THE LIFE-BOAT,

OR

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GREATHEAD'S ORIGINAL LIFE-BOAT.

AT a time when great and, we trust, successful efforts are making to improve our life-boats, it is but right to put on record some facts connected with the first life-boat ever used in this country, the credit of which belongs to HENRY GREATHEAD, late boat-builder, of South Shields. In consequence of the wreck of the *Adventure*, of Newcastle, in September, 1789, on the Herd Sand, at the entrance of the Tyne, when the crew were seen to drop from the rigging, and perish in presence of thousands of spectators, who watched them from the shore, but could render no assistance, a subscription was entered into by several gentlemen, a Committee appointed (of which Mr. NICHOLAS FAIRLES was Chairman), and a reward offered for the best model of a life-boat. Among the competitors was WILLIAM WOULDHAVE, a clever but a wayward man, who died at South Shields in 1821. His was the only model, we believe, sent in to the Committee. He is spoken of by some as *the* inventor of the life-boat. PRINGLE'S MS says, "The idea of the peculiar construction he adopted as his model was suggested to him, as he stated to a friend, by the circumstance of a woman, at the Field House Well, asking him to assist her to put a skeel of water on her head. She had a piece of a broken wooden dish floating in the water, which, he observed, floated with the points upwards. He turned it over several times, and ascertained that it always righted itself." The Committee, however, awarded the premium to GREATHEAD; this builder suggesting, say they, "the material improvement of making the keel curved instead of straight," and he was forthwith employed to build a boat according to the plan he had proposed.

The dimensions of the boat were as follows: length extreme, 30 ft.; length of keel, 20 ft.; breadth of beam, 10 ft.; depth of waist outside, 3¼ ft.; depth inside, to deck, 2⅛ ft.; stem and stern alike, 5¾ ft. high; sheer of gunwale, 30 in.; to pull 10 oars double-banked, with iron thole-pins, and grummets; very raking stem and stern-post, 10½ in. to 1 ft.; depth of main keel, 4 in., with great camber or curvature; and three sliding keels. A cork lining, 12 in. thick, runs fore and aft on each side, and reaches from the deck to the thwarts; and a cork fender outside, 16 in. deep, 4 in. wide, and 21 ft. long, not reaching to the stem or stern within 4½ ft.; a deck, or platform, laid at 11 in. above the bottom of the keel; 5 thwarts, 36 in. apart from centre to centre, at 16 in. above the flat and 11 in. below the gunwale. The form of the boat like that of a steamer's paddle-box boat, with stem and stern alike. She had no means of freeing herself of water, nor of self-righting, in the event of being upset. This boat was built by subscription at South Shields, and launched on the 30th January, 1790. The Society of Arts rewarded the inventor with its Gold Medal and 50 guineas in the year 1802, the Trinity Corporation and subscribers to Lloyd's granted him 100 guineas each, and Parliament voted him 1,200*l.* in the same year, in acknowledgment of the utility of his invention.

The first service that this boat was called upon to render was in 1791, at the wreck of a Sunderland brig, stranded at the entrance of the Tyne, the crew of which she saved. On the 1st January, 1795, saved the crew of the ship *Parthenius*, of Newcastle; also of the *Peggy*. In 1796, saved the crew of a Scottish sloop, the *Countess of Errol*. In 1797, the *Fruit of Friends*, from Leith; the *Planter*, of London, &c. Hitherto, no other life-boat had been built; but in 1798, the Duke of NORTHUMBERLAND employed GREATHEAD to build a boat for North Shields, where it was stationed, and his Grace endowed it with an annuity for its preservation. This boat is still in existence, but not in use. Its first service was in November, 1798, when it saved 7 men from the sloop *Edinburgh*, of Kincardine, wrecked on the Herd Sand; saved the crew of the brig *Clio*, of Sunderland; and in October, 1799, saved the crew of the ship *Quintillian*, of St. Petersburgh, &c. In addition to the above, the Duke of NORTHUMBERLAND ordered a life-boat for Oporto in 1800; and, by the end of the year 1803, GREATHEAD had built 31 life-boats (including the three before mentioned), and for the following places:—St. Andrew's and Montrose, in Scotland, in the year 1800; Lowestoft and Woodbridge, in Suffolk, in 1801, and in the same year gave a plan from which a life-boat was built and stationed at Scarborough; Ramsgate, Whitby, Redcar, Holy Island, Douglas (Isle of Man), Aberdeen, Ayr, Liverpool, and Christchurch, in 1802; Guernsey, Newhaven (Sussex), Plymouth, Arbroath, Exmouth, Rye, Penzance, and Whitehaven, in 1803; also for Memel, Pillau, Stettin, Copenhagen, Elsinore, Gottenburg, and Cronstadt, on the Continent of Europe.

Four years prior to GREATHEAD's first boat, that is in the year 1785, one LIONEL LUKIN, a coach-builder in London, took out a patent for a life-boat. This boat is said to have been strong and buoyant. We have no account of its dimensions, nor have we been able to trace where it was built or what became of it; but its peculiar features were projecting gunwales, side air-cases built into the boat, or double sides, and air-cases under the thwarts. LUKIN wrote a pamphlet on life-boats, entitled "The Invention, Principles, and Construction of Insubmergeable Boats," published by Nicholl and Son, London, 1806. He retired from business in 1824, and settled at Hythe, in Kent, where he died in 1834; and on the back of his tombstone is engraved "This Lionel Lukin was the first who built a life-boat, and was the original inventor of that principle of safety by which many lives and much property have been saved from shipwreck; and he obtained the King's patent in 1785."

Whether GREATHEAD was acquainted with LUKIN's proposal does not appear; if so, he rejected the side air-cases and adopted cork instead. From the period of GREATHEAD's first boat, now more than 60 years ago, to the present time, various modifications of the boat have been built, but its general form and principal dimensions are still retained at Shields, Sunderland, and generally in the ports in the north of England. There is a little doubt as to the dimensions of the original boat—some say 30 ft., others 28 ft. long; but the engraved plan by STEELE, in 1812, shows a boat 26 ft. long, 9¾ ft. wide, 3½ ft. deep, 6½ ft. height of stern, and sheer 30 in., or much more than any boat now-a-days; yet it does not seem that this large sheer was given with any view of making the boat self-right.

Air-cases somewhat similar to LUKIN's have been since introduced at the sides, instead of cork, and also under the deck or flat. We do not know when these were first adopted, but we find, as early as March, 1806, Mr. CHRISTOPHER WILSON, of the Commercial-road, exhibited before the Society of Arts the model of what he terms "a neutral-built self-balanced boat," as a life-boat, for which he received the Society's Gold Medal. Its only claim to be called a life-boat consists in a double side from the gunwale to the water-line, forming an air-chamber, about 1 ft. wide, very much the same as LUKIN's boat, divided into compartments, and not very dissimilar in that respect to the fitting of the life-boats built by the Messrs. PLENTY, of Newbury, Berks, in 1824, for the Shipwreck Institution (figured

at Plate 5 in Report of the Northumberland Life-boat Committee); but in all other respects, PLENTY'S boats, which were well-built safe boats, were very superior.

Water, too, has been introduced as ballast, among others, by FARROW, of South Shields, in 1843; but the earliest use of it that we know of is in a boat built by SKELTON, of Scarborough, in the year 1825, and now doing work as a life-boat at Caernarvon; the water is admitted and retained in a covered well, very similar to the mode adopted in other boats that use water-ballast. Tubes or scuppers for freeing life-boats of water have also been introduced, but very sparingly, until lately; whereas they are essential to the efficiency of a life-boat, and if the greater part of the water from below can be kept out by a self-acting valve, which may be done by WELLS'S patent valve, the free use of tubes cannot cause any inconvenience to the boat or the crew.

