

20.5 1786 J 1  
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CIRCUMSTANTIAL NARRATIVE

Of the LOSS of the

H A L S E W E L L

(EAST-INDIAMAN.)

Capt. RICHARD PIERCE,

Which was unfortunately wrecked at

SEACOMBE in the ISLE of PURBECK,

On the Coast of DORSETSHIRE,

On the Morning of Friday the 6th of January, 1786.

COMPILED FROM THE

*Communications*, and under the *Authorities* of

Mr HENRY MERITON and Mr. JOHN ROGERS,

The two chief Officers

Who happily escaped the dreadful Catastrophe.

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The THIRD EDITION.

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*T*HE Circumstances of this Narrative  
were communicated to the EDITOR  
by US ; and the whole ACCOUNT,  
as far as it comes within the reach of our  
Knowledge is strictly TRUE.

HENRY MERITON,

JOHN ROGERS.

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A

NARRATIVE, &c.

**T**H E misfortunes of individuals affecting only their immediate relatives, occasion no publick concern ; and death presented in any of its ordinary forms, though at all times awful, is too familiar to be tremendous ; but when numbers are involved in one common fate, and that fate is attended with circumstances of unusual horror, the united blow is felt by the whole community, the republic itself is convulsed

A by

by the shock, and grief, pity, and regret, spread themselves among all orders and conditions of men.

Thus the decease of a single citizen, however respectable his character, however amiable his conduct, passes unnoticed among the daily records of mortality; and the number who fall in a battle, or perish in a fight, are enumerated and recounted without emotion; whilst the fatality of a pestilence, the devastations of an earthquake, and the terrors of a storm, fix on the mind, and awaken the passions to sympathetic sensibility.

Nor is this distinction unwarranted by reason; the common lot of mortals we are prepared to expect, and know to be  
unavoidable,

unavoidable, and the events of war are equally obvious and certain; but the pestilence, the earthquake, and the storm, are calamities of which no apprehensions are formed, and which rush on with such sudden and inevitable violence, as to bid defiance to fortitude, and baffle the efforts of philosophic arguments.

The melancholy Catastrophe which is intended to be the subject of the following pages, is of a nature so direful, that humanity recoils at the recollection of it; and among the various events of the same deplorable kind, which have blackened the annals of the last forty years, scarce one has been attended with so many circumstances of aggravated woe.

Of the loss of the *Victory*, no certain accounts have ever been received; the prevailing opinion has been, that she sunk at once; and that her numerous, and still lamented crew, were overwhelmed in momentary destruction.

The fate of the *Doddington* East-Indiaman is too well known to require a repetition, she struck at once on an unknown rock, and the destiny of the sufferers, and those who escaped, was determined in the course of a very few hours.

In the *St. George*, which was unfortunately burnt in the Bay of Gibraltar, in the year 1758, but few, in comparison, perished, relief was almost instantaneously  
afforded

afforded to the survivors, and the accident was one of those, which even the casualties of war might have occasioned, to a ship prepared for battle.

The wreck of the *Ramilies* on the western coast of England, and of the *Litchfield* on the African shore, were each of them marked with many circumstances of horror ; in the former case no more than 24 lives were saved, out of a crew which consisted of near 800 ; and in the latter, instant death was avoided, at the expence of a blessing, dearer than even life itself, the survivors being immediately reduced to a state of slavery, from which they were not emancipated till after a tedious and difficult negotiation ; but these were both ships of war, destined to dangerous  
and

and adventurous services, in which the tenure of existence could be only precariously held, and must be considered to be subject to the variety of contingencies ever annexed to such employments.

The loss of the Royal George was indeed a national misfortune of great magnitude. The brave Admiral Kempenfelt, the experienced officers, and the able and selected seamen who constituted her unfortunate crew, were so many pillars withdrawn from the support of a fabric, of which its naval strength is the only prop; nor will the merit of the individual sufferers, or the injury sustained by the public, be forgotten, whilst the ports of Great-Britain can furnish a fleet to maintain that Empire over the main,



to which her situation, her interests, and her superiority in nautical skill and bravery, so justly intitle her ; but even the gloom of this scene of distress is alleviated by the consideration, that the fate of those who suffered, was unattended with the aggravation of lingering and hopeless apprehension.

When we reflect on the loss of the Grosvenor on the Eastern coast of Africa, we shudder at the miseries of the surviving few, and cease to deplore the less rigid destiny of those, who by immediate death, were happily exempted from the dreadful participation ; — of this sad event we shall have occasion to speak hereafter, and hope, from a further consideration of it, to offer consolation to  
the

the afflicted relations and friends of those, who on the present most unhappy occasion, have been the untimely victims of misfortune.

The recent shipwreck of the *Nancy Pacquet*, on the fatal rocks of Scilly, in her homeward-bound passage from Bombay, is fresh in the memory of our readers; but though the destruction in that instance was more complete than in this now immediately before us, yet we are inclined to believe, that those who peruse this narrative will be of opinion, that it was less horrible, and that if such scenes will admit of comparison, the circumstances of the present case were more lamentable.

The *Halsewell* East-Indiaman, of 758  
tons

tions burthen, commanded by Richard Pierce, Esq; having been taken up by the Directors of the East-India Company to make her third voyage to Coast and Bay, on the 16th day of November, 1785, fell down to Gravesend, where she completed her lading; and taking the ladies and other passengers on board at the Hope, she sailed through the Downs on Sunday the 1st of January, 1786, and the next morning being a-breast of Dunnose, it fell calm.

