

THE ALBERT EDWARD LIFE-BOAT.

Generosity is never utterly thrown away. Like bread cast upon the waters, it returns after many days. In some cases results follow with pleasing rapidity, and sometimes in a form that is peculiarly gratifying. Bordered all around as this country is with rugged and dangerous coasts, upon which the ever restless and oft-times stormy waves dash with relentless force, the necessity of precaution against shipwrecks is particularly urgent. For many years the National Lifeboat Institution has performed most valuable duty in this respect, and now our coasts are dotted over with buildings containing boats and life saving gear, under the charge of brave and gallant seamen. Many of the boats and gear are the gifts of persons or institutions, and one of these Lifeboats owes its existence and usefulness to the members of the craft. The boat is very properly named after our Royal Grand Master, and is called the "Albert Edward." It is stationed at Clacton-on-sea, where it has done good service. On several occasions during the past year it was instrumental in rescuing many persons from peril and even from death. A misfortune, however, befell this noble little vessel on the 23rd ult., which unfortunately resulted in the loss of two of the brave crew. The following account of the event, the accuracy of which we can vouch for, will tell its own tale of manly daring and endurance:—

At about 10 p. m. on the 23rd January, the Albert Edward Lifeboat was promptly launched in reply to signals of distress, during a gale from the W. N. W. The boat proceeded under close reefed canvas across the Swin, and when about mid-channel, the coxswain ordered the second coxswain to burn a blue light, so that a reply might be obtained from the vessel in distress, no signals having been seen from her for some time. While the blue light in question was being held, two or three very heavy seas, in quick succession, struck the boat, one of them breaking into the

helm down, but the boat, instead of answering it, heeled over, and then turned over to port, the coxswain calling on the crew to "hold on." The boat came up on her starboard broadside and there remained. The coxswain managed to pull himself up to the port side from under the ropes and there found one of the crew. He at once endeavored to free the sheets, which were foul, but being unable to do so, he, with great presence of mind, pulled out his knife and cut them. The boat's head, which had been checked by the anchor falling overboard, now came round, head to sea, and she immediately righted. This was at about 11:30 p. m. The coxswain having called over the crew, found two missing, viz., Cross, the second coxswain, and T. Cattermole. He can only account for their loss by their being down on the lee side and being hampered by the ropes and oars. The boat then laid to at anchor until daylight, but nothing could be seen of the missing men or the wreck. Sail was then set, and Clacton was reached at 11:30 the following day. All the men were thoroughly exhausted with the immersion and the cold wind. Cross, the second coxswain, leaves a wife and six children under fourteen years of age, and Cattermole, a wife and three children under four years of age. Captain Carter, R. N., the District Inspector of Lifeboats, at once proceeded to Clacton, and made inquiries into the circumstances of the case. After full consideration, he is of opinion that the accident was occasioned, in great measure, if not entirely, by the foresheet getting foul. Great praise is due to the coxswain, who, when the boat was capsizing, urgently impressed on his men the importance of holding on.

A local subscription is being made for the relief of the widows and children of the two men, towards which His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales has contributed £5. The National Lifeboat Institution has subscribed the sum of £450 towards the fund—£250 for the widow with six children, and £200 for the widow with three children. The noblest fact of all in connection with this melancholy disaster remains to be recorded. The men who endured so much on the occasion referred to, received from the Institution a money payment for their services, but, like generous-hearted fellows as they are, they handed over the whole of the amount to the widows of their unfortunate colleagues. One who knows