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## THE MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT, 1854.

IN various parts of the *Life-boat Journal*, we have expressed a strong conviction of the utter inadequacy of all existing means for affording succour to shipwrecked persons around our coasts. We have mourned over it as a national discredit, that many hundreds of lives were every year sacrificed at the very threshold of our doors, without any of those strenuous efforts being made for their relief which the urgency of the case has called for; which our character as a Christian nation has demanded; and which are every day successfully called into use against almost insurmountable difficulties where pecuniary profit is the motive power. We have advanced the opinion that as a nation, whose greatness has been reared in the lap of commerce, and whose wealth and power are still upheld by her, the claim on our protection of those who are her working servants, and through whose instrumentality we have reaped these great advantages, is also a national one, and not confined to those whom accident has located in the neighbourhood of our coasts. We have also stated that we considered this national aid could not be effectually afforded without the assistance of the Government; and we have pointed out various advantages which we might hope would accrue from such aid being given. Lastly, we have urged that the shipowner or immediate employer of the seaman and caterer for the emigrant and other passengers, should be compelled to provide every available means to prevent accident and to afford them security.

It will not be necessary for us to go over the same ground again that we have done

before, or to enlarge on the causes which have produced the past unsatisfactory state of things; the facts are patent, that great loss of life by shipwreck has annually occurred on our coasts and elsewhere, from time immemorial, and that no systematic and universal efforts have been made to prevent it. The Government of the day have at last become convinced of those facts, and are about to make their first serious effort to meet the evil. A bill has been prepared by the Right Honourable the President of the Board of Trade, THOMAS CARDWELL, Esq., M.P., and has received the sanction of Parliament, during the late Session, entitled "An Act to amend and consolidate the Acts relating to Merchant Shipping." This Act embodies a most comprehensive system of legislature for all the vast and varied interests involved in the immense shipping trade of this country; and, amongst the many enactments contained in it for the protection and welfare of seamen, and of passengers when on ship-board, are several the objects of which are, or the effects of which will be, to afford increased security to life in case of shipwreck or other disaster at sea.

The following brief summary of such parts of the Act as directly or indirectly will tend to this beneficial result, will convey some idea of its nature and value. We will place each part in the order in which it occurs in the Act, and note the Sections, so that any of our readers who may wish to read them at length may refer to them.

"*Merchant Shipping Act, 1854.*"

Summary of such portions of the above Act as have reference, directly or indirectly,

to the prevention of accidents and the saving of life in the event of shipwreck or other disaster at sea.

Part I. Sections 14 to 16.—Authorize the Board of Trade to appoint Inspectors, who, on their part, shall be empowered to investigate and report on the causes of accident or damage sustained or caused by any ship—as to whether the provisions of the Act have been complied with—and, as to whether the hull and machinery, boats and equipments, of any steam-ship are in good condition.

Part II. Sections 20 to 26.—Establish an improved measurement of tonnage.

Part III. Sections 131 to 140.—Institute and regulate examinations of masters and mates of “Foreign-going Ships,” and of “Home Trade Passenger Ships,” as to their qualifications.

Sections 240 to 242.—Authorize Admiralty Courts to remove the master of a vessel, on sufficient evidence of its being necessary; and authorize the Board of Trade to institute investigations as to the incompetency or misconduct of masters and mates of vessels; and to cancel or suspend their certificates of competency and service in certain cases, such as drunkenness, tyranny, or other gross misconduct.

Sections 260 to 266.—Institute Naval Courts on the high seas and abroad, for the investigation of complaints on board merchant ships either on the part of the master or men, and also the circumstances attending the wreck or abandonment of any British ship abroad, with power to supersede a master or discharge a seaman, and which Naval Courts are directed to forward Reports of their proceedings, in every case, to the Board of Trade.

Sections 280 to 287.—Require the keeping an official log, independently of the ordinary ship’s log, and define and explain the character of the same and of the entries required to be made in it.

Part IV. Sections 292 to 294.—Direct, 1st. That no British decked-ship (except ships used solely as steam-tugs and ships engaged in the whale fishery), and no foreign steam-ship carrying passengers between places in the United Kingdom, shall be

allowed to proceed to sea from any port in the United Kingdom, unless provided, according to her tonnage, with boats duly supplied with all requisites for use, and not being fewer in number, nor less in their cubic contents, than as specified in a Table annexed.

2nd. That no ship carrying more than ten passengers shall proceed to sea, unless, in addition to her boats as above required, she be also furnished with a life-boat, or one of her boats be rendered buoyant after the manner of a life-boat.

3rd. That no such ship shall proceed to sea unless provided with two life-buoys.

And further, that all such boats and buoys shall be kept so as to be at all times fit and ready for use.

Section 295.—Directs the use of such lights and fog-signals as shall be regulated from time to time by the Board of Admiralty.

Section 296.—Directs that whenever any ship, whether a steam or sailing-ship, meets another proceeding in a different direction, so that if both were to proceed on their respective courses they would run risk of collision, the helms of both ships shall be put to port, so that they should pass on the port side of each other.

Section 297.—Requires every steam-ship, when navigating any narrow channel, whenever it is safe and practicable to do so, to keep to that side of the fairway or mid-channel which lies on the starboard side of such ship.

Sections 300 to 302.—Direct that every steam-ship built of iron shall be divided by transverse water-tight partitions, into at least three equal parts. That they shall be provided with a safety-valve to each boiler beyond the control of the engineer.

That every sea-going passenger steam-ship shall have her compasses adjusted from time to time.

That all sea-going steam-ships, except tugs, shall be provided with a hose in connection with the engine, for the purpose of extinguishing fire.

That every sea-going passenger steam-ship shall be provided with a gun and ammunition, and other means of making signals of distress as specified.

Sections 303 to 311.—Provide for the survey of all passenger steam-ships by officers appointed by the Board of Trade for the purpose of ascertaining that all the provisions of this Act are carried out; such surveys to be held on every ship, at least twice in each year.

Sections 326 and 327.—Require that every accident to a steam-ship which shall occasion such serious injury to her hull or machinery as to affect her sea-worthiness, or which shall occasion loss of life or serious injury to any person, shall be forthwith reported to the Board of Trade by the owner or master of such ship; and that the supposed total loss of any such ship shall also be reported by the owner, in like manner, to that Board.

Part V. Sections 330 to 388.—Regulate and provide for an efficient system of pilotage.

Part VI. Sections 389 to 416.—Provide for the establishment, maintenance, and management of lighthouses, buoys, and beacons; and regulate the light dues, their amount, and mode of collection.

Part VII. Sections 417 to 431.—Define the constitution of the "Mercantile Marine Fund."

As it is through the instrumentality of this Fund that the chief provisions of this Act are effected, we insert Sections 417 and 418 in full; the former of which describes the manner in which the Fund is raised, and the latter the mode of its application.

"417. The following sums shall be carried to a common fund, to be entitled the 'Mercantile Marine Fund;' (that is to say)

"(1.) All fees and other sums (other than fines and forfeitures) received by the Board of Trade under the provisions of the Third and Fourth Parts of this Act.

"(2.) All light dues or other sums received by or accruing to the Trinity House, the Commissioners of Northern Lighthouses, and the Port of Dublin Corporation, under the Sixth Part of this Act.

"(3.) All rates and monies received by the Trinity House under the local Act of the seventh year of Her

present Majesty, chapter fifty-seven, for the regulation of lastage and ballastage in the river Thames.

"(4.) All fees and other sums mentioned in the Table marked V. in the Schedule hereto, which are received by Receivers appointed under the Eighth Part of this Act.

And an account of the said Fund, intituled 'The Mercantile Marine Fund Account,' shall be kept with her Majesty's Paymaster-General.

"418. Subject to any prior charges that may be subsisting thereon by virtue of any Act or Acts of Parliament or otherwise, the said Fund shall be chargeable with the following expenses; that is to say—

"(1.) The salaries and other expenses connected with the local Marine Boards, the examinations, and the shipping offices provided for by the Third Part of this Act.