Other modifications of GREATHEAD'S boat have been made, and recently a slight change of external form has been introduced, giving the boats a finer entrance, a little less beam, and obtaining the stability rather by a straight side and a long flat floor. It remains to be proved how these do their work, but the credit of having built the first practical life-boat is undoubtedly that of GREATHEAD; and boats much of the same construction are still placed at North and South Shields, where, by skilful management, they have been the means of saving hundreds of lives during the sixty years they have been in use.

BRITISH FISHERIES REPORT, 1851.

THE Report of the Commissioners for British Fisheries for the year 1851, just printed, confirms the statement made in the April Number of this Journal as to the great value of these fisheries to the country, not only in a commercial point of view, but as supplying the poor with cheap and nutritious food; and as a means, if fostered, of raising up a body of intelligent seamen conversant with our coasts and the set of the tides, and inured to every hardship.

The gross catch of herrings, in 1851, at the stations in Scotland and the Isle of Man (to which alone the Report is confined) was 725,416 barrels, showing an increase of 38,000 barrels over the preceding year. The chief places at which the herrings were taken were Wick, Peterhead, Fraserburgh, Inverary, Banff, Lybster, and the Isle of Man. Of the quantity cured, 74,832 barrels, or one-eighth part, was sent to Ireland; 182,659 barrels, or nearly one-third of the whole, was exported to the continent of Europe, chiefly to Stettin, Dantzic, and Hamburgh, leaving 461,217 barrels, or 66,000 tons, including fresh fish, for local consumption and home markets. The price of the cured fish is about 20*s*. a barrel, and it is chiefly consumed by the poor. In the cod and ling fishery the produce amounted to 7,590 tons; the chief fishing places being the Shetland Isles, Stornaway, Inverary, and the Orkneys. Of this quantity, 5,600 tons were cured fish, of which 500 tons were sent to Ireland, 350 tons exported, and the remainder used for home consumption.

The number of boats occupied in the fisheries in 1851 was 10,914, being an increase over the previous years of 434 boats, and the number of fishermen and boys employed in them was 40,938. The addition to the number of boats employed is very satisfactory. The Report says:—"The boats are everywhere now much larger than they were formerly, taking more material to construct, more ability to plan, and more time and capital to complete. There is, therefore, a very considerable development of national employment in the Return that shows the number of boats in use, absorbing much of the extra population in skilled labour of the most valuable kind; and it must be highly gratifying to a maritime country to be assured of the extension of these, and to perceive an augmenting number of trained men, habituated to our coasts, and conversant with their tides, marks, and inlets. In connexion with this subject, it is a matter of congratulation to the Commissioners to observe the attention that has been directed to the question of life-boats, and the public endeavours that are making both to increase their number and improve their efficiency. The lively interest taken in this subject by

His Grace the Duke of NORTHUMBERLAND, now First Lord of the Admiralty, gives hope that the immense deficiencies on our coast of the means of saving life will be shortly remedied, and that no port of consequence, and few even of minor size regularly frequented by vessels, will be allowed to remain without its protecting life-boat. The formation of ready crews for such emergencies must be promoted by an expansion of the fisheries, since any addition to the number of the ordinary boats in use increases the resources of men available to aid ships in danger and to rescue their drowning crews."

In all this we cordially concur. There can be no doubt that it is to fishermen we must chiefly look for manning our life-boats in case of need; and if we are to have their services at such a time, they are fully entitled to some benefit in return. It is gratifying to see that the Report states that the fishing-boats have improved in form; they are, however, susceptible of much further improvement; a well-constructed, well-equipped, and well-handled fishing-boat is still a desideratum on the coast of Scotland. Some of the Firth of Forth and some of the Buckie boats are fair specimens, but, generally speaking, the boats are inferior to those on the greater part of the coasts of England. One reason assigned for this, we are aware, is the want of better harbours; it is satisfactory, therefore, to see that the Commissioners report increased activity in this branch of their duties. Improvements have taken place, or are in progress, at Buckhaven and Cellardyke, in Fife; at Dunbar, at Rockfield, at Scalisaig, in Colonsay; and at Carsaig, in Mull. A special Parliamentary grant was obtained in 1849 for Lybster harbour, where the works are going on satisfactorily under the direction of the Messrs. STEVENSON, C.E., of Edinburgh, engineers to the Fishery Board; and negociations are on foot for works at Latheron-Wheel, and Occumster, in Caithness; at Portree, in Skye; St. Monance, in Fife; and Burnmouth, in Berwickshire. We heartily wish they may be brought to a successful termination; each year's experience confirming us in the opinion expressed some years since, that no single measure would tend more to the improvement of the fisheries, the fishing-boats, and fishermen of Scotland, than by affording them numerous small safe harbours, to which they might run with confidence in the hour of need. On this subject the Commissioners say:—"In the special Report of Captain WASHINGTON, R.N., upon 'Fishing-boats [Scotland], 1849,' it is remarked, 'It is scarcely credible that the small sum [2,500*l.* a-year] which Parliament has devoted to building harbours and piers in Scotland for the last few years should have given so great a stimulus to important local improvements as these grants are found to have done.' The anxiety manifested on all sides to obtain aid from this Parliamentary grant to the Board shows that the stimulus is by no means on the decline, but, on the contrary, that it is gradually reaching the parties on whom its action is calculated to produce most moral as well as lasting benefit, viz., the fishermen themselves, who are beginning to see that they possess resources which, if husbanded and judiciously applied in building or improving their boat harbours, may render the whole race of fishermen in a great degree independent of the casualties of fishing, and convert expeditions, hitherto precarious and hazardous, into safe and profitable adventures. The administration of this grant is receiving the most careful attention of the Commissioners, and, small as it is, it is undoubtedly a very material element in the increasing prosperity of Scotland and its fisheries."

Unquestionably it is so, and we heartily wish we could see the grant doubled. What would 5,000*l.* a-year be to the Imperial Treasury? and who would grudge such a boon to the hardy Scottish fishermen, whose capital, invested in boats, nets, and lines—at the mercy of the winds and waves—exceeds half a million sterling? That they would fully appreciate its value is proved by the following extract of a letter to the Commissioners from the Coldingham fishermen, who had subscribed among themselves a sufficient contribution to obtain a grant:—

Coldingham, 29 *May*, 1852.

HONOURABLE SIRS,—We, the fishermen residing at Coldingham, have too long delayed offering our thanks for the very great interest you have taken in enabling us to construct a harbour at our creek. In now offering our acknowledgments, we would beg to remark, that the harbour has afforded us all the advantages anticipated; complete security for our boats, and confidence to go to sea in weather which, previous to the improvements, would have deterred us; and when overtaken by gales at sea, we can with confidence make for our home, and reap thereby the full advantage of our labours, while our families have in such cases few fears for our safety.

The building during the past winter has withstood the heaviest sea that is ever likely to roll in upon our shores; and, proud of our little harbour, we will give every attention to have any little injury it may sustain timeously attended to.

We therefore, &c.,

(Signed) HUGH AITCHISON and Crew,
and nine other boats' crews.

