

"LOSS, BY SHIPWRECK, OF THE 'VISCOUNT
MELBOURNE.'

*■
"The ship *Viscount, Melbourne* (800 tons register) left London, bound for Calcutta, Oct. 26th, 1840. and arrived safely in the March of the year 1841. Thence she sailed in April for the Mauritius, with a cargo of rice, arriving in June at Port Louis. Then she returned in ballast to Calcutta; and after lying there three months, finally started for China, laden with cotton, rice, and saltpetre.

" We had light variable winds for the most part, down the Bay of Bengal and through the Straits of Malacca, and reached Puio Penang, or Prince of Wales's Island, in fourteen days.

" We lay here three or four days, taking in water, rattans, and fire-wood. The next place we touched at was Singapore, about a week's sail from Penang. Daring the ran, one of the Lascars, quite a boy, deliberately jumped overboard, because he had been kicked by a proud, upstart youth—our fourth mate, and sunk before a boat could reach him.

" At Singapore, Mrs. Dare, passenger, and two children, came on board ; one child scarcely two years old and the other at the breast. Also Lieut.-Col. Campbell, going to command the 90th Regiment, stationed at Macao.

"We left Singapore on Christmas night, at 12, with light, changeable winds and squally weather. On New Year's Day commenced a heavy gale, which lasted 'three days. This was supposed to be the primary cause of the loss of our good ship; for the strength of the gale, in the first place, carried us out of our course ; when it falling calm, with light airs at times, the strength of the current drifted us into the dangerous reef of coral, known by the name of the Luconia Shoal, from the Island of Borneo.

" It was on Wednesday, January 5, 1842, at 4, a.m., that I was called to keep my watch. I had hardly got on deck before I heard Mr. Small, the chief mate, sing out, ' Stand by your top-gallant and top-sail halyards,' and at the same time there was a rushing sound as of approaching wind. I said to the youngest apprentice, Hughes, whom I had just relieved, * Is that a squall coming on 3'—* I think so,' he replied, ' for I have heard it these ten minutes;' yet at the time there was hardly wind enough to fill the sails.

" The chief mate had just relieved Mr. Penfold, the second officer, when the man at the wheel said he heard breakers to leeward. The mate ran to the lee aide, and immediately exclaimed, ' Good God ! the breakers !' The captain was called instantly; the ship the while fast drifting on the reef. We tried to tack, but vainly. «Clear away the larboard anchor and let go 1' but it would not hold, the whole of the chain being paid down in the locker. ' Let go the starboard anchor!' but that was worse ; for the small-stream chain, which we used in working through the Straits, was paid down on the top of all in the locker also. Whilst we were clearing it, she struck; and continued bumping and tearing on the coral, unable to get free. The second stroke unshipped the rudder; sending the wheel am' the man holding it headlong to the lee side of the ship. ' Cut away the mizen-mast,' was the next command (in order to lighten the ship aft); and the noble mast fell over the side, carrying along with it yards, sails, and gear, smashing in the cuddy skylights as it fell. This lightened her considerably astern, but to no purpose: the ship was now fixed immoveably.

"All hopes were now given up of saving the ship, for the water was gaining upon us fast; and it was well known that when the

cotton got wet it would swell, and inevitably blow up the ship.

"Preparations were made to get the launch out; the sheep and goats were thrown out of her, and she was hoisted over the ship's side, together with the three cutters and the jolly boat. The chief mate now called the Europeans aft, and exhorted them to be sober and obedient and all would yet be well; to all of which they answered readily and willingly that they would. A dram of grog was now served out to all hands; and the mate, to keep the men as he had exhorted them to be—sober, rolled the grog cask into the lee scuppers and upset it.

"The butcher was ordered to kill one of the finest of the English sheep, and the cook to cook it, together with twelve fine hams, to be distributed to the boats' crews.

"At 11, aji., we went to breakfast; and the store-rooms being thrown open, a fine breakfast we might have made. There was bread, cheese, salmon, meat, pickles, pies, fruits, and liquors of all descriptions; but few of us could eat anything. The Lascars killed fowls, ducks, &c, and dry-curried them for their own use. They were very busy packing their things quite unconcernedly, for they did not feel the danger of their situation as we did. We next set about getting water, provisions, &c, into the boats; we had plenty of tins of preserved fruits, meat, and vegetables; whilst the cook was going round, throwing boiled hams and large pieces of roast mutton into each boat, beside raw salt meat, in case we should run short. We filled our boats' breakers with water, besides two puncheons of eighty gallons each, which we lowered into the long-boat.

"Each person was allowed to take a small bundle of clothes.

"Arms were next distributed amongst the crews,—guns, pistols, cutlasses, boarding-pikes, and tomahawks, with ammunition.

