

Smyth - Loss of the Steam-Packet Home - 1837

Geog
4678
37.9

WIDENER



HN XC7M S

Geog 4678.37.9



Harvard College Library

FROM

J. B. Whitridge.

Fourth Edition.

REV. THOMAS SMYTH'S

SERMON,

ON THE

LOSS OF THE

STEAM-PACKET HOME.

WITH A NARRATIVE.

CHARLESTON:

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY JENKINS & HUSSEY, NO. 36, BROAD-STREET.

1837.

PRICE, TWENTY-FIVE CENTS.

to the Editor
THE VOICE OF GOD IN CALAMITY:

0

OR,

REFLECTIONS

ON THE

LOSS OF THE STEAM-BOAT HOME,

October 9, 1837.

A SERMON:

DELIVERED

IN THE

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

CHARLESTON,

On Sabbath morning, October 22, 1837:

BY THE

REV. THOMAS SMYTH,

PASTOR.

FOURTH EDITION.

CHARLESTON:

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY JENKINS & HUSSEY, NO. 36, BROAD-STREET.

1837.

Geog 4676.37.9

Recd March 25 1847
Book of W. B. Whitcomb, Esq
of Charleston, S. C.

ENTERED

According to Act of Congress, in the year 1837, by

JENKINS & HUSSEY,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of South-Carolina.

PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION.

Were time afforded, the author would be glad to enlarge the account, contained in this pamphlet, of some of the circumstances of the melancholy event to which it alludes, especially in reference to the Rev. Mr. Cowles, of whom his friends have learned several interesting particulars. He has, however, done little more than make some corrections. Were it possible for the author, he would also very gladly take this opportunity of removing whatever impression he may have left in any mind, in reference to the probable incapacity of the captain: but although he has examined every source of evidence, and received several communications on this subject, he has yet seen nothing to overthrow the united testimony of the many disinterested witnesses who have been examined. Without, therefore, deciding the question, he must leave it where he has placed it, and again express his hope that this, in connection with the other sermons published on this occasion, will have the effect of leading the public mind to a profitable consideration of this dispensation of Providence.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

So great and terrible a calamity as the loss of the **Packet Home**, and the destruction of ninety-five lives, should not pass by unimproved. It should, in every way, call forth attention and regard,—that as individuals and as a community we may, out of this bitterness, extract the sweetness of wholesome profit.

The citizens of Charleston have done their duty by the appointment of a Committee, to investigate the whole case, and report to them the result of their examination, and by their determination to take whatever other measures may be deemed most likely to prevent the recurrence of similar disasters for the future.

As these proceedings are to be all made public, and will, doubtless, occupy much of the public attention, it may not be unadvisable to consider the matter religiously, and to hold up to the general view those "lessons of eternity" which are, surely, no less necessary to save us from "making shipwreck" of our future and everlasting hopes.

While we thus hear the voice of God and the voice of man teaching and admonishing us; while we are thus led to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, and to protect ourselves from the inexcusable perils to which we are exposed by the cupidity, or experimenting boldness, or the reckless indifference of men, we may hope that this whirlwind calamity, however desolating in its progress, and heart-rending in its consequent misery, will leave behind it, an atmosphere purified, a sky cloudless, and a city rejoicing in hope of future safety.

Such are the views with which the following Sermon is submitted to the public. It was prepared under the excitement of the occasion, amid the multiplied labors of a most laborious profession, in a season of extraordinary engagement, and necessarily in much haste. It does not, therefore, pretend to elaborate or profound investigation. It is nothing more than a commentary upon this dreadful disaster as its text, and an application of it to the heart. As it was prepared for the services of the Sabbath, in that church of which the author is pastor, it would not have been ventured before the public had it not been publicly requested, and had not its publication been urged by numerous individuals, some of them

not even connected with the author's congregation. Through their solicitation, and in the hope that good may be accomplished, it is now printed.

As it regards the reproof administered on page 11, it should be remarked that the author has carefully avoided answering the inquiries of those who have been anxious to identify its recipient. This is wholly unnecessary to the end in view, and would defeat it. And even should he be misinformed upon the matter,—inasmuch as the conduct reprobated is not of impossible occurrence, or unrecorded in history,—the public exhibition of its sinfulness may not be unnecessary.

It was thought the author was rather strong in his judgment upon the vessel and her commander. As he was one of the committee of investigation already referred to, he was, through that evidence now before the public, enabled to express more strongly the fears of his own mind; though it will be perceived he still leaves, and wishes to leave, the conduct of the captain open to any possible justification.

Praying that God may bless this Sermon to the promotion of His glory, and the salvation of men, it is confided to that powerful and ever living preacher—the Press—by

THE AUTHOR.

THE VOICE OF GOD IN CALAMITY.

LUKE XIII. 1-5.

There were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering, said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwell in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

WE have been called upon, my brethren, to hear during the past week, a tale of no ordinary sadness, and to witness calamity of no common or usual endurance. No enemy has been among us, to lay waste and destroy. No plague or pestilence have stalked through our city, brandishing around them the sword of death. Famine has not opened her wide and hungry jaws with earth-quake rapacity. No hurricane has burst upon us with the fury of a midnight assassin, nor has the thunder's bolt riven our peaceful habitations. None of these things have happened. There has been among us neither open enemy, nor plague, pestilence or famine, nor yet the fury of the whirlwind and the thunder.

