

NARRATIVE
OF THE
LOSS OF THE ABEONA

WHICH WAS

Destroyed by Fire

ON THE 25th OF NOVEMBER, 1820,

IN

LAT. 4°. 30". NORTH, 25. WEST LONG.

when

ONE HUNDRED AND TWELVE
INDIVIDUALS PERISHED.

COMPILED BY
SOME OF THE SURVIVORS.

SECOND EDITION.

GLASGOW:

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1821.

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NARRATIVE, &c

THE commercial distresses of this country prompted a considerable number of the inhabitants of the city of Glasgow, and surrounding villages, to form the resolution of leaving their homes, with their wives and families, to seek an asylum on the African shores: and, to accomplish this object, application was made to Government, by Mr. Henry Monteith, Lord Provost, the Magistrates, and several respectable Gentlemen of the city of Glasgow, for a grant of land, at the Cape of Good Hope, in order that those who choosed to emigrate might go to settle there. The application was successful, and the ship, Abeona, transport. No. 36, commanded by Lieutenant Mudge, was sent round, by the orders of Government, from Deptford to Greenock, to convey the emigrants to Algoa Bay.

On the 7th of October last, the emigrants, to the number of 126 men, women, and children, embarked on board the Abeona, at Greenock, forming, with the crew, and 14- passengers whom they met on board, and who had embarked at Deptford, for the same destination, a total number of 161 souls.

Some arrangements were necessary to be made, before they departed, which detained the ship at Greenock, till the 11th, when she weighed anchor, and dropped down to the Tail of the Bank. On the 13th, with a fair wind, she set sail."

With the exception of sea sickness, which prevailed amongst the passengers, and which occasioned a little deterioration of comfort, nothing of any consequence

occurred, on their voyage, till they arrived off Madeira. This island they passed with a light breeze, on the 25th of Oct; and on the 27th, were off St. Cruz, in the island of Teneriffe. Orders were given to some of the men to lower one of the gigs, or small boats, to go on shore for such things as were wanted, and leave such letters as the people on board were desirous of sending to their relations. They were, however, much mortified by the Spaniards refusing to allow any of them to land, unless they produced a bill of health.

Their expressing great surprise at such unusual precaution being observed towards a vessel coming directly from an English port, produced not the smallest symptom of an inclination to withdraw the prohibition. So far was this precautionary conduct carried by the Spaniards, that they even sent out a revenue boat, to watch the motions of the gig, and to convoy her back to the Abeona. And, to remunerate themselves for the exercise of their inhospitable disposition, they, in the most bare-faced manner, made a demand of six dollars and a quarter upon those against whom it was directed; and expressed much dissatisfaction at its being indignantly refused.

Seeing the unwillingness of the Spaniards to allow any of their people to land, the Abeona proceeded on her voyage, and, on the 2nd of November, anchored off St. Jago, where they met with a different reception. Here they were permitted to land, and take on board such fruit, water, and other articles, as they stood in need of, without hindrance or molestation, and also to leave on shore such letters as any of those on board were desirous of forwarding to their

relations. After a stay of seven days at St. Jago, the Abeona proceeded on her voyage.

On the 25th November, they found themselves in lat. 4 deg. 30 min. N., long. 25 deg. 30 min. W. and were rapidly approaching the Equator. As few of those on board had ever crossed it, their spirits were greatly elated, in expectation of a speedy introduction into the presence of old Neptune, and in the contemplation of the amusements that usually attend that ceremony. A different scene awaited them. It was noon; a dead calm prevailed; the wide expanse of ocean around them presented an unruffled surface, while, through the serene atmosphere of a torrid clime, the sun shone in unclouded majesty. Peace, joy, and happiness, reigned on board the Abeona.

