. One gentleman had a quarter-deck chair thrown over, and jumped after it. Another was seen half out of one of the port-holes on fire. Here an officer throws himself on deck, and rolls over in the vain endeavour to extinguish his burning clothes; and there, a helpless child lies screaming as the fire consumes it.

There was a very striking example of self-possession in the case of a lady and gentleman, who were standing right aft, and looking perfectly collected: the gentleman stood before the lady, apparently to keep the heat from her. Who were they? What was it which thus sustained them in the fiery trial? What was it produced this wondrous calm, as they stood and watched the approach of a fearful death? Was it the peace of God which passeth all

understanding? Did the angel of the Lord stand by to strengthen them? Our Father in heaven giveth songs to His people in the night of their sorrow, and delivers from the fear of death.

The masts of the steamer went over about four o'clock; the foremast on the port, and the mainmast on the starboard side. One poor fellow was seen at the jib-boom end: the jib was cut loose and was blowing away. Her mizenmast was still standing while she was in flames from stem to stern.

About five o'clock, the gunpowder in her two magazines, aft, exploded; and, in about twenty minutes more, the mizen having gone by the board, she made a heavy lurch and went down, her funnels being red hot, and still standing.

So perished this magnificent castle of the deep.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ESCAPE.

“ We went through fire and through water : but Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place. I will go into Thy house with burnt-offerings : I will pay Thee my vows, which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble.”—Psalm lxvi. 12—14.

SIXTEEN men, including two passengers, succeeded in lowering the after-starboard second life-boat; and, about the same time, Vincent, with two men, the steward and a passenger, got into and lowered the dingy.

Some of these escaped from the burning ship as by a hair's breadth. Mr. Sisely, one of the passengers, was in bed when the fire raged; and was awakened by the berth being filled with smoke: he jumped up immediately, and, snatching up the nearest garment, a coat belonging to his friend, hastily rushed through the cabin to the deck. The horrible scene which now presented itself, seemed, as in the case of most of the survivors, to have paralysed his senses, and to have temporarily disturbed his recollection. Having got into one of the boats which fouled her tackle, he was precipitated into the sea, and, providentially for him, succeeded, by swimming, in getting on board the dingy. The escape of these two boats will be best described by Mr. Neilson, one of the survivors. He says: “ Having

partially dressed, and being warned by the increasing confusion to lose no time, I made for the deck. The first person I saw on reaching the deck, was Mr. Burnet, of Trinidad, standing in his night-shirt, with a life-buoy round him, which brought to my mind that I had left a life-belt in my cabin, which I might perhaps recover, if I had yet time. I looked towards the flames, which were rising from the main and fore hatchways in so bright a mass, as to convey the impression that the fire had originated in or near the oil-store-room, and that there might be time to regain my cabin, which I succeeded in doing, though the windows were snapping right and left with the heat of the flames.

“I could not at first lay my hand on the belt, it being dark: just as I had found it a tremendous crash of the glass panels of the division at the end of the cabins, announced the approach of the fire aft.

“On leaving my cabin to regain the deck, several of the cabin-passengers, appalled at the approach of the fire, dared not attempt the approach of the companion-stairs: I urged them forward in vain; and, drawing a long breath, I gained the upper-deck unhurt.

“My first intention on coming on deck in my life-belt, and seeing the confusion that prevailed, was to wait until a boat had got clear, and then jump overboard, and swim to it; but, on observing the coolness with which the men in the life-boat were working, I determined to

share their fate, and accordingly got into the boat to assist in launching her. Our united efforts proved ineffectual: the fire had reached the companion, when one of the men, seizing my arm, said, 'Jump on deck; and haul away that tackle-fall.' We both did so at the after-tackle, two other men being at the fore-tackle. We raised the boat, with the men in her, out of the gripe of the crane, and one of the men loosing the bolt, I got over the ship's side and shoved the crane in, and the boat began to lower.

"The flames were now rushing up the companion with such fury, that they caught the two men who were lowering the fore-tackle of our life-boat, and burnt the hair off the face of one of them, who immediately jumped into the boat, followed by the man at the after-tackle. I sprang from the side, and slid down the tackle into the boat as she reached the water; and as the other man at the fore-tackle did the same, I gave the word to cut away. 'Hold hard!' said one of the sailors, who had far more presence of mind. 'Fend her off: if we drift under the cutter, she'll stave through us. Now cut away,' said he: and we drifted clear.