Whence then that pall of sadness which has covered this entire community? Whence that deep and universal sympathy which has taken possession of every heart? Whence that eager, anxious solicitude to hear fresh tidings of alarm? Whence those sounds of lamentation and weeping and great mourning—

parents weeping for their children, and wives for their husbands, and friends for their relatives, and all refusing to be comforted because they are not. One subject has entered into every conversation, and suggested the inquiry to every meeting friend. What news of the boat? sounded from every parlour. What news of the boat was heard in every dwelling, and at the corner of every street.

And now we have subsided into the certain and unquestionable belief, that above ninety individuals, several of them our fellow townsmen, and all of them our countrymen, have been swallowed up as in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and perished in the mighty waters. The flood opened and they sunk like lead into its depths. And the sea returned in his strength and overthrew them, and the waters covered them—there remained not so much as one of all that hapless number. They now lie, cold and stiff in death, buried by the sea shore, where the roar of its illimitable waters will chant their funereal dirge. There they alike repose, having lain down together, to wake no more until they hear that trumpet's voice which will arouse the dull cold ear of death. There are the old and the young—the infirm and the robust—the rich, and they who struggled hard in the toils of life. There is the mother and her infant babe—the husband and his long tried bosom partner—the friend and the friendless. And there are too the talented and accomplished. One grave protects them; the same earth covers them: past them will flow the same waters, and around them will howl the same wintry tempests.

One fortnight since, and how many hearts now stiffened in death, beat high with expectation ! One fortnight since, and how many homes now desolate, and forever to remain so, were filled with the hope and the promise of anticipated delight ! Separations were to be soon terminated, and torn hearts bound up. The social circle was soon to be enlivened, and its vacant chairs filled up by their accustomed tenants. The festivities and merriment of the approaching season, were already wakened up ; and forms now vanished, were seen rejoicing amid the splendours of the scene.

My brethren, we can see this multitude of fellow-beings, as they crowded on board that packet which was to restore them to their own sweet homes. We can accompany them as they cheerfully endured all the trials of their way, in the glad promise of a speedy voyage. We can enter into their fears, as they heard the wind roar around them, preluding storm and tempest. We can sympathise with their distress when they saw the curling, topping waves roll on the increasing fury of the gale, and the darkening heavens shut out the cheerful light of sun, and moon, and stars. We can weep with them, when they remembered home, and children, and friends, and felt that they were theirs, probably, no more. *We can more than fancy their anguish, when the ship began to yield to the strokes of the battering waves ; when the water, no longer kept without, forced its entrance ; when they were driven from their cabins, now filling with the

* The author, with his family, were among those who, through the misconduct and injustice of those interested, were involved in all the sufferings and loss consequent upon the wreck of the *William Gibbons*.

devouring element; when the machinery, enveloped in the rising waters, could no longer play; when their failing strength was no more able to keep at bay the advancing flood; when the lowering shades of night deepened the gloom of the tempest; and when, in the hopelessness of relief, they welcomed the fearful hazard of running themselves ashore, amidst the breakers, and taking chance among the ruins of the shattered hull.

But who can paint the scene of misery which now presented itself? Who can conceive the horrors of that awful hour, when, having struck the shore, a multitude were at once swept by the irresistible billows, into the dark and foaming ocean; when the boat, filled with those who were willing to make trial of the fearful hazard, was seen emptying its contents into the insatiate waters; when, amid the sepulchral tolling of the bell, the ship herself was seen rapidly cleaving in pieces before the omnipotence of the storm; and, one after another, was torn from his place of fancied security, and whirled into the eddying rush of waters. This is a scene, which fancy may attempt to picture, but which cannot be truly imagined even by the fevered mind of those who were so wonderfully delivered from it.*

And, my brethren, wherefore do I again harrow up your feelings by the sad recital of this woful calamity? Why do I carry you to that night of storm and darkness, and terror, and cause you to hear the shrieks of

* Close by me, says one of the survivors, stood a woman with her child, and as she hung on the wreck with one hand and her darling in the other, a surf came and washed her child from her; and such was her delirious agony, that she leaped, and with a most pitiful scream, cried out, "O my child," and disappeared for ever. Professor Nott, it is said, stood by his wife, who clung fondly to him. The steam pipe falling, crushed Mrs. Nott, and while he was making efforts to relieve her, they were both together washed overboard.

the drowning suppliant, and the groans of those who were sinking for the last time into the yawning deep? Does not God speak to us from amid this whirlwind? Is He not seen riding upon the storm? Is He not heard uttering forth his voice, and calling upon all the ends of the earth, to hear what God the Lord would say unto them? And shall we not give attention; and shall we not hear; and shall we not obey? "Despise not the chastening of the Lord. If we regard not the works of the Lord, and the operations of his hands, he will destroy us and not build us up. When the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth, let the inhabitants thereof learn righteousness." We have heard, it hath been told us, that of the few who are left to tell the tale of this terrible disaster, one has been heard to make merriment even of its suffering and distracted victims; and because his judgment slumbereth a little, to set his heart fully within him to pursue a course of thoughtlessness and unbelief. He that being thus warned, and thus summoned to repentance, "hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." He shall be "swept away as with a besom of destruction." Hear the words of the Lord, "I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrha, and ye were as a fire-brand plucked out of the burning: yet have ye not returned unto me saith the Lord. Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God."*

My brethren, as the interpreter of the will of heaven, I have endeavoured to find out the meaning of that

* Amos iv. 11, 12.

hand writing which the finger of God has traced upon this awful calamity. The following lessons, among others perhaps, seems to us very powerfully inculcated. May God impress them on every heart here present, to their salvation and his own glory.