This happy prospect was soon clouded. Destruction hovered over them. It was a quarter past twelve, when the alarm of fire struck terror into every heart, and awakened in their minds feelings of a very different description to those which they had previously entertained. The catastrophe was sudden and awful, in the extreme. Mr. Duff, the chief mate, had descended into the lazaretto, or store room, with a candle, in order to draw off some rum. It is conjectured that the candle, by accident, had come in contact with the spirits, or some other combustible matter. Instantly all was in a blaze around him. The utmost efforts were, in a moment, directed to subdue the flames. Every possible exertion was made by both the sailors and settlers, in handing water along, in order to extinguish their fury. The thick volumes of smoke which burst forth from the fatal room compelled them to abandon their object. Those below were forced to ascend to the deck.

The flames began to issue upwards, in fearful volumes. Still every exertion was made and continued, for near an hour, to arrest their progress, but all to no purpose. The rapidity of the flames were such that, to check them, in the slightest degree, was found impracticable, and it soon became obvious that every hope of saving the vessel was irrecoverably lost. The terror of all on board was greatly increased, from the dread that the flames would soon communicate with the powder magazine, and blow the ship to atoms. This magazine was situated aft the mizen mast. The lazaretto lay immediately before it. Smith, the cook, with a presence of mind which did him the greatest credit, perceived the imminent danger, and instantly prepared to prevent it. Himself, the carpenter, and some of the emigrants, undertook the perilous duty of getting to it, and throwing the powder overboard. Before they could effect their purpose, they were obliged to go down by the cabin, (the fire prevented them from taking the direct way,) and cut away the hatch which lay above the magazine. In doing this the carpenter broke the handle of his hatchet, but persevering he effected his purpose with his adze. The magazine was gained and the powder thrown overboard. This, however, was not generally known, while others, who saw what was going on, were still alarmed, lest some part might have escaped the notice of those brave men who had performed this arduous service. Under this impression every one rushed backwards from the fatal spot, in order to be at the greatest possible

distance, in case of an explosion. This greatly increased the previous terror and confusion.

The utmost efforts continued to be made, in order to arrest the fury of the devouring element. The commander, Lieutenant Mudge, and the Surgeon, were conspicuously active. Their conduct throughout this awful business deserves the greatest praise. The intrepidity and presence of mind of both were extraordinary. They assisted and encouraged the seamen and passengers, in carrying water to extinguish the flames, while the smallest prospect of saving the vessel remained. To enable them to bring a greater quantity of water to bear upon the flames below, the after-hatch was raised. Unfortunately this served only to increase the evil. The fire having got vent ascended up the rigging, with irresistible impetuosity. Rigging, yards, and sails, were soon in a blaze. The conflagration became general; and volumes of smoke and flames spread throughout the vessel, and rose above the towering masts of the *Abeona*. The last hope of saving the ship vanished. The only alternative which now remained was to endeavour to save the lives of those on board of her.

The exertions of the crew and passengers were instantly turned to lower down the boats. The two gigs were let down from the ship's quarters, and the skiff, which had been stowed on the booms, in the long boat, was, after considerable exertions, also got out, and all three safely launched. Previously, many persons had leaped overboard, to escape the flames. These the sailors and settlers who had been employed in launching the boats endeavoured to pick up, and succeeded in rescuing several from a watery grave.

The long boat was now the only one remaining on board. The exertions of all were directed to get her removed into the water. Strongly lashed and secured, and being, besides, encumbered with spars, some time was necessary to get her disentangled. Here the exertions of the carpenter, in cutting the fastenings, were again most conspicuous and praiseworthy. The boat was started from the booms to the gangway, and, by continued exertions, was nearly clear of the bulwarks. The tackle-fall was taken to the windlass. Lieutenant Mudge, the Surgeon, several sailors and settlers, continued to heave round, in hopes of every moment succeeding in their object. Amongst those who particularly exerted themselves on this occasion, and whose conduct deserves notice, was Marion Barrie, a girl of 18 years of age, who, with masculine energy, handled a handspike, aiding, with all her strength, those who were turning the windlass. At this moment the flames caught the tackle-fall and burned it. Such was their rapidity and force that Lieutenant Mudge saw there was no hope of accomplishing the desired object. He, accordingly, betook himself to his boat, followed by the Surgeon, and endeavoured to secure those already in the boats, and to save as many more as they possibly could of the unfortunate crew and passengers. The sequel will show that he acted prudently.

