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## DENNETT'S LIFE-SAVING ROCKETS.

The accompanying series of illustrations show the manner of employing Dennett's rocket in cases of disaster and shipwreck on the sea-coast. This rocket is used extensively on the coasts of Great Britain, the character of which in many parts renders every means that ingenuity can invent for the safety of life imperative. Great Britain is surrounded by stormy seas, and at certain seasons of the year shipwrecks are unfortunately frequent. During every winter, our English papers record many wrecks, attended with loss of life, and from the comments made upon these occurrences, we learn that carelessness, so frequently and so often unjustly charged against the management of our own mercantile marine, is likewise not unknown on the other side of the Atlantic. But the English press has done its work well in fully discussing these matters. Attention is at length greatly directed to the means by which these disasters may be mitigated on the British coasts. We find, on referring to the Wreck Registers presented annually to Parliament, that by far the greater number of shipwrecks arise from preventable causes, such as "bad lookout," "neglect of the lead," "insufficient manning," "rotten gear," "inattention to lights and bearings," "full speed in thick weather," etc., etc. It is also evident that in very many cases whole crews are lost for want a life-boat, and the means of placing her in the water safely and expeditiously. And last, though not least, is another cause, viz., the great facilities which exist for insuring rotten and unseaworthy ships. This is a most serious consideration; for until masters and owners can be brought to understand that it is for their interests individually and collectively, and for the interests of the country at large, that ships should be properly found, navigated and manned, what has been done, and is still doing by philanthropic institutions, must very inadequately meet the case. It is true that life boats on the most approved models, manned by brave and skilful men, are ready to render assistance to wrecked and stranded vessels. It is true that Dennett's rockets and Manby's mortars are placed on the coasts wherever they are thought necessary, in charge of men experienced in their use. It is true that thousands of pounds are spent annually by the Board of Trade, in rewarding individual cases of meritorious exertion, and in maintaining the life-boats and mortars and rockets above referred to; but it is equally true that hundreds of lives are still thrown away, and will continue to be thrown away, until steps have been taken to *prevent* rather than to *cure*.

The government have now earnestly taken in hand the question of harbors of refuge; and such harbors will no doubt tend to abridge the catalogue of wrecks; but still it seems to us that if no ships were allowed clearance at the Customs, unless certified by a British government surveyor as sound, well found, properly manned, and provided with life-boat and gear, more good would be done, and less expense would be incurred, than in afterwards endeavoring to remedy what might have been so easily prevented. This, of course, has no reference to steam vessels carrying passengers, as all such vessels are at present thoroughly examined and certified, both as re-