"I had one look round before I left the ship, and a more deplorable sight than our once clean and orderly decks presented, cannot be imagined. Below, the gun-deck was strewed with clothes of all descriptions,—chests, beds, and hammocks, which we were obliged to leave.

"The store-rooms were opened, and cases of wine, gin, and brandy, with fruits and preserves, were lying about the decks. Here I could not help laughing to see the butcher and the cook, both drunk; the butcher holding on by one of the stanchions to keep himself steady, and reviling the cook for being drunk on such an awful occasion (the cook at the time lying on the main hatches), when, just then losing his bold, he fell with his head through one of the panels of the store-room opposite, where he stuck fast until extricated by one of the crew.

"On the main-deck it looked still worse. The decks were littered with hay and straw; sheep, goats, pigs, and poultry, all in the greatest confusion, running about fore and aft without control.

"Aft, in the cuddy, were strewn uniforms belonging to the officers, and clothes of every kind, mixed with papers, refreshments, and baby-linen. In the midst of all this sat Mrs. Dare, a beautiful woman of not more than twenty-three, with a child at the breast; the other little fellow sitting on the knee of Colonel Campbell: (she was accompanying her husband, captain of a vessel now in China, but was obliged to be left at Singapore to be confined, and was now going to him). The captain was speaking to her, and, considering the sorrow of her situation, she endured it with the utmost fortitude. She made no lament, nor spoke, except to the child, which was crying because it could set no milk; but whilst she looked upon the child, tears trickled down her cheeks, and she gave the babe into the captain's arms, unable to endure it longer, and retired into her cabin a few minutes before she

went into the boat

" At about 1, p.m., all having left the ship, we started in the following order :—

" 1st. The long-boat, containing—

Charles Mc Kerlie	Captain.
Mr. Scott	Passenger.
Mrs. Dare and children	Do.
The Doctor	Do.
Martin Peterson	Carpenter.
Charles Nichols	Joiner.
James Young	Cook.
James Ridgeway	Butcher.
John Moyne	Seaman.
Alex. Mc. Kenzie	Do.
John Parker	Do.
William Puzack	Do.

With thirteen Lascars and servants.

" 2nd. The first cutter, containing—

Mr. Small	First Mate.
James Bradshaw	Third Mate.
Col. Campbell	Passenger
James Smith	Sail-maker.
James Godo	Seaman.
Thomas Hughes	Apprentice.

With six Lascars.

" 3rd. The second cutter, containing—

Mr. Penfold	Second mate.
John Stevens	Ship's steward.
O. Benham	Captain's servant.
Charles Donaldson	Seaman.
Thomas Muckleston	Apprentice.

With six Lascars.

" 4th. The jolly-boat, containing—

Mr. Dainty	Fourth mate.
Mr. Parkhouse	Captain's steward,
Myself	Apprentice.

With four Lascars.

"5th and last. The gig, containing— Twenty-one Lascars. —Total leaving the wreck, twenty-six Europeans and forty-five Lascars.

" We towed the long-boat out clear of the coral reef, and then she made sail, steering for the coast of Borneo. We received orders to steer S.E. and to fire a musket occasionally if we parted company during the night. Half a pint of water and a dram of grog were served out to each person. We kept as near the launch as possible all night.

" *Thursday, 6th.*— At daylight we were ahead of the launch and close to the cutters. At a signal from the former, we bore down towards her, the captain desiring the attendance of all the boats' crews at the funeral of a European, a sailor of the name of Puzack, who died during the night: (he had long been ill of the dysentery).

" The captain read the prayers for the burial of the dead, and the body was launched overboard, wrapped in a sheet. We then made sail; but had not gone one hundred yards from the body, before we saw several tremendous sharks, pulling and tearing it to pieces.

" Half-a-pint of water, with some mutton and biscuit, was dealt out to us three times in the day. Light airs and sultry weather. *m*

"Lat. at" noon . . . —Long. East. Saw no more of the ship since six, a.m.

"*Friday, 71**.—At daylight saw the land bearing E.N.E. and S.E. by S. In company with the launch. During the daylight breezes with a fiery sun: and having nothing wherewith to shelter ourselves from it, it began to raise large blisters on our hands and faces. The same water as yesterday, but no allowance of biscuit. Mr. Dainty, who had charge of our boat, kindly offered to share his clothes with me. I thanked him, but declined, thinking myself as well off as he in that respect. "Lat. . .—Long. East.

"*Saturday, 8th.*—At daylight all the boats in company stood in for the coast. Mr. Small in the first cutter, told Mr. Penfold that he would run in and look at the land, and return to us by sunset; but from that time we saw no more of him or his boat.

