

## Heroes of the Albert Medal.

BY L. S. LEWIS.

I.



HE Albert Medal may be described as a Victoria Cross for civilians. It was instituted by a Royal Warrant, dated the 7th of March, 1866, which had reference to one medal only, to be awarded exclusively for gallantry in saving life at sea.

A subsequent warrant, however, dated 12th April, 1867, revoked the first warrant, and created instead two new decorations, styled respectively "The Albert Medal of the First Class" and "The Albert Medal of the Second Class." The medal was extended to cases of gallantry in saving life on land by Royal Warrant dated the 30th of April, 1877.

The Albert Medal of the "First Class" consists of a gold oval-shaped badge, or decoration, enamelled in dark blue, with a monogram composed of the letters "V" and "A" interlaced, and with an anchor erect in gold. The whole is surrounded by a Garter in bronze, inscribed in raised letters of gold, "For Gallantry in Saving Life at Sea," and the medal is surmounted by a representation of the crown of the late Prince Consort. It is suspended from a dark blue riband, measuring 1 3/8-in. in width, with four white longitudinal stripes.

The "Second Class" Medal is a similar enamelled badge, but worked entirely in bronze, with a riband only 5/8-in. in width.

The land, or Home Office, Albert Medals

have no anchors, and both enamel and ribands are red, instead of blue. These decorations are made by Phillips, of Cockspur Street; and it is an interesting fact that the man who engraved the inscription on the very first medal was also engaged on the very latest one granted. In fact, the making of these medals, which are built up by hand, instead of being struck from a die as the Victoria Crosses are, is practically left entirely to one family of workmen.

The great aim of the Ministers who recommend Albert Medal cases to the Queen is to keep the standard of gallantry as high as possible; hence it is that among the few typical cases I have been able to select, there will be found some of the sublimest instances of heroic self-sacrifice that the world has ever known.

The very first man to receive this coveted decoration was Mr. Samuel Poplestone, a Devonshire farmer, whose case was "Gazetted" on the 15th of June, 1866.

Here is the story. The *Spirit of the Ocean*, a barque of 557 tons, with a crew of eighteen hands and twenty-four passengers, was wrecked on the rocks, 400yds. to the west of Start Point, Devon, on Friday, the 23rd of March, 1866. The vessel had been in a bad way for some time previous to the wreck. Several of her crew were sick, and the mates and passengers were trying to work her, when she was caught in a strong gale from the south-west, and presently "doomed to destruction," as the



FIRST CLASS ALBERT MEDAL—  
"SEA."



FIRST CLASS ALBERT MEDAL—  
"LAND."



newspaper men say when describing a big fire.

Popplestone observed the peril of the vessel, and knew that if she failed to weather the rocks, she must eventually be lost and every soul with her, unless assistance could be rendered from the shore. He, therefore, dispatched a messenger on one of his own horses to Tor Cross to rouse the villagers, and another mounted messenger to give information to the coastguards. By this time the vessel had struck on the rocks, and began to break up rapidly. Taking a small coil of rope, Popplestone, alone and unaided, proceeded nimbly along the storm-swept shore, from rock to rock, like a middle-aged chamois, to get nearer the vessel. By this time the wind was, technically speaking, blowing at "force 11," that is, a storm nearly equal to a hurricane, accompanied by blinding rain and a very heavy and dangerous sea.

While Popplestone was standing on the rock nearest to the ship, endeavouring to effect a communication, he was washed off into the swirling, raging sea; but, by a great effort on his part, and by the help of a returning wave, he regained his footing; and from this perilous position he succeeded in saving the lives of the mate and one of the crew; afterwards conveying them beyond the reach of danger.

Now, I think I may be permitted to say that, heroic as Popplestone's action undoubtedly was, he would not even receive a "Second Class" medal were he to go through the same experience again. The fact is, the standard of Albert Medal heroism has steadily risen; and the First Class decoration is only granted when it is nothing short of a miracle that the hero escapes with his own life. But perhaps I can illustrate my meaning better by turning to a most weird and extraordinary case, whose details would seem to be culled from the pages of Jules Verne, instead of the official records that have been placed at my disposal.

The Albert Medal of the "Second Class" was, in March, 1878, conferred upon John

Mitchell, carpenter; William Stewart, sail-maker; and Charles Wilson, A.B., formerly seamen of the *Conference*, of Bristol.

On the 9th May, 1877, the *Conference*, the *Avonmore*, and twenty-five or thirty other vessels were lying at anchor off the village of Huanillos, about 300yds. from the shore, loading with guano by means of lighters. The village itself consisted of about one hundred wooden houses, perched upon a very precipitous ridge, about 30ft. above the sea level. Immediately behind the mountains rise precipitously to a height of 5,000ft. To reach the guano, about 80ft. up the mountain, a zig-zag path had been made.

According to the statement of Captain George Williams, late master of the *Conference*, a severe shock of earthquake was felt

about 8.30 p.m., the weather being dark and gloomy and the sea strangely calm. There was a seaquake as well as an earthquake. The ship was found to be shaking so much that the masts and yards seemed about to tumble down, and the stern moorings parted. The seismic disturbance lasted several minutes, and was followed by a tremendous commotion in the sea, forming whirlpools and aqueous mountains that threatened to fall upon and bury the ships. The noise of the earthquake, as it shook the mountains, was perfectly appalling. Monstrous



MR. SAMUEL POPPLESTONE.  
(The First Recipient of an Albert Medal.)  
From a Photo. by Mrs. J. Hayes, Kingsbridge.

boulders of meteoric iron rolled down the precipitous sides, and, striking against each other, emitted sparks and flames of fire; while the cries of the guano-diggers higher up the mountains increased the indescribable horror of a scene truly calculated to destroy the nerve of the bravest on earth. The earthquake was followed by three distinct tidal waves, which rolled in at intervals of about ten minutes, rising about 50ft., as seen by marks on the shore, and causing many vessels to break their moorings and drag their anchors. What is more, the village of Huanillos was practically wiped out.

While all kinds of dreadful things were in progress on shore, the unfortunate *Conference* came in for a lot of knocking about. All the





"A TREMENDOUS COMMOTION IN THE SEA."

other vessels, if I may say so, seemed to blame her for causing this frightful pandemonium on sea and land, and so commenced to drive against her with great force and surprising persistency. The first tidal wave drove two vessels across the bows of the *Conference*, carrying away the bowsprit and jibboom. The second wave carried away her starboard bower chains, and at the same time the American vessel *Geneva*, carrying 2,400 tons of guano, was driven against her fore-rigging, damaging her severely. The *Conference* then commenced to drift towards the rocks, but the *Geneva* was upon her again, cutting her down amidships, four or five planks below the covering-board.