"(2.) The salaries of surveyors and other expenses connected with the survey of passenger steam-ships provided for by the Fourth Part of this Act.

"(3.) All expenses incurred by the general lighthouse authorities aforesaid in the works and services of lighthouses, buoys, and beacons provided for by the Sixth Part of this Act, or in the execution of any works necessary or expedient for the purpose of permanently reducing the expense of such works and services.

"(4.) All expenses incurred by the Trinity House in respect of lastage and ballastage in the river Thames.

"(5.) Such expenses for establishing and maintaining on the coasts of the United Kingdom proper life-boats, with the necessary crews and equipments, and for affording assistance towards the preservation of life and property in cases of shipwreck and distress at sea, and for rewarding the preservation of life in such cases, as the Board of Trade directs.

"(6.) Any expenses incurred in carrying into effect the provisions with regard to Receivers and the perform-

ance of their duties contained in the Eighth Part of this Act.

“(7.) Any expenses which by this or any other Act of Parliament are specially charged thereon.

And shall, save as hereinafter mentioned, be applicable to no other purpose whatever.”

Part VIII. Relates to wrecks, casualties, and salvage. Sections 432 to 438.—Provide for inquiry into the causes of the loss of, or material damage to, or abandonment of, any ship, and of the loss of life in cases of wreck or other casualty; and authorize the inspecting officers of coastguard and the principal officers of customs to hold such inquiries.

Section 439.—Gives the Board of Trade the general superintendence of all matters relating to wreck, and empowers them to appoint officers of the customs, or of the coast-guard, or officers of inland revenue, or any other person, to be a “Receiver of Wreck.”

Section 441.—Gives the “Receiver of Wreck” the chief command and authority over all persons present at any scene of wreck or other casualty, and requires him to assign such duties to each person, and to issue such directions as he may think fit with a view to the preservation of either life or property.

Sections 442 to 457.—Define the various duties and powers of a “Receiver” in cases of wreck and with regard to wrecked property; invest him with authority to suppress, by force if necessary, plunder, disorder, and obstruction at wrecks; and empower certain other public officers, in the absence of a Receiver, to exercise the duties of his office.

Sections 458 and 459, we think to be so important, and likely to be productive of such beneficial results, that we give them in full.

“458. In the following cases (that is to say)—

“Whenever any ship or boat is stranded, or otherwise in distress on the shore of any sea or tidal water situate within the limits of the

United Kingdom, and services are rendered by any person.

“(1.) In assisting such ship or boat;

“(2.) In saving the lives of the persons belonging to such ship or boat;

“(3.) In saving the cargo or apparel of such ship or boat, or any portion thereof;

“And whenever any wreck is saved by any person other than a Receiver within the United Kingdom,

There shall be payable by the owners of such ship or boat, cargo, apparel, or wreck, to the person by whom such services or any of them are rendered, or by whom such wreck is saved, a reasonable amount of salvage, together with all expenses properly incurred by him in the performance of such services or the saving of such wreck, the amount of such salvage and expenses (which expenses are hereinafter included under the term salvage) to be determined in case of dispute in manner hereinafter mentioned.

“459. Salvage in respect of the preservation of the life or lives of any person or persons belonging to any such ship or boat as aforesaid shall be payable by the owners of the ship or boat in priority to all other claims for salvage; and in cases where such ship or boat is destroyed, or where the value thereof is insufficient, after payment of the actual expenses incurred, to pay the amount of salvage due in respect of any life or lives, the Board of Trade may in its discretion award to the salvors of such life or lives out of the Mercantile Marine Fund such sum or sums as it deems fit, in whole or part satisfaction of any amount of salvage so left unpaid in respect of such life or lives.”

Sections 460 to 501.—Provide for arbitration and appeal in disputed salvage cases; define the manner of enforcing payment of salvage; provide for the disposal of unclaimed wreck; make the inhabitants of the hundred, or other district where a wreck occurs, liable for damages in the event of plunder or destruction of property; provide for salvage services rendered by any

of her Majesty's ships; and make sundry other provisions in connexion with salvage.

Part IX. Establishes and defines the liabilities of shipowners. Section 504.—Exempts the shipowner from being answerable in *damages* to an extent beyond the value of his ship, and of the freight due, or to grow due on the voyage, for loss of life or personal injury; or loss or damage of goods, &c.; provided that such loss of life, personal injury, or damage occur without his actual fault or privity.

Sections 507 to 509.—Define the mode of procedure for the recovery of damages.

Section 510.—Declares the rules to be observed as to damages, and to their application. The principle established by this Section is so important, that we insert the Section in full.

- “(1.) The damages payable in each case of death or injury shall be assessed at thirty pounds.
- “(2.) The damages found due on any such inquiry as aforesaid shall be the first charge on the aggregate amount for which the owner is liable, and shall be paid thereout in priority to all other claims.
- “(3.) All such damages as aforesaid shall be paid to Her Majesty's Paymaster General, and shall be distributed and dealt with by him in such manner as the Board of Trade directs; and in directing such distribution the Board of Trade shall have power in the first place to deduct and retain any costs incidental thereto; and in the next place, as regards the sums paid in respect of injuries, shall direct payment to each person injured of such compensation, not exceeding in any case the statutory amount, as the said Board thinks fit; and as regards the sums paid in respect of deaths, shall direct payment thereof for the benefit of the husband, wife, parent, and child of the deceased, or any of them, in such shares, upon such evidence, and in such manner as the said Board thinks fit.
- “(4.) The Board of Trade shall refund to the owner any surplus remaining

under its control after making such distribution as aforesaid, and the sum so refunded shall form part of the residue hereinafter mentioned.

- “(5.) The Board of Trade shall not, nor shall any person acting under it, be liable to any action, suit, account, claim, or demand whatsoever, for or in respect of any act or matter done, or omitted to be done, in the distribution of such damages as aforesaid.
- “(6.) If the amount paid to Her Majesty's Paymaster General, in manner aforesaid, is insufficient to meet the demands upon it, the several claims thereon shall abate proportionally.”

In the above summary we have only included such portions of the Act as have reference to the saving of life. These portions will arrange themselves under two heads, viz., such as directly provide for the saving of life, and those which indirectly do so by the preventing of shipwrecks and other casualties. Our space will not admit of our enlarging on them in our present issue, but we hope to be able to return to the subject in our next number.

#### LIFE-PRESERVERS.

In the *Times* newspaper of the 20th of February last, we read the following narration of a deplorable occurrence by which ten industrious men were deprived of life, and their families, all in indigent circumstances, left in sorrow to struggle with poverty and want:—

“At an early hour this day (the 18th of February) it was made known that the bark *Cherokee* was ashore on the East Hoyle Bank, when preparations were immediately made for rendering all the assistance possible. For this purpose the steam-tug *President*, with the Liverpool life-boat in tow, sailed to the aid of the unfortunate bark. The sea was very high in the Rock Channel at the time, and the boats were towed with difficulty. When near the bank, the Tug Company's life-boat, which was in tow of the steamer *Victoria*, suddenly capsized, and out of eleven persons that formed her crew only one was saved. The men who were drowned

were experienced river-boatmen, all in poor circumstances, and several of them have left large families totally unprovided for."

From another source we learn that the life-boat in question "was hired from the Steam-tug Company by the owners of the *Cherokee* to proceed to her assistance, and that eleven men were engaged to man her, including Mr. WILLIAM ROBERTS, the master of the steamer *Albert*, who offered to take charge of the boat, he having been out in her on several previous occasions. They proceeded, in tow of the *Victoria* steamer, down the Rock Channel, and got near to the *Cherokee*, but found there was too much sea to render any assistance, and in returning, still in tow of the *Victoria*, the boat was struck by a very heavy sea and capsized. The tow-rope was instantly cut to enable the steamer to turn round in as short a space as possible, and every attempt was made to save the unfortunate crew, but without avail, except in the case of one man who was saved, the remainder perished."

