

[From the Sydney, N. S. Wales, Com'l. Journal]

NARRATIVE

OF THE LOSS OF THE SHIP EDINBURGH, BY FIRE.

The *Edinburgh* was a fast sailing barque of 270 tons register, manned with a crew of twelve persons, including the captain, and had a full cargo of wool, oil, and cedar, and two male passengers for Liverpool. She left Sydney Roads on the morning of the 18th of March, and stood on her course, with light westerly winds. During the day of the 29th, Capt. Lyall and the chief officer remarked to each other, that there seemed in the cabin a closeness in the feeling, and a smell as of something burnt. It was not, however, sufficient to create any suspicion of the cause. The remarks were reiterated in the evening, and the conversation turned to the subject of wool igniting, and to an instance that occurred some eleven years ago, to a ship on her homeward passage, with a similar cargo to themselves.— Still, however, Capt. Lyall retired without the least apprehension. About three o'clock next morning (March 30th.) the chief officer came to the bedside of the captain, saying he was certain the ship was on fire. Captain Lyall sprung up, and seeing there was a great deal of smoke in the cabin, ordered the chief officer immediately to wear ship, and make all sail to the north. He then opened the largest scuttle, when the smoke rushed out with a force which almost overpowered him. He, however, got the scuttle closed down again, and called out for all hands immediately to clear away the long boat, and went on deck, taking up his chronometer, sextant, chart, and writing desk. The crew soon lowered the boat, and got into her two casks of water, a quantity of biscuit, and sixteen or eighteen pieces of pork, with the captain's things before mentioned, and a compass, and also the foretopmast stay-sail, which they had cut down to rig the boat, and a studding-sail boom to serve for a mast. In the mean time, the smoke had so increased, that the chief officer in vain attempted to enter the cabin, to save the log-book, and bring out his watch and some of his clothes. The heat also became great, and the smoke burst out in volumes up the companion and through the cabin windows, and began to issue from the aft hatch. Before four o'clock the heat had become so intense aft, that the man at the helm cried out, he could stand it no longer. On which Captain L. sent him forward, and lashing down the tiller, remained there himself. The flames now began to appear above deck, and to burst from the aft hatches, and to spread with astonishing rapidity over the ship. The men were, by this time, all in the boat, and calling on the captain, for God's sake to come away; but he, with an indescribable feeling, kept lingering behind, loath to leave the ship. The sea was getting up, and the captain seeing the danger of the boat beating against the ship, took his place in her about 5 o'clock, when they shoved off. About this moment their latitude was 44° 20' S., and their longitude 163° E., the wind SSE, blowing fresh, and the sea running high, the ship with foresail and topsail set, standing to the North about two knots an hour. They allowed the boat to drop astern, and employed themselves in fitting the mast and rigging the sail. At seven o'clock, when three miles astern of the ship, they saw her main and mizenmasts go over-board about the same time. Having got sail on the boat, at eight o'clock they were again up with the ship, and found that the poop and quarter-deck were burned down to the water-edge, the blazing going rapidly forward, and issuing with tremendous violence from the main hatches. The wind being S.S.E., Captain L. thought it better to steer N.N.W., in the hope of fetching some port of New

South Wales, and at two o'clock, when about six or eight miles a-head of the ship, they could see that her topsail was still set, and that she was surmounted by a deep cloud of smoke; after this they saw no more of her, and they now stood on their own course, intent only on saving themselves. Captain L. had hitherto found every one on board attend with the utmost alacrity to every command he issued, and he now found them calmly and implicitly resigned to his every wish. He now arranged that there should be two meals a-day, at half past eight in the morning, and half-past four in the afternoon, when they made the relief at the helm, and that the chief officer should lay out the allowance at each meal of one half pint of water, a biscuit, and a small slice of pork, and ordered that he should be first served, and out of fourteen portions he should have the smallest. Throughout the night and the next two days the weather was moderate, and they were able to keep their course at about three knots an hour.