And at this moment let us take a prospect of an outlet; in which all appearances united to promise a happy and prosperous voyage, and not a cloud intervened to obscure the pleasing hopes, which are ever annexed to a life of Adventure, and which are the main  
springs

**Springs of Industry, the foundations of commercial Spirit, and the conductors to private wealth and honor, and public advantage and aggrandizement.**

**The Ship one of the finest in the service, and supposed to be in the most perfect condition for her voyage; the Commander of distinguished ability, and exemplary character; his Officers, men of unquestioned knowledge in their profession, and of approved fidelity; the Crew, the best seamen that could be collected, and as numerous as the establishment admits; to whom were added a considerable body of soldiers, destined to recruit the forces of the Company in Asia.**

**The**

The very respectable passengers were :

Miss Eliza Pierce - - } Daughters of the  
 Miss Mary Anne Pierce } Commander.

Miss Amy Paul - - } Daughters of Mr. Paul  
 Miss Mary Paul - - } of Somersetshire, & Re-  
 } lations to Capt. Pierce.

Miss Elizabeth Blackburne, daughter of  
 Capt. Blackburne, of the same service.

Miss Mary Haggard, sister to an  
 officer on the Madras establishment,  
 and

Miss Anne Mansell, a native of Ma-  
 dras, but of European Parents, returning  
 from receiving her education in England.

John George Schutz, Esq; returning

to Asia, where he had long resided; to collect a part of his fortune which he had left there.

The ladies were equally distinguished by their beauty and accomplishments, the gentleman amiable in his manners, and of high respect in his character. Mr. Burston, the chief mate, was also related to Capt. Pierce's lady; and it is hardly possible to conceive a more friendly and happy society, nor one more calculated to join in diverting the tediousness of a long passage, by little plans of rational amusement, and by anticipating the pleasing scenes of novelty, the congratulations of expecting friends, and the success and prosperity which awaited the accomplishment of their voyage.

The

The objects of the voyage highly laudable, to extend the commerce, and to promote the revenue of the state ;—to employ that useful and absolutely necessary body of men, whose services are now no longer required for national defence ; to furnish the community with articles by use become essential necessaries ;—to provide others for foreign markets, which produce an influx of profit from the various nations of Europe, and to obtain decent and competent rewards for the skill, assiduity, and diligence, of the Commander and his Officers. Such are the ends pursued in a mercantile voyage, in the attainment of which, not only the state itself, but every member of the common-wealth is unquestionably interested.

From

From such pleasing expectations, such encouraging, such animating prospects, we are compelled to turn our eyes on a scene of distress so fatal and complicated, that humanity sickens at the recollection, and the pen trembles while it records the melancholy tale.

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

Tuesday



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

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

Wednesday the 4th, at two in the morning, they endeavoured to wear the ship, but without success, and judging it necessary to cut away the mizen mast it was immediately done, and a second attempt made to wear the ship, which succeeded no better than the former; and the ship having now seven feet water in her hold, and gaining fast on the pumps, it was thought expedient, for the preservation of the ship, to cut away the main-mast,

mast, the ship appearing to be in immediate danger of foundering ; in the fall of the mast, Jonathan Moreton, cockswain, and four men, either fell or were drawn by the wreck over-board and drowned, and by eight in the morning the wreck was cleared, and the ship got before the wind, in which position she was kept about two hours, in which time the pumps cleared the ship of two feet of water in the hold : At this time the ship's head was brought to the Eastward with the fore-sail only.

At ten in the morning the wind abated considerably, and the ship labouring extremely, rolled the fore 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

B

wind

wind came to the Westward, and the weather clearing up, the Berry-head was distinguishable bearing North and by East, distant four or five leagues; they now immediately bent another fore-sail, erected a jury 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.

Thursday the 5th, at two in the morning, the wind came to the Southward, blew fresh, and the weather was very thick; at noon Portland was seen bearing North and by East, distant two or three leagues. At eight at night it blew a strong gale at South, and at this time the Portland lights were seen bearing  
North.

North-West, distant four or five leagues, when they wore the ship, and got her head to the Westward, but finding they lost ground on that tack, they wore her again, and kept stretching on to the Eastward, in hopes to have weathered Peverel-point, in which case they intended to have anchored in Studland-bay. At eleven at night it cleared, and they saw St. Alban's-head a mile and half to the leeward of them, upon which they took in sail immediately, and let go the small bower anchor, which brought up the ship at a whole cable, and she rode for about an hour, but then drove; they now let go the sheet anchor and wore away a whole cable, and the ship rode for about two hours longer, when she drove again.

Whilst

Whilst they were in this situation, the Captain sent for Mr. Henry Meriton, the chief officer who survives, and asked his opinion as to the probability of saving their lives, to which he replied with equal calmness and candour, that he apprehended there was very little hope, as they were then driving fast on the shore, and might expect every moment to strike; the boats were then mentioned, but it was agreed that at that time they could be of no use, yet in case an opportunity should present itself of making them serviceable, it was proposed that the officers should be confidentially requested to reserve the long-boat for the ladies and themselves, and this precaution was immediately taken.

