

Kempensfeldt, who was at the time in his cabin, perished, and so also did two hundred and sixteen bumboat women and children who were on board. Of twelve hundred persons in the vessel at the time, about two hundred and ninety were saved by boats, which were kept off for a few moments by the whirlpool round the sinking ship. The *Lark*, a victualling sloop alongside the *Royal George* at the time, also sunk in the eddy, and several of her men were lost. Soon after the catastrophe, numbers of dead bodies appeared floating round the ships at Spithead. The *Royal George* had been condemned, and had only a few months more to float.

Another calamitous and historical wreck was that of the *St. George*, ninety-eight guns, one of the fleet sent into the Baltic, in 1811, to convoy merchantmen, Admiral Reynolds commander. The *St. George* had been injured by a collision, and was being brought home by two men-of-war, when she went ashore near Cape Ryssestein, on the coast of Jutland. Her guardian-vessel the *Defence* (seventy-four), first grounded, and went to pieces in half an hour, all her crew perishing but five seamen and one marine, who were saved on spars. The *St. George* took ground upwards of eight hundred fathoms from land, as she was trying to anchor. No boats could reach her from the shore, and those lowered from the ship were instantly lost. Only twelve men were saved, and these escaped on planks. When they left, Admiral Reynolds and Captain Guyon, who had refused to leave the vessel, were lying dead on the quarter-deck, surrounded by some five hundred of the crew. Fatigue and cold had struck them one by one. About fifty men were still alive, and their cries could be heard till dark. A part of the mast was cut away, and a raft was also formed, but in vain. Two days afterwards, the gale abating, boats were put off to bring ashore the bodies of the admiral and officers, but the deck had been washed away. Between thirteen hundred and fourteen hundred lives were lost with these two vessels.

The *Earl of Abergavenny*, a noble first-class East Indiaman, of twelve hundred tons, sailed from Portsmouth on February 1, 1805, with other outward-bound vessels, under convoy of the *Weymouth* frigate. The weather was unfavourable, and the wind strong against them. The very first night, the sheep-dog and the flock—the frigate and the convoy—lost sight of each other, and till day broke were out of each other's reach. This was an ominous beginning, but the sailors no doubt attributed it all to sailing on a Friday, and turning the ship's head, ran for Portland Roads. There was less hurry in those days, and no steam to force a vessel through opposing sea and wind. It was a comfortable, easy-going age; and the captain of an Indiaman, laden with precious goods, and bound for a long journey, thought nothing of a few days' delay. On Tuesday (there must have been rough work between Friday and Tuesday), the Indiaman having a pilot on board, a calm, grave man, who knew every rock, light, and headland, beat along the Dorsetshire coast, and bore up for Portland Roads; but ebb-tide setting in fast, and the wind being slack (misfortune on misfortune), she suddenly drove on the shambles, a rock of the Bill of Portland. There was no alarm at first—no thought of not getting off at the turn-tide—no fear of ever having to take to the boats; so for an hour and a half no guns were fired to signal the shore-people. At four, she made much water, which gained terribly fast upon the pumps. The crew worked hard, endeavouring to bail her at the fore-hatchway, but with little success. In the midst of all this anxiety and excitement, at five, the carpenter went below, and searching about and sounding, returned with a pale, scared face, and reported a great leak, that no pledgets or art of his could stop. Then, and not till then, the huge wounded ship spoke, groaned forth her alarm and distress, with discharges of twenty cannon. Ceaselessly, too, the pumps went on; but at six o'clock the loss seemed certain; more leaks were discovered; and to crown the horror and misery, the wind, as if exulting at mischief, rose to a furious gale. Night, too, had come, and hidden shore and sea. The vessel was settling down fast. At seven, more guns were

fired, to call for boats to take off crew and passengers, and king's and Company's troops, who were on board. The *Earl of Abergavenny* was laden with gold. She had seventy thousand pounds in specie, and a cargo of porcelain and other rarities, valued at two hundred thousand pounds. All that must go now, if the one hundred and sixty sailors, fifty passengers, thirty Chinamen, and two hundred recruits, could only be saved. Wordsworth, the captain, was a mild, thoughtful man—called "the philosopher" by his friends; and he keeps his head during all this growing danger, in the hopeless, baffling darkness. At eight, the captain tends the purser, the third-mate, and six seamen ashore, to save the valuable papers and despatches. Now, this fortunate third-mate, had been loitering on shore with the first-mate when the vessel left Portsmouth, and had been forced by the greedy boatmen to pay forty guineas for a boat to join their ill-starred ship; now they would give one hundred and forty guineas to get clear and safe out of it. One boat of brave Dorsetshire fishermen beat out to them, and clinging for a moment by rope and boat-hook, took off five passengers, and swept off with them securely.