If the providence of God in this world were administered on the principle of perfect retribution, so that of every man it might be said, he is rewarded or punished according to his deserts; then the argument of those to whom our Saviour addressed the language of our text would be correct. It would also be appropriately directed against the sufferers in this catastrophe, and we might, assuredly, conclude of each and all of them, that they were sinners above all others. But this argument of the Pharisees Christ repudiates; its principle he denies; its assumptions he contradicts; and the pointed lesson he directs to their own hearts, saying, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." At present we see the ways of God through a glass darkly. We cannot fathom the depths of his infinite will, or scan the wisdom of his infinite designs. In this present state of being, we see but parts of his ways. We hear his footsteps, and listen to his voice, but He himself remains hid in his own invisible and incomprehensible obscurity. What we know not now we shall know hereafter, when before an assembled universe, he will "vindicate Eternal Providence, and justify the ways of God to man." This terrible visitation does not then brand a character of necessary evil upon those who are its unhappy sufferers. Doubtless to some, it did ring the knell of eternal justice, and call up "a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and

fiery indignation ;” but to others, it may have only rent asunder the chains of their mortality, and emancipated their ransomed spirits from the hard bondage of sin and sorrow. This calamity has to do with the living rather than the dead. To us it addresses itself—us it admonishes and warns. For, except we repent, we shall as surely, and as irremedially, and eternally, perish.

And what does this calamity teach us ? Does it not, in the first place, demonstrate the severity of God ? We are all ready enough to believe in the existence of a God all merciful and generous, the giver only of good and pleasant gifts, and whose thoughts and purposes are wholly beneficent ; but we are all unwilling to believe in a God just as well as good—righteous as well as kind—powerful as well as merciful—and severe as well as pitiful. Behold then in this event the severity, as well as the goodness of God ; on them who perished, severity, but towards those who escaped, goodness, if they will be led by this goodness, to repentance, otherwise they also shall be cut off.*

Say not God is too merciful to punish men. Behold him here bowing the heavens and coming down, sending out his arrows and scattering them, discovering the channels of the deep and the foundations of the world at his rebuke, and destroying them by the blast of the breath of his nostrils.† Say not God is too tender hearted to destroy. Even now does he declare in these desolations of his hand, that “ he can create and he destroy,” that judgment and justice are the habitation of his throne, and that he will execute to the uttermost the threatenings, as he will fulfil in all their plenitude,

* See Romans, xi. 22.

† See Psalm xviii.

the promises of his word. Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? Nay, God forbid, for how then will God judge the world.* See now, does God in this event most loudly say, that I, even I, am he, and there is no God with me. I kill and I make alive, I wound and I heal, neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand. If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment, I will render vengeance on mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me.† Except, therefore, we repent, we shall all, in a like terrible manner, perish from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power. "He that hath ears to hear let him hear."

Are we not, at the same time, and as forcibly, instructed in the impotence of man. Lord, what is man, that thou with thy rebuke dost swallow him up. Thou makest his beauty to consume away; his strength is as nothing before thee. Thou sayest return, and the dust returns to the dust from whence it sprung, and all the glory of man fades as the grass of the mown field, when the reaper's work is done. Thou makest the winds thy ministers, or the floods thy servants, or the flames of fire thy instruments, and at once he sinks, he groans, he dies. Lord what is man, when disease lays hold upon him, when its poison preys upon his vitals, when the lightning's flash blasts his withered frame, or in any other way thou meetest him with the destiny of death? He is less than nothing. He cannot stand before thee. He is utterly consumed with terrors, and there is none to deliver him.

* Rom. iii. 5, 6.

† Deut. xxxii. 39, and 46.

Be taught, O man, thy impotence. Realize thy helpless dependence upon the omnipotence of Jehovah—even Him who “according to his fear so is his wrath.” And how will you stand when he appeareth? What will you answer when he requireth? How can you resist his will, when he drives you from his presence and consigns your portion in everlasting darkness? Repent then and be converted, every one of you, while under the dispensation of forbearance and mercy, and ere you enter upon the retributions of eternal justice, when “the wrath of God which is revealed from heaven” will be inflicted on “every soul of man that doeth evil.”

And I heard again, and the voice said, behold the misery, the uncertainty and the vanity of life. Man is born to trouble, he is of few days and full of evil. He is distressed on every side; without are perils, within are fears. He treads on ashes ready to burst out into flame. He walks on the verge of a crumbling brink. Death is in the air he breathes, the food he eats, the water he drinks, the ground he treads, the sea he traverses. In the midst of life he is in death. The calmest hour may usher in the tempest. The brightest hope may darken into despair. The fairest bud of promised happiness, may wither and decay. The mountain top of pleasure which he has ascended in anticipative glee, may immerse him in the sudden mist and lure him to the precipitous and fatal overthrow. His homeward voyage, so full as it is of every buoyant and fond desire of coming bliss, is a nearer and speedier passage to the tomb. Hear, O man, a lesson of instruction. Behold the

fashion of this vain and transitory world passeth away. Short is your respite from sorrow and death. Feeble your grasp of property or pleasure, and speedy your summons to the dreary mansions of the grave. Why then, cleave so fondly to a shadow? Why hug so closely this fleeting vision? Why, for these transitory joys, hazard immortality and immortal happiness? Lay not up your treasures on earth, where they are subjected to a thousand accidents; but lay up your treasures in heaven, and set your heart and your affections upon that unfading, incorruptible, substantial and everlasting happiness proffered in the Gospel.