Well done, Coldingham fishermen. You have put your own shoulders to the wheel, and you have prospered accordingly. We promise you that your letter, as it deserves, shall be read by your brother fishermen from John o' Groat's to the Land's End; and who can say it may not induce the fishermen of Newlyn and Mousehole, near Penzance, to follow your example, and set to work to improve their harbours, which they much need; while in return, you should copy their fine Mount's Bay boats. A fair exchange, which could not but be of great benefit to both parties.

But our space warns us that we must leave this instructive Report to tell its own tale, sincerely desiring for it a large circulation; and can only join in the profound regret expressed by the Commissioners, that "the supplies of cured herrings which are wanted on the Continent, which would naturally flow there, and which would then give an impetus to mutual commerce on the most profitable basis to the exchanging nations, are interrupted and suppressed by high prohibitory duties among the continental states, artificially maintained to check trade, and calculated to foster national animosities and jealousies. There are large communities on the Continent where a barrel of herrings would be much preferred to any other food that could be presented to them within the reach of their circumstances. There are periods of the year, such as Lent, when in many countries they would be largely consumed, not merely as a delicacy, but for ordinary subsistence; and it may almost be doubted whether, if the restrictions referred to were removed, the coasts of Scotland would be able to supply the immense demand that would arise. It is well deserving the consideration of the British Government and of all who may have influence with foreign states to promote a reduction of these oppressive duties, and to cause that increased circulation of home industry, and ready employment of augmenting numbers, which is so much wanted in this branch of trade, and is of consequence in maintaining a thriving maritime population."

THE THAMES CHURCH MISSION.

THERE are few sailors in the habit of trading to the river who will not be acquainted with the *Swan*, a dandy-rigged cutter, that serves as the Thames Floating Church, and may generally be seen lying alongside one of the sections of colliers waiting their turn to go up to the Pool to discharge. As the Society that manages the affairs of this vessel has just published its Seventh Annual Report, we think some of our readers on the coast may like to hear what has been doing on board the *Swan* for the last year; and as this little Journal may fall into the hands of others who have not had an opportunity of visiting the *Swan*, and perhaps of some who would like to see a similar Floating Church on some other of our rivers frequented by colliers, as the Tyne, the Wear, the Tees, &c., we will preface it by a few words as to the objects of the Mission, and the way they are carried out, as given in the Report before us.

The Thames Church Mission Society was established in 1844 to afford the advantages of a cruising vessel of worship, and partial

visitation to the vast floating population on the Thames, consisting of sailors, fishermen, bargemen, &c. To prevent the overcrowding of the Pool, coal-laden vessels for the port of London are not allowed to proceed at once to their destination, but must bring up in the section appointed by the harbour-master, and there await further orders. There are 7 such sections in the river between Blackwall and Gravesend. The uppermost, in Bugsby's Reach, has room for 65 sail; the two in Galleon's Reach, 25 sail; in Halfway Reach, just above Erith, 25 sail; in Long Reach, 200 sail; in Fidler's Reach, just below Greenhithe, 75 sail; and in Northfleet Hope, 75 more: in all, 465 sail, manned by about 3,000 men and boys. From various causes, vessels are frequently detained here several days, and sometimes for weeks. To supply their crews with spiritual instruction is the great object of the Society, and to assist them, the Admiralty kindly lent the *Swan* cutter, the hold of which is fitted up as a church.

The crew consists of the master, mate, two men, and two boys, who manage the vessel, and place her where the chaplain directs; the boats are then manned, supplied with books, and the work of visitation begins. Tracts are distributed, Bibles and prayer-books sold at reduced prices, and sailors are offered the use of a lending library, and invited to attend Divine service. At four P.M. a signal is made, denoting that there will be service in the evening. For half-an-hour the Thames church bell calls the seamen to prayers, and during this period the *Swan's* boats offer a passage to those who cannot otherwise obtain one. On Sunday mornings the service begins at half-past ten; in the afternoon, a Bible-class of men and boys assemble at half-past two, and there is evening service at half-past six. During the dark evenings the church is lighted with lamps, and warmed by a stove in the winter. There has been a steady increase in the congregation, insomuch that at times it is difficult to find even standing room. No class of people can be more attentive or decorous, and it is a touching scene to witness the weather-beaten countenances of some of the sailors lifted up in prayer, and to hear their unskilled, but manly voices, joining in a hymn of praise and thanksgiving.

During the past year, 3,348 vessels were visited; they were chiefly colliers; the rest were emigrant ships, fishing-smacks, barges, &c. 932 Bibles or Testaments, and 382 prayer-books, were sold. Divine service was celebrated 242 times, and attended by 8,942 persons; the greater part of whom, but for this vessel, would have been deprived of the means of worship: and for many a poor fellow it probably was his last opportunity of hearing the offer of mercy. A sailor lately remarked that he had not been able to attend the services in the *Swan* for five years, and that on the last occasion he was there with seven other seamen, who were all drowned on the following voyage. Now when we know that the average loss of life to our own countrymen from wreck and casualties at sea is about 1,000 persons a-year, it becomes a solemn duty to lose no opportunity of declaring to sailors the message of God's love to man. It may be their last warning. The recent loss of one noble vessel, the *Amazon*, made 60 widows, and deprived 150 children of a father's care.

Another, and a valuable feature of this Mission, is a lending library of well-selected books, adapted to the taste of sailors: the books are in so great request that the demand far exceeds the supply. There can be no doubt that the circulation of these books must be attended with good effect, and as the men take to them kindly, and are anxious to get them, every effort should be made to increase the library, so as always to have suitable books ready for those that ask for them.

Such, then, is the work that has been accomplished on the Thames by a few faithful and resolute men with small means. There is also a floating Mariners' Church at Liverpool and at Bristol. Now is there any reason why a somewhat similar vessel should not be established in some other of our river harbours, where the want of churches near the river's banks renders it very difficult for sailors to attend any place

of worship? The Tyne and the Wear are cases in point, but especially the former, which is a river about ten miles long from its entrance at Tynemouth and Shields to Newcastle Bridge; and in a portion of this length the vessels lie in tiers or sections, very much as in the Thames, waiting their turns to be loaded with coal; or occasionally, when laden, waiting for a fair wind to sail. The Tyne, too, stands at the head of the list of our ports for the number of arrivals and sailings, having upwards of 40,000 vessels in and out every year, or more than either London or Liverpool. As many as 1,200 laden vessels have been seen at one time lying in the port waiting for a fair wind. It is true that in several cases the vessels have not their full crews on board, but they always have some men and lads to take care of the craft, and these would make up a large congregation, who would most thankfully attend Divine service, if the opportunity were afforded them, in a church of their own, without going far from their vessel. Besides, on the banks of the Tyne there is no superabundance of churches; they are, alas! like angels' visits, "few and far between."

We would then respectfully invite all interested in the welfare of sailors belonging to the Tyne to take this question into consideration. We feel assured that the difficulties which may start up at first sight, when they come to be faced and grappled with, will vanish. All that would be required to make a beginning would be a small vessel, with her hold fitted up as a church, say with 100 or 150 sittings to start with; the cabin prepared for the chaplain, who should live on board; the forecastle, or fore-peak, for the crew, which need be very few in number; besides which, arrangements should be made for an evening school, open to apprentice lads and sailors, a reading-room, a lending-library, and a depôt for Bibles, prayer-books, and useful publications. The vessel need not be a black unsightly-looking craft, but painted of a cheerful colour, in accordance with her use; not a repulsive, but a pleasing object, similar to the floating Mariners' Churches in the United States of America (a model of one of which was shown in the Great Exhibition of 1851), at Hong Kong in China, and elsewhere. It would not require masts or sails, as we feel sure some one of the numerous steam-tugs on the Tyne would give her a friendly tug when she required to shift her berth. After the first cost of the vessel, it is probable the whole expense need not exceed 400*l.* a-year, which could be no great object to the counties of Northumberland and Durham, and all well-disposed sailors would assist.