About

About two in the morning of Friday the 6th, the ship still driving, and approaching very fast to the shore, the same officer again went into the cuddy, where the Captain then was, and another 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 his 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,

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.

The seamen, many of whom had been remarkably inattentive and remiss in their duty during great part of the storm, and had actually skulked in their hammocks, and left the exertions of the pump, and the other labours attending their situation, to the officers of the ship, and the soldiers; (who had been uncommonly active and assiduous during the whole tremendous conflict,) roused by the destructive blow to a sense of their danger, now poured upon the deck, to which no endeavours of their officers could keep them whilst  
their



their assistance might have been useful, and in frantic exclamations demanded of heaven and their fellow-sufferers, that succour, which their timely efforts might possibly have succeeded in procuring ; but it was now too late, the ship continued to beat on the rocks, and soon bulged, and fell with her broadside towards the shore : When the ship struck, a number of the men climbed up the ensign staff, under an apprehension of her going to pieces immediately.

Mr. Meriton, the officer, whom we have already mentioned, at this crisis of horror, offered to these unhappy beings the best advice which could possibly be given to them ; he recommended their coming all to that side of the ship which  
lay

lay lowest on the rocks, and singly to take the opportunities which might then offer of escaping to the shore. And having thus provided to the utmost of his power, for the safety of the desponding crew, he returned to the round-house, where by this time all the passengers, and most of the officers were assembled, the latter employed in offering consolation to the unfortunate ladies, and with unparalleled magnanimity, suffering their compassion for the fair and amiable companions of their misfortunes, to get the better of the sense of their own danger, and the dread of almost inevitable annihilation. At this moment, what must be the feelings of a Father—of such a Father as Captain Pierce!

In this charitable work of offering comfort to the fair sufferers, Mr. Mériton, now joined by assurances of his opinion, that the ship would hold together till the morning, when they would all be safe, and Captain Pierce observing one of the young gentlemen loud in his expressions of terror, and hearing him frequently exclaim that the ship was going to pieces, he cheerfully bid him hold his peace, observing to him, that though the ship should go to pieces, he would not, but would be safe enough.

It will now be necessary to describe the situation of the place which proved fatal to so many valuable and respectable persons, as without such a description it will be difficult to convey a proper idea of the melancholy, the deplorable scene.

The

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

But at this particular spot the cliff is excavated at the foot, and presents a cavern of ten or twelve yards in depth, and of breadth equal to the length of a large ship, the sides of the cavern so nearly upright 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 unfortunate wreck lay stretched almost from side to side of it, and offering her broadside to the horrid chafin.

But at the time the ship struck it was too dark to discover the extent of their danger, and the extreme horror of their situation ; even Mr. Meriton himself conceived a hope that she might keep together till day-light, and endeavoured to cheer his drooping friends, and in particular the unhappy ladies, with this comfortable expectation, as an answer to the Captain's enquiries, how they went on, or what he thought of their situation.

In addition to the company already in the round-house, they had admitted three  
black

black women, and 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 out by Mr. Rogers, the third Mate, and Mr. Brimer the fifth, so that the numbers there were now increased to near fifty; Captain Pierce sitting on a chair, 'cot, 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 assembly 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

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 hysteric fits on the floor deck of the round-house.

But

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 strong 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 the middle, and that the fore part had changed its position, and lay rather farther out towards the sea; and in this emergency, when the next moment might be charged with his fate, he determined to seize the present, and to follow the example of the crew, and the soldiers, who were now quitting the ship in numbers, and making their way to a shore, of which they knew not yet the horrors. Among



Among other measures adopted to favor these attempts, the ensign-staff had been unshipped, and attempted to be laid from the ship's side to some of the rocks, but without success, for it snapped to pieces before it reached them, however by the light of a lanthorn, which a seaman, of the name of Burmaster, handed through the sky-light of the round-house to the deck, Mr. Meriton discovered a spar, which appeared to be laid from the ship's side to the rocks, and on this spar he determined to attempt his escape.

He accordingly laid himself down on it, and thrust himself forward, but he soon found that the spar had no communication with the rock, he reached  
the

the end of it, and then slipped off, receiving a very violent bruise in his fall, and before he could recover his legs, he was washed off by the surge, in which he supported himself by swimming, till the returning wave dashed 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 of the rock, from which he clambered self still higher, till he was out of the reach of the surf.

Mr. Rogers, the third Mate remained with the Captain, and the unfortunate ladies

ladies, and their companions, near twenty minutes after Mr. Meriton had quitted the ship : Soon after the latter left the round-house, the Captain asked what was become of him, and Mr. Rogers replied that he was gone on the deck, to see what could be done. — After this a heavy sea breaking over the ship, the ladies exclaimed, “ Oh poor Meriton, he is drowned, had he staid with us he would have been safe,” and they all, and particularly Miss Mary Peirce, expressed great concern at the apprehension of his loss. — On this occasion Mr. Rogers offered to go and call in Mr. Meriton, but this was opposed by the ladies from an apprehension that he might share the same fate.

