

The Project Gutenberg eBook of An Appeal to the British Nation on the Humanity and Policy of Forming a National Institution for the Preservation of Lives and Property from Shipwreck (1825)

This ebook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this ebook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you'll have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: An Appeal to the British Nation on the Humanity and Policy of Forming a National Institution for the Preservation of Lives and Property from Shipwreck (1825)

Author: Sir William Hillary

Release date: November 24, 2008 [eBook #27322]

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Martin Pettit and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at <http://www.pgdp.net> (This file was produced from images generously made available by The Internet Archive/American Libraries.)

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK AN APPEAL TO THE BRITISH NATION ON THE HUMANITY AND POLICY OF FORMING A NATIONAL INSTITUTION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF LIVES AND PROPERTY FROM SHIPWRECK (1825) ***

AN APPEAL
TO THE
BRITISH NATION,
ON THE
Humanity and Policy
OF FORMING
A NATIONAL INSTITUTION,
FOR THE PRESERVATION OF
LIVES AND PROPERTY
FROM
SHIPWRECK.

BY SIR WILLIAM HILLARY, BARONET.

AUTHOR OF "A PLAN FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A STEAM LIFE BOAT AND FOR THE EXTINGUISHMENT OF FIRE AT SEA;" "SUGGESTIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT AND EMBELLISHMENT OF THE METROPOLIS," AND "A SKETCH OF IRELAND IN 1824."

**LONDON:
PRINTED FOR GEO. B. WHITTAKER,
AVE-MARIA-LANE.**

1825.

**TO
THE KING.**

SIRE,

From Your Majesty's exalted station as Sovereign of the greatest maritime power on earth, and from the ardent zeal with which You have graciously extended Your Royal patronage to every measure which could promote the welfare and the glory of the British Navy, I have presumed, with the utmost deference, to dedicate the following pages to Your Majesty.

With the most dutiful respect, I have the honour to subscribe myself,

SIRE,
Your Majesty's
Most devoted subject and servant,
WILLIAM HILLARY.

INTRODUCTION

[Pg 1]

TO THE

SECOND EDITION^[A].

The few pages of which the present edition is composed, were principally written under the circumstances there stated, which had forcibly called my attention to the fatal effects of those ever-recurring tempests, which scatter devastation and misery round our coasts, where the veteran commander and his hardy crew, with their helpless passengers of every age and station in life, are left wretchedly to perish from the want of that succour which it has become my object earnestly to solicit for these destitute victims of the storm.

[Pg 2]

Another winter has scarcely yet commenced, and our coasts are spread over with the shattered fragments of more than two hundred vessels, which, in one fatal tempest, have been stranded on the British shores, attended with an appalling havoc of human life, beyond all present means to ascertain its extent, besides the loss of property to an enormous amount. And shall these fearful warnings also be without avail? Shall we still close our eyes on conviction, until further catastrophes wring from us those reluctant efforts, which ought to spring spontaneously from a benevolent people? With the most ample means for the rescue of thousands of human beings from a watery grave, shall we still leave them to their fate? Shall we hear unmoved of this widely-spread destruction, and not each contribute to those exertions, to which the common charities of human nature, and the certainty of the direful evils we might avert, and the sufferings we might assuage, ought to incite us to lend our utmost aid?

[Pg 3]

The conflicting fury of the elements, the darkness of night, the disasters of the sea, and the dangers of the adjacent shores, but too frequently combine to place the unhappy mariner beyond the power of human relief. But if all cannot be rescued, must all therefore be left to perish? If every effort cannot be attended with success, must not any attempt be made to mitigate these terrible calamities, which bring home the evil to our very doors, and force conviction on us by their desolating effects, and by the destruction of hundreds of our countrymen, whose wretched remains perpetually strew our shores?—Whilst we pause, they continue to perish; whilst we procrastinate, the work of destruction pursues its course; and each delay of another winter, in the adoption of measures more commensurate with the extent of these deplorable events, is attended with the sacrifice—perhaps of a thousand human lives.

Even were the preservation of the vessels and their cargoes alone the objects of our care, the present want of all system for such a purpose is, in its consequences, as lavish of property as it is of life; and from the vast amount now annually lost on our shores, infinitely more might unquestionably be preserved to the commercial interests of the country, by the establishment of the Institution proposed, than its support would cost to the nation on its most extended scale.

[Pg 4]

Actuated by these impressions, I have sought by every argument to rouse the dormant energies of a brave and a humane people to the rescue of their fellow-creatures; and through the ardent zeal, the generous enterprise, and the liberal bounty of a great nation, to awaken every feeling which can stimulate to the effort, and provide every means which can insure its success.