"The launch anchored this night by means of a grapnel, with one of the carpenter's large augers lashed athwart for a stock, and we hung on astern of them. We kept firing signals during the night, but no cutter did we see. The gig, full of Lascars, that was towed by the long-boat, cast off secretly, and without a word, deserted us, and pulled for the shore.

"Water as before, with ham and biscuit and a bottle of porter.

"Lat . . .—Long. East.

"*Sunday, 9th.*—Last night was the most miserable one I ever spent; it rained and blew with great violence through the whole night. Mr. Dainty and myself had to keep watch alternately, for fear of going adrift. About two, a.m., the rope by which we were made fast to the launch parted; but luckily we caught hold of the second cutter as we drifted past, or we should have all been lost, for the wind and current were so strong, we should have been driven right out to sea.

"About six, a.m., as we were all assembled in the launch, hearing the captain read prayers, we saw a proa bearing down towards us.

"The captain ordered us to take the Serang (boatswain over the Lascars), along with us, and speak them, to learn if they were friendly; for we much feared they were pirates. If there was danger, we were to hoist a signal, and they would come to our assistance. We accordingly started to meet them; we waved a white cloth in token of amity, and they did the same. When we got alongside of them we spoke, the Serang acting as interpreter: they said that they came to conduct us safely in-shore, and that our boat

was there already. So by this we suspected that they had taken them prisoners, and wished to entice the rest of us to the same fate. They now said that they wished to see the captain; so we pulled back, and they soon came up with the launch, where all were ready, cutlass in hand, to receive them, in case of treachery. They tried all they could to persuade us to go with them, and finally began to make fast to the launch with a rattan rope. When they found that we would not go with them, they assumed a very threatening aspect; so, there being so few of us who would fight, and our fire-arms being useless on account of the preceding rain, the captain gave orders to cut and run. The cook with one blow of his cutlass severed their rope, and we all made sail. When they saw this, they made sail in chase of us. We gained upon them at first, when, to our surprise, they opened fire upon us, first from their

rifles, and finally from a swivel, the last shot passing through a blanket that was rigged as a screen from the sun at the back of the captain and passengers. It passed betwixt the captain and Mrs. Dare, and then scraping a piece off the skull of one of the Las-ears, who sat in the bow of the boat, it buried itself in the water. Another shot cut away the leech of the second cutter's lug. They gained rapidly on our boat, we not being so well manned or skilful as the rest. When within a few fathoms they made signs for us to desist pulling, at the same time taking aim at us. Mr. Parkhouse, who was pulling the next oar to me, when he saw the rifle pointed towards us, dropped his oar, exclaiming, ' Good God ! there is one of us gone.' it was of no use persisting farther, so they ran alongside.

" The proa was about the size of a sloop, neatly built of teak, but cleverly covered with matting and bark, to make her appearance as lubberly and clumsy as possible. She had two long straight poles for masts, and a large lug made of matting to each. Besides this, they pulled fifteen sweeps aside. When they first ran alongside the launch, there appeared to be only five or six half-naked fellows, who were fishing; but now her decks were crowded with Malays, armed and dressed in fancy costumes. Creeses, very dangerous crooked poisoned swords, clubs, spears, and guns, altogether made them have a very ferocious appearance.

"They jumped into our boat; seized upon us; and: would I think have despatched us at once, had it not been for the interference of one who seemed to be their chief, who, dashing away the swords of the most forward, ordered all but two to get into their own craft, and to proceed in chase of our other boats, which by this time had got pretty far in advance. They accordingly set their sails, and stood for the other boats, whilst we were obliged to steer for the land.

" Our preserver, a gentlemanly thief, was still with us, and he now began to lay his hands upon every thing, tying them all up in a blanket. But when those in the proa saw this, they, thinking I suppose that they were sent after a shadow, whilst he was making sure of the substance, turned back, and running alongside, began to clear the boat of every thing—clothes, provisions, and even our drop of water, about two gallons, for the sake of the keg. As they took our muskets, pistols, and other arms, they repeatedly jumped for joy, exclaiming, ' barguish' (very good). When they came to our sextant, they seemed much puzzled to know what it was, and made signs to me to show them the use of it, which I did. We repeatedly made signs to the chief to let us go after the boats, which by this time were nearly out of sight; to which he nodded his head assentingly, and shook us by the hand. Mr. Parkhouse now very foolishly pulled a small bag from his pocket, containing a fifty rupee note and some silver, which he gave to the chief, at the same time pointing to our other boats. Directly he got this, the rest began to strip us for more. They took his watch, Mr. Dainty's watch and ring, but on me they only found a Dutch stiver.