At this time the sea was breaking in at the fore part of the ship, and reached as far as the main-mast, and Captain Pierce, gave Mr. Rogers a nod, and they took a lamp, and went together into the stern gallery, and after viewing the rocks for sometime, 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, for they could only discover the black face of the perpendicular rock, and not the cavern which afforded shelter to those who escaped; they then returned to the round-house, and Mr. Rogers hung up the lamp, and Captain Pierce, with his great coat on, sat down between his two daughters, and struggled to suppress the parental tear which then burst into his eye. The

The sea continuing to break in very fast, Mr. 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 went into the stern gallery, and from thence by the weather upper quarter gallery upon the poop, and 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 poop, where they had remained together about five minutes, when on the coming on of the last mentioned sea, they

they jointly seized a hen-coop, and the same wave which he apprehended proved fatal to some of those who remained below, happily carried him and his companion to the rock, on which they were dashed with such violence as to be miserably bruised and hurt.

— On this rock were twenty-seven men, but it was low water, and as they were convinced that upon the flowing of the tide, they must all be washed off, many of them attempted to get to the back or sides of the Cavern, out of the reach of the returning sea, in this attempt scarce more than six, besides himself, and Mr. Brimer succeeded, of the remainder some shared the fate which they had apprehended, and the others perished in their efforts to get into the Cavern.

Mr. Rogers and Mr. Brimer both however reached the cavern, and scrambled up the rock, on narrow shelves of which they fixed themselves, Mr. Rogers got so near to his friend Mr. Meriton as to exchange congratulations with him, but he was prevented from joining him by at least twenty men who were between them, neither of whom could move without immediate peril of his life. — At the time Mr. Rogers reached this station of possible safety, his strength was so nearly exhausted, that had the struggle continued a few minutes longer he must have been inevitably lost.

They now found that a very considerable number of the crew, seamen, soldiers,

diers,

diers, and some petty officers were in  
 the same situation with themselves, tho'  
 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 escaped  
 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, precarious, and  
 doubtful chance of escape.

They could yet discern some part of  
 the ship, and solaced themselves, in their  
 dreary stations, with the hope of its  
 remaining entire till day break, for, in  
 the midst of their own misfortunes, the  
 sufferings of the females affected them  
 with the most acute anguish, and every  
 sea



sea that broke, brought with it terror, for the fate of those amiable, and helpless beings.

But, alas! their apprehensions were too soon realized. In a very few minutes after Mr. Rogers had gained the rock, an universal shriek, which still vibrates in their ears, and, in which, the voice of female distress was lamentably distinguishable, announced the dreadful Catastrophe; in a few moments all was hushed, except the warring winds, and beating waves; the wreck was buried in the remorseless deep, and not an atom of her was ever after discoverable.

Thus perished the *Halswell*, and with her worth, honor, skill, beauty, amiability,

bility, and bright accomplishments; never did the angry elements combat with more elegance; never was a watery grave filled with such precious remains. Great God, how inscrutable are thy judgments! yet we know them to be just; nor will we arraign thy mercy, who hast transferred virtue and purity, from imperfect, and mutable happiness, to bliss eternal!

What an aggravation of woe was this dreadful, this tremendous blow, to the yet trembling, and scarcely half saved wretches, who were hanging about the sides of the horrid cavern? they were themselves still in the most imminent danger, but their dearest friends, the pleasing companions of their voyage,  
those

those whose beauty, and accomplishments, would have charmed the tedious hours, and beguiled even contrary winds, and all the impediments of a long passage, of the sting of disappointment; had now bid them an everlasting farewell; they felt for themselves, but they wept for wives, parents, fathers, brothers, sisters,—perhaps lovers. All—All cut off from their dearest, their most invaluable hopes.

Nor were they less agonized by the subsequent events of this ill-fated night; many of those who had gained the precarious stations which we have described, worn out with fatigue, weakened by bruises, battered by the tempest, and benumbed with the cold, quitted their  
holdfasts,

holdfasts, and tumbling headlong either on the rocks below, or in the surf, perished beneath the feet of their wretched associates, and by their dying groans, and gulping exclamations for pity, awakened terrific apprehensions in the survivors, of their own approaching fate.

At length, after the bitterest three hours which misery ever lengthened into ages, the day broke on them, but instead of bringing with it the relief with which they had flattered themselves, served to discover all the horrors of their situation; they now found that had the country been alarmed by the guns of distress which they had continued to fire for many hours before the ship struck, but  
 which

which from the violence of the storm were unheard, they could neither be observed by the people from above, 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 out, and had it been possible to have acquainted those who would wish to assist them, with their exact situation, no ropes could be conveyed into the cavity, 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 hand, to turn the corner, and endeavour to clamber  
up

up 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 cliff, were the Cook, and James Thompson a quarter-master, 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

The house at which they first arrived was *Eastington*, the present habitation of Mr. *Garland*, steward or agent to the proprietors of the *Purbeck Quarries*, who immediately got together the workmen under his direction, and with the most zealous and animated humanity, exerted every effort for the preservation of the surviving crew of this unfortunate ship; ropes were procured with all possible dispatch, and every precaution taken that assistance should be speedily and effectually given; and we are happy in this opportunity of bearing testimony, under the authority of the principal surviving officers, to the kind, benevolent, and spirited behaviour of this Gentleman, whose conduct on the melancholy occasion, entitles him to universal respect

respect

respect and regard, as well as to the particular gratitude of those who were the immediate objects of his philanthropy.