Again was I admonished by this event of the stability of the laws and constitution of nature. These, like their great author, remain the same to-day, yesterday, and until their purposes are consummated. "There is no kicking against these pricks." There is no resistance to one jot or tittle of heaven's appointment. As easily may we, unaided, turn back the tide of ocean, as prevent the consequences of our actions. The laws of our being move on immutably, and if infringed, their penalty must be met. If we will be imprudent we must suffer: and if we sin, we must meet the consequences of our guilt. Thus was this boat unseaworthy, unfit to brave the storms of ocean, and without strength before the rush of mighty waters. Nevertheless did she attempt the perilous assault: and many were ignorant enough, or thoughtless enough, or bold enough, to peril with her. And having done so, no power could intervene, or was permitted to do so, and save them from their consequent destruction. The plea of ignorance and of thoughtlessness

will not shield the sinner from the fiery darts which will eternally issue from the hell of his own tormenting conscience. Future misery is necessarily consequent upon present and final impenitence; and when in such a character we meet the storm of death, there is no arm can then deliver us from the everlasting perdition of ungodly men. Now then, behold now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. Such is the law—the decree—the appointment of heaven;—such the irreversible plan, of God's righteousness, and our redemption. And this day of grace, and mercy passed, there is no more room for repentance. It will be forever too late.

And I heard a fifth voice, saying, behold the wonders of that providence, which worketh all things according to the counsel of heaven's will. The miracle of God's providence is, that it accomplishes his mighty purposes without a miracle.* Man in his utmost wisdom, can but achieve one object, by one effort and design: God by a single event, can effect innumerable purposes. How many results were secured by this one, to us, most disastrous calamity? Some who have met their untimely end, may have provoked God—by their bold impiety and daring contumely—to this visitation of his wrath, and this display of his omnipotent power. Some may have exhausted their day of grace, and worn out the patience of their God, and were now overwhelmed in merited and righteous retribution. Some again, may thus suddenly, and without the pangs of long continued misery, have been taken away from coming and greater evils.

* See Natural History of Enthusiasm.

Some may have been caught up in this whirlwind, and charioted to glory.* And some may have been spared that they may fill up the measure of their iniquity and hardihood, or turn unto the Lord and find mercy. We have here, a certain declaration of the truth, that the present is a time of forbearance, and the future, alone, a dispensation of unmingled, unrestrained justice. And we are here admonished, with all the earnestness derived from the certainty of our hastening doom, of the guilt of that presumption, which walks along the road of death without any fitness for it.

And if the united and uncontradicted testimony of the survivors, and I may now add, of the public committee appointed by the city, to investigate the case, is correct, another lesson of pressing moment, is urged upon us—a lesson not the less true or forcible, should this calamity prove an exception to the many similar and woful examples of it, which our memory can present. It is the power of evil, the force and influence of sin, the mighty strength of a depraved habit, even in a single individual. “One sinner destroyeth much good.” He brings ruin, not on himself merely, but upon all around him. He spreads the infection through his family, and household, and acquaintances; there is no limit to his power of evil. He marshals troops around him, he arms them with the same weapons of rebellion and vice, and they march on together,

* This we may believe to have been the case with the Rev. George Cowles and lady. Previous to his departure from New York, he preached in the Lecture Room of the Central Church, “a discourse which will be long remembered” says the New York Observer, “for its impressive and solemn character.” During the last scenes of this fatal tragedy on board the Home, he with his wife maintained the utmost composure, and even a serious willingness to depart. When last observed, they were reclining side by side on the luggage; and a kind providence permitted a survivor to repeat as the last words which fell from the lips of Mr. Cowles, “He that trusts in Jesus is safe even amid the perils of the sea.”

to the same sure and certain destruction. How often does a single sinner, by his single iniquity, involve in misery, a whole multitude of unoffending associates—associates from necessity, and not from choice,—pouring around him, as from the mouth of a volcano, desolation and death. Thus would it appear to have been here. By the most criminal indulgence of the commander, in that fatal poison, which is sweeping thousands, year by year, even from amid our own population, into an unprepared eternity—did he jeopard the lives of all on board. He, of course, was not responsible for the unfit construction of the vessel, unless, indeed, he had a voice in this also. But if through his neglect, or self-constituted incapacity, near one hundred persons were lost, when all, and perhaps all their property, might have been saved, does he not stand impleaded at the bar of heaven's chancery for such unpardonable waste of human life? And ought not the scowl and reprobation of the whole community to rest, if not upon him, (being supposed innocent,) yet assuredly upon the heads of those to whom such power is entrusted, only to be made the source of aggravated calamity. Even should this be rendered unjust in the case before us, by the clear proof of innocence, it is a subject upon which the community has slumbered, and the lesson itself is of practical application to us all. By indulging in the sin of unbelief, of intemperance, of gambling, or their kindred vices, we make ourselves fountains of pollution, and will stand chargeable, not merely with our own personal guilt, but with all that which has been contracted, or increased through our instrumentality.