On the 3d day (Friday) it rained and blew fresh, and the sea got up; still every thing went on regularly with them, and without a murmur—some talking confidently of falling in with a vessel, and all eagerly bending their eyes on the horizon in the hope of seeing a sail—a hope which the captain however discouraged, as he knew they were out of the tract of vessels, and wished them to place their hopes in their own exertions and speed. On Sunday, 3d April, a heavy gale with rain came on from the S.E.; at 5, A.M. a tremendous sea broke over and filled the boat, and she rolled and was on the point of settling, but Capt. L.'s exclamation that the next two minutes would decide their fate, urged the men to a fury of exertion, that soon lightened the boat of the water, and enabled them to congratulate themselves that they were again buoyant; but the pleasure of their escape was sadly lessened when they found that the sea had washed away every ounce of their bread.— They had, however, little time for reflection on this subject, for twice in the same morning was their boat again half filled by the heavy sea breaking in upon them. About noon the gale abated, and for some days they pursued their course N.W., without any accident, running with moderate breezes from seventy to eighty miles in the twenty-four hours. On Saturday the 9th, they again had very heavy squalls and rain, and the sun sank with the most dark and threatening aspect, and every wave towered above them, menacing instant destruction. Still however their gallant barque rose buoyant o'er the rushy seas, and her crew sat still and resolute within her feeble frame. The next day the weather was changed, and they had light airs and calms. About nine o'clock, A.M. a shark came alongside, and some of the sailors who have an antipathy to sharks, struck it repeatedly with an oar, in order to frighten it away, but in this they did not succeed, for it clung to the boat with the most invincible obstinacy; on seeing this the Captain directed them to endeavour to catch it by throwing a rope with a running noose over it, which they immediately did, and captured him with an ease that surprised them.— They dared not, however, take him into the boat, but cut him as he hung outside, and took him in piecemeal. It then afforded a luxurious feast; for after being ten days on salt pork, it was a most salutary and refreshing kind of diet. They all declared they had seen many sharks killed, but never saw one of half the size caught so unresistingly, and in it they recognised the intervention of the invisible hand of Providence, and felt that, though far and seemingly left to destruction on a dreary ocean, they were not deserted by a Divine Providence. At mid-day they were favoured

by a good observation, and found Sydney Heads bearing S.W.S., distant 150 miles, with light airs from the N.E., and boat going W.S.W. three and a half knots the hour. At noon next day the welcome cry was made of a sail in sight, and all eyes were fixed on a sail to windward, which appeared to be a schooner, laying a course as if bound to New Zealand. All now was hope, anxiety, and bustle, and a red shirt was tied to the top of the mast, and the schooner's movements were watched with painful trepidation. But alas! the schooner saw them not; she kept her onward course and left them to plod their weary, cheerless way. At nine o'clock on the morning of Tuesday the 11th, they descried the land about Botany, and with the wind at North they stood for it. Next day at dawn, they attempted to pull, but the captain ordered them to desist, as he saw they had not strength, and it created in the men a thirst for water which could not be afforded them. However, about 7 in the morning they saw a cutter to the N.W., and instantly bore away for her, and about eight came alongside the 'Venus' of Sydney, from Woolangong to Sydney, who readily supplied them with a bucket of bread, and advised them to run for Woolangong, which they immediately did, and about ten o'clock of Wednesday the 13th inst. they happily landed at that place—having been 11 days and 10 hours in the open boat. On Saturday the 15th, Captain L. and most of the crew embarked in the cutter 'Thomas,' and reached Sydney on Sunday. We cannot close our narrative without expressing our admiration of the cool and sterling intrepidity and the calm and unperturbed judgment exhibited by Captain L. throughout the awful moment of conflagration, and the days and nights of protracted privation; neither can we withhold our praise of manly patience, seaman-like perseverance, and quiet obedience of the gallant crew. On investigation we find there can be no doubt that the calamity arose from the ignition of the wool. The oil was all stowed in the fore part of the ship, and nowhere was there wool within a foot of an oil cask. If this be the case, it must be an awful warning of the necessity that every bale of wool should be re-packed in Sydney, in order to prevent the possibility of its being shipped moist.

THE NEW-ENGLAND COAL MINING COMPANY.

THOUGH a notice of a meeting of a company by this name appeared some time since in the public papers, and excited some degree of curiosity, yet there seemed to be no one who knew the individuals who composed it; and though the name of the company was significant enough of the object of its formation, yet the community knew nothing of the theatre and plan of its operations. As the result of its operations are now pretty generally known, and is exciting considerable attention, the following facts which may be depended on as substantially correct, may not be unacceptable.

About four years ago, Mr John Alexander, a native of Maine, began to direct his attention to the study of geology and mineralogy, with the intention of making a practical use of the knowledge he should acquire. Accordingly, he expended considerable time and money in making examinations in Maine for coal and other minerals. He became engaged with some others in boring for coal in the neighborhood of Portland—the people of that town deeming a discovery of it near their town an object of the first importance. The experiments of Mr Alexander in his own state not being attended with full success, and being certain that if coal of good quality and abundant quantity could be found any where in New England, it would amply reward any one who spent his time and