Now when the short time is considered which must have elapsed after the upsetting of the boat until the steamer had turned round and was again on the same spot, we think that a stronger instance could not be cited of the great advantage of every one on such occasions being provided with an efficient *life-preserver*, and of the imperative duty attaching to all those who hire or otherwise induce men to risk their lives on similar service, to furnish them with such, and every other means that may contribute to their safety. For if these men could have been supported on the surface for but a few minutes, their lives might have been saved.

We are aware that from different causes the crews are themselves occasionally averse to wearing any of these appendages. Sometimes a feeling of shame, lest their courage should be impeached, or that they should appear apprehensive of danger, or exhibit a mistrust in themselves or their boat, which would have a discouraging effect, is, we believe, the motive that influences them. At some places a species of fatalism exists, and we have heard a life-boat man say, "Ah, they aint much use, if a poor fellow's time is come, it isn't a life-belt as will save

him." We were also once told by the coxswain of a life-boat, "that they only served to prolong a poor devil's misery, and that if he were upset in a heavy sea he should think the sooner it was all over with him the better." Another cause, however, which has had its weight in preventing a more general desire on the part of sailors on the coast to be furnished with life-belts, has been the inefficiency from one cause or another of those with which they have been supplied; either they have been too cumbrous, or have fitted the person so inconveniently as to confine the limbs and prevent the free action of the lungs when undergoing bodily exertion, as in the act of rowing, or their buoyancy has been quite insufficient to support, with his mouth well above the water, a person having his usual clothes on him, which latter qualification has been lost sight of, or not sufficiently considered by the inventors and manufacturers of life-belts.

Such prejudices are, however, we believe, gradually disappearing, and a very general desire exists on the part of those who man the life-boats around the coasts to be provided with good life-belts. But whether they exist or not, the onus remains on those who employ or incite men to risk of life, that they at all events provide them with such safeguards, and induce them, if possible, to put them on upon every occasion of their going afloat in bad weather.

As on the one hand the unfortunate occurrence above related is, we conceive, calculated strongly to awaken a sense of responsibility in such parties, so as an additional incentive to act on that conviction, we would refer them to the account of the service of the Lyme Regis life-boat, narrated in No. 13, p. 124, of this Journal, where it will be seen that the lives of a life-boat's and of a vessel's crew were preserved through their being provided with a good boat, built to self-right, and well equipped with life-lines, &c., and each of the crew having on a buoyant and otherwise efficient life-belt.

In conclusion, we may state that the Committee of the National Shipwreck Institution, feeling the importance of the object above advocated, will readily afford every information on the subject to whoever may

wish to have it; and, if requested to do so, will forward samples of the life-belts recommended by them, and now used in their own life-boats.

#### LEGISLATIVE ENACTMENTS AND BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATIONS FOR THE BENEFIT OF BRITISH SEAMEN.

IN a lecture recently delivered, and since published, by Rear-Admiral Sir WILLIAM EDWARD PARRY, entitled "A Lecture on the Character, Condition, and Responsibilities of British Seamen," will be found the following abstract of the various legislative enactments, which had been issued for the protection and improvement of the merchant seamen of this country up to the date of the lecture (December 1853).

Sir EDWARD PARRY is so well known to his countrymen as a distinguished member of his profession, and as the consistent friend and benefactor of seamen generally, that anything emanating from him on subjects connected with their welfare, must carry great weight with it; we do not, therefore, think it necessary to offer any other apology for our insertion of this extract from his lecture:—

"Several statutes were enacted, and frequently amended from time to time, from the reign of Queen Anne down to that of George the Third, embracing a considerable portion of the last century. But they were still deficient in provisions calculated to improve the mariner's condition;—more particularly by affording him a cheap, easy, and ready means of obtaining redress from injury. He was oftentimes inveigled into engagements, by signing articles of which he did not know the conditions; defrauded of his hard-earned wages at the end of his voyage; and being often a stranger in the port of arrival, became the prey of crimps and other unprincipled persons, until, as the old adage goes, 'his money was spent, and he went to sea for more.' It was not until the year 1835 that any material improvement took place, when the attention of the Right Hon. Sir JAMES GRAHAM, then, as now, the First Lord of the Admiralty,

became directed to the subject; and he prepared an Act, commonly called the 'Merchant Seamen's Act,' which laid the foundation for subsequent improvements, and has been justly called 'The Seamen's Charter.'

"By this excellent statute all beneficial regulations to be found in former Acts are consolidated, and provision made for further measures of the same character.

"Now, just let us consider for a moment what it is that the Government of this great maritime country is bound to provide for, as regards her seamen.

"It may all be comprised, I think, in this:—To give such encouragement to the rearing of able-bodied and skilful seamen, as may ensure a sufficient supply, both in our naval and mercantile marine. This is a vital question, concerning, as it does, the State, the shipowner, and the seaman himself; for on the number and capability of those who navigate our trading ships in peace, and man our fleets in war, depends, under Providence, the prosperity, nay, the very existence, of our country, as an independent and first-rate nation.

"The time to which I am necessarily limited this evening, will only allow me briefly to recapitulate the laws which have been enacted, and the regulations that have been made with this great object in view, and most especially for the advantage and encouragement of seamen, since the passing of the 'Merchant Seamen's Act,' in 1835. Among these provisions are the following:—

"'Written articles of agreement in a prescribed form in all vessels above 80 tons, likewise a written discharge in a prescribed form.

"'The time for payment of wages limited; and the recovery of wages, or redress for injury, obtained by a summary appeal to a justice, instead of being obliged to resort to the tedious and expensive process of going into the Admiralty Courts.

"'No seaman to be abandoned abroad, and, if found in distress in a foreign country, to be sent home by the British Consul at the public expense.

"'A victualling scale to be inserted in the articles of agreement, and a survey to be

held on bad provisions and water when necessary.

“A medicine chest to be provided in all cases, and a surgeon under certain circumstances. Lime-juice, sugar, and vinegar to be served when on salt provisions; payment for short allowance of provisions.

“Wages to be paid up to the time of a ship’s wreck, and shipwrecked men provided with a passage home.

“Crews discharged from ships abandoned or sold abroad to have a free passage home.

“A proper space established for berthing, and the dryness and ventilation of the berthing-place provided for.

“The crimping system checked by rendering it unnecessary for seamen.

“Shipping offices established for superintending the agreement and discharge of seamen.

“The competency of masters and mates secured by a due examination of their qualifications, thus giving additional security to ships, and, therefore, to the lives of their crews.

“Forfeiture of these officers’ certificates, if found guilty of tyranny or drunkenness.

“Adjustment of disputes by arbitration of the shipping-master.

“Facilities for remitting money or investing it in Savings’ Banks.

“Regulations for the maintenance of discipline, good order, and contentment during the voyage, so essential to the comfort and happiness of all on board while at sea, and to prevent harassing litigations and unseemly broils arising out of misconduct.”

“I think it must be admitted that this is a goodly array of advantages conferred on British seamen, sufficient to show that the Legislature and the Government of England have not, of late years, been unmindful of the seamen’s welfare.”

Sir WILLIAM next proceeds to enumerate all that has been done for the welfare of seamen by the beneficence of private individuals and societies, such as the founding and maintaining hospitals and infirmaries in sea-ports; the providing “Seamen’s Orphan Schools;” the organization of “Sailors’ Homes;” and the establishment of societies to afford succour to stranded and wrecked

vessels, and to furnish shipwrecked seamen with means for returning to their homes, or to the sea-ports to which they may be bound.

The Author likewise offers much valuable advice to sailors on their moral and religious duties and responsibilities, to which they may with much benefit attend, and for information respecting which we refer them to the lecture itself. With reference to that part of the subject, however, we think that we may with advantage make some remarks, and offer some advice to sailors generally, on what we esteem to be their great failing, perhaps the most vulnerable point in their character, since it stands at the very threshold of the door of improvement, alike in their mental and their moral culture.

