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NARRATIVE OF THE WRECK OF THE "STRATHMORE."

BY ONE OF THE SURVIVORS.

The *Strathmore* was an iron vessel of one thousand four hundred and ninety-two tons, and acknowledged to be as fine a ship of her class as ever left the port of London. Her commander, Captain Macdonald, besides being a worthy man, was an experienced and careful seaman. His first officer, Mr. Ramsay, was also a sailor of the right type; but of the crew, generally that could not be said, although there were some good men among them. We mustered a crew of thirty-eight, men and boys; passengers of the three classes fifty-one; in all eighty-nine souls. This was the clipper's first voyage, and our destination was Otago, New Zealand. The ship's cargo was principally iron; but along with other things we had candles and spirits, and a still more inflammable item immediately to be mentioned. We left the docks on the 17th of April, 1875, and dropped down the river below Gravesend to complete our cargo, by taking aboard twenty tons of gunpowder, which having been stored, all the arrangements for sailing were complete; and, heaving anchor, we bade farewell to England about midnight of the 19th of April.

We got very pleasantly out of the Channel, and, owing to the course we steered, we in a great measure avoided that landsman's terror, the swell of the Bay of Biscay. A head-wind now came on, which continued for a fortnight, driving us right across towards America. When that had ceased we had a fair wind, but so slight that at times we did not make more than a quarter of a mile an hour. After a time more fitting breezes blew; we had now somewhat settled down to life on board ship, the weather had become exceedingly hot, and we took ourselves to such light amusements as suited the temperature; some to reading, some to whist and backgammon, others "spinning" or listening to a yarn.

I and three friends occupied one cabin; Fred Bentley, and two brothers, Percy and Spencer Joslen. Our meals were always welcome, agreeably breaking the monotony of life at sea. When we had been out about ten days, the routine was rather unpleasantly varied by the discovery that the crew had broken into the cargo and abstracted a couple of cases of spirits. This might not have been so soon found out, had the knaves not got so helplessly drunk that they were incapable of work. For a day or two they were insubordinate, and the passengers had to assist in working the ship. This matter, however, blew over, and things fell into the ordinary course. So reckless were these men that they were seen (as we afterwards learned from a third class passenger) in the vicinity of the gunpowder with a naked candle!

On the 20th of May we had a thunderstorm so terrific, that from its exciting effects some of the ladies were confined to their berths nearly all next day. To me and my companions it was a scene grander of the kind than we had ever witnessed in our northern latitudes. No ordinary language could describe it.

On the following day, May 21st, we were hailed by the *Loch Maree*, homeward bound, and short of provisions; latitude 4° 20' north. Our captain having supplied this ship with such stores as he could spare, we sent letters home by her. We were spoken by the *Borealis* on the 27th of May, and for the last time by the *Melpomene* on the 8th of June. We had this vessel in sight for two days.

Passing over the amusements incident to crossing the line, nothing of importance occurred while proceeding in a south-easterly direction, till we had rounded the Cape of Good Hope, and got fairly into the Southern Ocean. This vast expanse of sea, between latitude 40° and 50°, is dotted with several groups of small desolate islands, requiring to be shunned with all the care of the navigator. At mid-

day of the 30th of June we were eighty-seven miles from one of these dangerous groups, called the Crozet Islands, and running at the rate of six knots an hour, we expected them to be in sight by next morning, the 1st of July. A good look-out was kept. But two circumstances baffled every precaution; there was an error in the compass, and a fog settled down on the horizon; the result being that the captain believed we were ten or fifteen miles further south than we really were. Hence the dreadful fatality that ensued. At a quarter before four in the morning of the 1st of July, when in my berth, I felt the ship strike on one of those wretched Crozet Islands. I hurriedly dressed, and my friend Bentley went to warn the ladies, whom he already found up and hastily attired. The ship had got wedged in a cleft of the rock. This, our partial escape from destruction, appeared to us little short of a miracle, for had she struck a few feet on either side, our ship, good though she was, must inevitably have at once gone down. She hung by the forepart, with a list to starboard, her stern being submerged in deep water.