God holds us accountable, not only for our doings, but for our endeavours to do.* How fearful, then, the reckoning of the impenitent, or unchristian father, mother, friend !

There are other instructive lessons inculcated by this providence ; as, for instance, the great importance of self-command, and of cool, collected purpose ; the utter vanity of all merely human science, and fashionable accomplishments, and natural gifts, when brought to the trial of a dying hour ; but these are such as readily suggest themselves to every mind. We shall conclude what it appears to us necessary to say, in connection with this subject, by urging upon your attentive consideration the wisdom of piety ; the absolute necessity of being now and always ready and prepared to die. Die we must, some time, and in some manner, whether we travel or remain at home ; whether we are shipwrecked or conveyed to our future dwelling-place by the gentler hand of some disease. Death is the great crisis of our mortal state, —the consummation of our present being. It rolls that great stone to the door, which closes in our everlasting destiny, and which no power can move away. It seals our fate, not merely as it regards time, but as it is embraced in the eternity beyond. It may be momentary in its occurrence ; it may be most humiliating in the manner of its approach ; this mortal coil may be shuffled off amid the wild contortions of despairing agony : but the consequences are unending, and of infinite and unspeakable moment. For, “ after death, there is the judgment ;” and this judgment is

* Psalm xxviii.

final, and its sentence everlasting life, or everlasting death.

Seeing, then, brethren, that it is appointed unto us thus to die ; and seeing that in the present state of things we are left subject to all the chances and trying accidents of unforeseen misfortune, is it not clearly our first, and great, and paramount duty, to prepare to meet our God? For except we timely repent, and seek the favor and mercy of our Judge, and are found in Christ, leaning upon the hope of salvation, as our anchor, and looking to heaven as our home—we shall all perish. Die as we may, and where we may, and when we may—at home, in old age, or amid the honors of society, we shall assuredly perish. Of these individuals we only know that they perished bodily, but of all those who thus meet death, we are assured beyond all controversy, that God “will cast them both soul and body into hell, forever.” “He that hath ears to hear let him hear.”

And while grateful to God for our continued lives, and mercies, and filled with the tenderest sympathy for the bereaved and distressed, let me beseech and entreat all, by the equal severity and mercy of God, now in this accepted time, in this day of salvation—not to harden their hearts, as *they* did who provoked him in the wilderness, and “perished in that great and terrible desert.”

APPENDIX.

NARRATIVE OF THE LOSS OF THE STEAM-PACKET HOME.

A narrative of the circumstances connected with the melancholy event, which has been made the subject of the preceding discourse, may be very properly, and profitably appended to it. The pamphlet will, thus, contain a record, as well as an improvement, of this disaster. The anxiety of the public mind, and especially of the friends of the lamented dead, to know all the particulars of their last sad hours, has not yet been gratified. Much confusion surrounds the representations hitherto given of the closing scenes of this catastrophe. Thus far, the subject has been investigated rather in its bearing upon the character of the boat, and the conduct of her commander. That veil has been but partially lifted up, which hid from us the distresses of more than a hundred fellow-beings, shut up to the awful prospect of remediless destruction.

These deficiencies the author has endeavoured to supply, through the efficient and uncontrovertible evidence of the passengers themselves. By their assistance, a list of the passengers, both lost and saved, more full and accurate than any yet before the public, has been prepared.

Having made these remarks, the author will introduce the account of the whole calamitous voyage, as it has been drawn up by Mr. HUSSEY, and approved by the other passengers now in Charleston.

“In consequence of the various, and somewhat contradictory statements that have appeared before an anxious and suffering community, respecting the loss of the steam-packet Home, on her late passage from New-York to Charleston, it has been deemed ad-

visable that a brief and impartial account of the loss of that ill-fated vessel, should be submitted to the public. The writer, who had ample opportunity of knowing many particulars of this melancholy catastrophe, has, therefore, consented to submit to the public, the following statement, which may be relied on as substantially correct.

As it is not the object of the writer to influence public opinion, either in favour of, or against, any individual interested in this unfortunate vessel, he will endeavour to avoid any expression which would be likely to have such an effect, further than a plain and disinterested statement may render necessary.

With these views, the following narrative is respectfully submitted to a candid and impartial public.

The steam-packet HOME, commanded by Captain White, left New-York, for Charleston, S. C., at 4 o'clock, p. m., on Saturday, the 7th October, 1837, having on board between 80 and 90 passengers, and 43 of the boat's crew, including officers, making in all about 130 persons. The weather, at this time, was very pleasant, and all on board appeared to enjoy in anticipation a delightful and prosperous passage. On leaving the wharf, cheerfulness appeared to fill the hearts and enliven the countenances of this floating community. Already had conjectures been hazarded, as to the time of their arrival at the destined port, and high hopes were entertained of an expeditious and pleasant voyage. Before six o'clock, a check to these delusive expectations was experienced, by the boat being run aground on the Romer Shoal, near Sandy Hook. It being ebb tide, it was found impossible to get off before the next flood; consequently, the fires were allowed to burn out, and the boat remained until the flood tide took her off, which was between ten and eleven o'clock at night, making the time of detention about four or five hours. As the weather was perfectly calm, it cannot, reasonably, be supposed that the boat could have received any material injury from this accident: for during the time that it remained aground, it had no other motion than an occasional roll on the keel from side to side.* The night continued pleasant. The next morning, (Sunday,) a

