

a yard or two further on, showing that the wheels on that side must have passed over some distance in the air, at the height of at least three feet from the sward below. As I stood and imagined the course of those wheels above the open field, and remembered the opportune swing of the coach in the safe direction at the critical moment, I saw most distinctly the peril of which I had a pretty strong impression in passing it. I shuddered at the remembrance of the possible catastrophe, which when imminent had hardly moved me, and I felt that our deliverance had been marvellous.

I am afraid I had, at the time, no very distinct or devout recognition of Divine Providence, but in after life I have often recalled it with surprise, and felt thankful for this merciful preservation. But for this, I might have been maimed for life, or cut off with short warning.

But it was not my purpose to run off into old recollections, on seeing the picture of the mail at Christmas-time. This is a scene which I once saw on the road. The mail was changing horses at the Red Lion. Like our own coach, the mail was hung round with game of all sorts, sent from country sportsmen to their cockney friends. The hares, with their downy fur, and the birds, with their bright feathers, made a show which it was then thought a sight to see on a Christmas coach. The body of the mail, a fine deep red, strengthened by dark shadows cast from its abundant top fringe of game, contrasted with the neutral luggage; the sombre dress of the passengers, the grey horses just released from the trace-hooks, and the dull surroundings, formed a central mass of well-ordered form and rich warm colour, the more striking to an artist's eye from the winter accessories—a leaden sky, trees feathery with frozen rime, snow-covered roofs, and a snow-clad landscape with dazzling breadths of light borne out by shadows characteristically cold.

LIFE-BOAT SERVICES.

WE are unwilling to allow the year to close without reminding our readers of the services and the claims of the Royal National Life-boat Association. We happened this summer to be at Lowestoft on the day of the annual inspection of the life-boats of that port and of the adjacent parish of Pakefield. Besides the trial of the two life-boats, an exhibition of Capt. Manby's rocket apparatus for communicating with ships in distress, and other interesting experiments, formed part of the proceedings. Having made special inquiries as to the services rendered by the Lowestoft and Pakefield boats, it occurs to us that a brief notice of some of these may serve better than any general statistics to exemplify the humane and beneficent work of this noble institution.

On the 7th October, 1858, at eleven a.m., the barque *Zemira*, of Leghorn, with twelve Italians and an English pilot on board, ran aground on the Newcombe Sands, near Lowestoft, the wind blowing a hard gale from the S.W. at the time. The Pakefield boatmen, as soon as possible, launched the life-boat; but the greater part of their number being absent in Lowestoft Harbour, they could not be on the spot immediately; she was, however, afloat in about forty minutes, but the vessel had then broken up and disappeared. The life-boat's crew, nevertheless, determined to search the spot where she had been, with the chance of picking up any of her crew who might have been able to hold on by pieces of the wreck. On crossing the shoal, in a very heavy sea, the whole boat and crew were once completely immersed;

but, nothing daunted, they prosecuted their search, and happily succeeded in picking up eight of the crew floating about on pieces of the wreck at various distances from the spot, the last man picked up being two miles distant from where the main part of the vessel remained. The captain, three of the crew, and the English pilot, unfortunately perished. This service was considered to be altogether of so gallant and praiseworthy a character that the Board of Trade awarded medals to the coxswain and crew; and a considerable collection (£60) was raised by visitors at Lowestoft in testimony of their admiration of it, and given to the crew, who also received the highest scale of payment allowed by the National Life-boat Institution, viz., £2 to each man—10s. each being the ordinary sum for day service in its life-boats.

On the 26th October, 1859, the schooner *Lord Douglas*, of Dundee, parted from her anchors in a heavy gale from the south, and foundered off the village of Corton, on the Suffolk coast. The Lowestoft life-boat proceeded under sail to the spot, and having anchored to windward of the wrecked vessel, the crew of which had lashed themselves to the rigging, succeeded in saving them, five in number, drawing them through the water by lines thrown to them, and landed them safely at Corton.

