

THE LIFE - BOAT,

OR

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AT the Annual General Meeting of the NATIONAL SHIPWRECK INSTITUTION, held at the London Tavern on Thursday the 21st day of April, 1853,

CAPTAIN THE EARL TALBOT, R.N., C.B., VICE-PRESIDENT, in the Chair,

The following Report of the Committee was read:—

ANNUAL REPORT.

THE Committee of Management, in presenting to the Subscribers and the Public their Report for the past year, do so with mingled feelings of satisfaction and regret: of satisfaction, that so much success has attended the efforts which have been made to save life from shipwreck; of regret, that still so many human beings have perished on our coasts during the late autumn and winter. Yet, however much we must deplore these disasters, they form no ground of discouragement; on the contrary, they should incite us to renewed exertion: they point out that there is much to be done, and they proclaim more loudly than ever the necessity that exists for well-organized, well-directed, and well-sustained efforts in the sacred cause in which we are embarked.

In rendering an account of the proceedings of the Institution for the past year, the Report will be arranged, as usual, under the several heads of General Proceedings, Life-Boats, Rockets, Wrecks, Rewards, Local Committees, Publications, and Finance.

General Proceedings.—It is with great regret that the Committee have to advert to the loss which they have sustained by the death of the late THOMAS WILSON, their much-respected and valued Chairman, who, for a period of nearly thirty years—extending

from the first foundation of the Institution to within a few days of his death—actively and zealously co-operated with them, and almost without intermission presided over their meetings. A brief memoir of his life will be found in the December Number of the *Life-Boat Journal*.

Yet, while the common course of nature has deprived them of the services of one valued friend, it is with much gratification that the Committee are enabled to state that the vacancy will be filled by another long-trying supporter of the Institution, Mr. Alderman THOMPSON, M.P., who, at the last meeting of the Committee, was proposed by His Grace the President, and unanimously elected Chairman.

Mr. FRANCIS WILSON has likewise consented to accept the office of a Trustee of the Society vacant by the death of his late lamented father.

The Committee have further to express their regret at the retirement (from increasing years) of GEORGE PALMER, Esq., of Nazing Park, Essex, who for a long period filled the office of Deputy-Chairman of Committee. Mr. PALMER will long be remembered for his strenuous endeavours to call the attention of Parliament to the subject of wrecks, and as Chairman of a Select Committee of the House of Commons on Shipwrecks, in 1843. On his retirement from

Aldboro' in Suffolk, at Worthing, and on the Northam Burrows, at Appledore, Devon, (towards all of which the Institution has contributed), and one at Sennen Cove, Land's End, at the sole cost of JAMES TREMBATH, Esq., lord of the manor. The boat-house at Filey has likewise been repaired, and the road to the beach improved.

Carriages.—The carriage mentioned last year, as building in the Royal Arsenal at Woolwich, on the design and under the superintendence of Colonel COLQUHOUN, R.A., Director of the Carriage Department, has been completed, and is now stationed at Cullercoats, where it is found that it moves easily, that the life-boat can be got upon it without difficulty and launched from it with safety: a similar carriage has been built for Hauxley; one is building for Newbiggin and for North Sunderland; and applications for a copy of the plan have been received from several quarters. The carriage travels on four wheels; but for launching, as well as for transporting the boat to any short distance, the platform, or body on the hind wheels, is all that is necessary. This permits the limber or fore-carriage, on arriving at the place of launching, to be detached, and to be employed to convey the mortar, barbed shot, lines, stay, whip, and all necessary stores, to the point that offers most advantage for effecting a communication, for which purpose it has accordingly been fitted. The Committee gratefully record that the Master-General and Board of Ordnance have declined to make any charge for the expense of this carriage; and they beg to offer their best thanks to Colonel COLQUHOUN, for the care and attention he has bestowed in having brought the work to so satisfactory a result.

Rockets and Mortars.—Two rocket stations have recently been formed in the Shetland Islands, one at Fetlar on the north-eastern coast, the other at Noss on the south-east, being two of the most exposed points, and the site of many wrecks. To each of these places a set of CARTE'S 6 lb. rockets, with the requisite lines, has, through the courtesy of the Comptroller-General of

the Coast-guard, been forwarded by the Institution.

It is with regret the Committee have to record the deaths of Mr. JOHN DENNETT, of Newport, Isle of Wight, and of Mr. ALEXANDER G. CARTE, late Ordnance Store-keeper at Hull, who have been the chief agents in establishing rocket-stations around our coasts, for effecting communication with a stranded vessel. DENNETT'S rockets (originally proposed by TRENGROUSE, of Helston in Cornwall, in 1807) were supplied by this Institution to Atherfield, St. Lawrence, and Freshwater, in the Isle of Wight, as early as the year 1826, and there are now about 120 stations on the coasts of the United Kingdom furnished with his rockets. CARTE first supplied his rockets in 1836, and they are now placed at about 31 stations, chiefly on the coasts of Durham and Yorkshire. Both of these individuals are entitled to very honourable mention, as having been instrumental in saving many lives from shipwreck.

Some experiments were made last autumn with an anchor-shot and grapnel-shot which proved satisfactorily; that with a charge of 10 ounces of powder, either anchor or grapnel, fired from a 5½-inch mortar, will carry out a 2-inch Manilla line from 130 to 160 yards; and that its holding-power, in tolerable ground, is equal to the strength of from 12 to 15 men. Thus two of them would be sufficient to haul a life-boat off a beach in a moderately heavy sea.

Local Committees.—Committees of the resident and neighbouring gentlemen, and officers of the Coast Guard, have been formed during the past year at the new life-boat stations on the Northumberland coast, also at Berwick-on-Tweed, Bridlington, Filey, Worthing, Lyme Regis, Penzance, Bude Haven, Aberdovey, and Barmouth. It is through the instrumentality of such local associations, that the Committee hope to insure the efficient management of the several life-boat establishments at those places, and they earnestly request their cordial co-operation, as essential to the well-working of the Institution.