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NARRATIVE

of a Shipwreck, and particulars of the loss of the English ship Jane, on the River la Plata. (South-America). By George Pecker, of Boston, (Mass.)

(Concluded.)

Descending the slope of the hill, I slowly moved along for some distance among the bushes that grew thick, till I espied at some distance a low pass among the grass and shrubbery, which I thought might be a safe passage. In half an hour, I reached it, and found it was not as safe as I had supposed. I found to my great joy I was not alone. The water was clear and excellent. I at first tried several different plans to get my mouth open, but at last lying at length on the ground, and rolling up to it, I succeeded. It was the most delicious draught I ever tasted. I drank a moderate quantity, waited a few minutes, and drank again. Looking around I saw nothing but what indicated a barren and inhospitable scene. I was therefore compelled to make my way over the sand hills, and regain the beach; a difficult task, which I however surmounted, and reached the beach about noon. The weather was still unpropitious; cloudy, the gale not much abated, and the sea continued to rise. When descending the slope, I soon found the bare staves too low for my bare bones, and brushed them. I shortly after sallied out in search of a covering, and succeeded in finding some bed, mattress, blankets, among the wreck. I took a survey of each side, and found at a distance something that looked like a bed, but on coming up I found only a sack of white cotton wool, wet and heavy which could not remove. I then returned to the cask, rested a while, and took another survey. I soon saw at a great distance down the beach towards the water, some rolls of cotton bagging, of which we had a large number on board, and again sallied out in pursuit. I was a long time in getting to them, and then found them so buried in the sand, that I was an hour in digging and bringing away the sand from around them. They were two large rolls of bed-tickings, standing upright, about 20 yards of one rolled in the other. I unrolled one, and the other, when I found them to be one still wet. I pushed it down and rolled it along beneath me, hitching myself up to it, and then pushing it from me again. Thus I got up to the cask, and a like tripe, from remaining so long in the water, and both painful and numerous wounds; my body was coloured, as if a rainbow was painted round me, and withal nearly naked. I was indeed, a figure to excite pity, and to excite fear, and too monstrous any sensation but astonishment.

above the waves; I exerted all my remaining power & reach, and was at last enabled to cling to a large crate containing recovered breath, as they kept high above the surface of the sea. Holding to this rope length, and constantly turning it round, I kept myself afloat, till I was enabled to get up on the edge of the raft, which was at least ten feet below the surface of the water. I was almost despaired of being near, and was fearful it might prove only a snare, but, however, holding on with a desperate courage, I soon perceived a sudden lull, & that were not a third so violent as the first. I roused myself, and roused my spirits, looked around, and I saw the breakers again dropping myself down, my foot touched the ground. I was of sand, and in a few minutes I was upon the beach. I got up to about breast height, and then by showing forward by legs & arms, I fell out upon the beach. After being more than half an hour in the water, and making nearly three quarters of a league, I at last found myself on shore, certain that no vessel had reached ten fathoms, which in an hour and a half the first struck was in pieces on the strand. I may have had of the violent elements, when not a vessel came on shore entire, of twenty-three persons, whom were four stout Africans, whose constant practice renders them almost invulnerable. One of them, but one body came on shore at night. The remainder of the crew, came not on shore till the next day, and nearly stunned. I attempted to stand, but my leg refused, and I fell backward to the ground, and the remaining fragments of my body were scattered with pain, and the severity of the weather, a groan for the escapee. Here as I lay on the earth, I repeatedly called for death, for his stroke have been welcome. Then I have met his face, not as the rage of the dread King of the but as the hope-inspiring smile of meek-eyed mercy. I entered the fate of my companions more happy than my own, suffering though severe, but momentary, while mine perhaps to be protracted till nature, slowly giving way, under misery at its utmost. Sufferings so acute I decided not to endure. The dread divine, therefore, was soon chaced. I resolved to put an end to my existence by the first means I should throw in my power. A firm opinion that these were barren and desolate country, inhabitants for a great distance, with no chance of being discovered, impenetrable from swamps, scrubby; and not being able without torture, I should not survive till the morning. I groping my way at the edge of the water, I felt something large, and to my surprise a pipe of which was the lowest part of the raft before me. I proceeded on the point of knocking my head against it, and dashing out my blood, but doubted my strength to blow sufficient. A second blow most happily struck me; this is big enough to contain me, knocking in the head, if possible placed in a favourable position, be a complete shelter from the cold. I groped for a pipe, and found one. I groped further round, and found several sticks of wood, and the pipes, and taking up one, and blowing it to the upper head, and the stroke, made a breach, and the spirit out through the hole; I drank some, and then I drank my strokes with renewed vigour. The head at last was entire, the wine washed over the head, and I felt like a new man. I then placed two pieces of head staves into the bilge of the cask, to make it square, and crowded in. It seemed like an oven. I had all been partly in the water, the edge of the raft, which now into the cask at every wave, kept me constantly throwing

to the wine. I carried a short distance, out of my course, a small keg, which I thought might possibly contain a salmon, of which we had several hundreds on board. I hitched towards it, but found it with one head out, and partly filled with sand. Nevertheless, I resolved to take it with me and fill it with wine.