* It is necessary, however, to state, that during this time there was great confusion on board. It was reported among the passengers, that the boat was on fire; but it was afterwards understood the danger arose from the liability to explosion, in consequence of the want of water to supply the boilers. Whether at this time the pump, the want of which was afterwards so woefully felt, was disordered, we cannot determine.

moderate breeze prevailed from the north-east. The sails were spread before the wind, and the speed of the boat, already rapid, was much accelerated. All went on pleasantly till about noon, when the wind had increased, and the sea become rough. At sunset the wind blew heavily, and continued to increase during the night: at daylight, on Monday, it had become a gale. During the night much complaint was made, that the water came into the berths, and before the usual time of rising, some of the passengers had abandoned them on that account.

The sea, from the violence of the gale, raged frightfully, and caused a general anxiety amongst the passengers; but still, they appeared to rely on the skill and judgment of the captain and officers,—supposing, that every exertion would be used, on their part, for the preservation of so many valuable lives as were then entrusted to those who had the charge of this frail boat. Early on Monday, land was discovered, nearly ahead, which, by many, was supposed to be False Cape, on the northern part of Hatteras. Soon after this discovery, the course of the boat was changed from southerly to south-easterly, which was the general course through the day, though with some occasional changes. The condition of the boat was now truly alarming: it bent and twisted, when struck by a sea, as if the next would rend it asunder: the pannels of the ceiling were falling from their places: and the hull, as if united by hinges, was bending against the feet of the braces.. Throughout the day, the rolling and pitching were so great, that no cooking could be done on board.

It has already been stated that the general course of the boat was during the day, south-easterly, and consequently in what is called the trough of the sea,—as the wind was from the north-east. Late in the afternoon, the boat was reported to be in 23 fathoms of water, when the course was changed to a south-westerly. Soon after this it was observed, that the course was again changed, to north-westerly; when the awful truth burst upon us, that the boat must be filling: for we could imagine no other cause for this sudden change. This was but a momentary suspense; for within a few minutes all the passengers were called on to bail, in order to prevent the boat from sinking. Immediately all were employed; but with little effect: for, notwithstanding the greatest exertions on the part of the

passengers, including even many of the ladies, the water was rapidly increasing, and gave most conclusive evidence, that, unless we reached the shore within a few hours, the boat must sink at sea ; and probably not a soul be left to communicate the heart-rending intelligence to bereaved and disconsolate friends. Soon after the boat was headed towards the land, the water had increased so much, as to reach the fire under the boilers, which was soon extinguished. Gloomy indeed was the prospect before us. With about one hundred and thirty persons, in a sinking boat, far out to sea, in a dark and tempestuous night, with no other dependence for reaching the shore than a few small and tattered sails, our condition might be considered truly awful. But with all these disheartening circumstances, hope, delusive hope, still supported us. Although it was evident that we must soon sink, and our progress towards the land was very slow, still we cherished the expectation that the boat would finally be run on shore, and thus most of us be delivered from a watery grave. Early in the afternoon, the ladies had been provided with strips of blanket, that they might be lashed to such parts of the boat as would afford the greatest probability of safety.

In this condition, and with these expectations, we gradually, but with a motion nearly imperceptible, approached what to many of us was an untried, and almost an unknown shore. At about eleven o'clock, those who had been employed in bailing were compelled to leave the cabin, as the boat had sunk until the deck was nearly level with the water ; and it appeared too probable that all would soon be swallowed up by the foaming waves. The heaving of the lead indicated an approach to the shore. Soon was the cheering intelligence of "land ! land !" announced by those on the look out. This, for a moment, aroused the sinking energies of all, when a general bustle ensued, in the hasty, but trifling preparations that could be made for safety, as soon as the boat should strike. But what were the feelings of an anxious multitude, when, instead of land, a range of angry breakers were visible just ahead ; and land, if it could be seen at all, was but half perceptible in the distance far beyond.

As every particular is a matter of interest,—especially to those who had friends and relatives on board,—it may not be improper to state, that one individual urged the propriety of lowering the small boats, and putting the ladies and children into them for safety,

with suitable persons to manage them, before we struck the breakers. By this arrangement, had it been effected, it is believed that the boats might have rode out the gale during the night, and have been rescued in the morning by passing vessels, and thus all, or nearly all, have been saved. But few supported this proposition, and it could not be done without the prompt interference of those who had authority to command, and who would be obeyed.

Immediately before we struck, one or two passengers, by the aid of some of the seamen, attempted to seek safety in one of the boats at the quarter, when a breaker struck it, swept it from the davits, and carried with it a seaman, who was instantly lost. A similar attempt was made to launch the long-boat from the upper deck, by the chief mate, Mr. Matthews, and others. It was filled with several passengers, and some of the crew; but, as we were already within the verge of the breakers, this boat shared the fate of the other, and all on board (about ten in number) perished.

Now commenced the most heart-rending scene. Wives clinging to husbands,—children to parents,—and women, who were without protectors, seeking aid from the arm of the stranger; all awaiting the results of a moment, which would bring with it either life or death. Though an intense feeling of anxiety must, at this time, have filled every breast, yet, not a shriek was heard, nor was there any extraordinary exclamation of excitement or alarm. A slight agitation was, however, apparent in the general circle. Some few hurried from one part of the boat to another, as if seeking a place of greater safety; yet most, and particularly those who had the melancholy charge of wives and children, remained quiet and calm observers of the scene before them.