Shortly after this a vessel, which proved to be the *Avonmore*, was seen for a moment driving at a furious rate across the bows of the *Conference*. Almost immediately her anchor light disappeared, and the cries of drowning people were heard. All this time the other ships, beyond the power of human control, were dashing hither and thither like mad creatures. The sea was a confused and turbulent maëlstrom, and yet the master of the *Conference* called for volunteers from

his crew to man the jolly-boat. After some hesitation Mitchell, Stewart, and Wilson volunteered their services. They rowed away into the intense darkness, and after some time succeeded in finding and rescuing the master of the *Avonmore* and his child, together with the second and third officers and an able seaman.

Fortunately, there was no further tidal wave; and when the boat returned to the *Conference*, the disturbance of the sea had considerably abated, and the rest of the crew were about to abandon the barque in their other boat, the *Conference* being then close on the rocks, with her stern and bows knocked in. Both boats then rowed about until four o'clock in the morning of the 10th of May, returning to the shore later on, when they

saw their ship for the last time strike the rocks and then heave over and sink. The master was told she had struck several times during the night, the fire caused by the impact between the iron bows and the rocks having been seen flashing by the crews of some of the other vessels.

Altogether, about four vessels were totally wrecked that terrible night at Huanillos; five were uninjured from being moored outside the others; and all the rest were more or less damaged. Numerous lives were lost.

A very different case was the Rotherham Main sinking shaft accident, for heroism in connection with which Ambrose Clarke and Robert Drabble each received the Second Class Albert Medal.

This extraordinary case was brought forward by Mr. Frank N. Wardell, H.M. Inspector of Mines for that district. Mr. Wardell, in his report to the then Home Secretary, Mr. Matthews, says that in the whole of his experience this act of bravery and courage has never been surpassed. He also states that Clarke has previously saved six or seven other lives.

The details of the accident are as follows:





MR. AMBROSE CLARKE.  
From a Photo. by Crosby, Rotherham.

On the 7th of July, 1891, an accident occurred in the sinking shaft of the Rotherham Main, situate near Rotherham, Yorks, the property of Messrs. John Brown and Co. This mishap resulted in the deaths of four persons and the escape of four others, all of them, however, more or less injured. Scaffolding was suspended in the shaft, 210ft. from the surface, and about 90ft. from the bottom, by means of four chains, which were secured to four staples fixed in the shaft. There was a depth of 11ft. of water standing in the bottom of the shaft, immediately below the scaffold. Sinkers were engaged in removing the sheeting-bores in the shaft for the purpose of putting in brick walling; and, at ten o'clock on the night of the 7th July, eight men went down on to the scaffold. Ambrose Clarke, the master sinker, remained above, directing these men. He never left his post until 10.45 p.m., when he heard a noise below, but was ignorant of what had happened.

What *had* happened was this. One of the staples to which the supporting chains were attached suddenly broke, whereupon the scaffolding tilted, throwing all the men off. One of them, Scattergood by name, managed to get hold of the "hoppit," or iron bucket, into which the shafting-boards were being

loaded, and in this he was drawn to the surface. There were steam pipes in the shaft in connection with the donkey-engine, and the falling scaffold broke one of these, filling the shaft with scalding steam.

When Clarke heard the uproar, he immediately ran across to the top of No. 2 sinking shaft, a few yards away, and told the man in charge there that something dreadful had happened in No. 1, so that he had better draw his men out of No. 2 shaft at once. Clarke then rushed back to his post, and was just in time to see Scattergood emerge from the steaming inferno. Without waiting to ask any questions, Clarke asked Scattergood if he would go down with him, but the unfortunate man was too confused and shaken to think of anything. Clarke immediately went down by himself—down into the hot, blinding steam, still escaping with a shrill, continuous scream. When the solitary heroic rescuer got to the place where the scaffold had hung, he found one man, Robert Drabble, suspended in the shaft in a peculiarly horrible manner. Drabble had evidently fallen head downwards, but had been caught by the hook of the grappling chain, which had entered the fleshy part of his leg, tearing it down to his boot, and fixing itself there. The point of the hook had



MR. ROBERT DRABBLE.  
From a Photo. by Crosby, Rotherham.



actually penetrated the foot also and come out at the sole. All the other men had fallen to the bottom. Thus Drabble was hanging like a leg of mutton on a hook, head downwards in the darkness, the blood pouring from his terrible flesh wound, and with his hands on some fencing belonging to the donkey-engine.

When Clarke arrived at this part of the shaft, some five or seven minutes had elapsed since the accident, and Drabble was calling feebly for help. On reaching him, Clarke said, "Now, then, let me heave you into the 'hoppit,'" to which the suffering hero replied, "Not yet. Go down below, and look after my mates in the water; I can hang a few minutes longer, I think."

Thereupon Clarke went to the bottom and rescued one man, Lovell, out of the water, and lifted him into the "hoppit." At this time Drabble shouted from above that he was going to fall, so Clarke at once ascended to him, and tried to cut the hook out of his boot, but could not succeed. He then put his arm round the man's leg and lifted him bodily up, whereupon the hook came out, and Drabble was safely deposited in the "hoppit."

Subsequently Clarke went down again and rescued another man named Beadsley, who was hanging over a stay just above the water with both legs broken. No more men could be found, so Clarke went to the surface with the three men he had saved. He afterwards went down a third time, and with the assistance of volunteers, succeeded in recovering the dead bodies of the remaining four men from the water at the bottom of the shaft.

The medals were presented to Clarke and Drabble by the Duke of Norfolk at a crowded and enthusiastic meeting.

A terrible "Story of the Sea" attaches to the presentation of the "Second Class" Albert Medal to Mr. David Webster, some time second mate of the barque *Arracan*, of Greenock, himself residing at Broughty Ferry, Dundee.

The *Arracan*, whilst on a voyage from Shields to Bombay, with a cargo of coals, took fire, owing to the spontaneous combustion of her cargo; and on the 17th of February, 1894, she was abandoned by her crew, who then took to their boats and endeavoured to make for the Maldivé Islands. The boats kept company until the 20th of that month, when, finding the currents too strong, it was agreed to separate, after dividing the scanty provisions.

The master, in command of the long-boat, then made for Cochin; while the mate, in charge of the gig, and the second mate (Mr. David Webster), in charge of the pinnace, with four of the crew (three men and a boy), made for the Maldivé Islands.

After two days, Webster's boat was injured by a heavy sea, and could not keep up with the gig, which was lost sight of. From this time the pinnace was kept working to windward until the 9th of March, by which day the water and provisions had been entirely consumed, and the outlook was not cheerful. Soon after this, things looked so black that the crew cast lots to see which of them should be killed, in order to provide food for the others. The lot fell upon the ship's boy, Horner; but Webster, who had been asleep, awoke in time to save the boy's life, and prevent a cannibal feast upon the high seas. After dark an attempt was made to kill Webster himself, but the boy, Horner, awoke him just in time to save himself—a beautiful instance of one good turn deserving, and receiving, another.