In our great insular empire, almost all individuals, from the most exalted and powerful in the land to the lowly and obscure, are at some period of their lives induced, by their various avocations and pursuits, to leave their own coasts. The brave seamen, the gallant soldiers, and the various subjects of these realms, of all ranks and degrees, are to be found traversing every stormy sea, and exposed to peril on every dangerous shore. This is not then an object for which the great and the affluent are called on for the relief of the humble and the destitute alone—the cause is individual, national, and universal, perhaps beyond any other which has ever yet been addressed to a country for support. It appeals equally to personal interest and to national policy—to private benevolence and to public justice; and each who thus extends the benefits of his efforts and his bounty to his countrymen and to mankind, may also be contributing to the future safety of his family, his friends, or himself.

[Pg 5]

In the pursuit of this arduous undertaking, I have felt it to be a duty I owed to the cause of which I have thus become an advocate, to offer my views to those of every class and department, who, from their humanity, their talents, or their station, are the most calculated, or the best enabled, to promote this great object of national benevolence.

[Pg 6]

I have dedicated this cause, with all deference, to a most gracious sovereign; I have addressed myself in its behalf to his ministers; and I have appealed to various distinguished individuals, to almost all the great national and benevolent institutions in the kingdom, to the commercial and shipping interests, and to the public at large, for the support of an object well worthy the deep attention of the greatest naval power of the present or of any former age, for the rescue of her numerous seamen and subjects from one of the most frequent and most awful of all the various calamities which desolate the human race.

From the same motives, I have most respectfully submitted this national and international system to the sovereigns and governments of the principal maritime powers of Europe and of America; and I avail myself with pleasure of the present occasion, to express my grateful acknowledgments for the promptitude with which several of their ministers, resident at this court, have transmitted it to their respective governments.

[Pg 7]

Encouraged to persevere in my endeavours, by the flattering support and approbation of many distinguished and enlightened characters, I am induced to hope that the day is not remote, when this contemplated institution may be established on a permanent basis, by the united energies of a noble and a benevolent nation, to whose support such a cause has never yet been addressed in vain.

The interest which this subject has already excited, has induced me to commit another edition of my pamphlet to the press; whilst the magnitude and vital importance of these objects, to our country and to mankind,—on our own and every foreign shore,—in the present and every future age,—will, I trust, best plead my excuse as a retired individual, and acquit me from the charge of presumption, in having had the temerity to submit my views to the consideration of so many illustrious personages, and for the earnest solicitude with which I have addressed myself to the humanity, the benevolence, and the justice of the British nation.

[Pg 8]

10th November, 1823.

FOOTNOTE:

[A] The introduction to the second edition and the following pamphlet were published previously to the formation of "the Royal National Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck," which it originally projected, as will be obvious by reference to dates and to the accompanying Appendix.

[Pg 9]

AN APPEAL,

&c.

For many years, and in various countries, the melancholy and fatal shipwrecks which I have witnessed, have excited a powerful interest in my mind for the situation of those who are exposed

to these awful calamities; but the idea of the advantages which would result from the establishment of a national institution, for the preservation of human life from the perils of the sea, first suggested itself to me during my residence on a part of the coast, often exposed to the most distressing scenes of misery, and where the dreadful storms of the last autumn prevailed with unusual violence.

On some occasions, it has been my lot to witness the loss of many valuable lives, under circumstances, where, had there been establishments previously formed for affording prompt relief, and encouragement given to those who might volunteer in such a cause, in all probability the greater part would have been rescued from destruction. At other times I have seen the noblest instances of self-devotion; men have saved the lives of their fellow-creatures at the peril of their own, without a prospect of reward if successful, and with the certainty that their families would be left destitute if they perished.

[Pg 10]

From these considerations, I have been induced to wish, that the results of the experience, talent, and genius of the most distinguished commanders, and men of science, should be united in the formation of one great Institution, which would in itself embrace every possible means for the preservation of life from the hazards of shipwreck.

Though many individuals have employed their time, their attention, and often exposed their personal safety for this object, yet nearly the whole of the most extensive and dangerous parts of our coasts are left without any means having been adopted, any precautions taken, for rendering assistance to vessels in distress; and, winter after winter, we have the most afflicting details of the consequences attendant on this lamentable apathy to human misery—an awful destruction of life, on almost every shore which surrounds the British dominions: acts have even sometimes been perpetrated at which humanity shudders, and which have caused other nations to cast reproach and opprobrium on the British name.

But individual efforts, however meritorious in themselves, are unequal to produce all the benefits contemplated, or to remedy all the evils, attendant on one of the most tremendous of perils to which human nature is exposed, and which is most likely to fall upon those who are in the very prime of manhood, and in the discharge of the most active and important duties of life. From the calamity of shipwreck no one can say that he may at all times remain free; and whilst he is now providing only for the safety of others, a day may come which will render the cause his own.

