

There can be no doubt that a life-boat, had there been one, would have rescued many more of the poor unfortunates, left on the rock from Friday afternoon to Monday afternoon, with considerable ease. During the year 1876-77, not very far from *five thousand* lives were saved by the fleet of 260 boats of the National Life-boat Institution. Let us examine the wreck record of that period.*

We find that the number of British vessels which entered and cleared from ports of the United Kingdom during the year in question was 581,099, representing the enormous tonnage of 101,799,050. Of these ships, 224,660 were steamers, having a tonnage of about two-thirds of the above amount. During the same period 60,000 foreign vessels entered inwards and cleared outwards from British ports, representing a tonnage of nearly 20,000,000. These 641,099 ships, British and foreign, had probably on board, *apart from passengers*, 4,000,000 men and boys.

In 1876-77 the number of wrecks, casualties, and collisions, from all causes, on and near the coasts of the United Kingdom, was 4,164, which number exceeds that of the previous year by 407. 511 cases out of this large number involved total loss, 502 and 472 representing the same class of calamities for the two preceding years.

During the past twenty years—from 1857 to 1876-77—the number of shipwrecks on our coasts alone has averaged 1,948 a year, representing in money value millions upon millions sterling in the aggregate.

"In making this statement," says *The Life-boat*, "we lay aside entirely the thousands of precious lives, on which no money value could be placed, which were sacrificed on such disastrous occasions, and which would have been enormously increased in the absence of the determined and gallant services of the life-boats of the National Life-boat Institution.

"In the Abstract of the Wreck Register it is stated that, between 1861 and 1876-77, the number of ships, both British and foreign, wrecked on our coasts which were attended with loss of life was 2,784, causing the loss of 13,098 persons. In 1876-77, loss of life took place in one out of every twenty-two shipwrecks on our coasts.

"It is hardly necessary to say that gales of wind are the prime causes of most shipwrecks, and that those of 1876-77 will long be remembered for their violence and destructive character. Of the 4,164 wrecks, casualties, and collisions, reported as having occurred on and near the coasts of the United Kingdom during the year 1876-77, we find that the total comprised 5,017 vessels. Thus, the number of ships in 1876-77 is more than the total in 1875-76 by 463. The number of ships reported is in excess of the casualties reported, because in cases of collision two or more ships are involved in one casualty. Thus, 847 were collisions, and 3,317 were wrecks and casualties other than collisions. Of these latter casualties, 446 were wrecks, &c., resulting in total loss, 902 were casualties resulting in serious damage, and 1,969 were minor accidents. The whole number of wrecks and casualties other than collisions on and near our coasts reported during the year 1875-76 was 2,982, or 335 less than the number reported during the twelve months under discussion.

"The localities of the wrecks, still excluding collisions, are thus given:—East coasts of England and Scotland, 1,140; south coast, 630; west coast of England and Scotland,

* Our information is derived from an article on the subject in *The Life-boat* for November 1st, 1878.