

and stores, and crew, were received into the long-boat, and she was abandoned. This unfortunate occurrence cast a shade of gloom over every countenance. Crowded before, they were now literally wedged together in a space which permitted no motion to any one but those employed in working the boat. No one dreamt of lying down, any change of position being hardly possible; and whoever remained for rest had to press upon some accommodating neighbour; whilst the fearful probability which it brought to their apprehension, of the other small boat being found equally incompetent to such a sea, and for such a distance, and the consequent necessity of receiving her crew also, which involved the certain destruction of all, shewed in a still stronger view upon how frail a thread their hopes depended.

Their sufferings surpass description. The intense heat of a tropical sun scorched them through the day, and left them exhausted and uncovered to shiver under the chilling winds of night. Two heavy gales of wind occurred, and added to their perils and sufferings; in one of these Captain Theaker for forty-eight hours never quitted the thwart on which he had posted himself, nor ever relaxed his vigilance; he, as closely packed into the boat and wedged together as the little fishes in a box of sardines. The only two residents in that part of the island, Mons. Endes and Mons. Venterre, came immediately to their relief, and welcomed them to their houses, and gave them all they had to give with the most eager cordiality: they clothed, lodged, and fed the whole party, forty-five persons, for nine days, in a manner and with a cheerful alacrity of kindness and sympathy in their misfortunes, which deserve a grateful and faithful remembrance. Major Hart brought the names of these excellent citizens and good men to the particular notice of the honourable the governor of Port Louis; and it may confidently be hoped that their virtue and charity may not pass without reward.

But the wind, though tempestuous, was favourable, and a blessing; had it fallen a calm in such a temperature, and at such a distance from land, their escape would have been more difficult, and their sufferings more painful.

The wisdom and cool forethought with which all preparations had been made, and the perfect science and good discipline with which their little skiff of six tons' burden was navigated, enabling them to calculate almost to an hour when and where they were to land, preserved the poor sufferers from the last horrors of famine: still, their supply of food was most limited.

The sufferings of three ladies, young women who had been accustomed from infancy to every comfort and indulgence, to whom any sort of privation had been an idea unthought of—one, too, with a child of five months at the breast, and her servant, four delicate females, exceed description; they must be left to imagination, and reference made only to the pious resignation and firm fortitude with which they bore their bitter lot; setting an example which was not without its cheering and supporting effect on their companions: their conduct throughout was honourable to themselves, and an honour to their sex.

From the first alarm, on the morning of the 27th September, to the landing at Roderigues, about noon of October 10th, notwithstanding extreme bodily suffering, from which the strongest were not exempt—swollen legs and scorbutic boils to the most distressing and painful degree from confinement, incessant wet, and bad and deficient food,—with all these accumulated afflictions, thirteen days' and nights' exposure in open boats in tempestuous weather under a vertical sun, and on stinted provisions, was borne with the devotion and heroism of the good old British seamen; and the captain was as respectfully heard and obeyed as under the best circumstances.

There is an eloquent passage in Sir John Herschel's invaluable "Discourse on the Study of Natural Philosophy," part of paragraph 21, which pleasingly illustrates and may adorn this narrative. "That a man, by merely measuring the moon's apparent distance from a star with a little portable instrument held in his hand, and applied to his eye even with so unstable a footing as the deck of a ship, shall positively say, within five miles, where he is, on a boundless ocean, cannot but appear to persons ignorant of physical astronomy, an approach to the miraculous."

So perfectly certain, under all disadvantages, was Captain Theaker of their situation, that on the evening of the 9th October, he shortened sail and lay to during the night; and saw land, the north-east side of the Island of Roderigues, as was expected, with the dawning of the day. Their feelings may be imagined, but cannot be described; they were worn out and exhausted by hunger and thirst; by exposure to heat and wet; by anxiety, confinement, and want of rest and sleep; their skin under their clothes, which were now rotting on their bodies, was stuccoed with encrusted salt, and was breaking out in scorbutic boils and sores, which with every touch of salt water smarted to agony:—but all was forgotten—the haven was before them!

They were first descried by a black fisherman, who kindly put out to sea to assist them, and pilot them through the narrow channels of the coral-reefs; and having guided them to the shore, sent off his comrades to apprise the residents on the island of their appearance when first seen, may serve to convey an idea of their situation: "They were," said he, "as closely packed into the boat and wedged together as the little fishes in a box of sardines."