We believe such an establishment would be highly popular among sailors, as it certainly is in America; that not only seamen, but their wives, children, and friends would press to be admitted to attend public service on board, in preference to having to seek sittings with difficulty in a church on shore. The floating population of the Tyne on a working day (exclusive of steamboat passengers) may be roughly estimated at 2,000 persons; on a Sunday, probably it does not exceed one-half. Now, if one in five, or even one in ten of this number, could attend public worship, there would at once be a fair congregation; but not improbably some pilots might join, and in fine weather we believe the numbers would be much increased. Much, of course, would depend upon securing the services of a zealous chaplain, who would devote himself to the work, and put his whole heart in the cause; but we trust there can be little doubt that a faithful minister would be found by seeking. Can one doubt that in such a cause "The Lord of Hosts would be with us; the God of Jacob would be our refuge?"

Nor is it impossible that after a short time that peculiar class of men so characteristic of their employment the "keelmen" might be induced to attend the TYNE FLOATING CHURCH; they would not find that they did their work worse on the Monday from having joined in the service of God on the Sunday. They have a spirit-stirring song on the Tyne, the chorus of which says, "Weel may the keel row;" we venture to assure them that the "keel" would row all the better, and more cheerfully, could they spend a portion of their evenings and of their Sundays on board their own Floating Church, where they would be always gladly welcomed, and their best interests attended to.

1852 — JAN.	NAME.	Belonging to	Rig.	Tons.	Men.	From	Bound to	Carg
2	Little John	Harwich	Schooner	74	5	London	Seaham	Ballast
4	Amazon	London	Steamer	2200	159	Southampton	West Indies	Passeng
—	Dasher	Plymouth	Schooner	79	6	Seaham	Plymouth	Coals
—	Little John	Harwich	-	-	-	London	Sunderland	-
—	Scotia	-	Schooner	99	6	Macduff	London	-
11	Eleanor	Blyth	Brig	146	7	Blyth	London	-
FEB.								
12	Celerity	Exeter	-	-	-	Newport	London	Iron
13	Sophia	Jersey	Sloop	-	-	-	-	Oysters
,,	Teazer	Jersey	Cutter	30	-	-	-	Oysters
14	Mary Ann	Goole	Sloop	54	3	Goole	London	Shoddy
18	Warrior	-	-	-	8	Liverpool	London	-
21	Wave	Dundee	Barque	-	-	South Ferry	Copenhagen	-
,,	Coke	Wells	Sloop	42	4	Goole	Wells	Coals
,,	Geertiena	Veendam	Galliot	60	3	Amsterdam	London	Wheat
25	Queen of the Isles	Leith	Schooner	140	9	Leith	Shetland	General
APRIL								
6	Anna Rebecca	-	-	-	-	Amsterdam	Agra	-
9	Elizabeth & Mary	Whitby	Schooner	-	-	-	London	Coals
,,	Edouard	Elbing	Barque	499	13	Liverpool	Gottenburg	General
10	Queen	Wicklow	Smack	25	3	Wicklow	Skerries	Ballast
11	Scotia	Lerwick	Schooner	60	11	Lerwick	Faro & Iceland	Fishing
13	Mary Hay	Aberdeen	Barque	258	12	Jamaica	London	Sugar,
14	Advocate	London	Barque	296	15	Moulmein	London	Timber
,,	Breton	-	Lugger	-	-	Pont L'Abbé	-	-
15	Maria Johanna	Rotterdam	Galliot	130	7	Liverpool	Libau	Salt
16	Sarah Maria	Norden	Galliot	41	4	Norden	Port Gordon	Bones
,,	Druid	Aberystwith	Schooner	55	4	Liverpool	Drogheda	Salt
,,	Swan	Barmouth	Smack	30	3	Liverpool	Drogheda	Culm
19	Endeavour	Maldon	Brig	114	6	Sunderland	Maldon	Coals
20	Supply	Shields	Brig	-	-	Shields	London	-
,,	Town of Liverpool	Liverpool	Barque	336	-	Buenos Ayres	Liverpool	Tallow &
,,	Orielton	Milford	Schooner	-	-	Galatz	Tyne	-
22	Wenlock	Falmouth	Schooner	100	4	Falmouth	Newcastle	Sulphur
,,	Elisa Emma	Shoreham	Brig	173	7	Glasgow	Havre	Pig-Iron
,,	Betsy & Margaret	Dundee	Schooner	78	5	Arklow	Newcastle	Sulphur
23	Splendid	Pwllheli	Schooner	111	5	Newcastle	Londonderry	Coals
,,	Edward	Tonsburg	Brig	110	7	Christiana	Caen	Deals
,,	Robuste	Bayonne	Chasse Marée	76	5	Blyth	L'Orient	Coals
,,	Emma	Poole	Brig	-	10	Hamburg	Newfoundland	Butter
24	Charles	London	Brig	189	9	Antwerp	Quebec	General
,,	Lumsden	Newcastle	Brig	201	8	London	Shields	Ballast
,,	George	Whitby	Schooner	155	6	Middlesbro'	Hamburgh	Coals
,,	Diligence	-	Schooner	-	-	-	-	-
,,	Paul	Bideford	Schooner	46	4	Newport	Plymouth	Coals
25	Jane	London	-	-	-	Boston	London	-
26	Clorinda	Portaferry	Brig	115	7	Ardrossan	Dublin	Coals
,,	Isabella	Newcastle	Schooner	44	3	Newcastle	Lowestoft	Coals
27	Bee	Aberystwith	Sloop	31	3	Liverpool	Waterford	Flour
28	Ann	Whitby	Brig	110	5	Newcastle	Folkstone	Coals
29	Ebenezer	Lynn	Schooner	40	3	Hartlepool	Lynn	Coals
,,	John Moore	Liverpool	Ship	706	20	Bombay	Liverpool	General
,,	Jane Burrow	Brixham	Smack	28	4	Brixham	Fishing	Ballast
30	Japara	Rotterdam	Barque	484	14	Baltimore	Rotterdam	Flour &
,,	Catherine	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
,,	Alice Maude	London	Barque	253	-	Algoa	London	Wool
MAY								
1	Asia	London	Brig	250	7	Hull	London	Coals
7	Maidstone	-	Barque	-	-	Rochester	Newcastle	-
11	Mary	Lynn	Brig	135	6	Hartlepool	Lynn	Coals
12	Laurel	Aberdeen	Schooner	70	4	Wales	Aberdeen	Slates
14	Unknown	-	Schooner	-	-	-	-	-

AS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM, FOR THE YEAR 1852.