Mr. Meriton made the attempt, and almost reached the edge of the precipice; a soldier who preceded him, had his feet on a small projecting rock or stoop, and on the same stone Mr. Meriton had fastened his hands to help his progress; at this critical moment the Quarry-men arrived, and seeing a man so nearly within their reach, they dropped a rope to him, of which he immediately laid hold, and in a vigorous effort to avail himself of this advantage, he loosened the stone on which he stood, which giving way, Mr. Meriton must have been precipitated to the bottom, but that a rope was providentially



videntially lowered to him at the instant, which he seized as he was in the act of falling, and was safely drawn to the summit.

The fate of Mr. Brimer was peculiarly severe, this Gentleman who had only been married nine days before the ship sailed, to a beautiful lady, the daughter of Capt. Norman, of the Royal Navy, in which service Mr. Brimer was a lieutenant, but was now on a voyage to visit an uncle at Madrás; came on shore, as we have already observed, with Mr. Rogers, and like him got up the side of the cavern, where he remained till the morning, when he crawled out, and a rope being thrown to him, he was either so benumbed with the cold as to fasten

it about him improperly, or so agitated, as to neglect making it fast at all; but from which ever cause it arose, the effect was fatal to him; at the moment of his supposed preservation, he fell from his stand, and was unfortunately dashed to pieces, in the presence of those who could only lament the deplorable fate of an amiable and worthy man, and an able and skilful officer.

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 preservers above, who stood prepared with the means which the situation would permit them to exercise, to help them to the summit. The



and the wind blowing hard, it was in some instances forced under the projecting rock sufficiently for the sufferers to reach it without crawling to the extremity, in either case, whoever laid hold of it, put the noose round his waist, and after escaping from one element, committed himself full swing to another, in which he dangled till he was drawn up with great care and caution.

It is but justice in this place to say, that the survivors received the friendly and humane assistance of Mr. Jones and Mr. Hawker, gentlemen resident near the spot.

But in this attempt many shared the  
fate

fate of the unfortunate Mr. Brimer; and unable through cold, weakness, perturbation of mind, or the incommodiousness of the stations they occupied, to avail themselves of the succour which was offered them; were at last precipitated from the stupendous cliff, and were either dashed to pieces on the rocks beneath, or falling into the surge, perished in the waves.

Among these unhappy sufferers, the destiny of a drummer belonging to the military on board the *Halswell*, was attended with circumstances of peculiar distress; being either washed off the rock by the seas, or falling into the surf from above, he was carried by the counter sea's or returning waves, beyond the breakers,

breakers, within which his utmost efforts could never again bring him, but he was drawn further out to sea, and as he swam remarkably well, continued to struggle with the waves, in sight of his pitying companions, till his strength was exhausted, and he sunk, to rise no more.

—It was not till late in the day that the survivors were all conveyed to safety, one indeed, William Trenton, a soldier, remained on his perilous stand till the morning of Saturday the 7th of January, exposed to the united horrors of the extremest personal danger, and the most acute disquietude of mind; nor is it easy to conceive how his strength and spirits could have supported him for such a number of hours; under distresses so poignant and complicated.                    Though

Though the remains of the wreck were no longer discoverable among the rocks, yet the surface of the sea was covered with the fragments as far almost as the eye could reach, and even so late as ten o'clock on the Friday morning, a sheep, part of the live stock of the unfortunate officers, was observed buffeting the angry waves.

The surviving officers, seamen, and soldiers, being now assembled at the house of their benevolent friend, Mr. Garland, they were mustered, and found to amount to seventy-four, out of rather more than two hundred and forty, which was about the number of the crew and passengers in the ship when she sailed through the Downs; of the remainder, who unhappily

pily lost their lives, upwards of seventy are supposed to have reached the rocks, but to have been washed off, or to perish in falling from the cliffs, and fifty or more to have sunk with the Captain and the ladies in the round-house, when the after part of the ship went to pieces.

All those who reached the summit survived, except two or three, who are supposed to have expired in drawing up, and a black, who died in a few hours after he was brought to the house, though many of them were so miserably bruised that their lives were doubtful, and they are scarcely yet recovered.

As the last returns which were dispatched from the ship have never come to hand, and all books and papers went  
to



to the bottom with her, it has been impossible to obtain an exact list of the seamen, soldiers, passengers, and servants, who were on board her at the time she failed, nor is the list of the officers perfectly complete, some of the more subordinate being usually entered on the ship's books, at the time they actually come on board.

We shall, however, offer to our readers, two lists; the first, of all the principal officers, and such others as can be precisely ascertained, who failed in her, and the authenticity of which, as far as it goes, may be depended on; the second (in which but few doubts occur) of the persons who were saved.

List

**L I S T** of Officers on board the  
**H A L S E W E L L**, at the time she  
failed :

<b>Richard Pierce</b>	—	<b>Captain</b>
<b>Thomas Burston</b>	—	<b>Chief Mate</b>
<b>Henry Meriton</b>	—	<b>Second Mate</b>
<b>John Rogers</b>	—	<b>Third Mate</b>
<b>Henry Pilcher</b>	—	<b>Fourth Mate</b>
<b>William Larkins</b>	—	<b>Fifth Mate</b>
<b>James Brimer</b>	—	<b>Supernumerary ditto</b>
<b>John Daniel</b>	—	<b>Sixth Mate</b>
<b>Thomas Clothier</b>	—	<b>Surgeon</b>
<b>Richard Fowler</b>	—	<b>Purser</b>
————	<b>M'Coy</b>	— <b>Surgeon's Mate</b>
————	<b>Falconer</b>	— <b>Ditto</b>
<b>William Rayner</b>	—	<b>Purser's Assistant</b>
<b>Duncan M'Dougal</b>		<b>Midshipman</b>
————	<b>M'Manus</b>	— <b>Ditto</b>
<b>James Humphries</b>		<b>Ditto</b>
<b>William Humphries</b>		<b>Ditto</b>
<b>Thomas Jeane</b>	—	<b>Ditto</b>

