



SUPPLEMENT

TO

The London Gazette

Of FRIDAY the 29th of JULY.

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India Board, July 28, 1836.

A DISPATCH has been received at this Office from Colonel Chesney, R. A. in command of the Euphrates expedition, dated Euphrates steamer, Anna, 28th May 1836; of which the following, with its enclosure, are copies:

*Euphrates Steamer, Anna,
May 28, 1836.*

SIR,

IT is with feelings of the deepest regret, that I do myself the honour of informing you that the Tigris steamer was totally lost during a hurricane of indescribable violence, which, after the short struggle of about eight minutes, sent a fine vessel to the bottom in five* fathoms water, and deprived His Majesty of fifteen valuable men, with five natives in addition.

My reports up to the 17th instant, at Deir, will have informed you that all was going on as successfully as the most sanguine could possibly desire. We found the Arabs well disposed, and quite ready to form depôts for us of wood, charcoal, bitumen, and lignite coal, all met in abundance, and tried with complete success. In addition to these marked advantages, the survey has been carried five hundred and nine miles down the Great River, which seemed in all respects favourable; in short all was continued prosperity up to the afternoon of the 21st instant, when it pleased God to send the calamitous event of which it is now my duty to give a feeble sketch.

* The last depth sounded; and we have since found three and an half fathoms on one side of the spot, and five on the other.

A little after one P. M. on that melancholy day, the flat boats being a little ahead, and the Tigris leading the Euphrates, a storm appeared, bringing with it, high in the air, clouds of sand from the west north west quarter. At this moment we were passing over the rocks of Is Geria (deeply covered), and immediately after we made a signal for the Euphrates to choose a berth, and make fast; which was done more as a matter of precaution, on account of the difficulty of seeing our way through the sand than from apprehension that the squall would be so terrific. The Tigris was immediately directed towards the bank, against which she struck without injury, but with so much violence as to recoil a distance of about eight yards, leaving two men on the bank, who had jumped out to make fast. The wind then suddenly veered round, drove her bow off, and thus rendered it quite impossible to secure the vessel to the bank, along which she was blown rapidly by the heavy gusts, her head falling off into the stream as she passed close by the Euphrates, which vessel had been backed opportunely to avoid the concussion. The engines were working at full power, and every endeavour made to turn the vessel's bow to the bank. One anchor was let go, but the heel of the vessel made it impossible to get the other out, and she was then nearly broad side to the wind, with the engines almost powerless, and the waves, rising to four or five feet, forcing their way in at the windows. Lieutenant Cockburn, the Messrs. Staunton, and some of the men made ineffectual attempts to keep out the water, for the fate of the vessel was already decided; and the fore part of the deck being under water, Lieutenant Lynch came to report that the Tigris was sinking, and the

word was immediately passed for all to save themselves. At this very instant a momentary gleam of light faintly shewed the bank at the apparent distance of eight or ten yards; and, as there seemed every probability that the stern would touch it before she went down, Lieutenant Lynch encouraged the people to remain steady until they reached the land. All were on deck at this critical moment, some clinging to the ropes of the awning, the paddle boards, and funnel; but the majority were close to the tiller, and all behaving with the most exemplary obedience, until the vessel went down all at once, and probably within half a minute, after we had seen the bank for an instant.

Lieutenant Lynch, who was at my elbow, dived out underneath the starboard ridge rope, at the moment when there was about four feet water on the deck, and I had the good fortune to get clear, in the same way, through the larboard side, and also to take a direction which brought me to the land, without having seen anything whatever to guide me through darkness worse than that of night. When it cleared a little, I found around me Lieutenant Lynch and Mr. Eden (both greatly exhausted), Mr. Thompson, the Messrs. Staunton, and several of the men. The hurricane was already abating rapidly, and as the distance from the vessel to the shore was very short, we indulged the hope that the rest of our brave companions had reached the bank lower down. For an instant I saw the keel of the Tigris uppermost, near the stern. She went down bow foremost, and, having struck the bottom in that position, she probably turned round on the bow as a pivot, and thus showed part of her keel for an instant at the other extremity; but her paddle beams, floats, and parts of the sides were already broken up, and actually floated ashore, so speedy and terrific had been the work of destruction. From the moment of striking the bank until the Tigris went down it scarcely exceeded eight minutes; whilst the operation of sinking itself did not consume more than three; indeed, the gale was so very violent that I doubt whether the most powerful vessel, such as a frigate, could have resisted it, unless she were already secured to the bank; and, for this there was, in our case, little or no time, as it was barely possible, in the position of our consort, to make fast and save the vessel.

I had little, or rather no hope, that the Euphrates could have escaped, but the intrepid skill of Lieutenant Cleaveland and Mr. Charlwood enabled them to get out two anchors in the very nick of time; and by the united means of two hawsers, and the engines working at full power, the vessel maintained her position at the bank until the storm abated, as the enclosed letter* from Captain Estcourt will explain more fully; and as it required all the powers of a fifty horse engine, in the case of the Euphrates, to keep her hawsers from snapping; I infer, that the twenty horses of the Tigris would not have been sufficient to enable her to keep the position at the bank, even if the Officers had succeeded in securing her along side of it.

Lieutenant Lynch and Mr. Eden continued cool and collected until the last moment, nor were any efforts wanting that skill or presence of mind could

* 26th May.

suggest to save the vessel in the first instance, and the lives in the second, when the former had failed; nor could any thing be more exemplary than their conduct, and that of all on board; scarcely a word was spoken, not a murmur was heard, and death was met with that exemplary degree of intrepidity and resignation which have been displayed by every individual throughout the arduous and trying service in which we have been engaged since January 1835.