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The party so miraculously preserved, without the loss of a single individual, proceeded in a schooner to Port Louis, where they landed on the 23d October. They were received with the most consolatory and gratifying attention. The honourable the governor, Sir W. Nicolay, was pleased to offer the hospitality of government-house to Major and Mrs. Hart; and the most respectable inhabitants of the place immediately left cards of inquiry and offers of service of every description, sending them at once, unasked, the most liberal supplies of linen and clothes to relieve their immediate wants. The regimental messes of her majesty's 9th and 29th regiments sent invitations to their military brethren, offering the accommodation of their mess-tables, and whatever else lay in their power, to assist them in their distress. Finally government, most kindly guaranteed the bills they required to draw to supply their wants, that they might not feel any pecuniary embarrassment. In fact, nothing that condescension or goodness could suggest on the part of Sir W. and Lady Nicolay—nothing that sympathy in their sufferings could call forth from the community at large, was omitted; and Captain Theaker, his crew, and passengers, were soon able to proceed in different vessels to England, and Major and Mrs. Hart to the Cape of Good Hope.

THE PROTESTANT.*

"I won't go," said my uncle, as with folded arms he stood at the window of my study, debating within himself a point where I was equally undecided.

"The weather seems to forbid it, indeed," I remarked.

"The weather! when did you see me in the character of fair-weather Jack, my good niece?" asked the old sailor, somewhat nettled. "No it is not a shower, or a torrent of rain could withhold the expression of those loyal feelings that must and will cleave to the House of Brunswick. That fact is, I cannot forget that on the last occasion when I saw my sovereign, mine was the only hat in a rather large group of silent by-standers, lifted to greet her with respect that royalty must ever claim from its subjects. I could not bear to witness such another slight put upon my Queen."

* From the Christian Lady's Magazine for March, 1840.

"Neither would you, dear uncle: the circumstances are changed. There! that distant gun even now gave signal that the ring is placed upon her finger; she has plighted the vow that binds her to one in holy bands, appointed of God—Another report! Oh, may the Lord confirm the blessing which that young royal pair are now receiving from the lips of his venerable minister!"

"Amen, Amen!" exclaimed my uncle, on whom the sound of the far-off cannon had operated with magic effect. "Come, order a carriage without delay. We'll go towards Kensington, and have one look at the young couple."

A few minutes saw us on the road: but the transient gleam of fair weather was soon followed by a heavier fall of rain.

"There is brightness in the horizon, nevertheless," remarked my uncle, as he closed the window against the pelting storm; and we will abide patiently the dispersion of those stormy symptoms."

Before we reached our destination in Hyde Park, the weather had sufficiently changed to admit of our carriage being thrown open, which afforded us a wide survey of the animated scene. We were near the Kensington gate of the Park, and as some little uncertainty at first prevailed as to which road the royal pair would take, this, where in either case they must needs pass, became an attractive point. Hand-some carriages were drawn up on each side, equestrian gentlemen grouped themselves to the best advantage, and a dense throng of determined pedestrians pressed even to the wheels and horses, which lining the footway, rather impeded their prospect. My uncle stood erect in the carriage, his dark-blue surcoat conspicuously displaying the white satin rosette on which I had lavished all my skill, the hat somewhat raised from his open forehead, and the glow of healthy old age, heightened by the moment's excitement, mantling on his cheek. Many gazed at the honest veteran; and he, in return, cast a look of speaking benevolence on all around him.

"How many changes," he abruptly said, "have come over this scene since, as the school-boy guest of an old family in Kensington, I bowled my hoop along this road?"

"Changes, indeed! uncle: but the mightiest change is in the living department of the scenery."

"Ay; I doubt whether there be one in many of the hundreds now present who have numbered my years."

Just then an old lady, dressed with as much regard to the fashion of former days as could be retained without extreme singularity, was seen advancing across the Park, and anxiously seeking an interval by which to pass into the front rank. A pretty waiting-maid was apparently bent on dissuading her, but the dame would not be deterred; and after a rapid survey through her spectacles, she boldly advanced into the throng. I remarked, half-laughing, "How strong is the passion of sight-seeing in some people!"

"Say not so," replied my uncle in one of his gentlest tones; "rather call it the passion of loyalty, which, in spite of all discouragement, will throb to the last pulse in the bosoms of those who knew what it was to call George the Third their King, while one of his race wears the British diadem. To me there is something beautiful in the eagerness of that old lady, to catch a glimpse of her young, wedded Queen, at the expense of personal inconvenience, and even peril, to say nothing of the weather. I have noticed several such to-day; and trust me, my dear, the silent prayer that will be sent up from their hearts will do more for their object than all the courtly homage of the glittering circle by whom she is even now surrounded in the palace."

I felt reproved; and had not the old lady already been lost in the crowd, I believe I should have invited her into the carriage.

Meanwhile my uncle's thoughts had taken another turn, glancing at a subject in which he is deeply interested. "Could the eye paternal of our revered old king have beheld the mighty masses this day congregated around his palaces, and known how immense a proportion of them were a sheep not having a shepherd—left to the ravening wolf, for lack of that which church and state are alike bound to provide, he would not have given sleep to his eyes: nor