Charles Templer	} Youths under the care of the Captain and other officers, but acting as Midshipmen
Charles Webber	
William Cowley	
_____ Miller _____	
James Welch	— Gunner
Daniel Frazer	— Boatswain
John Harrison	— Sail-maker
Edward Hart	— Gunner's Mate
Jacob Murray	— Ditto
Thomas Barnaby	— Boatswain's Mate
Benjamin Barclay	— Quarter-master
James Thompson	Ditto
Andrew West	— Ditto
Gilbert Ogilvie	— Ditto
Joseph Jackson	— Ditto
Jonath. Moreton	— Ditto
Thomas Firth	— Captain's Steward
George Wilson	— Ship's Steward
James Jackson	— Carpenter's Mate
William Fleet	— Caulker's Mate
James Turner	— Cooper

**LIST of the Officers, Seamen, and  
Soldiers saved.**

**Henry Meriton — Second Mate**

**John Rogers — Third Mate**

**John Daniel — Sixth Mate**

**Duncan M'Dougal Midshipman**

**———— M-Manus Ditto**

**James Welch — Gunner**

**Daniel Frazer — Boatswain**

**John Harrison — Sail-maker**

**Edward Hart' — Gunner's Mate**

**Jacob Murray — Ditto**

**Thomas Barnaby — Boatswain's Mate**

**Benjamin Barclay — Quarter-master**

**James Thompson Ditto**

**Andrew West — Ditto**

**Gilbert Ogilvie — Ditto**

**Joseph Jackson — Ditto**

**James**

James Jackson — Carpenter's Mate

William Fleet — Caulker's Mate

James Turner — Cooper

Robert Pierce — Cook

Richard Tupman — Seaman

Thomas Morgan — Ditto

John Lock — Ditto

Timothy Forster — Ditto

George Woodgate Ditto

Andrew Anderson - Ditto

John Morris — Ditto

George Harris — Ditto

Wm. Viccary — Ditto

John Cownden - Ditto

Robert Millar Ditto

David Anley — Ditto

William Thompson Ditto

George SundeNand Ditto

Jonath. Rogers — Ditto

Nath.

**Nath. Mingies — Seaman**  
**John Price — Ditto**  
**John Love — Ditto**  
**Thomas Brooks — Ditto**  
**Solomon Bevans — Ditto**  
**Michael Bevans — Ditto**  
**Isaac Holland — Ditto**  
**Robert Humphries Ditto**  
**Richard Berry — Ditto**  
**John White — Ditto**  
**Peter Rofs — Ditto**  
**Thomas White — Ditto**  
**John Anderson — Ditto**  
**George Ruffell — Ditto**  
**Robert Roberts — Ditto**  
**William Evans — Ditto**  
**James Flendall — Ditto**  
**George Powdrill — Ditto**

**John**

John Fowles — Soldier  
 Joshua Hawkins— Ditto  
 William Gapon — Ditto  
 James Rowley — Ditto  
 Richard Strover — Ditto  
 Thomas Jones — Ditto  
 Robert Daniel— Ditto  
 William Spraggs — Ditto  
 Thomas Eastman— Ditto  
 William Clark — Ditto  
 William Rickies — Ditto  
 John Morse — Ditto  
 Caleb Austen — Ditto  
 Joseph Watton — Ditto  
 Thomas Shaftoe — Ditto  
 John Todd — Ditto  
 William Johnston— Ditto  
 Richard Reeves — Ditto  
 Philip Smith — Ditto

Patrick

Patrick Ganetty — Soldier  
 Benjamin Morris — Ditto  
 Thomas Sanders — Ditto  
 James Shield — Ditto  
 John White — Ditto  
 William Trenton — Ditto

On Saturday morning Mr. Meriton and Mr. Rogers, having been liberally assisted by Mr. Garland with the means of making the journey, set off for London, to carry the melancholy tidings to the Directors of the India-House ; and having humanely taken the precaution to acquaint the magistrates of the towns through which they passed, that a number of shipwrecked men would be soon on the road to the metropolis, (lest the tedious and disagreeable way-fare of  
 of



of these unfortunate beings should be rendered more miserable by unjust suspicions) they arrived at the India-House on Sunday the 8th instant at noon, where the sad tale was no sooner told, than the Directors, with their usual munificence, ordered handsome gratifications to the Quarry-men and others, who assisted in saving the survivors, and provided some immediate support for those who out-lived this lamentable event. To Mr, Garland the Directors have also made such acknowledgment of thanks, as his benevolent conduct merited.