" There was a case of herring-paste, which they made me taste of before they would take it. They also threw our bag of biscuit into the water. When having taken every thing, they now, to our great delight, told us we might go. They gave us a small basket of sago, and about three pints of water. The chief politely shook hands with us all; then stepping on board the proa they made sail

towards the shore.

" Luckily for us, one of our boats was just in sight; that containing Mr. Penfold. who had offered the captain, if he would give him six Englishmen, he would rescue us, or share our fate, for they never thought we should return. Guess then our joy, when we saw him lying-to, though a great way off.

" We made sail, and stood towards him, pulling, at the same time, with all our might, uncertain for some time whether we gained upon them or not. Had it been night, we should have missed them, and must, unprovided as we were, have died a miserable death; worse, indeed, than the one from which we had escaped. We came up with him Cast, and in two hours from leaving the proa, ran alongside of them, and pleased enough they were to see us.

" Just as we reached them, away went our mast, and the cutter took us in tow. We soon came up with the launch, when the captain welcomed us heartily. Oar boat not being worth repairing, was condemned. Half of our crew went in the second cutter, Mr. Dainty and myself into the launch. The sails and oars being taken out of her, she was scuttled, and cast adrift.

" *Monday, 10th.*—Pleasant breeze during the day : steering N.W. for Sambas, a Dutch settlement on the S.W. coast of Borneo. Mrs. Dare fretting very much for her babe, being unable to give it rack. The little boy, full of fun and mischief, throwing overboard everything in his reach. Set to, and made weatherboards of some spare canvas, to keep out the spray, which occasionally broke over us.

"The same allowance of water, with bread, ham, preserved meat, &c, three times a-day. During the night parted company, by accident, with the second cutter.

" *Tuesday, 11th.*—Strong breeze from the northward. The captain finding the water getting short, had it measured, and found, that by going upon short allowance, we should have enough to last as to Singapore direct, so we were pat upon three wine glasses a-day. The little boy very troublesome, continually crying for water. The heat of the sun is unbearable, the skin beginning to peel off my hands and face.

" *Wednesday, 12th.*—Stiff breeze, with a high troubled sea; shipped a great quantity of water, which damaged some of our bread. Lat $4^{\circ} 4' N$. Long. $111^{\circ} 10' E$.

" *Thursday, 13th.*—Steady breeze from the northward, with heavy sea. At half-past four, p.m., we saw the Great Natimas Island, bearing from West to S.S.W. Hauled our wind to go to the northward of the island.

" At sunset, the extreme of the island bore N. and W. by S. "
Friday, 14/A.—At day-light, the island yet in sight. Pleasant breeze from N.N.E. At two, p.m., passed Saddle Island. At four, the island out of sight astern.

"*Saturday, 15th.*—During the day, the sun very oppressive. Steering W.S.W. Lat. $4^{\circ} 13' N$. Long. $106^{\circ} 20' E$. Caught a little rain-water during the night

"*Sunday, 16th.*—At daylight, saw the A nam has, bearing S.E. half S. The captain read prayers. Had a glass of champagne each after dinner. At three, p.m., saw Wlo Aoue S.W. by W. Palo Penang W. half S. Fine weather throughout, with smooth water.

"*Monday, 17th.*—With daylight, beheld the main-land of Malacca. At six, saw Bintang Hill. At twelve, boarded the *Mary Irvine*, of Liverpool, bound for China. The captain was very kind, offering us provisions ; but expecting to be in Singapore in a few hours, we took nothing, except some water and pine apples, which were a great treat to us.

" We arrived at Singapore at about three, p.m., after being twelve days in our boats. The second cutter had got in early in the morning. Nothing heard of the first cutter.

" Now came a carriage for Mrs. Dare, and thankful enough she was,

" Mr. Penfold, in a hired schooner, was then going to search for Mr. Small.

" Mr. Dainty having engaged his passage home in the barque, *Manilla*, for London, procured places as seamen for me and the other apprentice. Thus, on Saturday, the 22nd, we went on board ; on Sunday, the 23rd, we weighed anchor, and started for England, where, after a long and tedious voyage of five months, during which we were nearly starved into the bargain, we arrived in London, after an absence of twenty months.

" The first cutter did not get into Singapore until a fortnight after we left, having been to Sambas. The Lascars, who deserted us, had been taken as slaves, and did not regain their liberty until twelve months after.¹

Thus far Harry Thompson : thanks to him, for holding the pen in one hand, whilst using the oar with the other. Yet, had it not been for Mrs. Dare and the children, the other creatures might have shifted for themselves, and the journal might have mouldered unmolested in that old weather-beaten chest, which had timed its creakings to the roll and dash of many a wild sea billow.