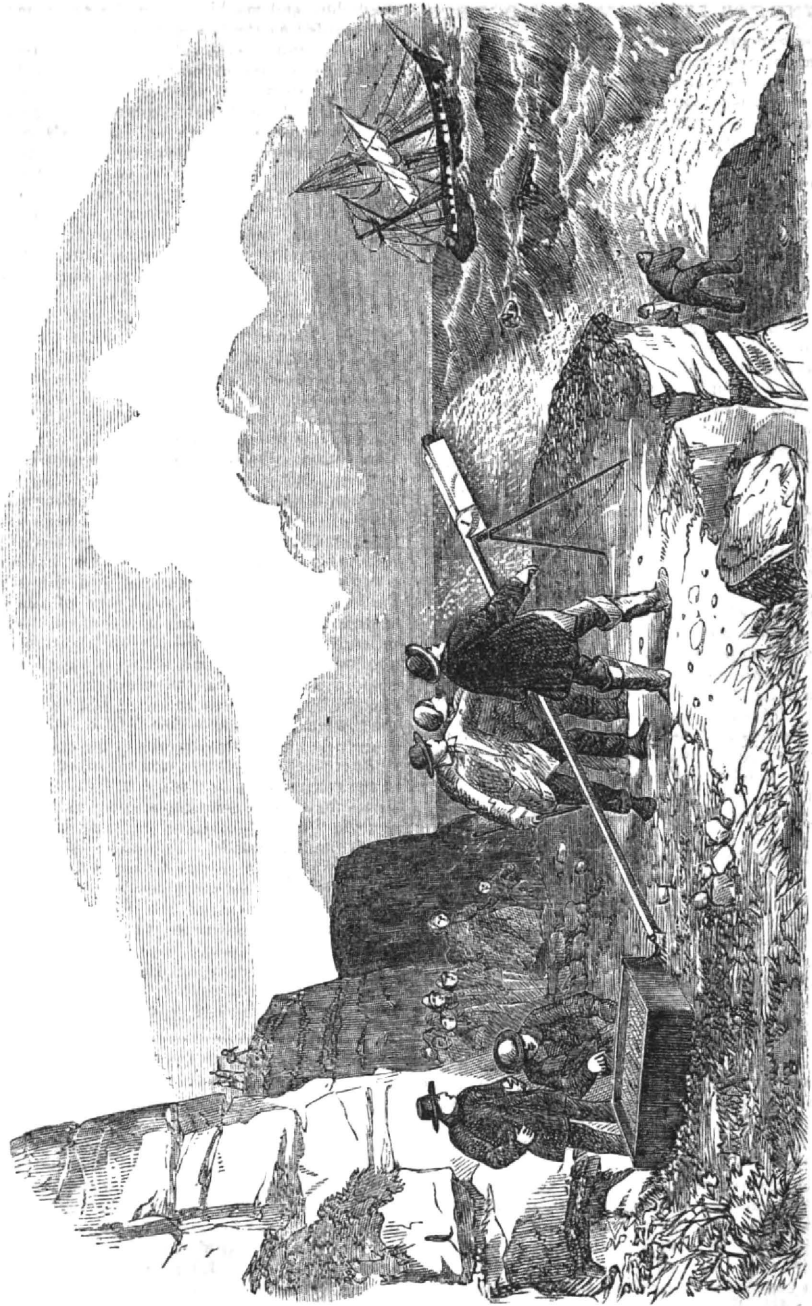
gards hull and machinery, in the same manner as provided by the law of this country.

But to return to the subject of our illustrations. There are at present on the coasts of the United Kingdom about 150 life-boats, well found and fully manned; and 200 coast-guard stations, at which Dennett's rockets and Manby's mortars are maintained by the Board of Trade, at an annual expense, altogether, of between £4000 and £5000. The number of lives saved from shipwreck in 1857 by these means, and by coast-guard boats, luggers and small craft, was 1668; and the number lost in the same time, 532, making a total number of 2200 lives imperilled on the British coasts alone, in one year.

In the rocket apparatus, an ordinary nine-pounder Dennett's rocket, having a thin, light, but strong line attached to it, is fired over the ship in distress. Great care is required in letting out this line; and to prevent its "kinking," it is kept "faked" on pins in a box. When wanted for use, it is either fired out of the box, or off the ground. On the rocket-line being fired over the ship, and secured by the crew, they signal the people on shore that they have done so. A "whip," which is a rope having the ends spliced together (like a jack-towel on a large scale), and rove through a tailed block, is now hauled on board by means of a rocket-line, and the tail of the block is made fast to some part of the ship, as high up as possible. By means of the "whip," or endless rope, the people on shore haul off another and thicker rope, which is made fast on board the ship above the tailed block, and is stretched taut between the ship and shore above the "whip." There is therefore a double communication with the ship, one by the means of the thick rope stretched taut, and the other by means of the endless rope or "whip." The thick rope serves for a block carrying a sling to travel in, and the "whip" serves to pull the sling backwards and forwards. The sling is a circular cork life-buoy, fitted with a pair of short trousers or drawers. These machines were invented by Commander Kieboe, of the Royal Navy, and from him are known as "Kieboe's Breeches." They have saved many lives. Our illustrations show the arrangement of the rocket apparatus, the flight of the rocket-line, and the manner of bringing a shipwrecked crew on shore.

## AUTHORSHIP.

"Never write a book," said Talleyrand; "if you do we shall know all your brains are worth, for as many francs as your book will cost. No man of sense writes books; the emperor writes no books (this was said before Bonaparte was sent to St. Helena), Socrates never wrote a book." While a man is living he will perhaps have more repute for wisdom if he be considered *able* to write but does not, in the same way that, as Bacon says (speaking of conversation), "If you dissemble sometimes that you are thought to know, you shall another time be thought to know that you do not." But traditional wisdom is fugitive, and has no lasting influence, except when a chronicler is found to record the original utterances. Socrates was immortalized by his disciples, especially by Plato, who reproduced the thoughts expressed by his master in public discourses, or is supposed to have done so.