It would be unjust to suppress a circumstance, which reflects great honor on the benevolence of the master of the  
Crown

**Crown Inn, at Blandford, Dorsetshire :**  
**When the distressed seamen arrived in that town, he sent for them all to his house, and having given them the refreshment of a comfortable dinner, he presented each man with half a crown to help him on his journey. An example of liberality, which we trust will have its effect,**

**Before we pay the tribute due to the memories of those who unfortunately suffered on this deplorable occasion, it may not be improper to remark, that a very particular friendship subsisted between Mr. Meriton and Mr. Rogers, the two principal officers who escaped the dreadful catastrophe; they had made a long and painful voyage together in the Pigot, and were among the few who**  
**survived**

survived the mortality with which the crew of that ship was visited: On their return to England, twenty-five days only before they undertook the voyage which has been so unhappily interrupted; they again engaged to embark in the same bottom, and Providence has a second time rescued them from impending death: The sanction which these Gentlemen have given to this narrative, prevents our speaking of them in the language which their universal reputation dictates.

The character of Captain Pierce is beyond eulogium; his professional skill and knowledge will be best testified by the command with which he had been long invested, and which he bore with equal honour to himself, and advantage to his employers. His integrity was as

E unimpeached

unimpeached as his punctuality was exemplary. He was generous without profusion, and liberal without ostentation. His heart and his hand corresponded in the exercise of every act of humanity ; from his door the distressed never departed without relief. He was a sincere and zealous friend, a kind and unassuming benefactor. In his family he was a pattern of excellence, a tender and affectionate husband, a fond and indulgent parent, a mild and beneficent master. In his ship he was the friend of his officers, the protector of youth, the encourager of merit, a father to the crew : Few private men have deserved, few have enjoyed, a character so totally irreproachable, so conspicuously eminent.

His

His daughters (in acts of tenderness to whom he nobly and heroically expired) were as remarkable for accomplishment of mind, and sweetness of disposition, as for the elegance of their persons, and the extent of their polite acquirements; they were educated under the immediate care of their parents, and repaid their tenderness by the most dutiful and affectionate attention.

Six children happily survive him, and we trust will serve as comforters to his afflicted and yet disconsolate widow, to whom he had been married upwards of twenty years; one of these, the eldest, a son, and the name-sake of his lamented father, is now about eighteen years old, and was left in the East-Indies by Capt. Pierce on his last voyage; the others are

two of each sex of different ages, and an infant yet at its mother's breast. Mrs. Pierce was the daughter of Thomas Burston, Esq; the Collector of Excise for the County of Surrey; and at Kingston in that county, Captain Pierce and his family have resided almost constantly from the time of his marriage. As merit and industry, like his, could hardly fail of success, it is said he had acquired a competent fortune, and intended that this should be his last voyage.—Unhappily for his family, his friends, and the community, the progress of it was stopped by an event which has produced the most universal and unaffected concern.

The two Miss Pauls were relations to Captain Pierce, and daughters of a gentleman

tleman of the West of England, beautiful, sensible, amiable, and accomplished young women—Happy in the companionship of their beloved cousins, happy in the protection of their worthy and affectionate Father, the pain of quitting their still nearer relations, and the terrors of a long voyage were dissipated, and their embarkation seemed only to be an agreeable change of situation—How uncertain are the expectations, how delusive the prospects, how evanescent the hopes, by which mortals are guided in the pursuit of sublunary happiness!

Miss Blackburne was the daughter of Captain Blackburne, a commander also in the service of the East-India Company, who now resides at Old Malton in Yorkshire.

shire. If the reports we have heard be true, that this gentleman has lately lost two sons by untimely and accidental deaths, what pity and commiseration is due to him on the additional misfortune which has befallen him in the person of a daughter, whose beauty and merit were equally the objects of admiration.

Of Miss Haggard and Miss Mansel no further circumstances have come to our knowledge, than those we have already mentioned; but it is universally allowed by those to whom they were known, that they may be very deservedly grouped with their amiable fellow-sufferers.

Mr. Schutz had acquired a very considerable fortune in Asia, from whence  
he



he had not been long returned ; but some difficulties arising in the collection and remittance of considerable sums which he had left behind him in the East, he found it necessary to make another voyage to Indostan, but unhappily perished, in all probability, as he was attempting to gain the rock, his body having since been found, and received interment. Of this gentleman's family and connections no accounts have come to our hands, but the officers who survive speak of his character with great respect.

Mr. Pilcher, the fourth mate, was about twenty-four years of age, a young gentleman highly esteemed ; he was lately a lieutenant on board the Scipio, a guardship, commanded by Captain Inglefield ;

glefield; his father, Edward Pilcher, Esq. is in the commission of the peace for the County of Kent.—Mr. Falconer, one of the surgeon's mates, was the son of Magnus Falconer, Esq. one of the Master Attendants of Chatham Yard, and was going to settle at Bencoolen.—Mr. William Rayner, the Purser's Assistant, was the son of a gentleman of very respectable abilities in the law, and grandson of John Rayner, Esq. late of Sunbury, in Middlesex.

Among the youths who were cut off by this dreadful blow, were Mr. Charles Templer, brother of James Templer, Esq. His Majesty's Attorney, and Master of the Crown-office in the King's-bench. Mr. Charles Webber, son of the late Admiral Webber, and son-in-law to Wm.

Smith,

Smith, Esq of His Majesty's Office of Ordnance.—Mr. William Cowley, son of — Cowley, Esq. of Kingston, in Surrey, and Mr. — Miller, son of Mr. Miller, organist, of Doncaster; this young gentleman was a proficient in music, and it was intended, with his assistance, and that of some of the Captain's band, to have formed occasional concerts, in which the ladies would also have taken parts, to amuse them on the passage.