We allude to that want of self-respect, of proper pride, of true dignity of character, the possession of which need not be, nor is, in fact, confined to any one class of society, but which may attend a man in every walk of life, howsoever humble, except in that of the professional mendicant. In using the word pride, we do not allude to that mere self-conceit or arrogance which lifts men, in their own opinion, above the sphere in which God has seen fit to place them, and which alone they are fitted to occupy, but to that quality of the mind which prompts its possessor to self-exertion, which leads him to feel that it is more honourable and more dignified to work out his own welfare, to be the architect of his own destiny, than to remain all his life long in the leading-strings of others, dependent on them for benefits which he might have earned for himself by his own exertions.

But what is too generally the characteristic of the sailor in regard to this point? He is proverbially looked upon as hardly fit to take care of himself; he is regarded as a singular exception to the ordinary race of men; as a grown-up child, with the same want of thought and judgment as a child; and, which is the worst feature of the case, he is *content to be so looked upon*—he forgets that if he can thus simulate the simplicity and unskilfulness of a child, he cannot enrobe himself in a child’s innocency; that



he has *now* to act the part of a *man*, and will, hereafter, be answerable for his acts as a *man*.

Theology does not come within our province; yet, as we regard it to be of some importance to the class of men of whom we are, in particular, now treating, we cannot refrain from expressing the opinion that religionists of the present day, in their zeal for the promulgation of an essential part of Christian doctrine, have often, especially in their teaching of the poor and illiterate, dwelt too exclusively on the corruption of man's nature, and the self-abasement that is consequently incumbent on him; forgetting that he may thus be led to look on that corruption as not only the *cause* of his sins, but also as an *excuse* for them, if not, moreover, as at once a barrier to his repentance, and to all hope of improvement; thus, in fact, leading him to forget the equal truth that he is made in God's own image, although he has defaced it by sin, and that as he stands at the head of His creation in this world, so he is especially bound to lead his life in conformity with the dignity of such a position. What we fear is, that many, thus learning only to despise themselves, may become careless of the commission of acts which will certainly make them despicable.

We are, however, trenching on controversial ground, which is not our desire; we will, therefore, conclude by entreating our sailor readers, whilst they gladly avail themselves of the aid of "Sailors' Homes," or any of the above-named advantages which Providence may place in their way, and of which, at present, they especially need the assistance, yet not to rest on them alone, but labour to make themselves, by their own exertions, as far as possible, independent of them; remembering the old fable of the carter, who, when his vehicle stuck in the mire, received no answer to his prayer to Jupiter for assistance, until he put his own shoulder to the wheel: and applying to themselves the moral, "That those who will make no effort to help and improve themselves, have no authority either from the word of Revelation or the light of reason to suppose that they will receive the blessing or the help of God."

### THE ADMIRALTY REGISTER OF WRECKS FOR 1853.

IN the *Life-boat Journal*, No. 11, we gave as one reason for the discontinuance of the register of shipwrecks, on the coasts of the United Kingdom, which we had previously inserted, that a Wreck Register was being compiled at the Admiralty which would be annually presented to Parliament. That document for 1853 has now been published, which enables us to furnish our readers with a summary of its contents.

It is, as usual, a fearful list, numbering 832 disasters; but it is gratifying to observe, so far as loss of property is concerned, that the Register for 1853 shows a very considerable decrease in the number of wrecks and casualties, as compared with the preceding year, when 1115 occurred.

In the gales of February, March, April, and July, 1853, the numbers exceeded those of the same months in 1852, and the month of May in each year produced the same amount; but in all the other months of 1853, the numbers fell much short of those in the corresponding months of the previous year.

This may be accounted for by the fact, that the gales of the winter months of 1853 were less frequent and of shorter duration, although they blew with occasional violence.

On the other hand, however, the year 1853 records a loss of 989 lives, being 69 more than were lost in 1852, when the number, so far as is known, was 920. This increased number, in proportion to the number of wrecks, was caused by the great sacrifice of life which occurred in two or three individual instances. Thus the loss of the *Annie Jane* shows 360 alone; that of the *Queen Victoria*, 83; and of the *Dalhousie*, 59.

There can be no doubt that these total numbers, for each year, show considerably less than the actual amount of loss of life which has occurred on and around our coasts, as there are no means at command for ascertaining the number of those vessels which sail out of port and are never again heard of. The lives of fishermen and other

boatmen are undoubtedly also often lost without any official returns being made of the same.

The Admiralty Register of Wrecks is compiled principally from the Coast-guard Returns; from Lloyd's published list; from the "Shipping and Mercantile Gazette"; and from the official reports of Lloyd's agents around the coast to the Admiralty. It is prepared by Commander J. V. READ, R.N., and although imperfect, as any such register must be, there is no doubt that it is the most complete account of wrecks published.

Annexed to the Return is a Wreck Chart, on which a black spot marks the site of each wreck, fire, or collision, as far as can be ascertained.

The following is the summary which precedes the Register.

The wrecks on the coasts and in the seas of the United Kingdom in the year 1853, were 832, which may be thus classed —

Totally wrecked . . . . .	369
Totally lost in collision . . . . .	52
Damaged seriously, and had to discharge . . . . .	386
Damaged seriously in collision . . . . .	25

The number of casualties in each month were :—

January . . . . .	106
February . . . . .	91
March . . . . .	52
April . . . . .	78
May . . . . .	41
June . . . . .	26
July . . . . .	45
August . . . . .	33
September . . . . .	70
October . . . . .	96
November . . . . .	71
December . . . . .	123

Total . . . . . 832

Of these, 253 occurred on the east coast of Great Britain; 76 on the south coast, and 130 on the west coast; 81 wrecks took place on the coasts of Ireland; 6 were cast on shore at Scilly; 11 at the Channel Islands; 3 at Orkney and Shetland; and

12 at the Isle of Man; the remaining 260 wrecks occurred in the surrounding seas.

#### LIVES LOST, 1853.

The whole loss of lives during the year, as far as has been ascertained, amounts to 989.

Of these, 18 went down with the *Herald*, which sunk off the Start, after collision with a schooner at night, on 15th January; 83 in the *Queen Victoria* steam ship, which ran on the rocks, near the Bailey Lighthouse, Dublin, at night, and sunk 15th February; 11 (the crews of two Lossiewouth fishing-boats) were lost, 23rd February; 11 in the barque *Irene*, which upset in the Mersey, 26th February, during a heavy gale; 16 in the *Duke of Sutherland* steam-ship, wrecked at the Pierhead, Aberdeen, 1st April; 12 in the *Richardson*, which sunk near St. Bees Head, 22nd April; 12 in the *Olive Branch*, which sailed from Shields for London, 25th April, and has not been heard of since; 10 in the *St. Tudno*, sailed from Newcastle, 17th May, and has not been heard of; 360 in the *Annie Jane*, from Liverpool, bound to Montreal, wrecked on Isle Vatersa, Hebrides, in a heavy gale, on 28th September; 59 in the *Dalhousie*, which foundered off Beechey Head, on the night of 19th October; 20 died on board the *Isaac Wright*, which was stranded on the Irish coast, and put back to Liverpool, in distress, 4th October; 15 in the *California Packet*, from Sligo to New York, laden with iron, which foundered 160 miles west of Ireland, on the 4th November; 60 in the *Marshall* steam-ship, which foundered off the Humber, in collision with the barque *Woodhouse*, at night, 28th November; 19, who were washed overboard from the *E. Z.*, at sea, in distress, on passage from Liverpool to New York, 6th December; 10 in the *Caravane*, wrecked near Blackwater Head, Wexford, in a heavy gale, on 19th December; 18 in the *Chatham*, wrecked on the bar of Drogheda, in the night of 19th December; and 9 in the *Eva* screw steam-vessel, which parted asunder and sunk off Lambay Island, 27th December. The remainder were lost in smaller groups; to

which are to be added an uncertain, though without doubt a large, number drowned in missing ships.

How many painful reflections is such a return calculated to awaken in every mind? That a thousand lives (which may be taken as a probable average) should be thus, every year, prematurely cut off on our own coasts alone, is indeed a melancholy fact. There is no other calling of life than that of those whose "business is in the great waters" in which so constant and great a sacrifice of life takes place.