The following day Webster fell asleep—he had to pass the time somehow—and was awoke by the struggles of the crew for the possession of his gun: it was again their amiable intention to make a meal of the heroic mate. Two hours later the famished crew recommenced operations on Horner, but once more they were prevented by the determined conduct of Webster, who threatened to shoot and throw overboard the first man who laid hands upon the boy.

The next day one of the crew tried to sink the boat, but Webster mastered him and prevented further mischief. Two days later the same desperate man again tried to scuttle the craft, and failing this he attacked poor Horner, whose string of escapes would be incredible were it not placed beyond the shadow of doubt by the official papers. The boy's latest assailant was instantly shot at by Webster, and would certainly have been killed had not the cap of the mate's gun missed fire. Soon after this incident a bird flew over the boat, and Webster, putting a fresh cap on his gun, shot at and killed it; whereupon it was immediately seized and devoured by the starving men—bones, feathers, and all.

During the next five days the crew were quieter, subsisting mainly on barnacles that had attached themselves to the bottom of the boat, and sea-blubber for which they dived. The following day some of the men became delirious. One of them lay down exhausted at the bottom of the boat, when



his companion, scenting a meal, at once smote him on the head with an iron belaying pin, cutting him badly. Horrible as it seems, the blood which flowed from the wound was caught in a tin, and drank by the sufferer himself and two of his companions. After this, doubtless feeling greatly invigorated, they fought and bit each other, only desisting when completely exhausted; they recommenced the mad *mêlée*, however, at the earliest possible moment, the boy, Horner, quietly keeping watch all the while with his protector, Webster.

On the thirty-first day in the boat the unfortunate fellows were picked up 600 miles from land by the ship *City of Manchester*; they were very kindly treated, as you may imagine, and taken to Calcutta. Webster, by his conduct, was undoubtedly the means of saving the lives of all in the boat.

Sergeant Cole, the next recipient of a First Class Medal, encountered a peril as great as mortal man could be called upon to confront. He came to these offices and told his own story with the modesty of a true hero.

It seems that on January 24th, 1885, at two o'clock in the afternoon, Police-constable Cole (as he then was) was on duty in the crypt of the Houses of Parliament. At this time the dynamite scare was at its height, and all police officers were warned daily by their superiors to be on the alert for suspicious characters with bags and parcels. Cole had just gone his rounds at the top of the staircase, and had descended, when two lady visitors to the Houses of Parliament came to him in a state of subdued anxiety, and exclaimed: "Policeman, there's one of your mats on fire!" Cole made no answer, but immediately went to the bottom of the staircase, which was just round a slight curve, only a few feet from where he was standing,

and which spot he had passed less than a minute previously.

This gallant officer is able to this day to give the minutest description of the appalling sight that met his fascinated gaze. The thing that was lying on the ground, and which the ladies took to be a mat, was a pad of oily felt, about 2ft. long and 18in. wide. It contained sixteen pockets, and in each was a cake of dynamite, covered with paper of a peculiar hue, and kept in its place by a piece of bent wire. In the centre were the detonator and fuse; and from the latter shot a little column of fire in spasmodic jerks, after the manner of a squib. The pad was fitted with boot-webbing and buttons, evidently designed to be buttoned round the miscreant's waist, beneath his overcoat. The moment Cole saw this "pad" he realized its awful import.

"Good God, it's dynamite!" he screamed. "Clear out; get away." There were not many people to get away, except his two terrified informants and a few stray visitors; but they "cleared out" with amazing alacrity. Stooping down, the constable tried to pinch the fuse out from the centre, but could not succeed. He then folded the pad in two and, taking it up, he sped swiftly into Westminster Hall, but in a few seconds a new

development had taken place. The fuse had evidently burnt low, and set fire to other parts of the pad, which began to melt, causing a quantity of oily, pitchy matter to run down on to the officer's hands. Cole immediately dropped the thing, and here his story ends. "I only remember a great flash of light," he said; "no sound—nothing!"

The sequel is well known to Colonel Sir Vivian D. Majendie and Sir Frederick Abel. The dynamite exploded the moment it touched the floor. A great gap was blown in the massive floor of Westminster Hall, precipi-



EX-POLICE-SERGEANT COLE.

From a Photo. by Debenham & Gould, Bournemouth.



tating poor Cole into the basement beneath, which was about 14ft. deep. The large stained-glass window, too, at the St. Stephen's end of the Hall, was drawn in by the concussion and shattered to pieces.

must infallibly have wrought terrific havoc in the Palace of Westminster had not Cole removed the pad from the spot where it was placed. The clock at the top of the staircase leading into St. Stephen's Hall stopped



"I ONLY REMEMBER A GREAT FLASH OF LIGHT."

When the unfortunate man was found he had not a vestige of clothing upon him. His boots, however, were intact. When the *débris* was sifted, the constable's belt turned up in four pieces, but not an atom of his helmet. His uniform, however, was found here and there in fragmentary strips. The heroic officer's body had literally to be dug out from beneath the huge masses of stone that had fallen through. He had sustained frightful injuries. His skull was broken, so also were four ribs; and his internal injuries were of a peculiarly horrible nature. Moreover, he became stone deaf.

But, you will ask, how did Cole know it was dynamite? Well, about two months before this outrage a bag of dynamite had been found at the back of Nelson's Column, in Trafalgar Square, and the same evening Police-constable Cole was shown some of the cakes, probably for his future guidance in such matters.

Cole hovered between life and death for months. To this day he suffers from periodical disorders in his head (especially during the winter months); and he is obliged to wear elaborate surgical appliances.

According to the experts, the explosion

at exactly eight minutes past two; and—*mirabile dictu*—another dynamite explosion occurred at the Tower of London at the very same moment. Burton was the author of the Westminster Hall outrage, and Cunningham of the explosion at the Tower; both were sentenced by Mr. Justice Hawkins to penal servitude for the term of their natural lives. The Albert Medal was presented to Sergeant Cole by the then Home Secretary, Sir William Harcourt, almost on the very spot where the explosion took place, and in the presence of a great representative gathering of the Metropolitan Police.

Another "First Class man" is Captain Peter Sharp, whose photograph is reproduced on the next page. He is, or was, master of the *Annabella Clark*, of Ardrossan. The story is as follows:—

On the 20th of November, 1878, at about 5.45 in the evening, a fire suddenly broke out on board the French ship *Mélanie*, which was lying in the River Adour, at Boucan, near Bayonne, loaded with 500 barrels of petroleum, of which forty were on deck. The *Mélanie* was thirty mètres from the quay of the port. Her crew consisted of four men.





CAPTAIN PETER SHARP.  
From a Photo. by R. J. Robinson, Ardrossan.