About nine, the water had risen above the orlop deck. The crisis approached, and Captain Wordsworth, in his calm and collected way, had to fulfil a painful duty, and inform the passengers that they must soon perish. The crew, hitherto calm and orderly, broke through all discipline in the despair of that moment, demanded drink; they would die delirious and happy; but the officers withstood the brutal and unworthy craving, and stood armed, with their backs to the spirit-room. Just before the ship staggered in its death-throes, and began to sink, Mr. Baggett, the chief-mate, said to Captain Wordsworth: "We have done all we can, sir—she will sink in a moment;" to which the captain calmly replied: "It cannot be helped—God's will be done." He refused all entreaties to save himself, and when last seen, the brave man was clinging quietly and imperturbably to a rope. About eleven, the ship gave a sudden shock and sank backwards, falling first on her beam ends, in twelve fathom water. Between eighty and ninety persons were at the time clinging to the tops of the masts, and were afterwards taken off. In the agony of the last hour, the sailors had forgotten to get the boats out. At half-past eleven, the shore-boats were hailed by the men still in the shrouds, whom, however, they did not, for some reason or other, try to save. The number lost in this terrific wreck was three hundred. The cargo of treasure and porcelain was estimated at two hundred thousand pounds. Nothing was saved but some despatches for India, and some valuable prints consigned to General Lake. Captain Forbes and three privates, taken from the wreck, died in the boat that rescued them before they could reach Weymouth, although that place was only two miles distant. Some time after, the spar-deck of the unhappy vessel floated up, with many trunks and light goods.

The *Kent* East Indiaman was destroyed by fire in the Bay of Biscay, on the 1st of March, 1825. This fine ship of 1350 tons, had on board a crew of 158 men, 364 soldiers, 20 private passengers, 43 women, and 66 children. The vessel was set on fire by the light from the lamp of an inspecting-officer, which caught some spirit from a stoved-in casket in the hold. Three out of the six boats belonging to the *Kent* were soon swamped, but the most perfect discipline was maintained throughout the whole time of danger; the officers with swords drawn, superintending the departure of first the women and children, and then of the soldiers and crew. The captain of the *Kent* was almost the last man to drop from the spanker-boom into the boat—nor would he leave his ship till he heard the guns, whose tackle had burst in the advancing flames, explode in the hold, into which they had one by one fallen. Fourteen men who clung to the chairs till the masts fell overboard were saved by a Liverpool vessel. The flags of distress were seen waving amid the flames till the masts fell like stately steeples, and the fire reaching the magazine, the charred timbers were blown into the air by a tremendous explosion. Eye-witnesses describe

the half-burnt vessel as resembling an immense caldron or basket-work of fire, the blackened planks dark against the flame. Fire was springing from the hatchway, and storms of sparks were scattering to the wind. One man was seen by the sailors of the rescuing boats bound to some spars that were under the ship's counter. He was so close, that as the stern-frame rose with every swell, he was jerked upwards and suspended above the water, only to be scorched by streams of pure flame that shot momentarily from the casings of the gun-room ports. On these occasions, the man screamed with agony, till the surge came and buried the stern-frame in the waves. Just as the boat reached the sufferer, the fire snapped the cord that bound him to the spar, and he sunk and was seen no more. It was supposed that the spar had caught some rope to the keel or rudder-irons, while the other spars had drifted away. It is supposed that above eighty-one individuals perished in the luckless *Kent*.

The *Ocean Monarch*, one of the Boston and Liverpool packets, left the Mersey at daybreak on August 24, 1848, with a crew of 30 men and 366 emigrants and passengers. About 12 o'clock, a yacht from Beaumaris saw the vessel between Orme's-head and Abergely. Mr. Littledale, the owner of the yacht, was standing with his friends admiring the splendour of the ship, when, to their horror, she suddenly put up her helm, as if she was about to return to Liverpool. Then up went a flag of distress, and a moment after, furious flames broke out from her stern and centre. The yacht could not run alongside the burning vessel because of the sea that was running, but she lowered a boat, and saved thirty-two persons. The Brazilian steam-frigate *Afonso* also came to the help of the *Ocean Monarch*, as well as several other steamers. The flames were now so threatening that the crew all rushed to the forepart of the vessel. Women with children in their arms jumped into the sea, and men followed. As the fire advanced, driving all before it, the passengers and crew collected on the jib-boom, clinging in clusters as thick as they could pack, and even huddling one upon another in their paroxysm of despair. There was no discipline possible, and the passengers ran distractedly about quite uncontrolled, and hurrying to the most dangerous places. To add to the horror, just when the rescue was near, the foremast fell with a fearful crash, and with its burning spars on the shrieking masses crowded on the jib-boom, which it struck into the water with all those that had taken refuge on it. The captain threw spars to float those overboard, and then being pressed by the flames leaped after them, and seized hold of some floating wood. Several men struggling for the same hold, he swam off to another plank, and there remained till the yacht picked him up. The Brazilian frigate, out on a pleasure excursion with the Prince de Joinville and the Duke and Duchess of Aumale on board, came up an hour and a half after the yacht, and anchored to the windward of the burning vessel. Her sailors making fast a rope to the *Ocean Monarch*, sent her boats backwards and forwards to save the endangered wretches who lay between the pursuing fire and the expectant sea. A Bangor and a New York steamer also arrived to help in the same good work. The yacht remained till the unhappy bark was burned nearly to the water's edge. The men and women were so close together in the water that the boats could not approach the ship so near as was necessary. Many lives were lost from this singular cause. The brave stewardess perished in attempting to save the powder, which, after all exploded. The fire left the figure-head and solid timbers of the stem untouched; but the upper works were cleared to the water's edge as clean as if a carpenter's saw had levelled them. As the water stole in, and the burning ship settled down, large volumes of flame rushed forward hissing and crackling. Of the 396 passengers and sailors, 218 were saved, and 178 lost—the majority killed by falling masts. This fire was supposed by the steward to have originated in a careless passenger having made a fire in a wooden ventilator which ran from the third deck to the captain's cabin, mistaking it for a chimney. The captain,