ED; STRANDED and DAMAGED so as to require to DISCHARGE CARGO.

ature of sualty.	Wind. Force.	Wind. Direction.	Lives Lost.	SITE OF WRECK—CREW HOW SAVED—REMARKS, &c.
iown -	-	-	5	Not since been heard of.
it - -	8	S.W.	100	Burnt, 100 miles S.S.W. of the Land's End. 59 persons saved in boats.
iown -	-	-	6	Sailed from Seaham on 7th January, and not since heard of.
iown -	-	-	5	Sailed from Harwich on 2nd January, and not since heard of.
iown -	-	-	6	Sailed from Macduff on 5th January, and not since heard of.
iown -	-	-	7	Not heard of since: supposed, lost on Scroby, Yarmouth.
ided -	-	-	-	St. Ives: sprang a leak, and ran on the beach.
idered -	-	-	-	Rock of L'Etaw, Jersey. Crew saved in their own boat.
idered -	-	-	-	Aquetil Rocks, Jersey. Crew saved in their own boat.
: fire -	9	NN.W.	-	Took fire in the Wallet, was scuttled off Walton Naze, Essex; afterwards got into Wivenhoe.
ided -	-	-	-	Rock off Derby Haven: got into Douglas, Isle of Man.
ided -	-	-	-	South Bank, River Tay.
nded -	-	-	-	Off Wells Harbour. Obliged to discharge; afterwards repaired.
nded -	5	-	-	On Sunk Sand; got into Harwich. Obliged to discharge.
nded -	9	NN.W.	-	Papa Island, Shetland. Parted cable, and drove ashore.
idered -	-	-	-	Sunk 24 miles from Start Point, after collision with "Propontis" steamer.
nded -	4	N.E.	-	Black-tail Sand, entrance of Thames. Much strained.
nded -	2	S.W.	-	Dunnet Sands, Thurso. Got into Stromness on 23rd April to repair.
idered -	6	-	-	Off Bray Head, Dublin. Collision with the "Rose" steamer.
nded -	8	S.S.W.	-	Sumburgh Head, on a sunken rock. Taken into Lerwick to repair.
l Wreck	5	E.S.E.	-	On Bream ledges, Scilly Islands.
l Wreck	3	S.byE.	-	Robert's Head, entrance of Cork. Crew landed in coastguard boat.
idered -	-	-	-	On a bank off Neath, in Swansea Bay.
idered -	4	S.E.	4	Chisel Bank, Portland. Collision with Triton. 3 men saved by shore boat.
l Wreck	3	S.E.	-	Rocks, North Harbour, Peterhead.
nded -	7	E.S.E.	-	Drogheda, near Ballywater River.
idered	7	E.S.E.	3	Drogheda Bay. Crew drowned.
l Wreck	6	N.E.bE.	-	Shipwash Sand. Crew taken into Harwich by a smack.
ision -	-	-	-	Off Foulness, with the "Emperor." Much damaged.
nded -	-	WS.W.	-	Burbo Bank, Liverpool. Towed into port leaking much.
ndered -	-	-	-	Off the Goodwin. Contact with the Bordeaux steamer.
nded -	10	S.S.E.	-	Rocks off Shields. Much damaged. Crew saved by S. Shields life-boat.
ndered -	8	S.	-	Off Holyhead.
nded -	6	S.S.E.	-	Fraserburg. Rocks at Sandhaven. Got off on 4th May.
nded -	9	E.	-	Wick Bay. Got off on 4th May with 30 tons of cargo in.
nded -	9	E.	-	Hasbro' Sands. Got afterwards to the beach, and there sold.
nded -	8	S.E.	-	Wells. Broken up.
l Wreck	9	S.E.	-	Dennis-Ness, N. Ronaldsha, Orkney. Crew saved by a boat from shore.
l Wreck	9	N.E.	-	Pan Sand. Crew and 46 emigrants taken off by two Whitstable cutters.
nded -	9	E.	-	Maplin Sand, entrance of Thames.
l Wreck	7	E.S.E.	-	North Gar Sand, Tees. Crew saved by Seaton life-boat.
-	-	-	-	Broadstairs Harbour. Broke from her moorings and sunk.
ision -	7	NN.W.	-	Appledore, with schooner "Aquila." Much damaged; discharged to repair.
ision -	-	-	7	With a ship 120 miles W. of Cape Clear. 7 persons picked up by "Ontario."
ndered -	6	E.byS.	-	Angus Rock, Strangford Bay, county Down.
nded -	-	N.E.	-	Back of pier, Whitby.
nded -	6	W.S.W	-	Off the Hook Lighthouse, Waterford.
ndered -	5	E.N.E.	-	Off the Galloper. Crew saved in ship's boats.
ndered -	2	E.S.E.	-	In Lynn Harbour. Sprung a leak.
nded -	2	W.S.W	-	South Stack. Got off and into Holyhead; 6 feet water in hold.
ndered -	-	S.W.	-	Off the Start. Contact with the Southampton steamer.
nded -	5	S.W.	-	Compton Bay, Isle of Wight. Cargo in part saved, but damaged.
l Wreck	-	-	-	Off Wexford; supposed at the end of April.
nded -	7	S.W.	6	Dungeness. Four coastguard men and two of the crew drowned alongside.
l Wreck	8	N.E.	-	North Yarmouth, Holm Sands.
nded -	-	-	-	On the In-sand, Shields Harbour.
nded -	6	S.W.b S.	-	Long Sand, Lynn Deeps. Crew picked up by a pilot boat.
l Wreck	6	S.W.	-	Skerries, Pentland Frith. Crew saved in their own boat.
ndered -	-	-	6?	Off Ailsa Craig. Seen to founder.

Coast, are earnestly requested to supply information for the Wreck Register.

WRECK OF THE COLUMBUS.

A LAMENTABLE case of wreck, attended with great loss of life, and one highly discreditable to our country, we regret to say, occurred at the Hook Point, Waterford, early in the present year. We would gladly be spared the pain of recording the facts, but our duty as Journalists admits of no compromise. Where the lives of human beings are concerned, the truth must be told at all hazards. Of the circumstances of the case there can be no question, as they were fully brought out in evidence in open Court before the Waterford Harbour Commissioners, as reported in the "Waterford Mail" from the 10th to the 31st January, from whence the following account is abridged.

On Tuesday the 6th January, 1852, the American ship *Columbus*, of 1,200 tons burthen, M'Cerren, master, from New Orleans to Liverpool, laden with cotton and maize, a crew of 30 persons and 3 lady passengers, struck on the rocks under the Hook Point, on the east side of the entrance of Waterford Harbour, and became a total wreck, with a loss of 13 lives. From the statement of the captain, it appears that, owing to a succession of southerly gales and thick weather, he had had no observations for some days. On the 6th Jan., while running as he thought for the Tuskar lighthouse, at the entrance of the Irish Sea, at 5 P.M. he saw the Hook lighthouse, near Waterford (30 miles to the westward), and from being unable to see the land on which it stands, he took it for the Tuskar. It was blowing a strong breeze from the S.W., and the ship steering east. At half-past 5, on the light being lighted, he found that it was not the red revolving light of the Tuskar, but the fixed bright light of the Hook. Immediately, on finding he was embayed, hauled his wind to the S.E., but could not weather the Saltees light-ship, which lies 10 m. E.S.E. of the Hook. He then wore ship, and stood to the westward, with difficulty weathered the Hook Point, passing it within a-quarter of a mile, stood across the harbour, and soon saw the red light at the end of Dunmore pier, which lies on the west side of Waterford Bay, just within the entrance, and which is the regular pilot station.