Immediately after the fire was noticed, an awful mass of flame shot up from the main hatch, and the vessel quivered from stem to stern from the explosion of some of the barrels. Her seams at once opened, and the blazing petroleum poured out into the river, spreading a belt of fire all round the ship; in other words, not only was the *Mélanie* herself a raging furnace, but the river all round her was also on fire. The master and a seaman jumped overboard, but the mate remained, hoping to save his son, who was lying helpless under some heavy furniture that had fallen upon him. Captain Peter Sharp, whose vessel was lying close by in the river, some 80yds. from the *Mélanie*, at once put off in a small dingey to the mate's assistance, accompanied by a seaman named John McIntosh. These two propelled their boat through the blazing river to the doomed vessel, picked up the seamen, who had by this time jumped overboard, and also took the mate into their own boat. The rescue accomplished, Captain Sharp hurried away

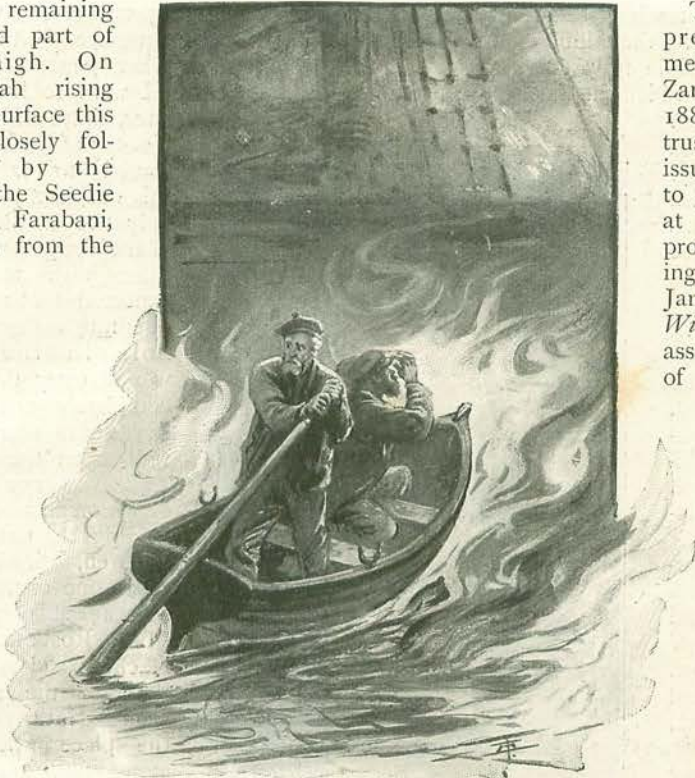
from the scorching proximity of the *Mélanie*—or what remained of her—but nevertheless he had sustained very severe injuries. It was at first feared that he would lose the sight of one eye, and McIntosh the use of his hands. Captain Sharp's face was dreadfully disfigured, but rather than put his owners to any expense he refused to go into hospital, as he was advised to do, and put to sea almost at once, bound for Seville.

While consulting the records at the Government Offices, I was somewhat puzzled to read that the Queen had been graciously pleased to confer the Albert Medal of the First Class on Farabani, Seedie Tindal, serving in H.M. ship, the *Wild Swan*. I have since learnt that "Seedie" is the generic name given to certain East African native "boys," while "Tindal" was the name given to the boatswain's mate.

The *Wild Swan* chanced to be off the coast of Mozambique in the year 1880, charged with the overhauling of slave dhows. On the 8th of August the vessel numbered among her crew a fugitive slave boy, named Farejallah; and at 11.45 on that day several of the Seedies were going on shore to wash their clothes, when a flannel garment belonging to Farejallah fell into the water. The boy was ordered to go into the punt to pick up the flannel, but instead of doing this he went on to a landing-stage alongside and then dived into the sea. The lieutenant in charge was immediately afterwards heard calling loudly for a rifle; and it was then seen that a monstrous shark had just glided under the black boy in the water and seized him by the leg, dragging him down, struggling, for about six feet. It is here necessary to explain that the smallest detail of this awful affair was perfectly visible from the deck of the warship, so beautifully smooth and clear was the sea. When Farejallah rose to the surface it was seen that his leg had been bitten off at the knee, and the water around was tinged with blood. The monster again turned on its side, and coming up once more under the unfortunate slave, dragged him down another ten feet, tearing



off his remaining leg and part of the thigh. On Farejallah rising to the surface this time, closely followed by the shark, the Seedie Tindal, Farabani, jumped from the



"PROPELLED THEIR BOAT THROUGH THE BLAZING RIVER."

netting into the water and brought the unfortunate boy to the surface, swimming with him until the punt was reached.

The captain of the *Wild Swan* states in his report that what makes this a peculiarly gallant deed is the fact that Farabani saw the whole of the horrid catastrophe from the first seizure of the boy; and, furthermore, that when he jumped into the water, not only the attacking shark, but three other monstrous and fearful brutes were seen close to the ship, attracted, no doubt, by the blood.

One authority, who knows the spot very well, says that Farabani's escape was little short of a miracle. The same distinguished officer adds that the sharks at this place have been known to capsize the native canoes; and he never knew anything thrown into the water that had not been immediately torn to pieces by enormous ground sharks.

The senior officer in charge of the station, Admiral Jones, recommended the granting of a pecuniary reward in this case, in addition to the medal, sagaciously pointing out that the latter would not be so thoroughly appreciated by the recipient or understood by the other Seedies.

Vol. xi.—86.

The account of the presentation of the medal is dated from Zanzibar, January 21st, 1881. The officer intrusted with this duty issued a general *memo* to the ships assembled at Zanzibar; and he proceeded on the morning of the 20th of January on board the *Wild Swan*. He then assembled the Seedies of that ship together, with those of the *London* and *Ruby*, and as many officers and men as could be spared. The medal was then publicly presented to Farabani, together with the additional grant of £20. The Royal Warrant was read and explained to him; and he requested that his grateful thanks

might be conveyed to Her Majesty for the high honour conferred on him, and to the Board of Trade for their handsome present. At the conclusion of the proceedings three cheers were given for Farabani, who signed his mark to the usual receipt form. Unfortunately, the slave boy, Farejallah, died at three o'clock p.m. on the 8th of August, 1880, in the Military Hospital, Mozambique, where he had been removed; he only lingered a few hours after the dreadful occurrence.

The photograph next reproduced is that of Miss Hannah Rosbotham, the only lady who has ever received the Albert Medal. This lady was, and still is, assistant schoolmistress at the Sutton National Schools, St. Helens, Lancashire. On the 14th October, 1881, the stone belfry of the schools was blown down during a terrific gale of wind, and fell through the roof into the infant schoolroom, where nearly 200 children were assembled, causing the death of one and injuring many others. The moment this mass of masonry had fallen, the schoolroom and its gallery were filled with stones, slates, and timber. Whilst others fled for safety, Miss Rosbotham, who at the time



of the accident was teaching elsewhere, deliberately went in among the falling mass and clouds of dust and, while fully conscious of the extreme danger to which she was exposed, remained on the spot until every child had been placed in safety. At the imminent risk of her own life, this heroine of twenty-three removed four infants who were partially covered with the *débris*, and also rescued therefrom a little girl, who was completely buried, and who must inevitably have been suffocated had not such gallantry been displayed.

