

MELANCHOLY NARRATIVE.

Of the loss of the Mail Boat, from Monsterrat, to Antigua, in February last, with Five Missionaries, two wives, four children, two servants, and Captain and crew. One of the wives only (Mrs. Jones,) was saved.

MONSTERRAT, MARCH 13, 1826.

To-day our dear Sister Jones was so much recovered as to justify my hearing from her own lips the almost unparalleled narrative of the wreck of the Maria. I had been waiting with some anxiety to hear the particulars from her, the only one spared to relate the sad story. The following to the best of my recollection, forms a correct account.

After they left Monsterrat on Monday evening, they had to pass through a most fearful night. The wind blew very hard and the sea was unusually heavy. The day following was one of a very distressing description, but towards sunset they were fast approaching the island of Antigua.

The Captain was aware of the dangerous reefs, rocks, and sands, which lie in such fearful numbers at the mouth of Saint John's harbour and endeavoured to avoid them. The Missionaries were on deck expressing their joy at the prospect of supping and sleeping on shore; and the children below were singing in the cabin, in imitation of their fathers, and playing around their mothers. All now were without fear but Mrs. Jones, and her mind, she says, was so distracted for a time with the idea that the vessel would yet be lost, that she had to pray earnestly against it. However, the fear did not leave her, but these words came to her recollection, and so comforted her, that she could do nothing but repeat them to herself;

*Jesus protects; my fears begone!
What can the rock of ages move?*

About seven o'clock an alarm was spread suddenly through the vessel by the cry of "breakers a-head!" The helm was instantly put down, and the mainsail lowered, but the vessel missed stays twice, (a most unusual thing with her,) and before she wore round, she struck on the south end of the Weymouth, a dangerous reef to leeward on Sandy Island; (a long bank to the S. W. of Saint John's harbour.) Had she been twice the length of herself, either to windward or leeward, she would have escaped altogether; for she would either have run between the reef and Sanday Island, or have had sea room enough in her due course; and yet it so occur-

ed, that if the reef had been picked, in the judgement of the agent for Lloyd's a worse place could not have been found. The Brethren now rushed towards the cabin to seize their wives, their little ones, and servants. The mothers and servants snatched up the children, and rushed through the pouring flood, which was now fast filling the vessel, to the Missionaries on deck. The scene was indescribable! The vessel fell on her side and filled directly. The sailors cut away her mast, and she righted a little. They cast out the anchor, and let out the chain cable, which caused the vessel to hang a little more securely on the rocks, whilst the sea beat over her in the most terrific manner. All the passengers and crew now hung upon the bulwarks and rails of the quarter-deck, up to their middle in water. Soon after she struck, the boat washed overboard, with George Lambert, a free black seaman, in it. The mate, Mr. Newbold, jumped after it, and happily for himself, reached it. They endeavoured to bring her back to the wreck, but could not, and were driven away to sea. In the situation just stated the passengers remained one hour, calling on Him who alone could save them, and endeavoured to comfort themselves and each other with the prospects of a blissful eternity, when the waist of the vessel gave way, and precipitated all who were clinging to the rails of the quarter-deck into the sea; viz. Mr & Mrs. White, with their three children, Mr. and Mrs. Truscott, and child, two servants, and Mrs. Jones. Mr. Jones being next to his wife, saw her desperate situation, and made an effort to lay hold of her, in which he providentially succeeded, and drew her up so far that she got hold of the part of the wreck on which he hung, and was saved. The children as they floated on the surface of their watery grave cried much, but the Brethren and their wives calmly met their death. They cried out to them who were on the wreck, "farewell, the Lord bless you," and they in return repeated the affecting "farewell," and offered up the same prayer to God. "Lord have mercy upon us," "God save us," were the solemn ejaculations that now passed through the lips of the drowning Brethren! In a few moments the dear children ceased to cry, and the voice of prayer was turned to endless praise.

The Captain now exhorted all who were still on the wreck to come nearer to her head, as she was fast breaking up, and that part of her was likely to hold together longest, and adding, "hold on if you possibly can until morning, and then we shall be seen from Goat Hill Battery, and be rescued." With this advice they were enabled to comply, though with considerable difficulty. The sea was tremendous and night dark! Wave followed wave in close succession, and they had frequently but just recovered their breath from the past wave when the next took it from them again. At length the greatly wished for morning arrived; but alas! it was not to be the morning of deliverance for them. They made the best signals of distress they could, but they were not seen. They on the wreck could see people walking on shore, but no one saw them, there was so little for the naked eye to distinguish them from the reef, and the waves ran high. Vessels and boats passed at some distance during the day, and they unitedly and with one voice endeavoured to hail them; but the beating of the sea on the rocks drowned their voices, so that they could not be heard. The Brethren and Sister Jones were, however, enabled, by the grace of God, notwithstanding all their disappointments, to stay their minds on God; and to instruct the deeply stricken and penitent captain and sailors how to be saved. The sailors wept and prayed, whilst the Missionaries pointed them to the Lamb of God, and exhorted them to add faith to penitence. Poor fellows, two of them died this day on the wreck exhausted, but "looking unto Jesus." Night again came on apace, and soon enveloped them in all its dreariest gloom! Seated on a piece of the wreck; up to their breasts in water without a crumb of bread, or a drop of water having passed through their lips; the sea very rough, and the waves passing over them, each wave threatening immediate death! In this condition they held each other. If one ventured to sleep a little, another watched lest the waves should sweep him away. It was a night like the last, full of horrors. When day appeared, it was welcomed with praise to God that their eyes were permitted once more to see it, and with prayer that it might be the day of rescue; at the same time according to Mrs. Jones, their lan-

guage appears to have been that of their divine Master, "not my will, but thine be done." Vessels and boats passed again, but they were not seen. Some time after noon this day (Thursday) Brother Hillier said he thought he could swim ashore, and thus, by the blessing of God, rescue himself, and be the happy instrument of saving them. The Brethren Jones and Oke feared, with the Captain, that he was too weak, having taken nothing, to swim three miles, the distance required. He, however, still thought he could, and in the spirit of prayer, he committed himself to the deep, and they after bidding him farewell, commended him to God. He struck off well, but in about ten minutes sunk to rise no more, till "the sea shall give up her dead." One or two of the sailors also attempted to reach the shore on pieces of the wreck, but failed. Thus the survivors passed through another day of sorrows. The bodies of some of the sufferers were seen floating to-day; and the rain fell in showers around them; but Sister Jones says, eagerly as they wished it, only one slight shower fell on them. She put out her tongue, and caught a few drops of rain, which refreshed her, for which she felt thankful to God. Night now approached once more, but with every appearance of its being the last, for the joints of the piece of wreck on which they were began to open fast, and there was every appearance of its soon falling in pieces and putting an end to all their affliction. With this expectation, each was fervently engaged with God in hallowed and resigned communion. Contrary to their expectations, however, they were spared to see another day. The sea was much calmer to-day (Friday) than it had before been, and about noon, Brother Oke said that he would endeavour to swim ashore. Mrs. Jones was asleep when he made the attempt, but was informed afterwards by Mr. Jones that he was drowned soon after he got into the water, being too weak to swim far. Mrs. Jones was seated on what are called, I believe, the bits; her husband was beside her, with his head leaning on her shoulder, while her hand held him by the coat collar. He began to lose the use of his legs, and his dear wife called the Captain to help her to raise them, if possible, out of the water. The Captain made the effort, but was too weak to come to her help. Not

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