On the same afternoon the Lowestoft life-boat performed another valuable service. Scarcely had she returned from saving the crew of the *Lord Douglas*, than another schooner, the *Silva*, of Glasgow, drove ashore at Corton, although lying with three anchors ahead. The life-boat had split her foresail in the previous service, but another was borrowed, and she again started on her mission of mercy, which, happily, was crowned with similar success, and the crew of the wrecked schooner were taken off in the same manner. Having split her borrowed foresail, the life-boat was compelled to land on Yarmouth beach, where the shipwrecked men were hospitably received into the Sailors' Home. The life-boat had to be left at Yarmouth until the 28th October.

On the 1st November, 1859, the crew of this valuable and efficient life-boat had another opportunity to distinguish themselves. The screw-steamer *Shanrock*, of Dublin, ran ashore on the above-named day, on the Holm Sand, during a heavy gale from the S.W. The Lowestoft life-boat was launched as soon as possible after the situation of the unfortunate vessel was perceived, and proceeded under sail to the spot, when she anchored, and the crew of fourteen men were with much difficulty hauled into the life-boat by lines thrown to them. The sea was said to be breaking over the mast-heads of the steamer, and repeatedly filled the life-boat. The danger of the service was much increased by the circumstance that a great expanse of shoal water lay close to leeward of the boat, and if her cable had parted, it was considered that the destruction of the boat and her crew might have followed. For this service the life-boat's crew received double the usual payment, or £1 each; and in testimony of admiration for this and previous distinguished services in the life-boat, the following men had, in addition, the silver medal of the institution awarded to them:—Richard Hook, coxswain; Francis Smith, Richard Butcher, Alfred Mewse, Thomas Liffen, James Butcher, and William Rose.

On the night of the 2nd November, 1861, the schooner *Fly*, of Whitby, was in a leaky state, and in danger of foundering near Lowestoft, in a heavy gale from the north. On her making signals of distress, the life-boat of the National Life-boat Institution, at Lowestoft, was launched through a tremendous surf, and proceeded to

her assistance. Some of the life-boat's crew were placed on board, and succeeded in taking her safely into Lowestoft Harbour. The vessel and her crew of four men would probably have been lost but for this aid.

On the 10th November, 1861, the Lowestoft life-boat was again instrumental in saving lives. The barque *Undaunted*, of Aberdeen, struck on the Newcombe Sand, in a south-westerly gale, and hoisted a signal of distress. The Lowestoft and Pakefield life-boats both put off to her aid, and together took off her crew of eleven persons, landing them safely. The barque shortly after became a total wreck.

Again, on the 14th November in the same year, two small vessels, the pilot cutter *Whim*, and the lugger *Saucy Lass*, were seen to be at anchor on the weather side of the Holm Sand, in an extremely dangerous position, and with signals of distress flying. A steam-tug was seen to be near them, but unable to approach near enough to render them any assistance, as the wind was blowing a heavy gale at the time, and a high surf was breaking on the sand. The Lowestoft life-boat was quickly launched, proceeded under sail to the sand, and succeeded in rescuing the crews of both vessels; the steamer towing her to windward after her rescue of the crew of the cutter, to enable her again to drop down into the broken water to the aid of those on board the other vessel. Seven men were taken from the cutter by the life-boat, and eleven from the lugger.

On the 26th February, 1862, the services of this valuable life-boat were again called into requisition. Early in the morning the boat of the brigantine *Matilda*, of Stockholm, with four of her crew and a Lowestoft pilot on board, found their way into Lowestoft Harbour, and reported that their vessel, with six more men on board, was ashore on the Corton Sand, and fast breaking up. The harbour steam-tug had, fortunately, her steam up at the time, and the Lowestoft life-boat having been manned, she took her in tow and conveyed her to windward of the sand, where they found the unfortunate vessel a broken-up wreck. The life-boat quickly made sail to the spot, and dropping her anchor amidst the broken fragments of the wreck, succeeded in rescuing four of the unfortunate vessel's crew, the remaining two having been washed off the wreck and drowned before her arrival. Captain Rivers, harbour-master of Lowestoft, went out in charge of the tug, without the aid of which the life-boat would not have reached the wreck in time to have been of service.