DENNETT'S ROCKETS FOR FIRING THE ROCKET LOFTY LINES.

#### AN EASTERN OPIUM SALOON.

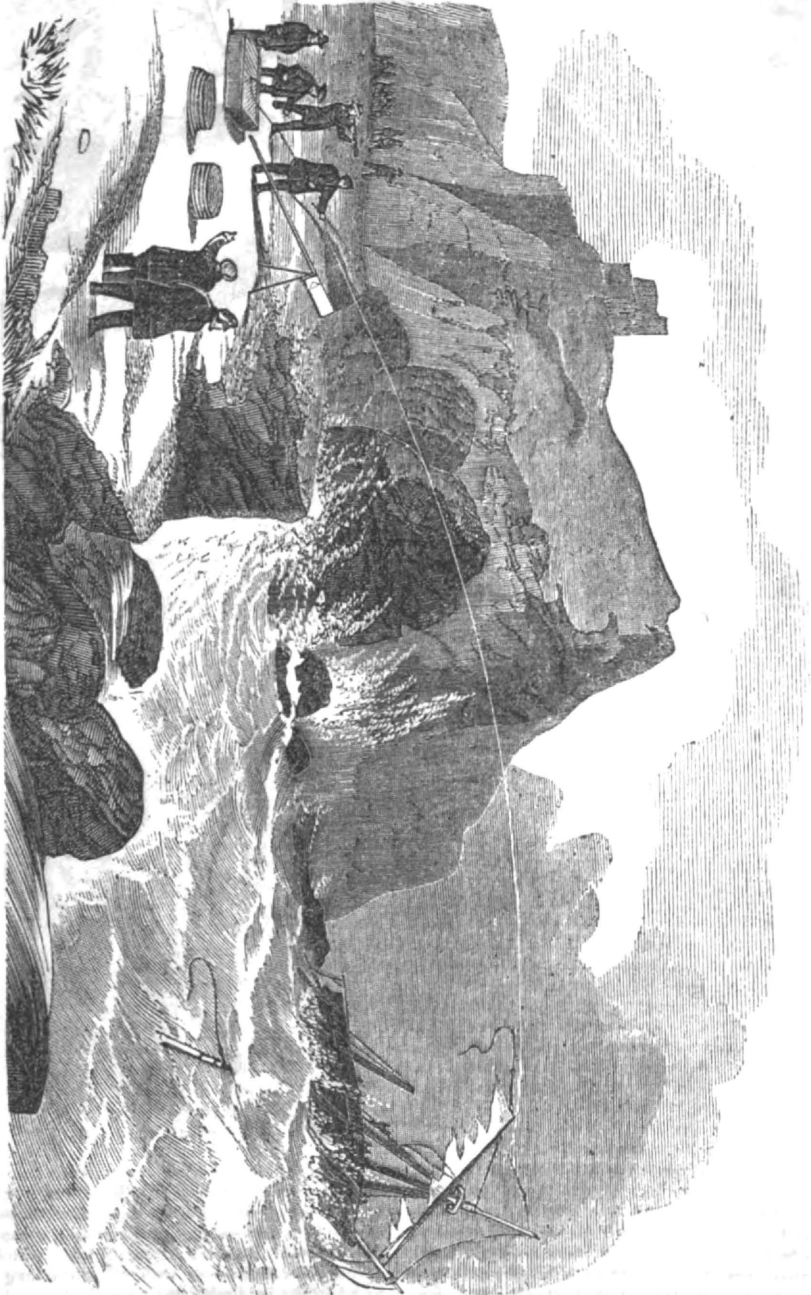
Lord Jocelyn, an English traveller, describes an opium saloon at Singapore: "One of the objects," says he, "which I had the curiosity to visit at Singapore, was the opium smoker in his heaven; and certainly it is a most fearful sight,