I extract the following from the report of Mr. James Plews, head master of the Boys' School at Sutton, which report is dated November 22nd, 1881:—

“When the accident happened a complete panic seized the boys, and all rushed to the door. After seeing the door cleared and the boys in a fair way of getting out, I left them to the care of the assistants, and made my way at once to the infant school. I found the door completely blocked with the mass of children, some on the floor and others climbing over them, but all wildly trying to get out. I at once cleared the door, passed the children out uninjured, and then went into the school. I found the room filled with a cloud of dust, and saw through it Miss Hannah Rosbotham, then in the act of clearing away the slates

and timber and lifting out of the wreck a little girl, completely covered with slates, timber, bricks, and broken plaster. All this time, and indeed after I went to her assistance, slates and broken

pieces of rafter continued to fall; but this was, in my opinion, only the smallest part of the danger, as I and those with me fully expected that the gale, obtaining access at the hole in the roof, would carry the latter completely away, and drive in the gable wall upon the gallery. This was not a case of a woman who, being in peril with the children, instinctively seizes one of them and rushes out of danger. Miss Rosbotham was teaching a class at the time of the accident some distance from the place where the stone fell, and must have gone deliberately into the cloud of dust and among the falling *débris*, and, what is more, stayed there until that all the little ones were out of danger.”

After this occurrence, the people in the neighbourhood, desiring to mark their appreciation of Miss Rosbotham's conduct, subscribed and raised about £13, with which it was intended to purchase for her some useful present. Mr. James Plews writes to say that he is still the head master of the Boys' School, and Miss Rosbotham also remains assistant mistress; but she is now Mrs. James Parr.



MISS HANNAH ROSBOTHAM.  
(The Only Lady Recipient of an Albert Medal.)  
From a Photo by Vandyke, Liverpool.



## Heroes of the Albert Medal.

BY L. S. LEWIS.

### II.



MOST extraordinary are the details of the gallant action for which an Albert Medal of the First Class was conferred on Mr. Thomas Averett Whistler, first mate of the ship *Ennerdale*, of Liverpool.

Early in the morning of the 17th of December, 1885, when the *Ennerdale* was rounding Cape Horn, an apprentice, named Duncan McCallum, was sent aloft to loose the sky-sail. The *Ennerdale*, I should mention, was one of Messrs. J. D. Newton's "Dale" line of steamers.

Presently, as the captain was descending from the poop, he saw a heavy body strike the main rigging a little above the bulwark, and rebound into the sea. That "heavy body" was McCallum, and the ship being almost under full sail at the time, he was carried rapidly astern.

Immediately after this tragic occurrence, H. S. Pochin, an able seaman, leaped overboard after the apprentice, but the latter sank before Pochin could reach him. All things considered, the rescuer's position was now pretty serious, and fearing lest he should be seized with cramp before a boat could come to his assistance, he hailed the ship, asking for a lifebuoy to be thrown to him; at the same moment the master, Captain Gunson, called all hands to man a boat. The first mate, Mr. Whistler, who had been asleep in his berth, ran on deck and heard Pochin's hail. Calling to the boatswain to heave him a lifebuoy, he at once sprang overboard, secured the lifebuoy which was thrown to him, and succeeded in reaching Pochin.

Vol. xii.—5.

This poor man was already on the point of sinking, but with the help of the lifebuoy Whistler was able to keep him up.

Meanwhile, considerable delay had occurred in the dispatch of the boat—for one thing, her lashings had been secured very firmly for the passage round Cape Horn, and when she was launched, so many men crowded into her that she capsized; which says much for the popularity of Whistler. The boat was soon righted, however, and

dispatched in charge of the third mate and two seamen. All this time the two men in the water were rapidly becoming exhausted; and they had made up their minds to abandon the lifebuoy and strike out side by side for the ship, when they were confronted by a new, weird danger.

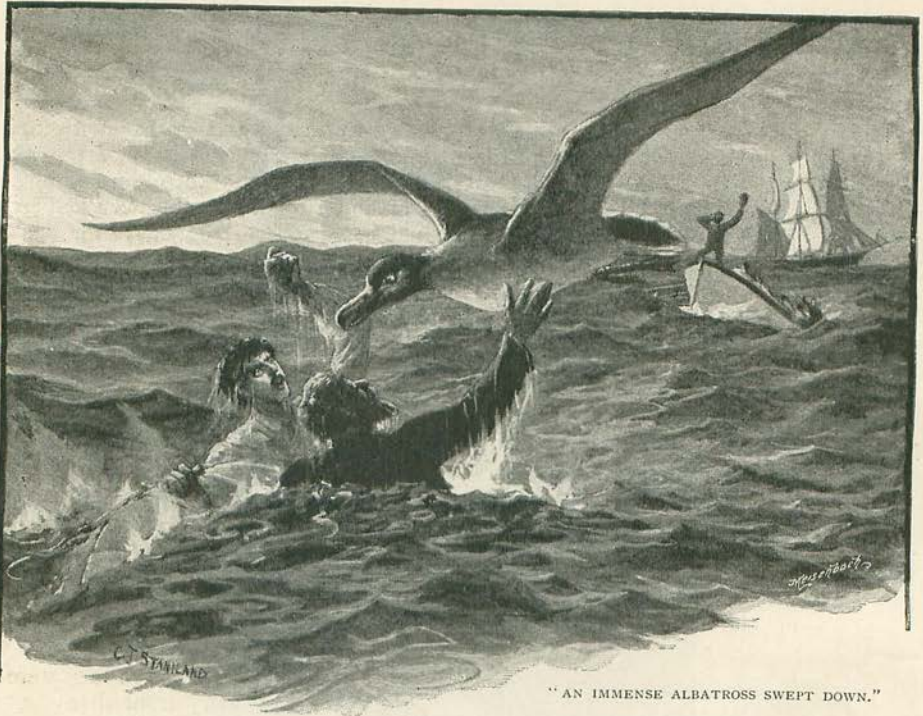
An immense albatross swept down majestically on Pochin and Whistler, and, after hovering round quite close to their heads, alighted on the water just beyond arm's length. There the great bird remained, staring them in the face, and evidently only waiting until they had become a little more exhausted. In a few minutes, however, the boat reached the spot, and its crew drew their perishing



MR. THOMAS AVERETT WHISTLER.  
From a Photo. by Fredericks, New York.

shipmates out of the water. Directly they were lifted into the boat, both men became insensible, and Whistler was delirious for some time afterwards. Amazing as it may seem, the two men had remained in the piercingly cold water for upwards of forty minutes. The expectant albatross was greatly disappointed at the turn events had taken, and had to be driven off with a boat-hook. It was a remarkable fact that the attack of this bird contributed not a little to





"AN IMMENSE ALBATROSS SWEEP DOWN."

the saving of the lives of both Whistler and Pochin. This was because their vigorous efforts to beat off the savage bird materially helped to keep their blood in circulation, thereby averting the fatal cramp.