Bentley and I with others made for the port-quarter boat, but we could not get it off the davits, as a sea washed broke us and washed us forward to the handrail of the poop. All from the poop forward was now rapidly getting under water to midship. The captain, seemingly greatly distressed, yet with characteristic disregard of self, gave orders as to the boats, directing that the women should be looked to first; his chief officer, Mr. Ramsay, another fine fellow, also doing all that was possible in the short time left to them. Unhappily for them and for us, the second or third wave that washed over the ship carried away these good men, all of whom were respected and lamented. A number of the people got into the port lifeboat, including Mrs. Wordsworth (the only lady saved), and Messrs. Bentley and Spencer Joslen. A sea came and took this boat off the chocks. She fell back and partly stove in her bottom, but rose and floated across the poop, and finally left the ship, to the wonder of every one, without capsizing. It was in endeavouring to leap into this boat that our poor friend Percy Joslen was lost. The gig, with others of the crew and passengers, followed in charge of the second mate; and after her the dinghy, in charge of the third mate, about nine o'clock a. m.

To resume my personal experience. The boats left us going towards the rocks, which we saw in front of us about one hundred yards off, rising like a wall several hundred feet out of the water. I should have mentioned that, for the time, having parted company with Bentley, I, to save myself, took to the mizzen rigging. There I remained with others until daybreak, by which time the ship had gone under water, all but the fore-castle head. On day breaking, I got along the mizzen top-gallant stay to the main mast, and from there, down the mainstay, to the roof of the deck house. There was a heavy swell, but every wave did not break over us. Several others scrambled to the same place. We then went into the fore-castle.

Late in the afternoon the gig returned and took away five passengers whom we had not before seen, and who had been clinging to the mizzen-top. They went off, and we were left shivering in the cold, the lateness of the day rendering it impossible for the boat to return. We passed a miserable night. Our position was one of great peril, as we felt the vessel rising and falling with the flowing and receding wave; we not knowing but the next wave would liberate and sink our ill-fated ship—as was the case a few hours after we left her. We had nothing to subsist on but a few biscuits, and were almost frozen by the wet and extreme cold. About

* The error may have arisen from the proximity of the ship to the Crozets, whose rock-bound coast abounds in compass-detracting ironstone. Or the compasses of the ship, which perhaps was not properly "swung" before leaving port—may have been affected by her cargo of iron.

ten a. m. of the second day, the gig returned, bringing back the hope of life which had almost left us. This boat took us all off, the last remaining being myself, another passenger and nine of the crew. The sea had now become more calm, and we got to the landing place, about a mile and a half to the southeast of where our ship had struck; this place had been discovered by the first boat, and a rope had been fixed to the cliff, by which we climbed up the rock.

As the morning of the wreck was nearly pitch dark and the incidents were too crowded, many occurred which did not come under my personal observation. Miss Henderson was swept from the deck by an early wave; her brother survived to die a more lingering death on the island. Mrs. Walker fell a victim to her maternal feelings, as she could not enter the boat without her child. It had been taken by the second mate, and placed in charge of the second steward in the rigging. One of the ship's apprentices, much to his credit, gave up, on request, a life-buoy to one of the passengers. Terrible as the circumstances of this sad morning were, it is surprising the outward composure that was maintained throughout. I did not hear even a scream from the women. Mrs. Wordsworth showed great self-possession. When all landed and collected, we found forty lives had been lost, including one entire family of ten. George Mellor, a third-class passenger, died ashore of exhaustion the second night, and was buried in the sea.

Upon landing, I was regaled with a leg of a young albatross (of which and other birds there was fortunately a considerable store on the island) roasted; and after having been thirty hours on the wreck, I need scarcely say that I never tasted anything sweeter. A glance at the sterile rock on which the fates had driven us and on which we were to live if we could for an indefinite time, showed that compared with it Crusoe's island was as the garden of Eden. We were on Apostle Island, which, to judge by the guano deposit, must have been the home of seabirds for ages, and on which, very probably, the foot of man had but seldom if ever trod.

Before entering on the subject of our life on the island, it may be as well to give a brief account of the group of islands of which ours was one. The Crozet Islands are a volcanic group to the south of the Indian Ocean, lying between Kerguelen's Land on the east and Prince Edward's Islands on the west. They take their name from Crozet, a French naval officer. Apostle Island, on which we were, was the largest of the reef of rocks called the Twelve Apostles, forming part of the group. Large and small islands and rocks inclusive, are twenty-six in number.

