

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