Notwithstanding that the officers and the chief part of the crew had thus withdrawn, those left on board continued their exertions, in order to launch the long boat. They forced away as much of the bulwarks as they conceived would permit the boat to pass over, and then attempted to accomplish their object by main force. While thus engaged, however, the flames which had perforated the deck, and issued

through the hatchways, caught the stern of the boat. It was instantly in a blaze. Every effort to check the flame was fruitless. The main and mizen rigging, also, having, by this time, been consumed, the main-mast, and main-yard, and also the mizen-mast, fell overboard, on the larboard side, with a tremendous crash. Lieutenant Mudgc, who had foreseen the catastrophe, had not got into his boat two minutes before the event took place. Had he delayed his departure, it would certainly have been attended with ruin to many of those who had previously escaped from the vessel. The three boats proceeded to a short distance from the ship, lest they might be upset, or some of the people in them killed, by the falling of the masts and yards.

Fearful as the scene of terror and consternation was, which had previously reigned over this ill-fated ship, still it was trifling, compared to what followed. The hope of escape by the long boat being completely cut off, a scene of anguish and despair ensued, which beggars all description. The weeping children clung round the trembling knees of their disconsolate parents, for assistance and protection. The afflicted parent sought out his helpless offspring, and collecting together in mournful groupes, they, with lamentations of the bitterest anguish and despair, looked around and sought for that relief and assistance which, alas! no human arm could any longer afford them. Below their feet, and around their heads, raged the devouring flames, and before them lay the wide expanse of the unfathomable Atlantic. To escape was impossible! Death stared them in the face, arrayed in his wildest terrors, leaving them but one alternative, either to be consumed by the flames, or drowned in the billows. In this sad state of agony and

despair, the sufferers tore the hair from their heads. Some leaped into the sea, calling for that assistance which it was impossible to afford them. Others clung round the chains, the sides of the ship, and the burning rigging. Many retired to the bolt-sprit, the only part which the flames had not reached. Here they found no safety. The foremast was now in a blaze. Every support it had was soon consumed, and it fell directly forward upon the boltsprit, killing or knocking off into the sea those who had taken refuge upon the latter.

Those in the three small boats witnessing the unavailing efforts of the persons on board to get out the long boat, and perceiving the horrible state in which they stood, endeavoured to save as many of the wretched sufferers as they could. They picked up several that had leaped overboard, and were swimming towards them for assistance, or supporting themselves on spars, or other pieces of the ship, which had been thrown overboard. They approached the burning wreck, as closely as they durst do, and continued to take in the trembling fugitives who were so fortunate as to reach them. But the boats being filled with as many as it was believed they could carry, a consultation was held by those on board, when it was judged proper for their own safety to abandon the vessel, and those that remained on board of her, to their fate. Painful as this resolution was, still it was the only course they could take; and even those in the boats who beheld their relatives perishing before their eyes, were constrained to acknowledge that any attempt to save more would only be involving the whole in one common calamity.

Having come to this resolution, and being no longer able to stand the sight of the sad spectacle of human misery before them, those in the three boats rowed to some distance from it. The scene, at these moments, was the most awful and distressing that was ever beheld by mortal eye. Those in the boats saw their fellow creatures,—nay, their dearest relatives, perishing amongst the consuming flames, or throwing themselves headlong into the sea, to escape their fury. They saw others clinging to the sides of the ship, and to the few remaining ropes, which the fire was fast seizing and consuming in their hands. They saw them clinging to these while their clothes on their backs were in flames, until, exhausted, they sank into the burning vortex, or dropped off into the ocean. They saw the most astonishing efforts made to prolong life to the last moment, amidst the most unutterable horrors. They witnessed the most devoted resignation, undaunted courage, the bitterest anguish, and tenderest love and affection, displayed amongst the wretched sufferers, and they witnessed all this, without being able to render them the smallest assistance. While the boats remained near, saving as many as they could, a gleam of hope would no doubt still animate the bosom of all who remained on board; but when these rowed off to a distance, and left them, as they were forced to do, to their fate, all hope must have vanished. The anguish of this dreadful moment may be conceived, but cannot be described,—equally severe, we may believe, in the breasts of those that had escaped, as in the bosoms of those to whom the fatal lot fell to remain and perish.