When the scourge of war is raging, we hear of larger numbers perishing together in a comparatively short time. We are, however, accustomed to look on war as a great but necessary evil, which the wisdom of a Divine and Benevolent Providence sees fit to inflict on his creatures at intervals of time, doubtless to promote the ultimate benefit of mankind, by the changes, which, in the present imperfect condition of this sublunary world, can, perhaps, only by such means, be brought about. We are accustomed also to look on those who perish on the field of battle, as men whose calling and duty it is to seek such an end when their country's good shall require the sacrifice: and a renown and glory have in all ages been held to accompany such a death; all of which reasons contribute to make it a picture less gloomy and sad to look upon, than that encountered in the daily avocation of life, when the last struggle is with the elements alone, and the gurgling waters, as they close over their victim, separate him for ever from all the ties of life.

But, after all, the most painful part of the subject to our minds is the question which forces itself on us—How much of this sacrifice of life and consequent human misery might have been prevented? A sense of neglected opportunity is probably one of the most painful reflections which ever saddens the human breast, as without doubt it is one of the most alarming that ever arouses the long slumbering conscience at the last hour. But a nation collectively may be awakened to a sense of "neglected opportunity" as well as an individual.

And as with an individual, well is it if such takes place before it be too late—before the opportunity be taken away!

#### MEETINGS OF COMMITTEE.

Thursday, March 2, 1854. THOMAS CHAPMAN, Esq., F.R.S., in the Chair.

Confirmed the Minutes of the former Meeting, and those of the Finance, Wreck and Reward, and the Life-boat Sub-Committees.

Elected GEORGE LYALL, Esq., a Member of the Committee of Management of the Institution, in the place of his late father.

Voted the silver medal and 2*l.* to coast-guard chief-boatman GEORGE FINLAY, and 4*l.* to his 4 men, for their services in a coast-guard-galley in rescuing, after much difficulty and risk of life, 2 of the crew of the emigrant ship *Tayleur*, which was wrecked during a gale of wind from S. to S.S.W. on the east point of Lambay Island, on the coast of Dublin, on the 21st Jan. last, when 270 persons met with a watery grave.

Also the silver medal and 1*l.* to coast-guard chief-boatman JAMES FITZPATRICK, and 10*s.* to another coast-guard-man who assisted him, for their exertions in wading into the surf to rescue the master and 3 of the crew of the brig *Lady Octavia* of Greenock, which was wrecked during a S.W. gale of wind off Malin Head, on the coast of Donegal, on the 30th Jan. last.

Also the thanks of the Committee, on vellum, to the Rev. OWEN LLOYD WILLIAMS; a letter of thanks to Mr. AUGUSTUS VINCENT (of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company's service); and 5*l.* to 5 men, for their services in the Cemlyn life-boat, in rescuing 17 passengers of the steam-ship *Olinda*, of Liverpool, which struck during squally weather, late at night, on Harry's Furlong rock, in Holyhead bay, on the 26th Jan. last.

Also the thanks of the Committee to PHILIP DOHERTY and JAMES WEST, coast-guard boatmen at Hartlepool, for their services with the Manby apparatus, to the crew, consisting of 7 men, of the brig *Gem*,

of Peterhead, which was stranded near that place on the 10th Jan. last.

Also 4*l.* 3*s.*, and approved of the like moiety voted by the Local Committee to the crew of the Filey life-boat, for attempting to save the crew of the schooner *Margaret*, of Newcastle, which during a N.N.E. gale of wind foundered at sea, on the 27th Dec. last.

Also the thanks of the Committee to Lieut. MOLESWORTH, R.M., chief officer of coastguard in charge of Fishergate Station, and to his crew for saving with lines 7 men belonging to the brig *Galatea*, which was stranded during squally weather near Shoreham, on the 18th Jan. last; and a reward of 2*l.* to THOMAS FORWARD, coast-guard boatman, who was injured in the face by the bursting of a rocket on the occasion.

Also 4*l.* 10*s.* to two coastguard boatmen, and 4 fishermen, for rescuing with a shore boat the crew, consisting of 9 persons, of the brigantine *Adolfo*, which, during a S.E. gale of wind, was driven on shore in Durdrum Bay, on the 19th Dec. last.

Voted also the special thanks of the Committee on vellum to Mr. R. MAINGAY, chief officer of the coastguard at Ardglass, County Down, and 5*l.* to 12 other men, for saving on two trips in a coastguard galley, the crew of 3 men of the smack *Mary*, of Douglas, Isle of Man, which, during a S.E. gale, got on the Churn rocks, near Ard-glass, on the 18th Dec. last.

Read a communication from Mr. JOHN NEWTON, of Birmingham, respecting his plan for rescuing life from shipwreck.

Also from Mr. A. G. DILLON, of Dublin, calling attention to a diagram, with a description of a lanthorn which he had invented, for the purpose of enabling the officers of steamers to telegraph orders at night, and in foggy weather, from the paddle-box bridge to the helmsman.

Read the Inspector of Life-boats' Reports of his visits to the Aldborough and Thorpness life-boat establishments, which he found in an efficient state.

Read letter from the Honorary Secretary at Barmouth, giving favourable accounts of a trial and of the services of the new life-boat recently placed there by the Shipwreck Institution.

Resolved—

1. That a life-boat and carriage be provided for Skerries, on the coast of Dublin, and that Inspecting Commander IRWIN, R.N., be thanked for the Report which he had furnished to the Committee respecting the most eligible spot on which to place a life-boat in that locality. Also that the thanks of the Committee be given to the Hon. THOMAS PRESTON, of Gormanston Castle, and to HENRY ALEXANDER HAMILTON, Esq., of Balbriggan, for their exertions in collecting subscriptions in aid of the establishment.

2. That a favourable opportunity be embraced to place a life-boat at Brighton, and to establish in that town a branch of the Shipwreck Institution.

3. That two life-boats, each being 30 feet long, be ordered to be built by Messrs. FORRETT, of Limehouse, according to a design recently furnished by Mr. PEAKE, of Her Majesty's Dockyard, Woolwich.

4. That 300*l.* from the funded capital of the Institution be sold.

Thursday, March 23, 1854. THOMAS CHAPMAN, Esq., F.R.S., in the Chair.

Confirmed Minutes of the previous Meeting, and those of the Finance and Wreck and Reward Sub-Committees.

Read letter from the Earl of BECTIVE, announcing the death of his father-in-law, Mr. Alderman THOMPSON, M.P., Chairman of the Institution, at Newport, Monmouthshire, on the 10th inst.

Resolved—

That the General Committee of the Royal National Shipwreck Institution desire to record their deep regret at the demise of Mr. Alderman THOMPSON, M.P., V.P., whose cordial co-operation in the cause of humanity they had often occasion to appreciate, and by whose lamented death this Institution has been deprived of a most esteemed and valued Chairman.\*

The Resolution was ordered to be communicated to Mrs. THOMPSON, and to express to her how sincerely the Committee

\* A brief memoir of the late Mr. Alderman THOMPSON will be found in the *Life-Boat Journal*, No. 13, p. 127.

condoled with her and her family in their bereavement.

Approved of Mr. J. JUDGE's estimate of 85*l.* 11*s.* for building a boat-house for the Dungeness life-boat.

Read and approved the draft of the Annual Report of the Institution, and ordered the balance sheet to be submitted to Mr. BEGBIE, the Auditor.

Decided that the Annual General Meeting of the Institution be held on the 11th April next.

Read letter from Mr. BARTLEMAN, of Tynemouth, stating that the Cullercoats life-boat had saved, on the 19th March, the crew of a fishing coble.

Voted 5*l.* to 10 men who went off in two shore boats to the assistance of 14 of the crew of the ship *John o' Gaunt*, of Liverpool, which was wrecked, during thick and rainy weather, on the rocks near the Stacks lighthouse, off Holyhead, on the 17th Jan. last.

Also 4*l.* 18*s.* to the crews of the Holyhead life-boat and a shore boat, for going off to rescue the crew, consisting of 11 men, of the barque *Peninghame*, of Belfast, which came on shore near Holyhead new harbour of refuge on the 18th Feb. last.

