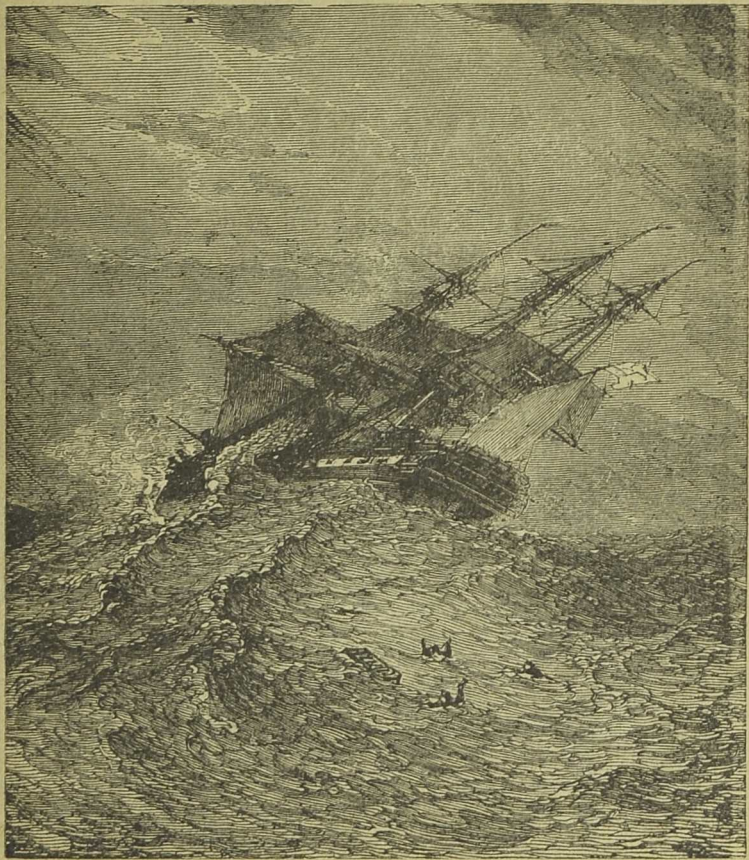


THE SHIPWRECK.

BY GEORGE BREALEY.



ARROWS SHOT AT A VENTURE.

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The Shiptwreck.

“**L** AND ho!”

Had an electric shock been sent through the vessel, it could not have caused a greater commotion than those two words. The sound was caught up and repeated from mouth to mouth. Passengers half awake turned out of their beds to have a glimpse at the land they had for so many weary months been looking for.

The captain hastened on deck, for an anxious time was approaching.

“Where away?” cried he to the sailor who was on the look-out.

“Two points on the lee bow, sir.”

All eyes were turned in that direction, and they beheld, far away on the edge of the horizon, what seemed to be a bluish-black cloud. That was the land. And now the sun rose grandly out of the sea. The eastern sky was ablaze with the golden dawn; the dancing waves caught the first rays of light that darted across the water, while every spray mirrored ten thousand suns. The gallant *Atalanta* was a noble

sight as she swept proudly on before the fresh morning breeze. Hope beat high in every breast; for, after many days of weary expectation, home was in sight.

But as the morning grew towards noon, dark and heavy clouds began to come up round the horizon; the wind blew in fierce gusts, and the waves began to rise. One by one the sails were taken in, until the *Atalanta* was shorn of all her beauty. But the passengers did not mind this. "Home is near," said they; "we are sailing straight for home, and once there, the wind may howl, and the sea rage, but they will not make us afraid."

The sky was black and heavy with lowering clouds; the wind whistled mournfully through the rigging; the waves, so pleasant to look at in the morning, now rose in dark, angry masses on every side, threatening to overwhelm the ship. The land was drawing nearer and nearer. Many of the passengers could recognize the mountains that had been familiar to them in their youth; some of them wept for joy, and audibly thanked God that He had permitted them once more to look on their native land.