Coming to the cask, I found one that answered, I soon procured a billet of wood, struck out the bung, and applied my mouth to the hole, drinking a great quantity. I afterwards rinsed the keg, and nearly filled it with wine, returned with it slowly to the cask, I set it outside and crawled in; and began to ruminate upon my condition. I found it would be impossible without succour to move much longer about, and determined to remain at home during the remainder of the day, and if sufficient strength remained on the next, as my only chance of relief to rig a kind of signal with a pull or small spar, of which there were many, and a piece of cotton stuff for a flag; that, if any vessel should approach near enough, she might observe it. My first thought of endeavouring to get off the small boat, which I saw at a great distance, and to rig a kind of sail, and steer for Monte-Video, I now abandoned. It was a mad idea, and would have been impracticable, as the boat's bottom, I afterwards learnt, was stove in. I knew that the next day I should be unable to make a further search than I had done for provisions, as the method of getting along was slow and painful, being as I before observed, by hitching myself backward with my right hand, and frequently stopping to thrash myself from the cold. And although nothing was more probable than that the first savage who should discover me would instantly murder me, as an impediment to plunder, I was prepared for his knife; and that my apprehensions were not groundless, the sequel too mournfully shews. But a certain prospect of relief still upheld my spirits, which were never less depressed than on this occasion. I remembered that the great Director still had not forsaken me since "God is ever present, ever felt, in the wide waste as in the city fall." Every thought therefore considered, to wait with fortitude the will of Heaven was my ultimate determination. I was now more comfortably situated than at any previous period, and I began to amuse myself by singing a few songs. I had a covering inside, and a keg of wine outside. One song, if not with energy was sung with great feeling, it was the well known and classical song of "How blest a life a sailor leads." &c. After this, by repeated drinking, owing to my excessive thirst, I was thrown into a doze of about half an hour. I soon awoke, and to beguile my feelings, began upon a psalm tune, and sung several to quiet the emotions caused by hunger, thirst and pain.

It was now three days and nights since I had tasted food, and my taper of life began to glimmer in the socket. How I survived these scenes of accumulated misery so long, when but barely alive, on first gaining the shore, I scarcely can tell; the retrospect even now astonishes me. But frail mortality can exist no more. My strength had utterly failed. I hailed the approaching night as the termination of my cares; considered the mean covering over me as my shroud, and the cask as my coffin, and waited with fortitude the hour of dissolution. But the next was the hour of deliverance! About 4 o'clock on the afternoon of Saturday, the auspicious 20th of September, I was aroused from my reveries by the sound of a horse's feet. Uncertain and careless who appeared, whether a friend or an enemy, I waited his approach with calmness, being absolutely indifferent in my choice "to sleep or die." At the next moment, a horse with a rider stopped before the cask. I hailed in Spanish faintly, "Amigo," friend. He instantly alighted, and struck at such a ghastly spectacle, as I then exhibited, he recoiled a few paces backward. Recovering soon from his dismay by seeing my helpless condition, he advanced and stooped to learn by what strange means I had outlived the general wreck. He

was a young man, a Creole, or half Indian, of benevolent features, and dressed partly in the Indian method. I told my tale in few words concluding by asking him the distance of a habitation, and the possibility of my reaching it, if he could bring assistance that day, and promising that he should be rewarded for his kindness. "In a few hours," said he, "I can return with assistance, as the next rancho, or hut, is but little more than a league. He then expressed his surprise at my providential escape, made the sign of the cross on his breast, praised St. George as my special preserver; said I was fortunate in speaking the language so fluently, and that I was greatly so in being discovered by him, whose mother, he said, lived at the nearest cottage, whither I could be conveyed. He said if I had fallen into the hands of the savages, they would certainly have dispatched me, for they were merciless and ferocious. "But, first," added he, "I'll bring you something to eat, for you look half-starved." In about an hour, he re-appeared bringing a warm sausage, and some mouldy bread, wrapped up in a towel. I greedily seized it, thinking I could devour it at once, but was disappointed to find I could not swallow a mouthful, my throat being contracted close, and sore. As he was planning the means of my removal, I left it wholly to his care, and only requested to be conveyed to a place of shelter and safety. He then made his lasso, a line of green hide, with which they catch wild horses, fast to the handle of the largest trunk, and drove off. Shortly after he had gone, a savage, or Guacha of a fierce and murderous countenance rode up, alighted from his horse, and roughly asked who I was. I replied, a shipwrecked seaman. "Are you the captain?" "No," I answered, "I was the mate, and had previously been discovered by a person, who had just left me to return with assistance." He asked me the road he took. I told him when he sprang upon his horse, and galloped off in the direction the other had taken.