Thursday, April 11, 1854. THOMAS CHAPMAN, Esq., F.R.S., in the Chair.

Confirmed Minutes of the previous Meeting.

Resolved—

That THOMAS BARING, Esq., M.P., be elected the Chairman of the Royal National Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck.

Thursday, April 11, 1854. The Annual General Meeting of the subscribers and friends of the Royal National Shipwreck Institution was held this day, at the offices, John Street, Adelphi, Captain SHEPHERD, H.C.S., Deputy Master of the Trinity House, Vice-President, in the Chair.

The proceedings of the Meeting will be found recorded in the *Life-Boat Journal*, No. 12. The Annual Report can be had on application at the office of the Institution.

Thursday, May 4, 1854. THOMAS BARING, Esq., M.P., in the Chair.

Confirmed Minutes of the two previous Meetings, and those of the Finance and Wreck and Reward Sub-Committees.

Read letter from his Grace the President the Duke of NORTHUMBERLAND, K.G., dated from Naples, expressing his deep regret at the death of Mr. Alderman THOMPSON, and stating that he should not be able to take the Chair at the proposed Festival of the Institution to be held on the 17th May.

Elected THOMAS BARING, Esq., M.P., a Vice-President and Trustee of the Royal National Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck.

Resolved—

That the thanks of the Committee be given—

1. To Her Majesty's Board of Ordnance, for their liberality in granting a site of the Ordnance ground at Dungeness on which to erect a house for the life-boat recently placed there by this Institution.

2. To Inspecting Lieut. HOPKINS, R.N., for the trouble which he had taken with the life-boat at Dungeness.

3. To JAMES HANS HAMILTON, Esq., M.P., for the site of ground required for the life-boat house at Skerries.

4. To Captain HENDERSON, R.N., C.B., Comptroller-General of the Coastguard, for his courtesy in allowing the Dundrum Bay life-boat to be conveyed by a revenue cruiser from Dublin to her station.

Voted 6*l.* to 4 men belonging to the pilot cutter *John and Mary*, of Aldborough, Suffolk, for their services, in the cutter's boat, to the crew, consisting of 9 men, of the brig *Ann and Sarah*, of South Shields, which was wrecked during a gale of wind from N.E. by E. on the Whiting Sand, on the 3rd April last.

Also 6*l.* 6*s.* to the crew of the Filey life-boat, for their exertions in the boat in rescuing the crew, of 4 persons, of the sloop *Comet*, of Whitby, which came on shore near that place on the 28th April last. The life-boat having sustained some damages on the occasion, the estimate of 4*l.* for repairing her was approved.

Voted the thanks of the Committee, on

vellum, to Mr. PADDON, master of the brig *Ellen*, of London, for rescuing 55 persons from the burning barque *Mahomed Shah*, in lat. 40° S. and long. 118° E., on the 19th April, 1853, and safely landing them at Hobart Town, a distance of 2,000 miles.

Resolved—

That, taking into consideration the severe loss which the Shipwreck Institution has sustained by the death of its late Chairman, Mr. Alderman THOMPSON, M.P., and advertising, also, to the continued absence from England of his Grace the President of the Institution, the holding of the public dinner of the Institution be postponed to next year, and that the noblemen and gentlemen who had consented to act as stewards on the occasion be requested to allow their names to be retained for the same office in 1855.

Thursday, June 1, 1854. THOMAS CHAPMAN, Esq., F.R.S., in the Chair.

Confirmed Minutes of the previous Meeting, and those of the Finance and Wreck and Reward Sub-Committees.

Resolved—

That Captain SHEPHERD, H.C.S., Deputy Master of the Trinity House, and Captain W. H. KENNEDY, R.N., Deputy Comptroller-General of the Coastguard, be elected Members of the Committee of Management of the Royal National Shipwreck Institution.

Reported the deaths of HENRY BLANSHARD, Esq., and WILLIAM SKINNER MARSHALL, Esq., late Members of the Committee of Management of the Institution.

Resolved—

That the Committee record their sincere regret at the lamented demise of their late valued colleague, W. S. MARSHALL, Esq., who, during a long series of years, co-operated with them in carrying out the objects of the Shipwreck Institution.

The Rev. E. L. BERTON, of Fareham, called the attention of the Committee to the construction of his collapsing life-boat. A brief description of this boat will be found in the *Life-Boat Journal*, No. 10, p. 70.

Read a communication from the Rev. THOMAS BAKER, offering to place the

Whitburn life-boat under the management of the Shipwreck Institution.—Decided on accepting the same.

Read letter from Mr. THURSTON, of New York, expressing the thanks of the New York Life-Saving Association, for the information which had been furnished him by the Shipwreck Institution, relative to the means used on the coasts of the British Isles in rescuing life from shipwreck.

Read letter from Mr. BARRINGTON, C.E., of Limerick, respecting his life-boat, and laid on the table a plan and model of the same.

Voted 1*l.* to a boat's crew for saving the crew of a boat which had foundered during a gale of wind at the entrance of Sullivan's Sound, on the coast of Donegal, on the 27th April last.

Mr. BARTLEMAN, of Tynemouth, reported that the Cullercoats life-boat had been lately twice out to save the crews of fishing cobles. He also stated that the Trustees of the Port of Tyne Life-Boat Fund had contracted to build a life-boat for Prior's Haven. They had likewise voted 100*l.* towards the Cullercoats life-boat and ways, in addition to a grant of 50*l.* towards the life-boat now building at Blyth-haven.

Instructed the Inspector of Life-boats to proceed to Stockton-on-Tees, and to ascertain the cause of some defects reported to exist in a life-boat recently built at that place from a design furnished by this Institution.

He was also desired to proceed with the life-boat and carriage, when complete, to Skerries, on the coast of Dublin; and on his return to visit the life-boat stations on the coasts of Dorset, Cornwall, and Devon.

Thursday, July 6, 1854. THOMAS CHAPMAN, Esq., F.R.S., in the Chair.

Confirmed Minutes of the previous Meeting, and those of the Finance and Wreck and Reward Sub-Committees.

Read report from Col. TULLOH, R.A., Director of the Carriage Department, at the Royal Arsenal, Woolwich, giving a favourable account of the new life-boat carriage, constructed by Messrs. RANSOME and SIMS,

of Ipswich, under the directions of the Shipwreck Institution, and detailing the result of the trial which had been made with it at Limehouse in his presence. He suggested that the carriage should be returned to the builders, to make one or two alterations in it.

Read and approved the Inspector of Life-boat's report on the same subject.

Resolved—

That Col. TULLOH be thanked for his report, and that the carriage be returned to the builders to make the alterations suggested.

The Woodbridge-haven life-boat (built by the late Mr. PLENTY, of Newbury), not being required on that station, it was decided to offer the boat to the Bideford Life-Boat Committee, to be placed on the Braunton Sands.

Voted ten guineas in aid of the Hartlepool Seamen's life-boat. A description of this boat will be found at p. 163 of our present number.

Elected THOMAS CHAPMAN, Esq., F.R.S., Deputy-Chairman, a Trustee of the Shipwreck Institution.

Voted 2*l.* to GEORGE and MATTHEW JEFFLES for their services, in their boat, to a man who was upset from a fishing coble during a heavy gale of wind off Goldsborough, near Whitby, on the 2nd June last—another man having unfortunately perished on the occasion—a grant of 1*l.* was also given to the men as a recompense for the fishing gear which they lost in going to the assistance of the man.

Thursday, August 3, 1854. His Grace the President, the Duke of NORTHUMBERLAND, K.G., in the Chair.

Read and confirmed the Minutes of the previous Meeting, and those of the Finance and Wreck and Reward Sub-Committees.

Resolved—

That HAMILTON FITZGERALD, Esq., be elected a Vice-President of the Royal National Shipwreck Institution, in virtue of his munificent donation of one hundred guineas in aid of its funds.