The flames continued their progress, till the work of destruction was complete. The cries of those who

still survived and remained on the wreck, were distinctly heard by those in the boats, till nearly midnight. After that, all was silent! By that time, the last sufferer was relieved from his sorrows. About three o'clock, on the following morning, the vessel was consumed nearly to the surface of the water, and what remained of the Abeona sank to the bottom. In the lamentable manner described perished 112 human beings. The swell of the Atlantic again flows over the fatal spot, and leaves no monument to mark the tomb that contains their ashes. A considerable number had endeavoured to save themselves either on the boltsprit, or a raft constructed by some spars which had belonged to the ship. During the night, this raft floated very near the place to which the boats had withdrawn. A sudden and terrific cry set up by those on the raft, from what cause is unknown, alarmed those in the boats, and the fear of its coming in contact with them, compelled those in the boats to seek safety, by rowing to a greater distance. After this they heard the cries of those on the raft no more. So near were the latter, at one time, that they could distinguish the voices ; and one boy who had been saved in the boats thought he heard his father's voice amongst those (supposed eight or ten) who were on the raft. The boats remained, all night, at no great distance from the fatal wreck, in hopes that some vessel might, during the night, have seen the flames, and come to their assistance.

It would be a very difficult task to particularise all the distressing scenes which those in the boats witnessed, from the commencement till the close of the fatal catastrophe. Every one of these were of the most heart-rending description, and such as require only to be mentioned to be felt by every bosom which

can feel for the miseries and sufferings of their fellow creatures. We shall briefly detail a few of them.

The Barries of Provan Mill, near Glasgow, a family of twelve, out of whom eight, under sixteen years of age, are saved, deserve to be first noticed. Insensible to their own danger, their whole care was to save their children. With incredible activity, and at the most imminent danger, they collected as many as they could, and Mrs. Barrie threw eight of the youngest into one of the small boats. She refused to go into it herself, but went in quest of her other two children, against the remonstrances of one of the seamen. The boat was forced to put off, just as she appeared again, hanging in the leech of a rope, over the starboard bow. Both parents, and the two eldest children, a boy and girl, unfortunately perished. Barrie, the elder, was for some time observed cutting the ropes that led from the fore-mast to the bolt-sprit, to prevent the fire from reaching them. Kitty, the oldest who was saved, acted towards the other children as a mother. The youngest, a boy about fifteen months old, clung to her from the moment they entered the boat, and never would afterwards be separated from her. Her conduct deserves the greatest praise, and generous and sympathising public will accordingly reward her.

Seeing all hope of escape cut off, McFarlane, who had been married only a short time before they left Greenock, bound a rope round his wife, and attaching it to himself, they both, with undaunted resolution, jumped over the starboard bow, into the sea, in hopes of reaching the boats by his exertions. A dog, impelled by the same natural attachment to life, leaped also from the ship, into the water, and while the young couple were making the greatest exertions to preserve

their lives, the dog got upon the top of them; which incumbrance, with the husband's exhausted strength, soon terminated the unequal struggle. They disappeared together and perished. Walker who, it was thought, made a similar attempt to save himself and his wife, swung himself over the fore-chains, where they seized a rope which was suspended from the chains, and held on, in expectation of some of the boats relieving them. Exhausted, however, the husband was compelled to let go his hold, and Mrs. Walker, worn out, soon after dropped after him. Mrs. Suffield, an officer's widow, who was going to the Isle of France, with her four children, to settle there, after making fast the youngest to her neck with her gown, lowered herself down the fore-chains with a rope, and was fortunately saved by those in the skiff. Her eldest daughter, while anxiously calling out to save her mother, leaped from the bulwark into the sea. Endeavouring to save her mother, those in the boats could not, at the moment, render her any assistance, and the unfortunate girl perished.