But that which delighted many was a source of great anxiety to the captain, and

he ordered the ship's head to be turned away from the land. But it was too late. Approaching a perilous coast, and trusting in his own knowledge and skill, he would not take a pilot when he might have had one: the wind was fair, and the sky cloudless, and he trusted in himself. But now, too late, he saw his danger, and he was afraid of being drifted on to the rocks, and dashed to pieces. This fear was too well founded. Slowly and gradually the wind and the waves were carrying the ship to destruction. Everything was done that skilful seamanship could suggest, but nothing could save them. What a change

from the morning! Then hearts beat high with hope, and home seemed to be near; now they were swiftly speeding to their destruction!

The captain ordered the boats to be got ready; but it was found there were not sufficient to carry all, and some were provided with pieces of wood, empty casks, and anything that would float. In the midst of these preparations the ship struck! A thrill of terror ran through all in the ship. It was an awful time. Every heart stood still. It was a moment of intense agony. Death stared them in the face! They felt that in a few minutes they

might be standing before God in another world !

The ship struck again with greater violence, and the masts snapped off and fell over the side. The seas began to break over the ship as the passengers crowded into the boats until they were full ; others cast themselves into the sea with pieces of the wreck, hoping to float to the shore. They were all gone but three individuals, who stood together on the quarter-deck. They were a man and his wife, and their little boy. He passed a rope round his wife and his son, and fastened it on to his own body, and awaited a favourable oppor-

tunity to leap into the sea ; for he was a powerful swimmer, and he hoped, nay, he felt confident, that he was able to reach the shore with his precious burden.

The moment arrived. Claspings them firmly, he sprang into the raging waters, and struck out for the land. Many of the passengers had already landed in safety ; he could see them standing on the firm ground, and they could see him struggling in the waves. They cheered him on in his gallant effort, and for a time it seemed as though he would successfully reach the shore. But the cruel waves sorely buffeted him. The two dearly-loved but helpless

beings whom he was attempting to save were slowly but surely drawing him down to death. Again and again the waves went over his head. A sharp pang shot through his heart, and every breath he drew was shorter than the last. What should he do? If he persisted in attempting to save both his wife and his child, all three would inevitably be drowned. Willingly would he have sacrificed himself to save the lives of those he loved; but Death would not accept such a sacrifice. One must drown, that the other might be saved. He must decide speedily, for he was growing weaker and weaker. Each second of indecision

seemed an hour of intense agony. He looked on the wife of his bosom, and the son of his love, and the heart of the husband and father was torn by a thousand conflicting emotions. Death stood impatiently at his elbow demanding one victim, or all!

He hesitated no longer. Fervently kissing the almost lifeless lips of his darling boy, he severed the rope that bound him. The boy sank down, and was lost in the depths of the sea, while the young spirit flew upward to its Father in heaven.

Relieved of a portion of his burden, he

battled successfully with the waves, and brought his wife safely to the land.

Reader, when the voyage of life draws near to its close, will it be your fate to be wrecked and cast away in sight of heaven? or have you a captain that knows how to thread his way through the narrow entrance, and land you safe in glory? If you depend on yourself, however smooth and calm all may be, you will surely be wrecked. There is only one Captain who can carry you safely through, Jesus Christ, the Captain of our salvation. The skeleton timbers of many a ship lie bleaching high and dry on the rocks.

Christ was not their Captain; they trusted in themselves, and their end was utter destruction.

Reader, when your shipwrecked soul is being buffeted by the waves of death, do you think a human arm can save you? Your friends may love you, some may even be ready to die for you, but they cannot save your soul!

Oh, sinner, before it is too late, stop in your sinful career! "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" The Lord Jesus Christ, when He hung dying on the cross for you and for me and for all human beings, cried, "It is finished!" He had accomplished the

work of salvation for all mankind, and now all who will may have their sins forgiven. The Spirit of God will enable them to lead a new life, and finally they will obtain an entrance into heaven, where Christ has prepared for us an eternal rest.

Do not be deceived by any present peace you may have, unless that peace arises from the knowledge of Jesus as your personal Saviour; if you are not saved *now*, you are lost *now*, and each moment makes your condition more perilous. Christ can and will save you! He will not be found like that fond father who

tried to save his son and his wife also, but could not. Jesus is able to save *all* who come to God by Him.

Are you, dear reader, being carried safely to glory in the strong arms of the mighty Saviour? or are you sinking down to eternal destruction in the arms of the devil? *Which?*



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BUILDINGS, E.C.