Having already given a faithful account of the short, but eventful, period of about twelve minutes occupied by the beginning, the progress, and termination of the hurricane, I will conclude the painful part of my task, by referring you to the enclosed return of the names of the valuable men who have been lost to His Majesty and their country for ever. Very different was the result when a similar, but less violent gale, sent my little vessel to the bottom of this river in 1831; for I had not then the misery of deploring the loss of a single life, and my little schooner was afloat and continuing the descent in less than twelve hours; whereas, all our efforts, as yet, have failed even to find the remains of the vessel, not a ripple, or the slightest trace of the unfortunate Tigris, marks the spot where she went down; but our search has not yet terminated, and if she should be found without having been dashed to pieces, I shall take measures to recover her with the assistance of the diving bell, and other means; especially as there are many valuable instruments on board, in addition to the hull and machinery, and particularly as the Arabs here are well disposed.

I am happy to say, that the survivors of the expedition remain as much unshaken as ever in their confidence regarding the final success of this undertaking, as well as the manifest advantages, facilities, and cheapness of this line of communication. The hurricane has been, it is true, a most trying and calamitous event; but, I believe, it is regarded by all, even at this early day, as having no more to do with the navigation of the Euphrates in other respects, than the loss of a packet in the Irish Channel, which might retard, but could not put an end to, the intercourse between England and Ireland.

We are, therefore, continuing our descent and survey to Bussora, hoping, not only to bring up the mail from India within the specified time, but also, if it pleases God to spare us, to demonstrate the speed, economy, and commercial advantages of the River Euphrates, provided the decision of Ministers shall be in the true spirit of Englishmen, to give it a fair trial, rather than abandon the original purpose in consequence of an unforeseen and, as it proved, an unavoidable calamity.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(Signed) F. R. CHESNEY, Colonel, commanding the expedition.

*The Right Hon. Sir John Cam Hobhouse,
Bart. President of the Board of Control.*

*Euphrates Steamer, Anna,
May 26, 1836.*

SIR,

THE very unexpected nature of the hurricane in which this vessel was taken on Saturday last, the 24th

instant, and the extreme violence with which it was accompanied, render it necessary that I should acquaint you with the circumstances as they affected this vessel, and that I should lay before you the conduct of Lieutenant Cleaveland and Mr. Charlewood, to whose united exertions and skill, supported by the active exertions of a most willing crew, added to the great power of the engines with which this vessel is propelled, her safety is to be attributed.

Scarcely had we cast off from the bank, when, at mid-day on Saturday last, we, in company with the Tigris, had stopped to take in wood, when a dense cloud of dust was seen to rise high into the air, on the right bank. For some minutes it was doubtful whether it would not pass off to our right, but soon it was apparent that it would be otherwise. Preparation was made to meet the squall by furling the awnings, &c. As soon as the Tigris, which was leading, as usual, had cleared a reef of rocks, at this season far under water, she made a signal to choose a berth, and make fast. Hardly was the signal answered, when the gale began. The Tigris was rounding to to bring up to the left bank; the Euphrates followed; but, as we neared the bank, I saw that the Tigris could not stem the gale and current. She had failed to make the bank, and now was falling off with her head outwards. The Euphrates was compelled to back her paddles to give room. Our operation, as you will at once see, was full of danger; for it could scarcely be expected that she would afterwards be able to gather way upon herself against the violence of the elements and current. However, the Tigris having passed across our bows, we worked the engines with all power. The vessel took the bank with some violence, but did not recoil off. Instantly, Mr. Charlewood was ashore, followed by many men, bearing a hawser and light anchor. Within a few seconds a second anchor and chain cable had been got ashore, and these were followed rapidly by a second chain cable and anchor. Lieutenant Cleaveland kept the engines working the whole time; notwithstanding which, and the anchors and cables fixed ashore, the vessel still drove. However, the gale was soon over, and the vessel was safe.

The density of the cloud of dust excluded from my view the Tigris from the moment she crossed our bows; Mr. FitzJames, in the midst of the storm, reported to me, first that she was upset, and then that she had gone down. As soon, therefore, as our own danger had ceased, and that the

Euphrates was secured, I sent off a party ashore, under Lieutenant Murphy, to render what assistance he might be able, to the crew of our consort, whilst Mr. Charlewood pressed me to allow him to go by boat, this I did as soon as it was safe.

Of the remainder of this melancholy tale, of the total loss of the Tigris, and the few who escaped to find a shelter on board the Euphrates, you are yourself well acquainted.

I have only to repeat, that to Lieutenant Cleaveland and Mr. Charlewood, and indeed to the whole crew of the Euphrates, the highest praise is due.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(Signed) J. W. BUCKNALL ESTCOURT,
Capt. 43d. Lt. Inf.

Colonel Chesney.

*On board the Euphrates Steamer, off
Anna, May 26, 1836.*

*Return of Officers and Men belonging to the
Euphrates Expedition, who were lost on the River
Euphrates, near Wordie, by the sinking of the
Tigris Steamer, during a violent Hurricane on the
21st instant.*

R. B. Lynch, lieutenant, 26th regiment Bengal
native infantry; passenger.

Robert Cockburn, lieutenant, royal regiment of ar-
tillery.

Eusoff Sader, interpreter.

John Struthers, engineer.

Richard Clark, acting serjeant.

Thomas Jones, gunner, royal regiment of artillery.

Robert Turner, ditto, ditto.

James Moore, ditto, ditto.

James Hay, ditto, ditto.

Archibald McDonald, private, royal sappers and
miners.

Benjamin Gibson, seaman.

John Hunter, ditto.

Thomas Booth, ditto.

Thomas Batty, ditto.

George Liddel, ditto.

Aboo, native.

Wasoo, ditto.

Jacob John, ditto.

Manneh, ditto.

Pedros, ditto.

H. BLOSSE LYNCH, Lt. I. N.

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