He soon after re-appeared at the cask, with some others, seemingly with a resolution of putting me to instant death; but most happily, the appearance of my deliverer with his father and several slaves compelled them to alter their design, and they went off to plunder, abandoning their horrid purpose.—My friend advised me to permit him to dress me in some clothes from a passenger's trunk, which they then broke open, alleging that in my present appearance, I should be taken for a common sailor, and that, clothed in a decent manner, I should gain among them more advantage, respect, and comfort. I accordingly suffered the painful operation of dressing, but my leg, being so greatly swelled, prevented my getting over it any thing but a pair of loose drawers. I also got on a surcoat and waistcoat. I was then with difficulty lifted upon the back of a horse, and my discoverer got up before me. Holding on to him, I had strength sufficient to keep myself in an upright position. I had just been seated on the back of the animal, when the general (Ortigues) who commanded the troops in that quarter, came up with a guard of soldiers and several others.

We arrived, at last, near dusk, at a small cottage. A number of large dogs gave notice of our approach, but were soon silenced by my companions, who assisted me gently to dismount. I was welcomed with many blessings, by the old woman, carried into the house seated in a chair, & stripped of my wet clothes, and put into as good a bed as the hut afforded. This rancho was a small place of only one apartment, built like all others, of cane fastened together with strips of green hide, plastered with mud, and a thatched roof. A fowl was killed by the old woman, and some good broth made and given me. After this, my leg was washed with hot vinegar, and my wounds dressed as well as circumstances would admit. I considered myself as peculiarly fortunate in falling into the hands, and being under the care, of one of those alleviators of calamity, those indispensable attendants of the bed of sickness, where is developed the most estimable and endearing traits

of character, usefulness, patience and compassion—an hospitable old woman. During the night, I drank a great quantity, both of wine and water. The old woman had wrapped two junk bottles, filled with boiling water, and placed them against my feet, at the foot of the bed. My feet were much swollen and wrinkled, and almost without feeling. The sudden application of artificial heat to the blood, though well intended, had a most pernicious effect, stagnating, corrupting, and destroying its natural temperature, and causing great pain; its effects were felt for many months afterwards. This night I slept but little. The rays of the sun breaking into the room, announced the morning of the sabbath, and I could, in truth hail it as a welcome and sweet day of rest.

I now took a view of the apartment and furniture. The room was partly separated by a partition of cane poles; inside of which, slept the old woman and her two younger sons, upon the floor, as there was but one bedstead upon which I lay. Her eldest son, my discoverer, lay near me wrapped up in his paunch, or blanket. At the farther end of the hovel was kept constantly burning upon a table, on each side of a crucifix two candles, which is an invariable custom when any one lies dangerously sick. A separate hut for the kitchen was built outside. The furniture consisted of a few hide-bottomed chairs, some hide sacks and baskets, a hide-seive, and a few other articles, of which hide was the principal material.

The next day the General again came, bringing with him several bottles of wine and cordial taken from the beach. I desired him to inform me if it was possible to send a letter to Monte Video. He replied it was difficult, as there was but little intercourse but that he knew of a patriot officer, who, having a passport, would in a few days go to the city. I therefore, next day procured of the old woman materials for writing, and a chopping block; this I placed between my legs on the bed, covering it with a piece of baze, and commenced writing. It was a tedious business, and I could sit up no longer than to write one line at a time. I, however, finished this necessary duty, & wrote two letters, one directed to W. P. White, Esq. who was the only person I was acquainted with in Monte Video, and another to the owners in Buenos Ayres. These I gave to the General, who in two days forwarded them to the Capital.