"From a moment of deep and heartfelt gratitude to Providence we were roused by the cries of our drowning fellow-creatures around us, to whom, alas! we could render no assistance: for the oars were lashed amidships, and the rudder was stowed away.

“Of two loose oars that had been thrown into the boat, we pushed one to a poor creature who was within five yards of us; but the shrill, bubbling cry which accompanied his effort to reach it, told too sadly that it was in vain.

“We took the dingy in tow, and got our rudder shipped; threw the masts overboard, (for we had no sails,) got the oars out into their crutches,—which we had not been able to find till then,—and pulled away for the burning ship, to try to save more lives. The fire gave us plenty of light, though the moon was obscured by clouds. The wind, however, had now increased to a severe gale; and before we had proceeded far on our mission, a heavy sea struck the dingy, and capsized her, drove her on our stern, broke away our rudder, and nearly half filled us with water.

“I was in the bow, and sang out to cut away the dingy, and get her head to the wind, which Mr. Vincent, who was in the stern, had already commenced doing; and scarcely was this accomplished, ere the approach of a tremendous sea, through the surf and over the top of which our boat gallantly rode, gave us ground for hope that we still might live through that awful night. It was, however, vain to attempt the rescue of those who were drowning round us. The slightest deviation from the wind's eye, in such a sea, would have swamped our boat. Behind us, the burning ship shed a light which illumined the sky and sea for

miles round. Before us, the sky and sea seemed to meet in one dark, undistinguishable mass, the immediate approach of the waves being indicated by a rushing sound, as their crests broke far above our heads, in a long white line of foam, glaringly reflecting the light of the burning ship behind us. In this position, without food or water, (for we staved our only small water-cask to bale the boat when nearly swamped,) without compass or rudder, and several only half-clothed, we remained for about three hours; Vincent in the stern, and I in the bows, watching the approach of the waves, and giving the orders to the men to pull starboard or pull port, so as to keep her head dead to the windward.

“About this time, a bark hove in sight, and passed between the stern of our boat and the burning ship. We judged her to be outward-bound, from her being under close-reefed topsails. As she passed between 300 and 400 yards distant, we several times hailed her with our united voices, strengthened by all the energy of despair. She answered us; and brailed her spanker, and we thought was preparing to bear up to our rescue.

“I shall never forget the deep sob of hope with which I noticed these preparations, or the bitterness of feeling with which I saw him spread his canvass to the wind, and veer round past the stern of the burning vessel, as he left us to our fate.

“About four o'clock it began to rain heavily,
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which beat down the sea; and as the wind, which had hitherto been south-west, got round to the north, it blew more steadily and with less violence.

“The morning broke bright and clear; and never was a rising sun hailed by an eastern devotee with more fervent gratitude than that with which we blessed Almighty Providence for having preserved us from the complicated dangers of such a night. And, though our position and prospects were by no means those which would have been selected from choice, the buoyancy of hope induced us to think only of the chance of being picked up by a passing vessel.

“I joined Vincent in the stern, and we proceeded to con over our probable distance from land; and, as we knew that unless picked up we could not make it for five or six days, even with a favourable wind, we arranged for a division of the men into watches, taking one each.

“The wind considerably abated, and we pulled steadily on for about three hours longer, when the man in the look-out forward, cried out that he saw a sail. At least a quarter of an hour elapsed before it could be again sighted, and still longer ere it showed by its increased size that it was outward bound. We immediately altered our course, and commenced pulling dead to windward, so as to intercept her, which, with a couple of hours' hard pulling, we managed to accomplish, and hailed her before she

was aware of our approach. She was an outward-bound brig; and, from her white sails and green caboose, we took her for a foreigner; and one of our men hailed her in the Dutch language.