The boat, at length, strikes,—it stops—as motionless as a bar of lead. A momentary pause follows,—as if the angel of death shrunk from so dreadful a work of slaughter. But soon the work of destruction commenced. A breaker, with a deafening crash, swept over the boat, carrying its unfortunate victims into the deep. At the same time, a simultaneous rush was made toward the bows of the boat. The forward deck was covered. Another breaker came, with irresistible force,—and all within its sweep disappeared. Our numbers were now frightfully reduced. The roaring of the waters, together with the dreadful crash of breaking timbers,

surpasses the power of description. Some of the remaining passengers sought shelter from the encroaching dangers, by retreating to the passage, on the lee side of the boat, that leads from the after to the forward deck, as if to be as far as possible from the grasp of death. It may not be improper here to remark, that the destruction of the boat, and loss of life was, doubtless, much more rapid than it otherwise would have been, from the circumstance of the boat heeling to windward, and the deck, which was nearly level with the water, forming, in consequence, an inclined plane, upon which the waves broke with their full force.

A large proportion of those who rushed into this passage, were ladies and children, with a few gentlemen who had charge of them. The crowd was so dense, that many were in danger of being crushed by the irresistible pressure. Here were perhaps some of the most painful sights beheld. Before introducing any of the closing scenes of individuals, which the writer witnessed, or which he has gathered from his fellow-passengers, he would beg to be understood, that it is not for the gratification of the idle curiosity of the careless and indifferent reader, or to pierce afresh the bleeding wounds of surviving friends, but to furnish such facts as may be interesting, and which, perhaps, might never be obtained through any other channel.

As the immediate connections of the writer are already informed of the particulars relating to his own unhappy bereavement, there is no necessity for entering into a minute detail of this melancholy event.

This passage contained perhaps thirty or more persons, consisting of men, women and children, with no apparent possibility of escape; enclosed within a narrow aperture, over which was the deck, and both ends of which were completely closed by the fragments of the boat and the rushing of the waves. While thus shut up, death appeared inevitable. Already were both decks swept of every thing that was on them. The dining cabin was entirely gone, and every thing belonging to the quarter deck was completely stripped off, leaving not even a stanchion or particle of the bulwarks; and all this was the work of about five minutes.

The starboard wheel house, and every thing about it, was soon entirely demolished. As much of the ceiling forward of the star-

board wheel had, during the day, fallen from its place, the waves soon found their way through all that remained to oppose them, and were in a few minute's time forcing into the last retreat of those who had taken shelter in the passage already mentioned.

Every wave made a frightful encroachment on our narrow limits, and seemed to threaten us with immediate death. Hopeless as was the condition of those thus hemmed in, yet not a shriek was heard from them. One lady, unknown to the writer, begged earnestly for some one to save her. In a time of such alarm, it is not strange that a helpless female should plead with earnestness for assistance from those who were about her, or even offer them money for that aid which the least reflection would have convinced her, it was not possible to render. Another scene witnessed at this trying hour was still more painful. A little boy, (supposed to be the son of Hardy B. Croom, of Newbern, N. C.) was pleading with his father to save him. "Father," said the boy, "you will save me won't you; you can swim ashore with me; can't you, father?" But the unhappy father, was too deeply absorbed in the other charges that rested upon him, even to notice the imploring accents of his helpless child. For at that time, as near as the writer could judge, from the darkness of the place they were in, his wife hung upon one arm, and his daughter of seventeen, upon the other. He had one daughter besides, near the age of this little boy, but whether she was at that time living or not is uncertain.

After remaining here some minutes, the deck overhead was split open by the violence of the waves, which allowed the writer an opportunity of climbing out. This he instantly did, and assisted his wife through the same opening. As he had now left those below, he is unable to say how they were finally lost, but as that part of the boat was very soon completely destroyed, their further sufferings could not have been much prolonged. We were now in a situation which, from the time the boat struck, we had considered as the most safe, and had endeavoured to attain. Here we resolved to await our uncertain fate. From this place we could see the encroachment of the devouring waves, every one of which reduced our thinned numbers, and swept with it parts of our crumbling boat.

For several hours previous, the gale had been sensibly abating; and, for a moment, the pale moon broke through the dispersing

clouds, as if to witness this scene of terror and destruction, and to show to the horror-stricken victims the fate that awaited them. How few were now left, of the many who, but a little before, inhabited our bark ! While the moon yet shone, three men were seen to rush from the middle to the stern of the boat. A wave came rushing on. It passed over the deck. One only, of the three, was left. He attempted to regain his former position. Another wave came. He had barely time to reach a large timber, to which he clung, when this wave struck him,—and he too was missing. As the wave passed away, the heads of two of these men were seen above the water ; but they appeared to make no effort to swim. The probability is, that the violence with which they were hurled into the sea disabled them. They sunk,—to rise no more.