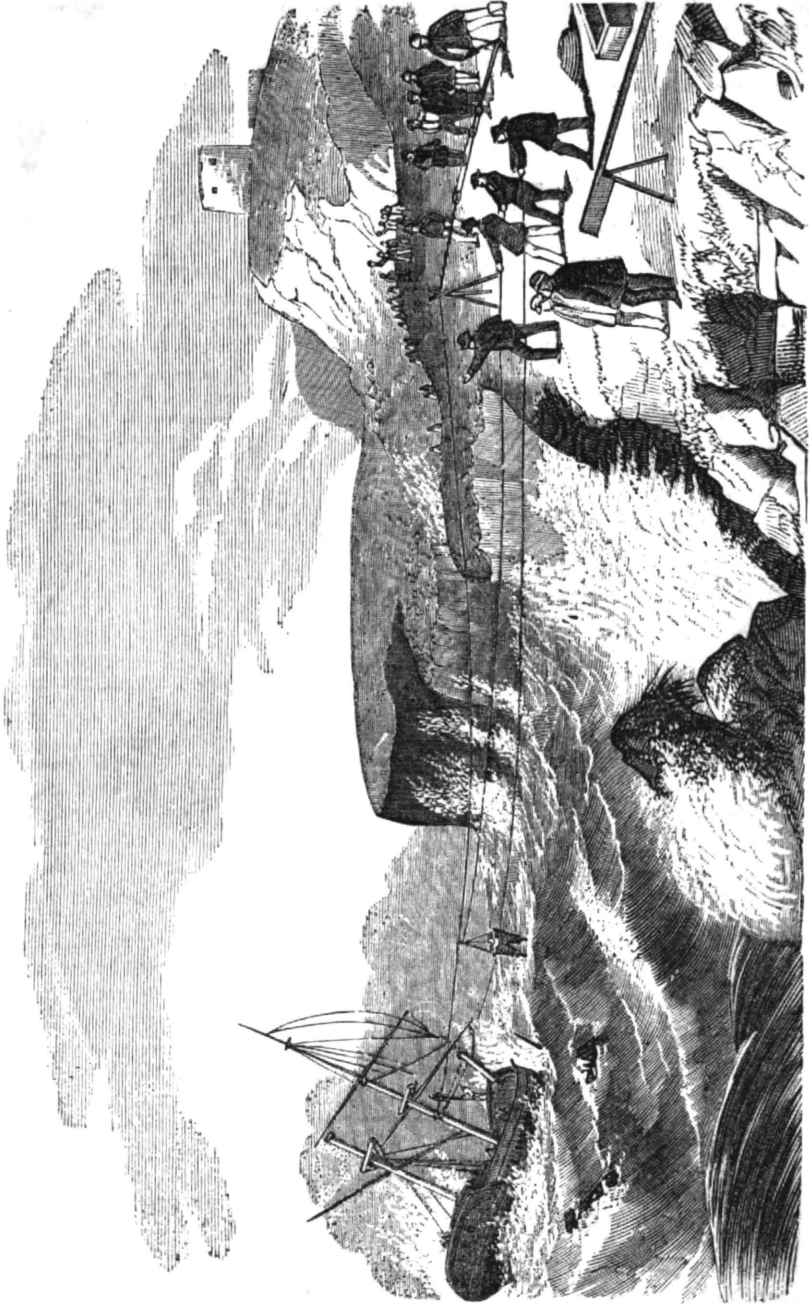
although perhaps not so degrading to the eye as the drunkard from spirits. The idiot smile and death-like stupor of the opium debauchees have something far more awful to the gaze than the bestiality of the latter. The rooms where the Chinese sit and smoke are surrounded by wood-

en couches, with places for the head to rest upon, and generally a side room is devoted to gambling. The pipe is a reed of about an inch in diameter, and the aperture in the bowl for the admission of the opium is not larger than a pin's head. On a beginner one or two pipes will have an effect, but an old stager will continue smoking

for hours. A few days of this fearful luxury, when taken to excess, will impart a pallid and haggard look to the features; and a few months, or even weeks, will change the strong and healthy man into little better than an idiot skeleton. About nine in the evening these infatuated people may be seen in all the different stages of their

FLIGHT OF THE ROCKET LINE.





SLINGING A SHIPWRECKED CREW ASHORE.

intoxication. Some enter half-distracted to feed their craving appetite; others laugh and talk under the effects of the pipe; while the couches around are filled with their different occupants, who lie languid, with an idiot smile upon their countenances, too completely under the influence of the drug to regard passing events, and fast

merging to the wished-for consumption. The last scene in this tragic play is generally a room in the rear of the building—a species of *moryus*, or dead house—where lie sheltered those who have passed into the state of bliss which the opium-eater seeks—an emblem of the long sleep to which he is blindly hurrying.”