On the 23rd May, 1867, during a strong breeze from the N.E. by E., the brig *Amicizia*, of Genoa, was observed to take the ground in the Stanford Channel. The Lowestoft and Pakefield life-boats both put off to the rescue of the crew. The first-named boat arrived alongside the wreck first, and took off ten men from the rigging, afterwards landing them in safety. The Pakefield life-boat succeeded in rescuing the remaining four men. The vessel soon afterwards became a total wreck.

These cases are selected from a detailed record now before us, of all the services rendered by the Lowestoft and Pakefield boats. No storm, however violent, no hour of the night or season of the year, ever deterred the gallant crews from promptly hastening to the help of ships in distress. On many occasions master mariners and officers of the Royal Navy have led the way as volunteers to man the boats. The name of Captain Joachim, R.N., deserves to be mentioned, a veteran sailor, and one of the most gallant officers that ever went afloat on such emergencies, as his silver medals and

clasps with which he has been decorated by the Association honourably attest.

Since 1855, when these two boats were brought into connection with the central institution in London, they have saved about 220 lives from various shipwrecks on the Suffolk coast. And these are but specimens of the services rendered in this good cause by the 190 life-boats of the National Association all round the coast of Great Britain.

Original Fables.

BY MRS. PROSSEL.

INCONVENIENCES OF "THE HIGHFLOWN."

"BAA, baa!" cried the little Lamb. "I've lost my mamma. Ah, who has seen my mamma? Baa, baa, baa!"

"Poor little heart!" cried an old Sheep that was busy nibbling the sweet short grass when the cry attracted her. "How long have you lost her, my dear?"

"Oh, a long, long time, and I can't find her anywhere. Baa, baa!" cried the little Lamb.

"Well, don't fret; I dare say she is not far off," said the kind old Sheep. "You look very tired; come and eat a bit of this nice grass, or lie down and rest, and I will go and look for her."

"Oh, thank you!" said the trembling Lamb, lying down at once.

"What is she like, my dear? Is she like *me*?" asked the old Sheep, as she turned to go on her search.

"Oh, dear, no!" cried the little Lamb, as if shocked at such an idea. "My mamma is so pretty; her fleece is as soft and as white as the clouds up there, and her eyes—oh, they are so beautiful!"

The old Sheep paused and looked thoughtful. "I don't remember ever to have seen one of our party like that, but I suppose I haven't taken notice enough. I shall be sure to know her at once *now* that you have described her," she said, and away she went.

She examined every sheep she met, but saw none a bit better looking than herself, so she passed all without asking if they had lost a little lamb.

"I am very sorry to tell you, my dear," she said when she returned, "I am afraid they must have taken away your poor mother, for nowhere can I see her, and I have been all over the field."

"Baa, baa!" cried the little Lamb, piteously. At that minute a sheep appeared on the top of the bank under which the Lamb was lying, and cried out loud, "Baa-aa-aa!"

Up started the Lamb and skipped up the bank, crying, "Mamma, mamma! Oh, cruel Sheep, how could you say she was taken away from the field?"

"Cruel!" cried the Sheep, much surprised. "Why, how in the world was I to know that *that* was your *mamma*, after the description you gave? Learn to keep to sober truth; if you had not been so highflown, I should have found her directly, and saved you pain and myself a world of trouble."

LET ANOTHER PRAISE THEE.

"WHAT a wonderful fellow Mr. Blazes is," said Dull, the pack-horse, to Conjurer, the old hunter.

"Blazes *wonderful*, is he?" said Conjurer.

"Oh, astonishing," replied Dull; "he was always considered the finest horse in the stud for symmetry and beauty; and then his swiftness in a race, his spirit and dexterity in leaping, his untiring strength; in short, his excellence in all ways was marvellous."

Conjurer did not reply, and Dull continued—

"And the prizes that his family have won, and the fame they have! Any bet may be made on the breed; they come off with flying colours from every field and course; unexampled success, and unfailing, attends them."

"Where did you get all this?" inquired Conjurer, who had his own opinion of the merits of Mr. Blazes and his breed.

"From the best possible authority," said Dull,—"*himself*."

"Ah, so I thought," said Conjurer; "Let me advise you,