McLeran, who survives the loss of his wife and four children, would have perished with them, had it not been for the exertions of his wife. Seeing no hope of escape for them all, and he refusing to abandon them, she came behind him, and literally pushed him headlong into the water, and after swimming for about a mile, was picked up by the people in one of the gigs, just as his eldest daughter sprang from the ship, in the hopes of some of the boats coming to her relief. The mother and the remaining children were left behind. McLean, after getting into one of the boats, in order to save his wife, placed the one end of an oar on the ship, while the other rested on the skiff, whereby she might descend to him. Too timid to attempt this

mode of deliverance, she remained, and consequently perished. Hally, who had got married to the daughter of an emigrant, while lying at Greenock, resolved to save or to perish with her. Clasped in each other's arms, they sprang from the starboard side of the vessel into the waves, and were seen no more,

Mr. Duff, the chief mate who had been involuntarily the cause of the fatal accident, refused to leave the ship, on any account. He exerted himself to the utmost to see the passengers and the rest of his comrades saved. He cheered the people repeatedly, during their exertion to get out the long boat. He bore an excellent character, and was the support of an aged mother. He preferred, he said, immediate death in the ship to the equally certain, and even more horrible, fate which, he was convinced, awaited those who had got into the boats. He resolved to suffer with those who were suffering in consequence of the accident which had occurred by his hands. Smith, the cook, seeing no possibility of escape, deliberately threw off his wooden leg, and, having bound to his arm, with a piece of rope-yarn, a favourite dog, which, during the early part of this voyage, he had saved from drowning, he plunged into the deep with the animal, and both disappeared for ever.

One of the emigrants who perished, seeing one of his children's clothes take fire, in order to extinguish it, sprang down the fore-chains, and, while in the act of immersing the child in the water, the flames caught his hand, and forced him to let go his hold. The helpless innocent sunk to rise no more. Mr. Wright, one of the passengers, aware of his inability to swim, made his way to the starboard fore-chains. Here he found Paterson, to whom he was much attached,

surrounded by his wife and family, in anxious expectation of relief. To rouse Paterson from the state of stupor into which he seemed plunged, and to induce him to exert himself to save his wife and children, by means of the skiff, which was then very near the ship, Mr Wright took up one of his friend's children, a boy about seven years of age, and threw him into the water. He immediately jumped after the boy himself, and both were fortunately rescued from a watery grave, by the exertions of those in the boats, who stretched out oars for them to lay hold of, not daring to come too close to the burning vessel.

An emigrant, of the name of Reid, whose wife was also on board, was amongst the last of the survivors who left the ship. He had almost exhausted his strength, in working at the pump, and endeavouring to launch the long boat. He remained in the ship till about four o'clock, p. m. during which time he witnessed the most indescribable scenes of misery and distress. Anguish, horror, and despair, were written, in the strongest manner, on every countenance around him. The three boats, at this time, were about one mile from the ship. To reach these was the only chance which he had for safety. The flames pressed around him. Separated from his wife, he could nowhere perceive her. Giving her up as lost, he sprung overboard. He had only proceeded a short distance, when he was arrested by the cries of his wife, imploring him to return and save her. He turned back, and reached the burning vessel. He endeavoured to get on board, and, for that purpose, caught hold of some ropes. Cut asunder by the flames these gave way. He seized the boats' davit. From a similar cause this gave way, and descending struck him on the forehead. For a few minutes he remained

senseless. Recovering, he gained the mizen chains. From thence he was driven by the flames. By great exertions he gained the fore-chains, to which his wife was clinging with one hand? He assisted her on deck, He continued to embrace her, till the irresistible fury of the spreading flames separated them for ever. In despair he snatched a burning stick from the fiery ruins around him, threw himself into the water with it, and, in twenty minutes, he reached the boats in safety.