But, you will ask, how about the unfortunate McCallum? He was seen no more, having probably been killed by striking the sheer pole in his terrible fall. The thick iron bar in the rigging was afterwards found to be bent into a semi-circle by the force of the collision with the poor apprentice's body. It is gratifying to learn that Pochin, too, received the Albert Medal.

The next photograph reproduced is that of Mr. William Hinton, a much-respected officer of Her Majesty's Inland Revenue, formerly stationed at Halesowen, but now living at Lancaster. On the 13th of January, 1881, a fire broke out on the premises of Mr. John Booth, an ironmonger, of Halesowen. Of course, a crowd three or four hundred strong

gathered in the street in front of the shop, feeling sure of a first-rate spectacle, by reason of the large quantity of oil that was stored in the basement.

Presently a rumour passed round that there was quite a lot of gunpowder in the place; whereupon Mr. Hinton, after ascertaining its whereabouts from Mr. Booth, informed the superintendent of police of the

presence of the gunpowder. This official remarked that it was quite impossible for any human being to enter the shop until the fire was got under. Not being satisfied with this assurance, Mr. Hinton at once entered the blazing oil warehouse, amidst dense volumes of black smoke, and in a few minutes reappeared with a large drawer containing several 1lb. canisters of gunpowder. This interesting find he at once took to Mr. Booth, who was observing things from the street. Our hero was then further informed by the storekeeper that a large quantity of blasting powder still remained.



MR. WILLIAM HINTON.

From a Photo. by J. Davis, Lancaster.



At this time the fire was blazing with tremendous fury, and Mr. Hinton was earnestly persuaded—nay, almost compelled—to abandon his mad intention of making another trip into the warehouse. Every moment a frightful explosion was expected which would bring down the whole block of three houses, and work terrible havoc among the crowd, who would not be dispersed until they had seen the last of the fire.

Once more Mr. Hinton dashed into the raging furnace, and after some time returned with 25lb. of blasting powder contained in a big tin canister, the outside of which was quite hot and blistered by the flames, which were then *in actual contact with it*. By this time the heat was so intense as to melt the solder on a number of articles which were a greater distance from the fire than the canister of powder. There cannot be the least doubt that in a few seconds the whole 25lb. of blasting powder would have exploded. As it was, the tin envelope burned Mr. Hinton's hands.

Nothing can give one a better idea of the high standard of the Albert Medal than the fact that only a Second Class was conferred upon Mr. William J. Bridges, quartermaster of Her Majesty's ship *Thunderer*. This man was at his station in the shell-room when a frightful explosion took place which shook the warship as though she had been rammed. After the explosion occurred, the shell-room was immediately filled with smoke, and many burning fragments of clothing, etc., were blown down into it. The magazine was also filled with smoke and reported to be on fire. The scene must have been terrible. All lights were put out, and the cries of the wounded were distracting. The prevailing impression was that one of the filled common shells had exploded, and all the men stationed in the room made their escape as speedily as possible—with the single exception of Bridges, who, taking off his woollen comforter, wrapped it round the burning fragments and brought them up on the flats. The heroic man afterwards went down again to make further search for any smouldering material that might have found its way among the projectiles. The medal



"BRIDGES WRAPPED HIS COMFORTER ROUND THE BURNING FRAGMENTS."

was presented to the gallant quartermaster on the *China Station*.

The Mayor of Gateshead presented a Second Class Albert Medal to Edward Scullion, at the Gateshead Town Hall, on the 23rd October, 1886. Scullion's portrait is reproduced here, and for it we are indebted to the Town Clerk of Gateshead. This is a very peculiar case. On the 9th of August, 1886, a boy named Lennon, and two other boys, were playing near the air-shaft of an unused sulphuretted hydrogen sewer connected with the chemical works of the Newcastle and Gateshead Chemical Company. Suddenly Lennon was overcome by the vapour, and a few moments later fell into the "sump" below. Heedless of the deadly danger, several workmen endeavoured to save the boy, who was, however, suffocated. In attempting to rescue him, two men, respectively named Quinn and Swinburne, also lost their lives. This





MR. EDWARD SCULLION.  
From a Photograph.

tragedy was enacted in a very few minutes. Scullion then came upon the scene, and after having covered his mouth with a muzzle, such as is worn by workers among chemicals, he descended the shaft and succeeded in getting a rope round the dead man Quinn, whose body was then drawn to the surface. Although almost stupefied from the fumes, Scullion descended a second time into the deadly vapours and brought up the body of the boy.

The unfortunate rescuers, Quinn and Swinburne, as also Scullion, were artisans in the Chemical Works, and, therefore, well aware of the frightful risks they ran from the poisonous gases. As a matter of fact, the action of Scullion was one of deliberate self-sacrificing intrepidity, inasmuch as, fully aware of the danger, he took every possible precaution, and this with the knowledge that several other workmen flatly refused to attempt the rescue.

Mr. Scullion has on three previous occasions saved life from drowning. On one occasion he jumped in after a lad who had fallen between the quay-wall and a tier of vessels lying alongside, and finding he could not make headway against the current in such a confined space, he grasped the drowning lad and dived underneath the vessel to the open water on the other side.

The next recipient of an Albert Medal,

whose photograph is shown here, is Captain Pulteney Malcolm, of the 4th Goorkhas. This case is quite unique, and the details are as follows: On the 10th of June, 1887, Lieutenant Trevor, of the West Yorkshire Regiment, was returning to Dalhousie in the Himalayas from the Khajiar meeting, in company with a brother officer, Lieutenant Towsy. At that part of the road known as the "Woodsheds," Trevor took a fresh pony—one that had a habit of jumping and sidling along the road. Of course, it was only a "road" by courtesy, being in reality nothing more than a narrow ledge, with the sheer face of the mountains on one side and a truly appalling precipice on the other. At this point it may, perhaps, be advisable to let Lieutenant Trevor's companion take up the story:—

"It's a funny thing, but poor Trevor's pony chose the vilest part of the road for his *haut école* performance. The little beast commenced sidling, got his hind legs over, and in an instant pony and rider were falling down a sheer dip of about 70ft. The whole of the precipice cuts down between 400ft. and 500ft., but the first part is the worst.

"I was leading my own pony about five yards in front of Trevor, when I looked round and saw this shocking accident happen. I then shouted for help, and started back along the road to the 'Woodsheds' to get assistance. About seventy yards back I met Malcolm riding. He dismounted, and we went back to the place together. I showed



CAPTAIN PULTENEY MALCOLM.  
From a Photo. by William Clark, Southport.