“As we had been approaching her, thinking of the bark that had left us during the night, we were speculating on our chance of obtaining assistance, but we little expected that our first hail would be followed by every exertion to get away from us. The wind had, however, completely lulled; I saw that we had the speed of her, and I shouted to the men to give way, and we would board her by force. This was unnecessary; for the Captain, whom the gale had kept on deck all the previous night, and who had been asleep in his berth when we first hailed, now came on deck, backed his mainsail and main-top sail, and, calling to us to come up alongside, cast a rope to make fast to our boat. Though the wind was down, there was so much sea on, as to render it a difficult matter to board the brig. Several ropes were thrown over, one of which I seized, but from its only being partially secured, I fell overboard, but was immediately picked up, not a bit the worse; and we all succeeded in getting on board the brig ‘Marsden,’ from London, bound to Carolina. Nothing could exceed the kindness with which Captain Evans treated us all; giving up his beds, and providing the best resources his vessel could afford. He first tried to land us on the coast of France; but

the wind shifting, he was obliged to stand out to sea, in the hope of falling in with an inward-bound ship. This not occurring, he determined to land us on the coast of England, and tried for Falmouth. The weather became hazy, and the wind began to blow, and, as he had not been able to get a sight of the sun, at noon, on Tuesday, and the weather thickening in the direction of the English coast, towards evening he stood up channel, made the Eddystone lighthouse about eleven, and anchored in Plymouth harbour between twelve and one o'clock.

“But a far deeper debt of gratitude than can be thus acknowledged is due to that Almighty Power who, by His mercy has thus preserved us from the perils which that awful night saw so fearfully combined against us.”

At first, it was feared that these were the only survivors; but, happily, Captain Teintalaer of the Dutch galliot “Gertruida,” fell in with two other boats, whose people he took on board, and carried into Brest. Their accounts are full of thrilling interest. Mr. Glennie says: “I was the last person, I should think, to arrive on deck. At that time they were attempting to lower some of the starboard boats; and some of the larboard, I fancy, were already in the water. I remained for some time looking round, and seeing boats lowered from both sides in the greatest confusion. Presently I heard the Captain give an order to lower the larboard life-boat; but the

answer was, 'She is on fire!' On going to see if this was the case, I found it to be so. The Captain then ordered the starboard life-boat to be lowered. Again, the answer was, 'She is on fire!' Just then I saw the only remaining boat, except the two life-boats reported to be burning, being lowered; and, without waiting to ascertain whether the second life-boat was really on fire, I heaved a rope over, and slid down by it, with the intention of dropping into this boat as she cleared away from the vessel. I did not succeed in this attempt, and fell into the water: happily, the very next wave brought her within the reach of my arm, and I got into her."

The escape of Mrs. M'Clennan was almost a miraculous one. Upon the alarm being given, she wrapped her infant in a shawl, and rushed upon deck. She was put into a boat without any garments but her night-clothes. Into this boat fifteen or twenty persons placed themselves; but, being unable to free the stern-tackle, the bow went almost perpendicularly down. Some fell into the sea, others scrambled up into the ship again. Mrs. M'Clennan was partly thrown into the sea; but her strong maternal feelings enabled her to save both herself and child. As Mr. Allen was endeavouring to regain the ship's deck, she seized hold of his leg, saying, "For God's sake, don't leave us." She then succeeded in getting hold of one of the thwarts; and Mr. Allen said to her, "Hang on till we right the

boat." She clung with her arm to one seat of the boat that was fast; and, holding the child with the other, remained in a nearly vertical position for half an hour. Just as she became aware that she could not hold much longer, the two engineers and other crew last to leave the ship, rushed to the boat, cut it from the tackle, and jumped into it lest it could get away. They were greatly surprised to find Mrs. M'Clennan and her child lying in the bottom of the boat. She was very much bruised; and in this trying situation remained for seventeen hours, almost the whole time up to her waist in water, from the time breaking over the boat,—without food and without clothes. Even the infant's shawl was obliged to make a sail of, in order to keep the boat before the wind. John Rodger took his cap, coat, and shirt, and put them over the lady and child. There was a bit of a crab in one of the pockets; and when the poor little child was crying for food, it was given to it. Seventeen hours after Mrs. M'Clennan escaped from her berth, she was lifted almost insensible, but still clinging to her child, on board the vessel that rescued the party.