During this time, Mr. Lovegreen, of Charleston, continued to ring the boat's bell, which added, if possible to the gloom. It sounded, indeed, like the funeral knell over the departed dead. Never before, perhaps, was a bell tolled at such a funeral as this. While in this situation, and reflecting on the necessity of being always prepared for the realities of eternity, our attention was arrested by the appearance of a lady, climbing up on the outside of the boat, abaft the wheel near where we were. Her head was barely above the deck, on which we stood, and she was holding to it, in a most perilous manner. She implored help; without which she must soon have fallen into the deep beneath, and shared the fate of the many who had already gone. The writer ran to her aid, but was unable to raise her to the deck. Mr. Woodburn, of New-York, now came, and, with his assistance, the lady was rescued : she was then lashed to a large piece of timber, by the side of another lady,—the only remaining place that afforded any prospect of safety. The former lady (Mrs. Shroeder,) was washed ashore, on this piece of the wreck,—one of the two who survived. The writer having relinquished to this lady the place he had occupied, was compelled to get upon a large piece of the boat, that lay near, under the lee of the wheel: this was almost immediately driven from its place into the breakers, which instantly swept him from it, and plunged him deep into the water. With some difficulty he regained his raft. He continued to cling to this fragment, as well as he could ; but was repeatedly washed from it. Some-

times, when plunged deep into the water, he came up under it. After encountering all the difficulties that seemed possible to be borne, he was, at length, thrown on shore, in an exhausted state. At the time the writer was driven from the boat, there were but few left. Of these four survived, viz., Mrs. Shroeder, and Mr. Lovegreen, of Charleston; Mr. Cohen, of Columbia, and Mr. Vanderzee, of New-York.

On reaching the beach, there was no appearance of inhabitants but, after wandering some distance, a light was discovered, which proved to be from Ocracock light-house,—about six miles south-west of the place where the boat was wrecked. The inhabitants of the island, generally, treated us with great kindness; and, so far as their circumstances would allow, assisted in properly disposing of the numerous bodies thrown upon the shore.

The survivors, after remaining on the island till Thursday afternoon, separated,—some returning to New-York, others proceeding on to Charleston. Acknowledgment is due to the inhabitants of Washington, Newbern and Wilmington, as well as of other places through which we passed, for the kind hospitality we received, and the generous offers made to us. Long will these favors be gratefully remembered by the survivors of the unfortunate *HOME*."

LIST OF PASSENGERS.

Passengers Lost.

Madame Boudo, Charleston, S. C.	Miss Stowe, Augusta, Georgia.
Madame Reviere, "	Miss Roberts, South-Carolina.
Mrs. Hussey, "	Mr. J. Root.
Mrs. Levy, "	Mr. J. M. Roll.
Miss F. Levy, "	Mr. G. H. Palmer.
Miss O. Levy, "	Mr. H. C. Bangs, Connecticut.
Mrs. Flinn, and 2 children, "	Mr. Whiting.
Hardy B. Croom, and Lady, "	Mr. Wild.
Miss Croom, "	Mr. J. Paine, Mobile.
Miss J. Croom, "	Mr. A. F. Bostwick, South-Carolina
Master Croom, "	Mr. A. Desaybe.
Mrs. Canack, "	Mr. F. Desaybe.
Mr. P. S. Cohen, "	Mr. T. Smith.
Mr. H. A. Cohrs, "	Mr. LaRoque.
Mr. S. G. Fuller, "	Mr. P. Domingues.
Mr. H. M. Tileston, "	Mr. Labadie.
Mr. C. Williman, "	Mr. Walton.
Rev. G. Cowles, and Lady, Augusta, Georgia.	Mr. Hazard.
Prof. Nott, and Lady, Columbia, S. C.	Mr. Canthers.
Mr. Desaybe, Lady and Servant.	Mr. Finn.
Mr. Broquet, Lady, Child, and Servant.	Mr. Woodburn, New-York.
Mr. O. H. Prince, and Lady, Ath. Geo.	Mr. Richard Graham, "
Mrs. Hill, New-Hampshire.	Mr. Sprott, Alabama.
Mrs. Whiting.	Mr. T. Anderson, Columbia, S. C.
Mrs. Boyd.	Mr. D. B. Toms, " "
Mrs. Faugh.	Mr. Kennedy, Darlington, S. C.
Mrs. Miller.	Mr. Walker.
	Mr. Benedict, Augusta, Georgia.
	Mr. J. Boyd.

Passengers Saved.

Madame La Coste, Charleston, S. C.	Mr. J. Holmes, New-York.
Mrs. Shroeder, "	Mr. H. Vanderzee, "
Mr. A. A. Lovegreen, "	Mr. H. Anderson, "
Mr. Charles Drayton, "	Capt. Hill, Portsmouth, N. H.
Mr. B. B. Hussey, "	Capt. Salter, "
Mr. J. S. Cohen, Columbia, S. C.	Mr. Jas. Johnson, jun., Boston.
Mr. C. C. Cady, Montgomery, Ala.	Mr. W. S. Roed, New-Haven, Ct.
Mr. Thomas J. Smith, New-York.	Mr. D. Clock, Athens, Ga.
Mr. J. D. Roland, "	Mr. John Mather.
Mr. John Bishop, "	Conrad Quinn (boy), Jersey City.

Of the Crew, there were in all forty-three, including the Captain, two Mates, the Chief Engineer, &c.: of these, the Captain, and nineteen of the boat's company alone were saved. The names of the crew not known.

NOTICE.

Should any profits arise from the sale of this Sermon, they will be given (as most appropriate to the subject,) to that most useful and benevolent Institution, the Charleston Port Society, to assist in the erection of the new Seamen's Chapel.