We spent the first and second nights ashore very miserably owing to the cold and damp. My first night—the second since the wreck—I, along with five others, lay under a rock: next night we all got into a shanty which had been built, but we were so closely packed that it was not possible to sleep. Therefore next night, Bentley, Henderson and I, went back to the rock, under the ledge of which we slept for several weeks. Before we got more sheltered, by building up a wall of turf, we were sometimes, in the morning when we awoke, covered with two or three inches of snow. Little of any value was saved from the wreck; some clothes were got out of the fore-castle, and a passenger's chest, containing sheetings, blankets, tablecovers, knives, forks, spoons, and a few other things, was picked up on return to the ship by the life-boat. The boats picked up, floating, a cask of port wine, two cases of gin, two cases of rum, one of brandy, one of pickles, some firewood, and a case of ladies' boots, which were not of much use to us; also a case of confectionery, the tins of which became very serviceable as pots for culinary purposes.

Two barrels of gunpowder also were found, and matches, also some deck-planks and other pieces of

timber were secured, which were useful for our fires. When the wood was exhausted, we discovered that the skins of the birds made excellent fuel. During the night of the 3rd July, the boats moored to the rocks broke away and were lost. This was greatly deplored at the time; but I consider it a fortunate circumstance, for the ship having sunk, the only flotation that would have been recoverable was spirits, which perhaps we were better without. And for another reason: with the boats we might have been tempted to visit and perhaps remain on Hog Island, which appeared about six miles off. We should have had a greater variety of food there, and probably altogether less privations and discomfort than we were subjected to on Apostle Island; but we would have been more out of the course of ships going to Australia or New Zealand, so that our rescue might have been much longer delayed.

The want of a controlling authority was soon apparent in our small community. There was no one capable of exercising that influence which by judgment, firmness, and a sense of justice, supported by the well-disposed, would have kept in check the troublesome spirits, who, however, were a small minority. Disciplinary power being wanted, the turbulent element was on the ascendant for some weeks after our landing. At length matters subsided into comparative order; but there never was perfect confidence. It was found advisable, for the general advantage, that we should separate into parties, subsequently into as many as six squads; this segregation was effected by a kind of natural affinity in the combining elements.

Mrs. Wordsworth lived for a considerable time in the large shanty, until a smaller one was given up for the sole use of her and her son. This lady was ill during nearly the whole time of our sojourn on the island, but bore the privations she was subjected to with great fortitude, little could be done to alleviate the hardships she suffered; she received such attention as the limited means at hand afforded, and was throughout treated with general respect. For instance, when dinner was served, each man passed his hat for his share of fowl; Mrs. Wordsworth's was handed to her on a piece of board. A Bible had been saved, which was read aloud, and psalms sung from time to time with great fervency, and early teachings, which had lain long latent, were revived with great force in their application to our present condition. These readings had a peculiar solemnity when we were laying our dead in their graves. The emotions thus produced were with some probably transient, although at the time heartfelt; with others the impressions may be more lasting.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

Y. M. M. I. A.

SOUTH COTTONWOOD,

Salt Lake County,

December 12, 1876.

A meeting was held here last Sunday, Dec. 10, for the purpose of organizing a Y. M. M. I. Association, at this place, and affiliating such association with the Central Association for the Territory.

Bishop J. S. Rawlings, of the Ward, and Bishop John Henry Smith and President Julius F. Wells, of the Central Association, were on the stand.

After some excellent instruction from the brethren, the organization was proceeded with, and the following officers were elected:

President, James Godfrey; Counsellors, Job Reading, Wm. Boyce, Jr.; Secretary, Wm. Bradford; Corresponding Secretary, Thomas P. Page; Treasurer, Hans Rasmussen; Librarian, Jas. Gilbert.

Forty-one members were enrolled on the Society's record and more are expected.

THOS. P. PAGE,

Cor. Secretary.

—The New York Tribune, of Dec. 6, has a paragraph headed "A Politician Missing." Only one?