The statement of Miss Anna Maria Smith, 9, Dawson-street, Dublin, who, it appears, was going out by the "Amazon" to join a family in Porto-Rica, with whom she had obtained the situation of governess, is calculated to awaken the most profound emotion. It displays

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The statement of Miss Anna Maria Smith, of 9, Dawson-street, Dublin, who, it appears, was going out by the "Amazon" to join a family at Porto-Rica, with whom she had obtained the situation of governess, is calculated to awaken the most profound emotion. It displays

extraordinary heroism and intrepidity throughout the awful catastrophe. She says: "As near as I can recollect, it was about half-past twelve o'clock on Sunday morning when I first heard the alarm of fire. I was in my berth. I hastily jumped out of it, and ran to the seats at the foot of the companion-stairs, and went forward to a gentleman, and asked him if he knew the cause of the alarm. He told me the ship was on fire, but there was not the least occasion of alarm, and advised me to return to my berth to dress. On refusing, he carried me to my berth, and called the stewardess to attend me. She came out of her room quite dressed, but, being much frightened, she went forward without assisting me. Being alarmed at seeing so much terror in others, I immediately took up a blanket and two petticoats, and rushed up the companion-stairs aft. The flames at that time were rushing through the after bulk-head. I stopped for a moment to see if there was any chance of the fire being extinguished, and observed Captain Symons undressed, with a bucket in his hand, surrounded by his officers. Everything then was much confused, consequent upon the fire breaking out so suddenly. I immediately ran aft, towards the wheel, where I saw a gentleman standing undressed, whom I believe to be Mr. Warburton: I went to the side of the ship and seized a rope, and, on looking round, I saw an officer running towards me in flames. He threw himself down, and rolled over towards me,

with the endeavour, no doubt, to extinguish the fire. I then asked Mrs. Scott, the stewardess, who was close behind me, if there was any place I could put my foot outside. Mrs. Scott said, 'O, yes; there!' and ran to the other side, crying, 'Save me! save me!' Observing a boat alongside, I swung out, holding by the rope for some time, the boat under me having capsized twice. At last, seeing a favourable opportunity, as the boat righted and was again under me, I let go my hold, and dropped into the boat; a sailor at the same time endeavouring to catch me. I should think the fall was at least fifteen feet. I was not much hurt: I fell into the bottom of the boat. I found there a Mr. Jean Strylus, a Belgian, and one sailor. The former told me he was the only one saved when the boat capsized the second time. Four other sailors soon after reached the boat, and got in; but by what means I cannot tell, as I was so much exhausted. One of them called out, 'Cut the rope, or we shall be all lost.' It was quickly done by one of the parties in the boat. It immediately drifted astern; and soon after we observed a person in the water supporting himself on two oars. The sailors rowed towards him, and fortunately succeeded in getting him in: it proved to be Mr. Evans. This was no sooner done, than we saw another, and every human effort was made to save him; but just as we got within a boat's length, the poor creature sunk. One of the men, Attwood; a very

humane man, seemed most anxious to approach the ship to do all he could to save more lives. Some objected, fearing the steamer's magazine might explode, and then all might be lost. We remained, however, within a short distance of the burning ship, in the hope of saving others, for, I should think, two hours; and although we could distinctly see the poor creatures huddled together aft, and many on the bows and bowsprit, we did not perceive any in the water. By this time the engines had ceased. When all hope was gone, the men prepared to pull towards land, if possible. There were, I think, five oars on board. We finally lost sight of the ship about four o'clock. I lay in the bottom of the boat, in my night-dress, covered with the blanket which I flung into the boat previous to lowering myself; but, hearing the men say, a sail would be serviceable, I immediately volunteered to give it up, which was gladly accepted, at once formed into a sail, and hoisted. The Belgian, who was sitting forward, offered me part of his cloak; and two of the sailors carried me aft for that purpose. During the whole of this night one of the sailors steered, as the sea was running very high. In the morning, as we had but five hands, Mr. Strylus was requested to row; but he could not, from weakness. I then proposed his taking the helm; and, as I can speak French, the orders were given by the men to me in English, and transferred to Mr. Strylus in French, to enable him to steer as they

wished. About nine o'clock we discovered, to our great joy, a sail; and immediately the men pulled with redoubled vigour towards her. She, however, appeared not to see us, and kept her course. The sea was tolerably calm on the Sunday, and the men continued to pull towards the east, thereby hoping to reach the French coast. About eleven or twelve the same night, the men observed a brilliant revolving light, and pulled vigorously towards it for six hours; but, as the sea was increasing in violence, they feared to approach nearer, on account of the cross-swells. By this time the poor fellows were completely exhausted, and nature could hold out no longer. Seeing the condition we were in, Mr. Strylus said to me, 'You have roused their energies on two occasions: try again.' I then cheered them on; but, as their hands were almost scarified from their laborious exertions, it was almost impossible to do so. They, however, used another effort, and soon afterwards observed another light, in another direction: we did not know what it was, but the men at once resolved to make a last push; and shortly afterwards their exertions were rewarded by reaching a Dutch galliot, the Captain of which, who had previously fallen in with the other boat, kindly took us aboard, and at once made for Brest, where we arrived at four o'clock on Monday afternoon.