When Reid returned to the ship he found McLucky in tears, with his little son, Peter, in his arms, and his wife, and another of his children, clinging around him, bewailing their helpless condition, and trembling at the sad fate which awaited them. As soon as Reid had reached the deck, he assisted one of Mr. Russel's daughters to get up from the fore-chains, where she was holding by a rope. He then placed her beside her father, mother, and brother, who clung together in the most wretched and imploring condition. This was the last time that this unhappy family were seen by any of the survivors. Thomson's truly unfortunate and friendless wife and family were observed by Reid clinging to each other, with the grasp of agony. Before his first leaving the ship, Mrs. Thomson begged of Reid to put some of her children into the long boat, expecting it to be got afloat He, accordingly, placed two therein, but was soon obliged to take them out again. This unfortunate woman and five children perished amidst this scene of horrors. Her husband lives to lament their loss, and curse the hand that separated them.

This unhappy man had been left behind, torn from his afflicted and helpless family, for a debt of **£25**, and for which the husband of his wife's sister was security. The creditor, though he was aware, for a long time, of his intended departure, never attempted to detain Thomson, until he was about to sail. The creditor promised to release the cautioner from his obligation of security, providing he detained and arrested the unfortunate debtor. The family had settled their affairs, and embarked at Greenock, on board the *Abeona*, when the cautioner went on board, and requested Thomson would come ashore, and take a parting glass with him. Thomson obeyed. The moment he set his foot on shore, he was arrested on a fugae warrant (one of those tremendous instruments, by which, in wicked hands, law may be made the most terrible oppression) and committed to prison. The ship, which was on the point of sailing, proceeded without him.

The distress of his wife and family may be easier conceived than expressed. Having no home wherein to hide their heads, in Scotland, they still requested going to the Cape of Good Hope, in this forlorn condition, convinced that Thomson would follow them, the first opportunity. The rest of the settlers commiserated the situation of this destitute family, and agreed to take them under their protection, not only during the voyage, but after their arrival at Algoa Bay, until Thomson (Government afterwards agreed to send him, after his family, by the first opportunity,) should arrive to protect them. But, alas ! that happy day they were destined never to see! The fatal 25th of November blasted all their hopes, and terminated all their sufferings. The unhappy husband

lives to mourn (with anguish, bitter and severe as their fate was dreadful) the loss of all he held dear in this world, aggravated by the recollection of his being, by the cruelty of a near relative, far removed from the possibility of affording them any assistance, in this their last scene of tremendous suffering and misery. It is not possible to conceive an act of deeper cruelty than that which separated the head from this helpless and forlorn family. The flames of the Abeona must, in imagination, rise up, before the perpetrators, and fill their hearts with anguish, and their souls with terror.

Peter Paterson, a seaman, at the peril of his life, saved his Prayer Book from the flames. He put it in his bosom, leaped into the sea, and swam to one of the boats. When taken up by the people on board, he requested that the Prayer Book might be taken from his breast, before he attempted to get into the boat, lest it might, by accident, drop into the sea, in the act of his getting on board. One of the passengers deliberately went in search of some provisions, bacon and biscuit, which he put into his hat, and with them sprang into the sea, in order to reach one of the boats. While swimming towards it, he lost his hat and provisions, but saved his life. Many other instances of intrepidity, courage, and self-recollection, in these awful moments, might be adduced, but it is deemed unnecessary.

If such as we have noticed (and these are but feeble outlines, indeed) were the sad scenes on board the Abeona, during the day, what must those have been which presented themselves to the surviving sufferers, when darkness enveloped the skies, certain that they were never more to behold the light of heaven! Here stood the parent lamenting his inability to save his helpless offspring;—there the

children supplicating from the parent assistance and protection, which it was beyond all human power to afford. The blackness of despair settled on every countenance. The dearest relatives—the husband from the wife, and the wife from the husband—the parent from the child, and the child from the parent—were separated to meet no more. The fate and sufferings of others exhibited a certain prelude to their own. Each beheld the object of his tenderest affection perishing before their eyes—consuming, as it were, by inches, in the devouring flames, or contending with weakening and ineffectual struggles, amidst the relentless billows. Before them no road for escape opened! Around them rose no hope of deliverance! Existence spun out for a few hours, but served to render their last moments more bitter and distressing—the approach of death more hideous and appalling. Over these melancholy scenes, however, humanity forces us to draw a veil. The heart starts back with horror, and the mind recoils in agony from the contemplation of scenes replete with such unprecedented misery, suffering, and sorrow.