Although a bright moonlight night, and the ship firing rockets repeatedly, and although within a musket-shot of the pier-head, no pilot came off, and the captain was compelled to stand out. He tried to tack, but the ship, missing stays, was obliged to wear, and in endeavouring to weather the Hook, the vessel struck heavily on the rocks, close under the light, at about 9 P.M. The anchors were immediately let go, to keep her head to sea; she soon drove higher up the bay, but kept head to wind. A boat was despatched to try and carry a line on shore, but was upset, and one man drowned. In trying to lower the life-boat she was dashed to pieces against the ship; the masts were then cut away. An attempt was made to send a line to the shore, distant only 50 yards, by means of a kite made out of one of the lady passengers' silk aprons, but it did not succeed. The ship held together until nearly 6 o'clock in the morning, when she swung broadside on to the waves. Her situation now became truly awful, and, of course, was but of short duration; every sea lifted the ship bodily against the rocks by which she was surrounded, and in a short time she was broken into fragments. The ladies were secured to pieces of the wreck, but they never reached the shore; some of the crew saved themselves by clinging to the bales of cotton which floated out as the ship broke up, and in this manner drove on shore; but 13 out of the 33, including passengers, were drowned.

The conduct of the Coast-guard on this occasion, as usual, was highly praiseworthy. Shortly after the ship struck, Mr. HORWOOD, R.N., of the Fethard Station, with the men under his orders, and Dr. HAMILTON, R.N., of H.M. Cutter *Sparrow*, who happened to be there on a visit, were on the spot, and actively engaged in rescuing the sufferers. Others, too, were not less active. Mr. BREEN, and Mr. CARROLL, keeper of the Hook light, and his assistants, and a Coast-guard-man, named ROGAN, were particularly remarked. They, with the bystanders, at

great personal risk of being carried away by the retreating waves, or crushed by the falling timbers, eagerly pressed forward to snatch the struggling men from the sea: the wife, too, of the light-keeper contributed everything that active benevolence could suggest to mitigate the sufferings of the rescued. Great credit, too, is due to the Rev. PETER DUNN, of Templeton, for his exertions in preventing plunder from the wreck, and in restoring lost property; nor must we omit the highly-creditable act of honesty shown by JAMES BREEN, of Harrylock, a poor boy, who picked up, unperceived, a small bag of American gold, which he returned to the captain in the presence of his pastor, Mr. DUNN.

Thus perished the fine ship *Columbus*, valued, with her cargo, at 50,000*l.*; and, still more sad, 13 of her passengers and crew—in a friendly harbour, and within 50 yards of the shore, whence there was no means of affording any aid that could be of service.

This painful case suggests some very serious considerations:—As to the position of the ship; as to the want of distinctive character in the lighthouses; as to the conduct of the Dunmore pilots; and, lastly, which is our special concern, as to the want of rockets, or a mortar, at the Hook Point, to effect communication with a stranded vessel.

It is not our province to sit in judgment on the master of the ship, nor any other person connected with this sad loss, nor is it our wish or intention so to do; but it is our bounden duty, with all the facts of the case before us, to point out the errors committed, so as to prevent, if possible, a recurrence of a similar disaster; and, 1st, we must remark on the rashness of running a ship on her course, after a casual glimpse of a lighthouse, without having ascertained what that lighthouse was. Owing to southerly winds and thick weather on the passage across the Atlantic, no trustworthy observations of the sun or stars had been obtained for some—it is said for eleven—days. In rather hazy weather, and three-quarters of an hour after sunset, in the depth of winter, the first sight of land after quitting New Orleans is obtained; and all that is seen is a lighthouse, but not the cliff, 50 feet high, on which it stands. Although it was certain that not many minutes would elapse before the light would be lighted, which would at once show its distinctive character (the Hook being a fixed bright light, the Tuskar a revolving red light), the *Columbus* could not be detained this short time to make sure of her position, but dashed along on an east course, with a strong fair wind, and all sail set, towards inevitable destruction. Suddenly, the Saltee Islands and floating-light are seen on the starboard, or weather bow; the ship was hauled to the southward as soon as sail could be shortened, and it could be done with safety to the spars, but not in time to weather the floating-light, and therefore the ship wore, and stood to the westward, towards Waterford Harbour, only weathering the Hook by a-quarter of a mile.

2. As to the want of distinctive character in the lighthouses.—The fact that two lighthouses were mistaken for each other by day is important. One would hardly have supposed that these lighthouses, one placed on a projecting headland, 50 feet high, the other, on a rock only 20 feet high, and apparently rising directly from the water, could be mistaken; but here we have the fact stated by the master, and confirmed by the mate of the ship. The lighthouses stand within 30 miles of each other, and are both of a light colour. It is evident, then, that this is not a safe state of things; an error of 30 miles is nothing for a ship to be out of her reckoning in crossing the Atlantic, especially as it is nearly all difference of longitude; the lighthouses, therefore, should be given some distinctive character, whether by painting one of them in alternate bands of black and white, horizontally or vertically, or by some other method. The necessity of doing so was long since pointed out to the Ballast Board of Dublin, under whose charge the Irish lights are placed, and a trial was made on the Maidens, off Lough Larne; why could it not be done to the Tuskar also?

3. As to the conduct of the Dunmore pilots.—It appears in evidence that the *Columbus*, after passing the Hook light,

stood across the harbour to Dunmore pier-head, firing rockets for a pilot every five minutes. She stood so close to the pier about 8 o'clock, that the people on the jetty were distinctly visible by the light of a full moon. Dunmore is the regular pilot station, and the two pilot-vessels were in the harbour, yet neither went off to the ship; and the captain, after waiting some time, seeing no prospect of a pilot, and being ignorant of the harbour, wore ship to stand out of the bay, but could not weather the Hook Point, and went ashore. As an excuse for not going off, it was stated that the pilot-vessels were inefficient, and the weather so bad that they dared not go off. All the pilots' assertions as to the dreadful state of the weather are disposed of by the simple fact, that the *Columbus* stood across the bay with double-reefed fore and mizen topsail, and only a single reef in her main-topsail; that when she found herself close in off the pier-head, she threw all aback, to turn on her heel, and that she stood out of the bay under her courses and topsails. Now, to call such weather a gale of wind is downright nonsense; any sailor-boy knows that a ship cannot carry a single-reefed main-topsail in anything more than a fresh or strong breeze. After great loss of time in getting an extra anchor up, one of the pilot-boats did go out a short distance, but it was too late. It appears, then, that the pilot-boats are inefficient and ill-found. That instead of one of them being under way at the entrance of the harbour (the proper place for all pilot-boats), they were both lying in Dunmore; that even there a bad look-out was kept, and when the ship was seen, no prompt measures were taken to put a pilot on board—and the ship was lost. It was, further, stated in evidence, that the Dunmore pilots are so ill-paid that it could not be expected that good sailors and skilful men would accept the situation.

Lastly, as to the want of a rocket or mortar, or any means for effecting communication with a stranded vessel.—This is our more immediate province, and it is not easy to say why this station was so entirely unprovided. Wrecks at this point are, we believe, of very rare occurrence, and no demand for a mortar has ever been made that we are aware of. The late sad accident is a warning that the station should not be left unprovided, and we may hope the Coast-guard will be enabled to furnish the requisite apparatus here as they have at other places on this coast; if not, we trust the Shipwreck Institution will do so. It might be placed at the lighthouse, or at the Coast-guard station at Harrylock or Fethard, only five miles distant, whence there could be no great difficulty in transporting rockets to the Hook Point; at all events, every means should be adopted to prevent a loss of 13 lives within 50 yards of the shore.

MEETINGS OF COMMITTEE.

6th May. THOMAS WILSON, Esq., in the Chair.

Confirmed the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Institution, held on the 22nd April; also of the previous monthly Meeting, and of the Finance, Wreck, and Reward Sub-Committees.

Resolved, that a Special General Meeting of the Institution be called by advertisement for Thursday the 3rd of June, to submit certain alterations in the Rules and Regulations of the Institution.