My discoverer, Pedro, was employed this day, with two slaves, in recovering some articles and provisions from the beach, which he said, was now covered with natives, breaking open trunks chests and bales of goods, staving in casks of wine when any wanted to drink, and exhibiting a confused scene of plunder, fighting, and wanton waste. The Indians here are generally of great size, long black hair, hanging like snakes down their shoulders, long bushy beards, and mustaches, a coarse blanket wrapped round the middle, and another, with a hole, through which they thrust their heads, hung down their backs, a turban, or handkerchief on their heads, horse-skin boots, stripped from the animal's leg, and worn raw into the shape of the feet. These, with a sword nearly a fathom long, in an iron scabbard, gave them a most horrible appearance. They, indeed, looked like demons. All wore large knives stuck in a sheath in their blanket behind, which they made use of for every purpose, to kill cattle, cut up beef, eat meat, and stab their fellow creatures. The General came, in the evening, with several soldiers, and at our earnest request, left a guard of three for our defence, who were well armed.

I had, about this time, a great many visitors, who all considered me highly favored by my patron saint, to whom they attributed my "hair-breadth escapes." Among them were many old women, who came upon horseback from different parts to barter their commodities. A consultation was held among them.

respecting my fever, leg, and bruises; and they recommended a large leal of an herb which grows in those countries, which dipped in hot oil and vinegar, had a wonderful and salutary effect. Although the application was acutely painful during several nights, the swelling greatly subsided, excepting about the knee. During this time I could not shift positions without great pain; and I could instantly perceive a change of the wind upon the least motion, from electric pain. It was the work of half an hour to turn sometimes in bed. My appetite was raging, and though I could not get so much as I wanted, owing to the care of my attendants, I ate immense quantities, and drank all that came within my reach, always keeping bottles of liquor under my pillow, for my night's supply. I kept one small boy constantly bringing water, of which during ten days, I believe I drank fifty gallons, besides half a dozen bottles of cordial, a dozen of wine, ten gallons of the same in a keg, and several bottles of other liquors, all of which Pedro had saved from the beach. I would frequently whistle and sing to beguile the pain, and the old woman would ask the reason. I told her I sung to kill the pain; but I saw she often thought from my strange behaviour, that my fever and anguish had rendered me delirious. My apprehension, however, of the savages in this weak state, and nervous debility of body and mind, gave me incessant anxiety: expecting every night that they would break in, and knowing their merciless ferocity. The constant

marking of the watchful dogs giving notice of their approach, sounded like a summons bell. One night when all had retired to rest, and the guards lay snoring upon the floor, the dogs set up a roaring yell, and soon after we heard the approach of footsteps, and a violent thumping at the door. Pedro aroused the guards and opened it, & the guards and old woman prepared for defence. I saw by the moonshine five hideous fellows, armed with swords and bayonets, standing before the door. A sharp parley ensued between them and the guard. They thought proper to make a speedy retreat, stealing in their way a horse from the field.

On the eighth day, I was agreeably relieved by the arrival of two clerks, an Englishman and a Spaniard, from Monte Video, in consequence of receiving my letter, from the house of the consignees, in order to effect my removal to the city and endeavour to secure some part of the property. The latter they found totally impossible, nothing of value being found on the strand, every thing having been carried off up the country by the natives. I was extremely rejoiced at their appearance, and we concerted plans for my departure. They slept one night at the hut, and next day, Sunday departed, having seen sufficient of the character of the natives, and glad they had escaped the knives of the gauchos, and vowing they would not venture their lives again among such a murderous crew for the value of a ship and cargo.

The cannibals were daily & hourly growing more inexorable, and the danger every moment increased. I had every reason to believe that on this night they intended to make a desperate attack upon the cottage, and to have murdered all in their power, had not the fortunate arrival about sunset, of the long wished for cart, with a driver and guide, both armed, put them in fear. These were a valuable addition to our force, and this night during which they slept in the hut, I felt less apprehensive of danger. To death and to danger the most terrific, I had been exposed, and had faced them with manly fortitude. I had escaped from wild beasts, and met the fury of the elements without shrinking; but the horrid prospect of having my flesh gashed and lacerated, and my limbs cut sunder by the knives of the savages, gave me infinite anguish, and boiling with rage and indignation, I could almost, at times, had it been in my power, have seized indiscriminate destruction, and like Sampson of old, have sacrificed my life to relieve it from such a state of torturing suspense, and to take revenge upon the blood-thirsty ruffians.

Notice is hereby given That the subscriber, both of the original and of the second issue, in Maryland, letters of administration on the personal estate of Benjamin Leitch, of Ben. late of York county, deceased. All persons having claims against the said estate, are hereby required to exhibit the same, with the vouchers thereon, to the subscriber, at or before the fifth day of August next, they otherwise shall be excluded from a dividend on said estate. Given under my hand and seal the 19th day of February, 1819. JNO. IRIDAN, Feb. 20.