In the midst of this terrible confusion, but little provisions were saved, or could be got into the boats. What were saved was chiefly owing to the exertions of the Surgeon and the Cook, who, with great presence of mind, threw some of the live stock overboard, in hopes that the boats might pick them up. They also collected all the provisions which they could readily get at and put them into the long boat. Their inability to launch her, however, rendered their care and exertions so far fruitless. After all hopes of personal safety must have vanished, the Cook was still observed to continue throwing overboard whatever

live stock lie could lay hold of, in order to provide all the sustenance possible for those who had committed themselves to the boats, without which they might meet a fate even more dreadful than that from which they attempted to escape.

While the sad spectacle of human misery lasted on board the wreck, the minds of those in the boats were wholly engrossed with sympathy towards it. When it ceased, then, for the first time, they had leisure to reflect upon their own forlorn situation; and the reflexion was well calculated to throw a damp over the most confident mind. They found themselves stowed in three small boats, in the middle of the ocean, six hundred miles from the nearest point of land. Their stock of provisions consisted only of about ten bacon hams, that happened to be drying in one of the gigs, at the time of the accident; two pigs and a sow which had been picked up, after swimming for about two hours; two turkeys; and about eight or ten pounds of biscuit. A few hammocks which happened to be wrapped about the two gigs, to prevent the heat of the sun from melting the pitch, were the only substitute for sails. As for clothes, many were half naked, having stripped themselves, to facilitate their swimming to the boats. To add to the desperate nature of their condition, they had only a broken compass between the three boats.

Thus situated, without the means of navigation, without provision more than what would support

their existence for a few days, and without shelter from the scorching rays of a vertical sun, it may well be conceived that they envied the fate of their late companions, whose sufferings were now past. The spirits of many were fast sinking to the lowest degree of despondency, by the horrible prospect which was before them, notwithstanding the frequent forced cheering, which was attempted to prevent it. During the night, the boats kept close together, to render mutual assistance to each other. One of them, however, was so leaky that, but for the providential occurrence of their having, before night came on, fallen in with a chest containing two tins, which served as baling dishes, they might probably have sunk. After all, it required their utmost efforts to keep her afloat. It rained through the night so heavily as to enable the people on board the three boats to intercept fifteen gallons of water, by spreading their clothes, and wringing them into a puncheon which they had picked up. This was a most fortunate supply, as not a drop had been saved from the ship.

Had the weather continued a perfect calm, they might thus have existed for a few days; but the most sanguine among them could scarcely hope that the result of their efforts would be any thing else than a mere protraction of their misery.

When day approached, every eye was directed, in exploring looks, towards the surrounding horizon, trying to discover some vessel which might be passing that way, while, at the same time, their desponding hearts told them that their expectations of seeing one were vain. But how inconceivably great was their joy, when the carpenter announced the glad intelligence

that there was a ship in sight, and pointed her out, at two or three miles' distance, bearing down upon them!

The sudden transition from a state bordering upon despair to as high a pitch of gladness as a human being is, in this life, susceptible of, had such an overpowering effect on the minds of the survivors, as to render them insensible to the particular manifestations of joy which occupied the time that intervened from their first sight of the ship, till they reached her side. Their request to be taken on board was readily complied with, and while there they were treated with the greatest kindness and attention, particularly by the crew of the ship. Their conduct and behaviour to the survivors deserve the greatest praise, and confer honour on the name of their country.