Granted a reward of 11*l.* to a party of fishermen, 20 in number, who, in two boats, saved 5 out of 10 of the crew of the Austrian brig *Nuovo Zelante*, wrecked on Turf Island, coast of Cork, on the 21st of March last.

Also the sum of 1*l.* to a boat's crew of 4 men, who saved 3 out of 9 persons from a boat swamped in Glandore Harbour, coast of Cork, on the 17th of February last.

3rd June. THOMAS WILSON, Esq., in the Chair.

At the Special General Meeting held pursuant to notice, read and considered the Rules and Regulations of the Institution. Sanctioned certain alterations in them, and finally adopted them, as printed in the April Number of the "Life-Boat" Journal, and directed them to be laid before another Special General Meeting for confirmation.

Confirmed the Minutes of the previous

meeting of Committee, and of the Finance Wreck, and Reward Sub-Committees.

In reply to an application from the Chairman of the North Devon Humane Society, that a new life-boat be granted to them, to be stationed on Braunton Sands, Bideford Bay, in lieu of their present boat, No. 2, granted to them by the Institution in Dec. 1831; also that their boat No. 3, the *Petrel*, sent to them in Oct. 1847, in which her crew had no confidence, might be removed, and another placed there in her stead. It was resolved, that No. 2 should be replaced forthwith, at the earliest opportunity, and that the Inspector of Life-boats should proceed to Bideford and examine the boats in question and the local establishment generally, and report the result previous to any decision being come to on the necessity of replacing No. 3 by another boat.

Granted a reward of 1*l.* each to three Coast-guardmen, of Barry Cove station, Cork, for saving 3 out of 18 of the crew of the barque *Amy*, wrecked near that place on the 22nd March last; and 5*s.* each to 6 countrymen who assisted on the occasion.

TUBULAR LIFE-BOAT.

UNDER the above designation, a "l fe-boat," or what would be more correctly termed a life-raft, has been constructed by two public-spirited gentlemen, the Messrs. RICHARDSON, of Aber Hirnant, Bala, North Wales, and navigated from Liverpool, round the Land's End, to Ramsgate and London, having, in the course of the voyage, encountered some severe weather, and sufficient, in their opinion, as also in that of the coxswain of the Magazines Life-boat at Liverpool, THOMAS EVANS (a high authority on such a subject), to establish the fact that a raft of that construction may be made to answer all the purposes of a life-boat, except, perhaps, beating to windward, for which obviously such a form is not adapted, although by means of lee-boards, and the use of the lee-oars, she goes to windward fairly.

The life-raft in question consists of two iron tubes, cylinders or pontoons, 40 ft. long, by 2½ ft. diameter, placed side by side, at a distance of 3 ft. apart; the ends tapered, curved, and turned inwards, so as to meet in a point at head and stern. The cylinders are divided into water-tight compartments, are well stayed and braced together, so as to form a rigid fabric. On the top of this, which forms a frame, narrow beams are laid athwartships, and at about an inch apart battens are laid lengthways (so that water may pass between), and thus form a platform, 30 ft. long. The head and stern sheets have a rope net-work instead. Above the platform, sides about 8 in. high, extend fore and aft, on which the thwarts are fixed; and again above these a gunwale, 12 in. high, in which the rowlocks are placed. The thwarts are 8 in number, 36 in. apart from centre to centre, but they are only 4 in. above the platform amidships. The width of the platform is 6 ft. 8 in., the whole width of the raft is 8 ft. It is pulled with 14 or 16 oars, like an ordinary boat, steered by a rudder, and rigged with 2 lug-sails, with a jib and top-sails for fine weather. It will carry 80 men, and such is its stability that, if they all stood on one side, it would make no great difference. The weight of the whole is 53 cwt., and its draft of water said to be only 11 in. It was built by Mr. William Lees, of Manchester, and appears well and strongly put together; the thickness of the cylinder iron is $\frac{1}{12}$th of an inch, and openings are provided in the top of each compartment for pumping out any water that may get into them. The four end compartments are filled with air-tight bladders, and the two middle with cork shavings. The cost of the whole, it is understood, was 130*l.*

This raft is said to have behaved very well on its passage round from Liverpool to London; it encountered some rough weather in passing through Jack Sound, off St. David's Head, and in the Bristol Channel, off Padstow. The coxswain declares that no sea ever broke over them, but that the raft rose buoyantly to the waves. On a trial in smooth water, off Woolwich, it held way fairly with a life-boat. No opportunity has yet been afforded for trying its powers in pulling off shore against a gale of wind to a wreck, but she has frequently beached and rowed off again in a strong breeze.

The spirited owners have left their craft at Messrs. Searle's, the well-known boat-builders at Lambeth, who will gladly show her to any one desirous of seeing her, and have declared their intention of sending her to Ramsgate for trial early in November, as soon as stormy weather sets in.

The use of pontoons, or water-tight cylinders, for floating, is no novelty; but this is the first time, as far as we are aware, that they have been combined and fitted, with sufficient skill and strength, as to form a life-raft. In January, 1813, Mr. THOMAS BOYCE, of Fetter-lane, was awarded a Silver Medal and 10 guineas by the Society of Arts, for a model of a safety-buoy, or small life-boat, consisting of two wooden cylinders, or pontoons, covered with water-proof cloth, connected together at 1 ft. apart, and bearing a grating between them; the cylinders were 1 ft. diameter, tapered and joined together at the end, and the whole only 3 ft. in width: it had a mast and sail secured above and below the grating, so that, which ever side fell uppermost, it was ready for use.

Pontoons for forming rafts and bridges for military purposes have been used since the time of Marlborough, and probably before; but these were flat-bottomed boats. The first use of the cylindric pontoon was proposed by Sir JAMES R. COLLETON, Major in the Royal Staff Corps, in a pamphlet published at Cambray in October, 1816; these were of wood, 22 ft. long, by 2½ ft. diameter, and the cylinders alone weighed 8½ cwt. Colonel, now General, Sir CHARLES PASLEY also proposed a pontoon, shaped like a canoe, of a light timber frame, covered with sheet copper, and divided transversely into two equal parts for the facility of carriage; these were 2 ft. 8 in. in diameter, and weighed 12 cwt. About the year 1820, Major, now Colonel, BLANSHARD, R.E., C.B., recommended cylindric pontoons of tin, of 2 ft. 6 in. diameter, but weighing only 7 cwt.; after a severe trial of the comparative merit of these pontoons in the Medway, in 1836, Colonel BLANSHARD's were finally adopted, for military service. A raft, 22 ft. long by 12 ft. wide, can be formed in a few minutes with these pontoons, and they can be rowed fast, and with great ease, in smooth water.

Among the numerous models sent to the Committee, in answer to the Duke of NORTHUMBERLAND'S offer of a premium for the best model of a life-boat, were 21 life-rafts; some supported by one cylinder, many more by two; some by closed canoes; some by a boat divided lengthways, and connected by a grating; some of wood; some of iron; some of gutta-percha: but none of them, apparently, combined and fitted with sufficient skill and strength to stand the rough work to which a life-boat is liable.

The life-raft of RUSSELL and OSWALD, of Douglas, Isle of Man, which had been in actual use since the year 1850, and reported favourably on by pilots and others, appeared to the Committee one of the best, and it is described in p. 41 of the Appendix to their Report; others were by DOCKAR, of Banff, and SEVERN, of Buckingham Gate; but they gave no indication of any prospect of obtaining speed. A raft on cylinders, that was built of the full size, and tried before the Committee, could hardly stem the tide in the river.