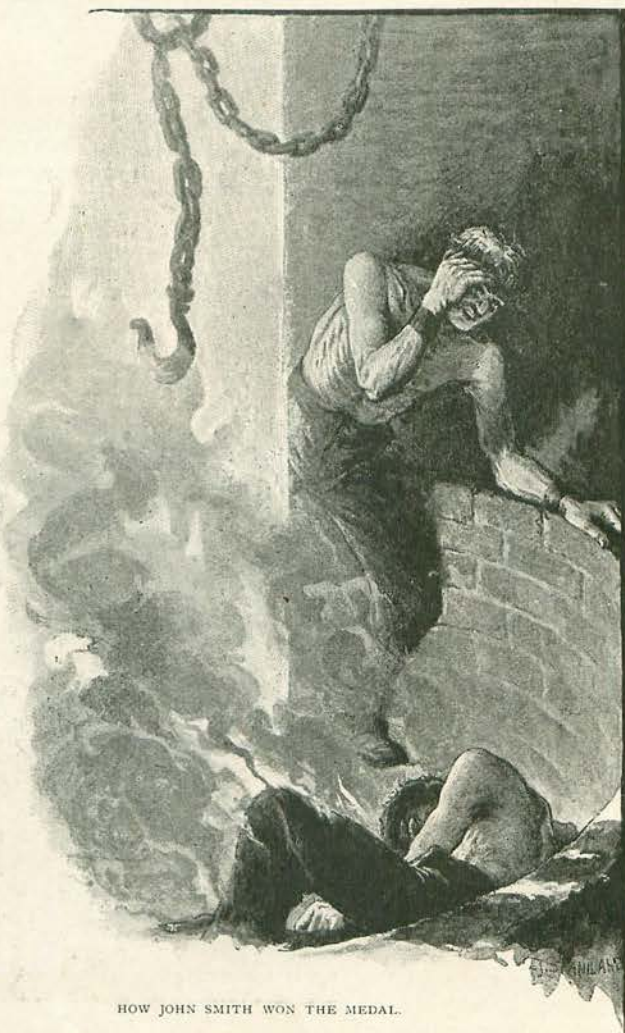


him the spot, and said that we must get down somehow, though I thought that particular place impracticable. Malcolm remarked that it was impossible for me to go down, but that he would try it, as he was an experienced climber. I took his boots off for him, and then hurried back myself to the 'Woodsheds,' where I knew there were several people assembled, and also some of our own fellows. Presently we all returned to the place together, and found that Malcolm had got about half-way down the face of the precipice, travelling very slowly. He eventually got to where poor Trevor lay about twenty minutes from the time he started. Malcolm found the unfortunate officer lying on his right side, face downwards, and just moving his head up and down. He turned him over and supported his head. Soon after this some whisky and a rope were let down, and Malcolm gave the injured man two mouthfuls of the spirit. Lieutenant Trevor immediately raised his arm and head slightly, and then sank back. He must have died then, as he never moved again. By this time three coolies had joined Malcolm, who, with their assistance, tied Trevor's body across two beams, which had probably fallen from above, and then conveyed it 200ft. lower down. Malcolm was there joined, first by Dr. Cunningham and afterwards by myself. A few minutes later we took the body up to the road above. I should think that Trevor was found at least 300ft. down the precipice. The poor pony was literally torn to pieces. I will spare you the description; but all the animal's legs were off, and his neck was broken in several places.

"There cannot be the least doubt that Malcolm went down that terrible precipice at the risk of his own life, and when I looked at the place afterwards from below, it seemed miraculous how he managed to get down alive at all. His feet were terribly cut about, and it must have been a most painful as well as dangerous climb for him."

One of the most extraordinary rescues conceivable was that for

which a humble individual named John Smith received the Second Class Albert Medal. This particular John Smith was a labourer in the Siemens department of Messrs. Thomas Firth and Sons, of Sheffield. About eight o'clock on Saturday night, May 18th, 1889, as the workmen were about to remove from the casting-pit a red-hot steel ingot, weighing twenty-six tons, an awful accident happened. One of the men, Benjamin Stanley, was adjusting the chain when his foot slipped, and he fell down into the pit, a distance of 15ft., quite close to the great column of red-hot steel. The wretched man lay stunned by the fall, and was already ablaze when Smith, realizing the terrible position of his comrade, seized a ladder and, thrusting it into an adjoining pit, hurried down



HOW JOHN SMITH WON THE MEDAL.



with hardly any clothing on. So great was his hurry, in fact, that he encountered an awkward fall through the ladder suddenly turning round. Recovering himself in an instant, Smith rushed to the rescue, and stepping into the inner pit speedily picked up his mate and succeeded in carrying him into the next pit, whence he was able by the assistance of other workmen to get him up the ladder.

Now, I should explain that the inner pit into which Smith boldly dashed was the place which immediately surrounded the bottom of the great steel ingot—a depth down of 3ft. and a width from the wall to the ingot of only 2ft. 3in. Poor Smith was horribly burnt, and was carried in a dazed state to the infirmary. His life was, however, preserved, but Stanley died three days after the accident.

Subsequently a purse was presented to this hero, containing contributions from every department in the works; this amounted to £20 17s. 9d., and to this the firm added a cheque for £25.

In order to make the extraordinary daring involved in this rescue still more obvious, I would point out that the man Stanley was dragged from a space *less than a yard wide*, having on one side a wall, and on the other a mighty mass of white-hot steel.

On September 11th, 1878, a truly terrific explosion of fire-damp occurred in the Abercarn Colliery, Monmouth, whereby 260 persons perished. On this occasion the greatest possible gallantry was shown in saving about ninety lives, and consequently there were two recommendations for the "First Class" and seven for the "Second Class" Albert Medal. Photographs of



MR. HENRY DAVIES.  
From a Photo. by J. Shirvington & Son.

of Henry Davies, who, after having been down the Abercarn pit all the afternoon in company with those recommended for the "Second Class" Medal, actually volunteered to descend the Cwmcarn pit, a shaft two miles distant. This further mission was undertaken with the object of conveying to the other explorers, who had attempted to enter the workings from the other side, an order to come out, because the subterranean fires were still burning fiercely, and a large quantity of gas pouring out of the workings rendered a second explosion

imminent. Had this potential calamity happened, it would assuredly have resulted in the destruction of every man below ground. Davies, after having been deserted by two men who refused to accompany him further, pursued his course alone in the pit for 500yds. or 600yds., though he must have felt that there was little or no chance of his coming out alive again.

John Harris, the other "First Class" man in this case, went down the pit with those recommended for the "Second Class" Medal. Having descended to a depth of about 800ft., the progress of the cage was



MR. JOHN HARRIS.  
From a Photo. by J. Shirvington & Son.

the "First Class" men are here reproduced.

The force of the explosion did great damage to the roadway and to the bottom of the shaft, setting the timber on fire in several places. Notwithstanding the terrible suspense, the blazing shaft, clouds of dust, and the imminent risk of another explosion, these men descended without hesitation, and they remained long at their heroic and humane work of rescue, not reascending the shaft until they had satisfied themselves that no one was left alive below.