Read letter from his Grace the President, and also a communication from Mr. C. E. LANG, respecting a plan of a life-boat in-

vented by the late Mr. OLIVER LANG, master shipwright in Her Majesty's Dockyard, Woolwich. A model of the boat was placed on the table. Agreeably to the deceased gentleman's request, the model was ordered to be deposited in the Museum of the United Service Institution, Whitehall.

Read communication from Mr. J. KEARNEY WHITE, chief officer of the coast-guard at Tramore, in the county of Waterford, stating the necessity, in consequence of the frequency of wrecks, of a life-boat at that place—Deferred.

Read letter from Mr. NATHAN THOMPSON, of New York, calling the attention of the Committee to his Folding Life-preserving Seat, one of which was submitted by him to the Committee. A description of the seat will be found below.

Lieut. HOPKINS, R.N., reported the completion of the Dungeness life-boat house, which, with the erection of a capstan for the boat, had cost 97*l.* 6*s.*—Ordered to be paid.

Read letter from Mr. TODD, Collector of Harbour Dues, at Peterhead, transmitting a sketch, with a description, of his plan for sending a line from a vessel to the shore, and *vice versa*.

Read letters from various parties in different parts of the kingdom, acknowledging with thanks copies of the mounted Wreck Chart of the British Isles, which had been forwarded to them from the Institution.

Reported the completion of the life-boat built under the directions of the Institution for the Dublin Ballast Corporation, and that she had been conveyed to her station on board the Trinity House steam-yacht *Argus*.

Inspecting Commander AUSTEN, R.N., transmitted a draft for 33*l.* 13*s.* 6*d.*, being the amount collected locally in aid of the Newcastle, Dundrum Bay, life-boat. The thanks of the Committee were voted to Captain AUSTEN for his zeal and valuable assistance.

## NEW INVENTIONS.

### PATENT LIFE-SEAT.

PERHAPS the chief drawback to a sufficiency of life preserving articles being provided on board our packet steamers and other pas-

senger ships, has been the unfitness for other purposes of any such articles commonly in use. Thus it may have often occurred to a shipowner on thinking over his responsibilities, which no doubt shipowners as well as other folks sometimes do, that, when providing a vehicle for the conveyance of perhaps hundreds of human beings across the sea with its attendant dangers, he is morally bound to provide them with every procurable means for insuring their safety in the event of any of those casualties happening, from fire, storm, or collision, which are of everyday occurrence.

The results of his thinking may be, that before launching forth his craft with her precious freight on board, and bidding her "God-speed," he will ascertain that she is sound and in good repair, and that her rigging, sails, anchors, boats, and other stores, are all complete and trustworthy. He may then provide for her an able and sufficient crew, and place all under the charge of a skilful captain. He may further cause one or more of her boats to be fitted as life-boats. The thought may, however, then occur to him that after all, in the event of a casualty, the boats may be injured or upset, or that they cannot be got out, and that therefore in such an emergency, some of the well-known contrivances of life-buoys or life-belts for the separate support of individuals in the water might afford additional security to their lives. He at once decides on having two or three, or it may be half a dozen for the purpose of throwing to any persons accidentally falling overboard, or getting upset in a boat alongside; but he perceives that to have them in numbers at all approximating to the number of individuals on board, would be attended with serious inconvenience, in addition to their expense; as they would occupy much room in a closely-packed ship, where every portion of the space is valuable. This inconvenience accordingly turns the scale; he consoles himself with the reflection that he has already done much more than many others do; that few ships are so well provided in all the above respects as his, and comforting himself with these reflections, he feels satisfied that he has done his duty to those who

have intrusted their lives to him, and, after insuring his ship, he sends her on her way, trusting that, with her wonted good fortune, she may have need for none of these things.

We are happy, however, to know that shipowners may in future be relieved of this difficulty, and of the anxiety which it no doubt has sometimes occasioned them, since a description of life-buoy has been invented by an American engineer, a Mr. NATHANIEL THOMPSON, of New York, which fulfils the two purposes of an ordinary seat and of a life-buoy.

Now as all vessels must have seats for those on board them, and such seats must take up room, the difficulty of stowage is at once got over, and there seems no reason why there should not be on board any ship as many life-preserving seats as there are persons in her.

We have seen experiments made with Mr. THOMPSON'S invention, and as it forms at once an efficient life-buoy, and a useful and ornamental seat, we do not hesitate to pronounce him as entitled to much credit for his ingenuity, or to recommend his invention for general adoption.

The following is a brief description of the life-preserving seat, which, however, it is difficult to convey a distinct idea of without a diagram.

Its general form, when in ordinary use, is nearly that of a common four-legged stool, or a chair with the back cut off; the upper portion of it, or the seat itself, as distinguished from the legs, possesses the buoyant power which is contained in two metallic air-tight chambers incased in wood. It is divided vertically down the middle, and so enabled to open and shut, being confined in either position by metal clumps, which slide up and down; when closed or shut up, it is a seat; when open, it is a life-buoy; the two air-chambers being then extended horizontally, connected at the sides, and allowing sufficient space for a stout person to stow between them, in which position he may float very much at ease, having the free use of his arms, with which and his feet he can readily propel himself through the water, the one chamber floating in front, and the other behind him.



Its dimensions as a seat are about 18 inches high, and 16 inches square on the top; when extended as a life-buoy it is about 3 feet long, and 2 feet wide.

This seat is, we understand, already in extensive use on board American passenger ships, as we have no doubt it will also soon find its way into ours.

### PRESERVATION OF LIFE FROM SHIPWRECK.

THE following is a copy of a Circular issued by the Board of Trade to the different Local Life-boat Committees and others who have charge of life-boats on the coasts:—

“Office of Committee of Privy Council  
for Trade, Marine Department,  
13th September 1854.

“SIR,

I AM directed by the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade to transmit to you the accompanying copy of the Merchant Shipping Act 1854, and to request you to call the attention of the Life-boat Committee to those clauses of the eighth part of that Act which have for their object the preservation of life from shipwreck, particularly clauses 441 and 2, and 458 and following clauses.

“In giving effect to the provisions of this Act it is the desire of the Board of Trade to stimulate local and voluntary exertion, and for that purpose to co-operate with the various Life-boat Committees or other parties who are engaged in forwarding the object of saving life from shipwreck.

“My Lords propose that the conditions of receiving aid from the Mercantile Marine Fund should be—

“1st. That the local Committee or other body should provide a boat and boat-house of a kind, and in a situation satisfactory to this Board.

“2nd. That the boat and boat-house should be subject to inspection.

“3rd. That some officer of the coastguard, or other person in the public service connected with this Board, should be a member of the local Committee or other managing body.

“The nature of the assistance contemplated by my Lords is that of giving rewards for the manning of boats in circumstances of danger and for the preservation of life; such rewards to be paid out of the Mercantile Marine Fund according to regulations to be approved of by their Lordships.

“I am to request that my Lords may be favoured, at your earliest convenience, with the views of the Committee as to the general scheme proposed, and with any suggestions for working out the details which may appear to them calculated to forward the object which my Lords have in view.

“Commander Robertson, R.N., from this Board, is about to make a tour of inspection of all the life-boat stations, and has been directed to hold personal communication with such Committees as may be desirous of learning further particulars. But in the mean time, my Lords will be glad to receive from the Committee their reply as to the general question.

“I am, Sir,

“Your obedient Servant,

“JAMES BOOTH.”

The whole or a summary of the clauses of the Act of Parliament referred to in the foregoing letter will be found at page 148 of the present Number of the *Life-Boat Journal*.

An arrangement has been made between the Board of Trade and the National Shipwreck Institution, that Commander Ward, R.N., the Inspector of Life Boats to the Institution, should accompany Commander Robertson on his tour of the eastern coast.

As will be observed, the success of this great national undertaking will depend, in a great measure, on the response made to the appeal to the humane for contributions. We believe that this appeal will not be made in vain; for surely the cause of “preservation of life from shipwreck” will not be allowed to form an exception to the other good causes so benevolently and liberally supported in this country. Who can read the account of the Wreck Register for 1853, which we give elsewhere, without being constrained to offer his mite

towards lessening the frightful sacrifice of loss of life from shipwrecks which annually takes place on our coasts?