The Messrs. RICHARDSON, however, have greatly improved on their model, and by the aid of a skilful mechanical engineer, have produced a life-raft which bids fair to compete, on advantageous terms, with any life-boat, and on a flat beach might prove very useful. It may be feared that the iron of which the cylinders are formed will be liable to rapid decay, unless they can be well coated, inside as well as out, to preserve them from rust; but as the inventors have overcome greater difficulties, no doubt, this minor objection will be vanquished too; and we heartily wish them the success that their public spirit and perseverance have so fairly entitled them to.

LACON'S SAFETY PLAN FOR LOWERING A SHIP'S BOATS AT SEA.

WHILST we are doing all in our power to guard our coasts with life-boats ready to save life in the event of a vessel being stranded on our shores, we must not lose sight of the fact

that the greatest loss of life among our own countrymen, during the past two years, has arisen from the difficulty of getting the ship's own boats lowered down in safety when the vessel has got into danger. In the case of the *Orion*, with 200 persons on board, of whom 160 were passengers, while running along the coast of Scotland in a calm summer's night, and within hail of the shore, she struck upon a rock off Portpatrick, and sunk in deep water, when 40 of the crew and passengers were drowned. In the more recent case of the *Amazon*, which caught fire on the 4th January of this year, at 100 miles distance from the Land's End, only 36 hours after leaving Southampton, "the mail-boat on being lowered was immediately swamped, with about 25 people in her, all of whom were lost; the pinnace sheered across the sea before the people in her could unhook the fore-tackle, and was dragged through the water at such a rate that everybody was washed out of her; while clearing away the second cutter, a sea struck her, raised her off the cranes, and unhooked the bow tackle; the fore end immediately fell down, and the people in her were precipitated into the sea and drowned;"—and thus, from the want of the means of lowering the boats in safety, 99 persons perished. In the still more recent case of the *Birkenhead* troop-ship, wrecked on the morning of the 26th February on the coast of South Africa: out of 638 gallant fellows, who left Simon's Bay a few hours before, only 184 remain to tell the tale. In all these cases, and in many others that might be cited, could the boats inboard, the paddle-box boats, and the quarter-boats have been promptly and safely got afloat, there can be no doubt that numbers of lives would have been saved.

Strongly impressed with this conviction, Mr. STIRLING LACON, formerly an officer in the East India Company's service, has proposed a plan for lowering boats at sea with safety, even when the vessel, as in the case of the *Amazon*, was going rapidly through the water. This is no theoretical plan, but has been actually put in practice on board one of the steamers of the South-eastern and Continental Steam-packet Company on the 5th August last, off Folkstone, as witnessed and certified to by Vice-Admiral TUCKER, K.C.B., and Captain GEORGE HATHORN, R.N., and many others who sign the certificate, when one of the quarter-boats, with Mr. LACON and a crew in her, was lowered into the water by one man, and went safely clear of the ship in a strong south-west breeze, and the steamer going at full speed, or at the rate of 12 miles an hour; and this experiment was repeated five or six times with similar success. We trust that this trial may be considered so far decisive, as to induce those who have hitherto been incredulous or wavering between this and three or four other plans that have recently been brought before the public, to go and witness a trial, and be convinced of the simplicity and practicability of the arrangement.

The characteristic feature of Mr. LACON'S plan is, that the boat is suspended from the davits, by pendants (or single ropes), instead of the usual tackles, the inner ends of which are brought round barrels at either end of a horizontal bar of iron (or windlass), secured close to the side of the vessel, either within or without the bulwark: the inner end of each pendant has a Flemish eye worked in it, and is merely hooked over a pin on the barrel, so that as it is unwound it runs off clear and disengages itself. A friction brake or strap is applied to the windlass in the centre, and worked by one man, by means of a lever 3 feet long, just as weights are lowered by a crane; the boat therefore must go down equally or evenly, can be stopped in its descent at pleasure, or both ends can be let go at once. It will be observed that this plan, so far, only provides for lowering a boat safely at sea, not for hoisting her up again; and in this Mr. LACON has shown his judgment, as the former was the real problem to be dealt with, and we believe he has solved it effectually. To hoist the boat up at sea, the common tackles must be used; the pendants do not interfere with them, as the tackles can be hooked to an eye-bolt at the end of the davits, and worked as before. But when short of hands, in moderate weather at sea or in harbour, two men can hoist the boat up by means of the inner rim of a ratchet-wheel,

the friction pulley or brake acting as a pawl. The great convenience of this arrangement in all merchant vessels, but especially in short-handed steamers, need not be insisted upon.

The most critical position for a boat on being lowered is when, half way down, a wave rises under her bow, and unhooks the foremost tackle; in such a case the brake would be thrown back immediately, and the after-end would go down as fast as the foremost, as the weight of the boat would immediately overhaul the pendant, and the boat would be free.

The only plausible objection we have heard to this plan is that in a ship-of-war the windlass or winch might be in the way of two of the quarter-deck or poop guns, and that the iron bar would be an additional danger in time of action, and, if struck, might act as a bar-shot. This is admitted, as far as the objection goes, but, first, we are not at war with any nation, and it may be hoped we shall not be so for some time to come; and, secondly, we are not at present recommending the plan for ships-of-war, but for passenger-steamers, emigrant-ships, and troop-ships, and we hold it to be imperative that they should be at once so fitted. At this moment not less than 100,000 of our countrymen are crossing the Atlantic as emigrants to Canada, the United States of America, and Australia, in ships fitted with the old mode of lowering their boats, whereas the present plan was made fully public in January last. Many of these ships are provided with every luxury; one of the largest and finest that sailed about a month since, advertised that there was on board a "COLLARD'S grand piano in the saloon!" Grand pianos are very nice instruments, but where hundreds of lives are at stake, we really think "LACON'S safety plan for lowering boats" would or should be a more attractive advertisement. But we trust the affair will not be left to the choice of shipowners; if, as we believe, an effectual remedy for one portion of "the dangers of the seas" has been found, public opinion will shortly force its adoption.

NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS.

IT was stated in the first Number of this Journal, that it would be published monthly, or occasionally, as circumstances might point out, and that it would be sold at the lowest possible price that would cover the expense of paper and printing, in order to place it within the reach of every boatman and fisherman around our coasts, but that it would not be permitted to trench on the funds subscribed by the public for what may be considered the more immediate objects of the Institution—as granting rewards for gallant conduct in saving life, placing life-boats, &c. After a trial of a few months, it has been found that its necessarily limited circulation among residents on the coast and fishermen will not cover the expense of paper and printing at the low price which has been fixed, and therefore, if continued as heretofore, it must encroach upon the fund appropriated to other purposes.

Such being the case, it is proposed to increase the price to 2*d.* each Number, and to issue it every two months, or once a quarter, as circumstances may arise: for the present, it is arranged that the next Number will appear in November, and the following on the 1st January. All original subscribers to the Journal will, of course, receive their copies at the former price until the close of the year.

We may here repeat the substance of what was said in the April Number, under the head of "A Word to our Well-wishers," that they can aid the cause of humanity by ordering some copies of the Journal of the nearest bookseller, and distributing them among the fishermen on the coast. It will be seen that each Number that has appeared has contained some useful suggestion towards saving life, and some information that may be of service to the fisherman in his calling, and there is little doubt but that each succeeding Number will continue to do so. We ask, then, the aid of all interested in the cause to help its circulation by every means in their power.

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