The first portrait is that



arrested by the damaged state of the shaft ; whereupon Harris got off the cage and, sliding down the guide-rope, reached the bottom. Here he remained many hours, knowing full well that any moment might be his last, until all who were alive had reached the cage by his assistance, and were taken to the surface in safety. Many of these, by the way, were badly burnt and otherwise injured, and must certainly have perished had it not been for Harris's heroic exertions. On this particular occasion the Earl of Beaconsfield recommended Her Majesty to grant the medals. Such was the magnitude of the Abercarn disaster, that the relief fund produced £61,300.

Yet another mining disaster, but of a very different sort, resulted in the reception of the Albert Medal by William Dodd, under-manager of the Diglake Collieries, in Staffordshire.

On Monday, 14th January, 1895, this colliery was flooded with water from the old workings of an adjoining mine. The water burst in like a cataract with great suddenness and violence, and with a sound like thunder. At the time about 240 men were at work in various parts of the pit. Much as I should like to give the full details of the extraordinary heroism manifested in this case, exigencies of space compel me to summarize the facts.

Mr. Dodd was, at the time of the disaster, in the office at the bottom of No. 2 shaft. The first thing he did was to point out to many of the miners the nearest way to a place of safety. Here I should mention that Mr. Dodd's very perfect knowledge of the topography of the mine proved of incalculable value. He next went up the main dip, down which the water was sweeping in tremendous volume and with terrific force. On his way Mr. Dodd had to creep through an air-crossing about 2ft. wide, and having passed through this, he heard several boys screaming. Looking up, he saw four lads about 6yds. away, who had given themselves up for lost. There was a deep pool lying between him and them, so he shouted to the

boys to plunge in, and he would catch them as they were carried past by the rapid current. The first one he seized by the hair as he floated by, and the others he also caught and landed safe. The awful nature of the situation may be grasped on learning that at this time the water was *within 12in. of the roof* in that part of the mine.

After having directed the boys to a place of safety, Mr. Dodd was himself in considerable danger, being up to his armpits in water. To prevent himself being carried down by the force of the current, he assisted himself along by the signal-bell wires, which were fastened to the side of the dip by means of staples. After he had gone a short distance one of these staples came out, and Dodd lost his hold of the wire. He was instantly swept off his feet and washed down the dip. After he had been carried some twenty or thirty yards he grasped at a piece of timber and saved himself, but was confronted by a new and even more formidable danger. Immense balks of timber that had been loosened by the rush of the water were carried down by the current like battering-rams, and poor Dodd had no light whereby he could see to avoid them. However, the heroic under-manager struggled from one part of the workings to another with marvellous gallantry, directing and saving men at every turn. At last,

he himself was engaged in a fierce struggle for life, trying to ascend a ladder in the face of a current of water that raced down like a mill-stream. When he *did* reach the surface, he fell unconscious into the arms of one of the men, but soon recovered and actually asked for more volunteers ; then, accompanied by two miners, named Bolton and Carter, he descended once more. For more than six hours Mr. Dodd had been battling against icy-cold torrents, with the result that his splendid bravery saved more than thirty miners.

The accompanying photograph is that of Captain W. J. Nutman, late master of the steamship *Aidar*, of Liverpool (1,583 tons), who is the very latest recipient of the "First



MR. WILLIAM DODD.  
From a Photo. by H. J. Gover & Co., Haulley.



Class" Medal. The details of this most interesting case were forwarded to the Queen during Her Majesty's recent trip to the Riviera.

At 2 a.m. on the 19th of January last, while the steamship *Staffordshire*, of Liverpool, was on a voyage from Marseilles to Port Said, signals of distress were observed from the *Aidar*, and the *Staffordshire* immediately went to her assistance.

The *Aidar*, it appeared, was on her way from Odessa to Marseilles, and the wreck occurred in the Mediterranean, near Messina.

As the *Aidar* was found to be sinking fast, three of the *Staffordshire's* life-boats were at once launched. But their crews experienced immense difficulty in the work of saving life

owing to the darkness and the heavy sea. Three times was the *Staffordshire* manœuvred round to windward, and each time the life-boat was dispatched the rescuing crew were in serious peril of their own lives. During one visit, the boat was badly injured by one of the *Aidar's* davits, which was just above the water. At 6.10 a.m. the only persons left on the wreck were Captain Nutman and an injured and helpless fireman, whom he was endeavouring to save, and whom he absolutely refused to abandon. The steamer was now rapidly settling down, and as it

was no longer safe to remain near her, the officer in charge of the rescuing party from the *Staffordshire* asked Nutman for a final answer—would he leave his helpless charge and save himself? He would not; he persisted in remaining with the injured man, choosing almost certain death rather than leave him to his fate. Even the passengers tried hard to induce the captain to come away, but he would not. The fireman seemed powerless and paralyzed with fear, making no effort to save himself beyond clinging to the broken bridge, then down in the water, as the vessel was on her beam ends. As the *Staffordshire's* life-boat returned each time, Captain Nutman would say: "Pull away with those people and come back for me afterwards." It is necessary to explain that the boat could not

come quite close to the sinking ship, simply because no one knew the moment when the latter might founder and suck down with her anything that chanced to be floating in the vicinity; moreover, there was a terrific sea.

At last, after having given Captain Nutman many chances of life, the men in the rescuing boats were obliged to pull away reluctantly, and immediately afterwards, at 6.17 a.m., the *Aidar* gave one or two heavy lurches and then foundered. Long after this the *Staffordshire's* life-boat returned to the spot, its crew perhaps animated by vague hopes, and the officer commanding it was amazed to behold Captain Nutman clinging to the bottom of an upturned boat, still grasping the now unconscious

fireman. Another half-hour elapsed before the boat could approach, but eventually this hero and his precious charge were picked up and taken on board the *Staffordshire*.

In all twenty-four persons were saved, one only, a boy, being drowned. This was the cabin boy, who was washed overboard during the night and not seen after 12.30 a.m.

Colonel Sir Vivian D. Majendie, the well-known explosives expert at the Home Office, interested himself very much in this case, and obtained a number of facts about it. He had a conversation with

Captain Nutman himself, who came from Port Said in the same ship with him. Sir Vivian gathered that the fireman was much too injured to make any effort to save himself, and if left by Captain Nutman he must have inevitably perished.

Another incident. There was a German passenger on board the *Aidar* who was so paralyzed with horror at the aspect of things that he could not be persuaded to jump from the ship into one of the rescuing boats; and he, too, must have been lost had not Captain Nutman, with great determination, taken him up and dropped him into the water. He was then obliged to struggle to one of the boats, but as he had a life-buoy on, and a boat was not far away, this cost him very little trouble. Captain Nutman likewise received a silver medal from the Committee of Lloyd's.



CAPTAIN W. J. NUTMAN.  
From a Photograph.