"Altogether we were thirty hours in the small boat, during the whole of which anxious time

there was nothing either to eat or drink ; but, notwithstanding, the gallant fellows who had so laboriously exerted themselves to save our lives, uttered not a murmur. They were all most kind and attentive to me throughout this trying and distressing scene ; but the fireman, Attwood, particularly so : he kindly bound up my feet in handkerchiefs, and placed something round my head, to protect me, as far as he was able, from the inclemency of the weather. Mr. Gould, who was saved in the first boat, was also very kind and attentive to me, after we had got on board the galliot."

By the destruction of the "Amazon," Miss Smith lost her all, so that she readily and gratefully accepted ten guineas from the fund raised for the temporary relief of the survivors who need assistance. Immediately on the news of their arrival at Brest, several ladies hastened to send them the clothing they so much wanted. The family of Sir Anthony Perrier also hurried to the assistance of their distressed countrywomen, and, with their ordinary humanity, had the two ladies and child removed to their own house, where they received all the care and attention they so much required.

A third party of the escaped, thirteen in number, were picked up on the evening of the conflagration by the Dutch galliot "Hellechina," Captain Gruppelaar, and passed by him on board the revenue-cutter, "Royal Charlotte," Lieutenant Lilburn, and landed at Plymouth.

These made their escape from the "Amazon" in the port life-boat; and directly after leaving the ship they found the boat fast filling with water, and discovered a large hole in her star-board bow, stove in by heaving her clear of the crutches. Those in her then used all their endeavours to keep her clear of the water, by baling her out with boots and shoes, while a stoker, named Fox, used very praiseworthy endeavours to stop the hole, by taking off his drawers and placing them on it. One handed his cap, another his handkerchief, others their socks, to stop the hole. They had to use their utmost endeavours for the whole night to bale her out. In the morning, the wind having very much abated, they kept the boat away before it, and passed down through the place where the vessel had sunk, which occurred about half-past six o'clock in the morning. They saw large pieces of wreck, chests, boxes, pieces of the ship, and one of her masts, with the cross-trees. The water for a large space was covered with oil, which prevented the sea from breaking: the weather became calm, and the light wind which was passing over the sea, had no effect on it: they could perceive no person, living or dead, but one piece of the wreck had something like part of a lady's dress round it. Just after shoving off from the ship, they saw one of the ship's boats very full of people; but, it being so dark, they could not distinguish any women: hailed them frequently, asking them to spare some oars,

having none themselves, but got no other reply than shouts in return. When it became light, they were driven along by the force of the wind and sea.

We must now draw this melancholy narrative to a close. Only fifty-nine persons have been mercifully rescued. Above a hundred lives are lost. Many have been made widows, and weep in their desolate homes. Orphan children are cast upon the world, or upon Christian charity. It is truly gratifying to find that public sympathy has been so awakened and directed, as that a very handsome sum has been realised in behalf of the survivors and the bereaved.

Shortly after this dreadful occurrence, a public meeting was held at Southampton, for the purpose of arranging such plans as might be the most effectual for the relief of the sufferers. The meeting was numerously attended, and a highly gratifying letter was read from the Hon. Colonel Phipps, announcing a subscription of £150 from Her Majesty the Queen, and His Royal Highness Prince Albert.

The following resolutions were adopted :—

“ That this meeting, under a deep sense of the mysterious dispensation of Almighty God, by which so many immortal beings have been suddenly cut off, desires to express its Christian sympathies with the numerous relatives of those who have perished in the late disastrous loss of the ‘Amazon,’ together with their

sincere desire to alleviate their sufferings, and, at the same time, to unite with the survivors in a strong feeling of thankfulness for their merciful and wonderful preservation.