The ship which thus rescued them from destruction proved to be the *Condeca da Ponte*, Captain Joaquin Almeida, from Bahia, bound to Lisbon, which, with the exception of one vessel, which had passed them about five days before, was the first they had seen for twenty days previously. The Portuguese ship had not observed the flames of the *Abeona*, during the preceding night, and, upon communicating to the Captain what had befallen her, he very readily proceeded to the spot where the deplorable disaster had taken place. Here he cruized about for several hours, with two men on the outlook, at each mast-head, in expectation of, perhaps, finding some of the unfortunate sufferers, who might have escaped the conflagration, by clinging to some of the shattered fragments of the vessel. This expectation was not realized.

Not a vestige was to be seen of the unfortunate ship, nor any of those who had been left on board of her, the day previous. The Condeca accordingly gave up the search, and altered her course, for Lisbon.

Thus, out of a situation the most forlorn, hopeless, and desperate, they were unexpectedly relieved by the interposition of Divine Providence. His eye watched over them, and his arm, though unseen, protected, and was stretched out to rescue them from this state of distress and danger. The Portuguese ship was far out of her intended course, and, what is very extraordinary, her crew state that, for several days previous, every effort was made by them, in vain, to keep her in the course intended. Such was the belief of the crew. The captain, however, gives a less superstitious reason for her being out of her course, namely, to avoid insurgent privateers. Still one must acknowledge that it was the overruling power of an arm unseen which brought the ship to the fatal spot. No such difficulty occurred, after having picked up the wretched survivors from the ill-fated Abeona.

Nothing material occurred in their passage back to Europe. The vessel reached Lisbon in safety. As soon as her arrival and their distressing case were known there, Mr. Jeffrey, the British Consul-General, and the Gentlemen of the British Factory, paid them every attention which humanity could dictate, endeavouring, in every possible way, to alleviate their distress. Ten helpless, friendless, and destitute orphans, from among the number, they took under their protection, charging themselves with the care of their future support, and procured, for the rest of the survivors, a passage on board the brig, Royal Charlotte, bound for Greenock. After remaining five

days at Lisbon, they embarked on board this vessel, and landed at Greenock, on the 13th of January, after a passage of seventeen days.

But how widely different were the circumstances in which they thus returned, from those in which a few months before, they had set out, from the same port! Then, every bosom was elated with the hopes of future ease, and comfort, and independence; and every regret at leaving their native land was immediately soothed by the growing mutual affection which had already begun to exhibit itself in their little community, and by the near prospect of obtaining a home and comfort, in another land, under the flag of their native country. Now, after having lost the little which they possessed of this world's substance, and after the still greater loss of valued friends and dear relatives, they add, by their misfortune, another instance to the many proofs which the world affords of the instability of human happiness, and of the disappointments to which its best prospects are liable, Out of the whole 126 emigrants that embarked at Greenock, only 16 came back to tell the dismal tale.

Before concluding this short narrative, the survivors find that they are discharging a duty to their own feelings, and to those of their fellow sufferers," when they inform the public, that the esteem which they conceive towards Lieutenant Madge and the Surgeon of the *Abeona*, for their conduct during the unpropitious voyage, has been such as even the heart-rending scene which they witnessed and deplore, and must for ever deplore, has not, for one moment, been able to obliterate from their minds.

The sufferers are convinced that the feeling world will be gratified in learning, that the sympathy which is so universally entertained towards them is displaying itself in the most beneficent acts of the kindest charity, in the city of Glasgow, and that their townsmen, with that interest which their connexion with the sufferers excited, are already subscribing a sum for their relief; thus giving way to a more lively movement of that liberal spirit which they have so often displayed in behoof of every object of distress, whether foreign or domestic. Amongst those who, from first to last, have exerted themselves, in every possible way, to assist and aid, the survivors cannot refrain from mentioning, with the liveliest gratitude and respect, the names of Henry Monteith, Esq. M. P. and Robert Dalglish, Esq. merchant, Glasgow. The kindness of these gentlemen has made an impression on the minds of the survivors which never can be effaced. Nor can they here omit mentioning, with sentiments of the strongest gratitude, the care and consideration evinced by a paternal Government, in every thing regarding their convenience and comfort, on board the vessel, during the voyage, which, by the melancholy and unforeseen accident, was attended with such disastrous results.