#### ADDITIONAL STATIONS AND NEW LIFE-BOATS.

NEWCASTLE, DUNDRUM BAY.—The locality of Dundrum Bay, on the east coast of Ireland, has, during the last three or four years, been the site of numerous wrecks, lying as it does at the entrance of the channel between the Isle of Man and the Irish coast, through which passes the greater part of the trade with Belfast and the other ports of the north of Ireland and with the western coast of Scotland. This Institution, accordingly, determined on stationing a life-boat at Newcastle, which was forwarded to her station in April of the present year, being conveyed gratuitously on board the British and Irish Steam Navigation Company's steamer the *Foyle*, as far as Dublin, and thence by a revenue cruiser to Newcastle.

This boat, built by FORRESTTS of Limehouse, on Mr. PEAKE'S design, is similar to those sent to Lyme Regis, Budehaven, and other places previously described; her dimensions being—length, 27 ft.; beam, 7 ft. 6 in., &c.

Some contributions have been made in the neighbourhood (*vide* page 119, No. 12. of this Journal) towards the establishment and maintenance of this boat, conspicuous amongst which is that of the Earl ANNESLEY, M.P., who has also generously built a house for the reception of the life-boat.

A local Committee of gentlemen resident in the neighbourhood of Newcastle has been formed for the management of the establishment, of which Captain AUSTEN, R.N., the Inspecting Commander of Coastguard of the district, whose exertions have greatly contributed to the establishment of a life-boat in the locality, is the Honorary Secretary.

SKERRIES, COUNTY DUBLIN.—To the south of Dundrum Bay, and lying between Drogheda and Dublin, is the small town of Skerries, at which place a life-boat is ready

to be stationed, at the joint expense of the residents in the neighbourhood and of the National Shipwreck Institution; the former of whom have come most liberally forward with contributions, and have shown much zeal in endeavouring to supply their locality with a good life-boat (*vide* page 119, No. 12. of this Journal). An example which we trust may be emulated by their countrymen on other parts of the Irish coast.

A local Committee of gentlemen has been formed for the management of the establishment, of which HANS HAMILTON WOODS, Esq., is the Chairman, and HENRY ALEX. HAMILTON, Esq., the Honorary Secretary.

This boat was built by FORRESTTS, of Limehouse, on Mr. PEAKE'S design, and is 29 ft. in length, with 7 ft. 9 in. beam. She is now awaiting a passage to Dublin, on board the British and Irish Steam Company's packet the *Foyle*, together with a carriage of an improved construction lately built for the Institution by Messrs. RANSOME and SIMS, of Ipswich, which will enable her to command the coast for several miles on either side of Skerries. A commodious boathouse has also been erected for her reception, and the establishment will be at once made complete in all respects.

The recent wrecks of the *Taylor* and of the brig *Agnes* in this locality will probably be remembered by many of our readers as amongst those which have pointed it out as a desirable one for a life-boat station.

DUBLIN.—A life-boat has, during the present year, been stationed at Dublin, at the cost of the Corporation, for Preserving and Improving that port. She is on Mr. PEAKE'S design, and was built by FORRESTTS, of Limehouse, under the direction of the National Shipwreck Institution. She is 30 ft. long, with 8 ft. beam. She was conveyed to her station on board the *Argus* Trinity steam yacht in July last.

PORTMADOC, WALES.—A life-boat on Mr. PEAKE'S design, and built by FORRESTTS, of Limehouse, has been stationed at Portmadoc, in Caernarvonshire, by the Shipwrecked Fishermen and Ma-

riners' Royal Benevolent Society, in lieu of one previously placed there of BEECHING'S construction. She is a 28 ft. boat; her other proportions being the same as other boats on Mr. PEAKE'S plan.

HARTLEPOOL.—A new life-boat has, during the past summer, been provided at Hartlepool; the circumstances attending the provision of this boat are of such a novel character, and, we think, so highly creditable to her owners, the seamen of Hartlepool, as to be deserving of especial notice.

Like all the great centres of trade around our coasts, the port of Hartlepool is every winter the scene of numerous wrecks, accompanied frequently with loss of life. Two life-boats have been hitherto stationed at Hartlepool; one on the south side, the property of the West Dock Company, who are required by Act of Parliament to provide a life-boat, and towards the support of which a small voluntary toll is paid by vessels entering the West Docks; the other, hoisted up at the north pier, is the property of the Hartlepool Life-Boat Association, and is also supported by a voluntary toll from shipping entering the port. Both these boats have been manned by the pilots only who are connected with either dock, and who, when they obtain their licenses, bind themselves to man the life-boats. The other seamen of the port are excluded, we believe, from going off in them. On witnessing the lamentable loss of life and property which occurred off their port in January of this year, which the life-boats already in existence were inadequate to prevent, they determined by their own efforts and by subscriptions amongst themselves, with any extraneous aid they might obtain, to procure a life-boat of their own; trusting that, through its instrumentality, they might often be the means of saving life. A resolution, indeed, most honourable to them, and one which we heartily hope may meet with the encouragement and success which it deserved.

A Committee of Seamen was accordingly formed to carry out the object in view, and Mr. W. L. PATTISON was appointed its secretary.

The result has been, that a Seaman's life-boat is now in being at Hartlepool, ready to add its services to those already there on the setting in of the coming winter, when we shall no doubt soon hear of its being brought into requisition.

The boat they have selected is on a new design by Mr. HAWKESWORTH, of Torquay. She is 20 ft. long, with 8 ft. beam. She readily self-rights if turned keel up, which is effected by means of iron ballast, and by the air-cases above the deck on one side of the boat admitting water into them when the boat is bottom up, whilst those on the other side, retaining their buoyancy, force that side up, and the ballast then restores the boat to her upright position. This boat is fitted with two self-acting valves of a peculiar construction. She has also a powerful pump to assist in relieving her of water in the event of her being filled.

No sufficient trial of this boat has yet taken place in a heavy gale to enable us to speak positively of her qualities; but the seamen have tried her both under sails and oars in a strong breeze and tolerably rough sea, and they so far feel confidence in her capabilities, and feel persuaded that, from her superior form, they would be enabled to arrive at a wreck more quickly and more certainly in her than in either of the old boats.

To mark their appreciation of the public spirit of the Hartlepool seamen, the Committee of this Institution have voted them the sum of 10*l.*, and have also presented them with a set of life-belts for their boat's crew, of the value of 10*l.* 10*s.*

WRECK OF H. M. S. ANSON.—In our account of the wreck of this ship in a former Number of the *Life-Boat Journal*, we inadvertently omitted to state that we extracted it from Gilly's *Shipwrecks of the Royal Navy*, an omission which we now beg to acknowledge, and which affords us an opportunity to recommend the perusal of these narratives to our readers, as being deeply interesting, and affording many instances of gallant conduct, of patient suffering, and of great daring. A cheap edition of this work would, we think, form a valuable addition to those within the reach of our seafaring population.

# Royal National Institution

FOR THE

## PRESERVATION OF LIFE FROM SHIPWRECK.

ESTABLISHED IN 1824.

SUPPORTED BY VOLUNTARY SUBSCRIPTIONS.

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The object of this Institution, as declared in its title, is to rescue wrecked persons around the coasts of the United Kingdom.

The chief means by which it is endeavoured to carry this object into effect are:—

By the establishment of efficient life-boats on the points of the coast most exposed to shipwreck, and the organization and training of crews ready to man the boats at all times, in case of wreck.

By placing mortar and rocket apparatus for effecting communication with stranded vessels, at those stations at which it is likely to be of service.

By granting pecuniary rewards to persons who go off in life-boats, or otherwise assist in saving life from wreck; and by conferring honorary gold and silver medals for distinguished gallantry in such service.

To enable the Committee effectually to perform this important work, the generous co-operation of the public is earnestly solicited.

The Committee gratefully acknowledge the following additional Contributions:—

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