Among the Midshipmen who suffered was Mr. Thomas Jeane, son of Thomas Jeane Esq; of Moncton, near Taunton, in Somersetshire, this youth was also under the immediate care of Captain Pierce, and his fate was also attended with many calamitous circumstances ;  
after

after he had quitted the ship and gained the rock, he was again swept off by the devouring waves, swimming well, he a second time got footing on the rock, but being now worn out with fatigue, and stiff with cold, he could not support himself against the continued assaults of the tempest, but after seven hours endurance of all the discomforts of his situation, he was compelled by debility to abandon his only hope of life, and perished in the sea.

Of the other officers who perished, no particular Accounts have been obtained, nor any anecdotes of any of the other sufferers, except the following, which the Editor subjoins in the very elegant and affecting language in which it was conveyed to him. Amongst

Amongst the many unfortunate sufferers, were Mr. James Humphries, and Mr. William Humphries, sons of the Reverend Mr. Francis Humphries, the present Curate of Hampstead. The youngest had already made one voyage to the East-Indies, and by his good conduct recommended himself to Capt. Pierce, who had received him on board as a midshipman. The eldest had been educated at Woolwich, and acquired complete military knowledge, such as induced him to hope for promotion. But being without connexions or interest, he stood no chance of a commission on the return of peace, and therefore quitted the academy. A warm friend of his father, who had greatly interested himself, and assisted him in the advancement  
of

of a numerous family, exerted himself in favour of this young man, and got him on board the Halsewell, with a prospect of the most flattering nature. It opened to him suddenly, he had but a few hours to prepare for a six months voyage; however he sat about it with spirit and activity, inspired by hopes that fortune would favour his devout wishes, and enable him to repay a fond father the expences of an education, not quite convenient to a situation in life, seldom accompanied with affluence. But alas! how soon were his pious dreams closed by a watery grave! all that we have learned of these unfortunate brothers is, that they were seen by one of the seamen, aiding each other in the devouring waves, but we  
are

are unhappy not to find their names in the list of survivors.—One may form some estimate of their merit by a circumstance that strongly marks it, and ought not to be concealed, for the honour of a young gentleman, whose name is Lewis. Mr. Humphries, for the purpose of augmenting his little income, and better support of his numerous family, has of late years taken a few pupils, and amongst them Mr. Lewis. The amiable disposition of his lost companions had created such an attachment in him, that his distress on hearing the horrid tale was truly fraternal. The injunctions of a mother, and persuasions of his friends, could scarcely restrain him from weeping over the tremendous rock that deprived him  
of

of his beloved associates, and exploring the coast for the recovery of their bodies, to perform his last kind office; by their decent interment. — Amiable, sympathising youth! May success reward thy virtuous, generous views! May thy pillow be soft in the hour of death, and may some friendly hand be near, to close thine eyes!

Nor may it be improper to mention the escape of Sir George L. Staunton and his lady from being sharers in this dreadful catastrophe.—This gentleman who had long been in the particular confidence of Lord Macartney, accompanied him to Madras as his Secretary, and came to England after the conclusion of the peace with Tippoo Saib



Saib in the treaty for which he had a very considerable part. He was now about to return to Asia, and had actually engaged for the passages of himself and lady in the *Halsewell*, but the arrival or immediate expectation of Lord Macartney in England, happily induced him to abandon his intentions but a very few days before the ship sailed.

Though we are aware that the task is arduous, and are conscious of our own inability, we cannot conclude this little narrative without offering to the relations and friends of those who have suffered in this unfortunate disaster, such consolation as presents itself on a retrospect of the several circumstances which have been drawn together in the foregoing pages.

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Let those to whom the amiable sufferers were most dear, reflect on the fate of such of the same sex as were wrecked in the Grosvenor, who escaping a sudden violent death, were exposed to hunger, thirst, nakedness, the attacks of wild beasts, and of the still greater brutes, the savages of the human race; who, cut off from all hope of ever being restored to any of the comforts of society, must have looked forward to death as a refuge from such transcendent calamities, and have considered its tardy approach as a delay of happiness; and let them compare the fate of these wretched victims to that of the friends for whom they mourn, who, in all the purity of virtue, were in a moment transferred to everlasting happiness, without a pang, and almost without an apprehension; and they will

will find an alleviation of their grief which reflection will strengthen, till time has mellowed the poignancy of their anguish into mild and tender regret.

Let the friends and relations of the officers, seamen and others of that sex, derive comfort from the consideration that the lives of those who are engaged in this perilous profession, are in a constant exposure to dangers more ostensible, though perhaps not more actual, than those of the tradesman, the mechanic, or the artificer; and that the separation of such as are employed in this way of life from the rest of the community, renders the accidents which befall them more conspicuous and observable; that they would, in all probability, lose the  
same

same number of those with whom they are connected in the ordinary events of mortality, and that the pursuits which brought them to this sudden, and, apparently, untimely end, were innocent, useful, and laudable.



And above all, let the afflicted on the present occasion, remember that the friends they lament neither precipitated themselves to destruction by neglect, obstinacy, temerity, or even imprudence; but that the event, however melancholy in its operation, was the dispensation of that Being who "*rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm;*" and that all his purposes, however unaccountable in the weak perceptions of human wisdom, are unquestionably wise, gracious, and ultimately merciful.

F I N I S.

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