“That, in order to mitigate the sufferings which the loss of the ‘Amazon’ has brought upon so many families, the example so nobly set by Her Gracious Majesty and her Royal Consort be followed by this meeting, in now entering upon a subscription for their benefit, with every hope that it will be adopted by the country at large; especially being encouraged by the generous manner in which the Royal Mail Steam-Packet Company, their Chairman and Directors, together with the Peninsular and Oriental Company, and many other influential and benevolent institutions and individuals, have responded to the call.

“That this meeting desires to express its sympathy with the survivors from the wreck of the Royal Mail Steam-Ship ‘Amazon,’ and their approbation of the conduct of the surviving members of the crew, especially of Mr. Vincent: they admire the coolness and judgment displayed after leaving the burning vessel, and they pray that the best blessings from the Almighty may rest upon him, and that his future life may be prosperous; and they hope that as he has begun so may he continue a career of honour and usefulness in the important service to which he is devoted.”

The amount actually realised by the “Amazon Fund” is about £12,000. The

principal portion of this has already been distributed.

The official investigation, which has been conducted with great ability, and through a course of protracted meetings, still leaves the origin of the fire in great obscurity. But we can easily understand, what all the survivors agree in, the marvellous rapidity with which the conflagration spread. The quantity of coal in the vessel, the pile of tarred sacks, the trusses of hay on the deck, the newness of the pine-wood, the tallow and the fresh pitch, all contributed to this. The evidence given in the inquiry, though, as might be expected, somewhat confused, has been sufficient to bring out many facts with a fearful distinctness. The first appearance of the fire at the star-board fore stoke-hole,—the rapidity with which it spread,—the impossibility of stopping the engines, or even of using the pumps,—the madness of launching the boats while the vessel was making such way,—the want of discipline in a new ship, the crew of which had not learnt their separate duties, under such an emergency,—the anxiety of the Captain and chief officers to extinguish the fire, when, in the circumstances, that was hopeless,—the unhappy coincidence of a gale of wind and a heavy sea, added to the horrors of the conflagration,—the jumbling together of sailors and passengers, where the most difficult and nicest management and the greatest coolness were indispensable,—these particulars enable us

to some extent to account for the calamitous results, and for the awful suddenness of their occurrence.

Meanwhile should we not hear the rod, and Him who hath appointed it? Should not a melancholy example, like this, of the uncertainty of human life, lead us to seek a gracious preparation for the life which is to come? We may, or we may not, be called hence by a disastrous Providence like this; but we must needs die. The fact is certain, though the time and circumstances of its occurrence are unknown. And it is our wisdom and our duty to prepare for the event; and to be all the more earnest and decided in our preparation, because of the awful possibility of the time we have to make it in being suddenly cut short. Sudden deaths around us, whether by accident or disease, impressively urge upon us the Saviour's admonition, "Be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

Let us think of the difficulty of making that preparation when delayed to the last. The people on board the "Amazon" had but a few minutes allowed them, from the first alarm of danger, till they were in eternity; and those few minutes, too, were filled with everything calculated to distract, confuse, and paralyse. What an unfavourable time for first serious thoughts,—for first earnest prayer,—for first attempts at faith! And although no such fearful accident may overtake us, it is unspeakably

foolish and perilous to procrastinate. For though we may die in our beds at home, the manner of our dying may be equally unfavourable to our necessary preparation. Agonizing pain may totally prevent our serious thought, —stupor may take hold of us,—delirium may set in,—burning fever may dry up our thoughts. Be wise to-day. While the clear light is shining, while the voice of mercy is heard, and while the Spirit strives, acquaint yourselves with God, and be at peace. In the enjoyment of peaceful Sabbaths, and gracious ordinances, seek the Lord. And then, when the Master comes, and whatever the heralds of His approach, you will meet Him with confidence and joy.

Nothing can be more fitting, on the part of those fifty-nine persons who have been so signally and mercifully rescued from the burning ship and the stormy sea, than to take up the words prefixed to this account of their deliverance. The claim of God upon them is especially manifest. O that their future life may be devoted to Him!

One word more, and I have done, though my heart speaks on. Human life is a voyage to us all, and we are nearing eternity day by day. We have dark nights, and are tossed on the billow; but, if our trust be in Him who spoke peace to the troubled waters of Galilee, we shall be safe. He will uphold us, and guide our frail bark to the shore, where no angry waves are beating, and which is never

shadowed by a cloud: where sorrow is unknown, and joy and gladness reign,—where the new song is sung, accompanied by the harpers, harping with their harps for ever.

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