[Pg 11]

These are not arguments founded on the visionary contemplation of remote or improbable dangers. Their urgent necessity must be obvious to every mind. So long as man shall continue to navigate the ocean, and the tempests shall hold their course over its surface, in every age and on every coast, disasters by sea, shipwrecks, and peril to human life, must inevitably take place; and with this terrible certainty before our eyes, the duty becomes imperative, that we should use every means to obviate and to mitigate the deplorable consequences.

This subject in a peculiar manner appeals to the British people collectively and individually. For ages, our seamen have been the acknowledged support of our splendour and our power; and until every thing which the ingenuity of man can suggest, and every inducement and regulation which social institutions can offer and arrange, have been combined into one great plan for their safety, we shall be wanting in our best duties to them, to our country, and to ourselves.

[Pg 12]

Local associations cannot call forth the energy which such a cause demands at our hands; they are only partial benefits, whilst the great evil remains unredressed. We have many noble institutions, widely spread through the extent of the British dominions, supported by voluntary contributions, and exalting our name above that of every other nation by our disinterested efforts in the cause of humanity; whilst this great and vital object to every Briton, seems alone to have been strangely and unaccountably overlooked, or only partially undertaken.

Our coasts are surrounded by land-marks as a guide by day, and lights and beacons by night; our mariners are furnished with charts of every sea, every rock is pointed out, every shoal set down, and every channel buoyed. Pilots are to be found at the entrance of every port, and all that science, indefatigable labour, and liberal expenditure can effect, to warn the seaman of his danger, and to prevent vessels from being wrecked,—all has long, and ardently, and ably been studied and accomplished.

[Pg 13]

Whilst the vessels are yet secure, every safeguard is at their command, amply supplied by public associations, or by the state; and towards which, on their safe arrival in port, they contribute their quota for the benefits they have received,—and all must but too often prove in vain; many may thus be warned of their danger, and be saved; shipwrecks will still continue to take place, despite of all human means, and their crews be exposed to every species of peril and distress,—but what then becomes their fate?

Wretched, exhausted, and in the last extremity of danger, on whom does their rescue devolve? to what body or class of men, or to which of our numerous departments, does it now become an honourable and an imperative duty to afford them assistance in this their utmost need?—where are the national funds for such an object, to supply ample means for the hazardous attempt, to reward the brave efforts of those who succeed, or to relieve the destitute families of those who perish in so honourable a cause?

The melancholy catastrophe closed, every human being on board having perished, or having quitted their shattered vessel in despair; the laws and usages of recompense are clearly defined;—salvage for the property preserved, in proportion to its amount.

[Pg 14]

But in the dreadful crisis between these two extremes, does one law of the land, or one National Institution, hold out the established claim to certain reward for a life saved?

In the nineteenth century, surrounded by every improvement and institution which the benevolent can suggest, or the art of man accomplish for the mitigation or prevention of human ills, will it for a moment be capable of belief, that there does not, in all our great and generous land, exist one National Institution which has for its direct object the rescue of human life from shipwreck?

The protection of property is in every stage a subject of legislation and of care;—the rescue of life from shipwreck has never yet been adopted as a national and a legislative object.

With the exception of the recompenses voluntarily given by the liberal institution of Lloyd's, the very few associations scattered thinly on the coasts, and the valuable inventions and gallant efforts of those brave and enlightened individuals who do honour to their country, our shipwrecked seamen are left in this awful situation, to the spontaneous exertions of enterprise and humanity, the chance of the moment, or the mercy of the winds and waves;—or rather let us say, to a greater mercy, and a higher Power.

[Pg 15]

It may be thought that this picture is overcharged; but unhappily, I believe it will be found too faithfully correct.

I am firmly convinced, that these appalling facts have never yet reached the great majority of the nation; but the veil once withdrawn, the honour, the justice, and the humanity of Britain will be deeply compromised, if the evil is not promptly and effectually redressed;—not any human means should be spared to atone for the past, and to alleviate the future.

In bringing this deeply interesting subject before the public, it is my ardent hope that it may call forth the attention of those better qualified to bring to perfection so important a work. Let this great national object but once engage the attention of the public mind, and not any thing can arrest its course.

The power of united effort, in the attainment of any great work of national benevolence, has never yet failed of success. The institution I have in view is equally a claim of justice and of benevolence; it peculiarly belongs to the greatest maritime nation in existence, and will, I trust, be deemed worthy the attention of the Admiralty of England, who have so long held their high station with as much honour to themselves as benefit to their country.

By whose immediate patronage the first measures for the organization of such a system may be honoured, or under the sanction of what names the requisite public meetings to carry them into effect may be announced, it would be the utmost presumption in me to anticipate; but it appears to me, that the immediate assembling of such meetings in London, would best contribute to the establishment of this Institution on a permanent and extensive foundation.

[Pg 16]

To the consideration of such meetings, I must respectfully beg leave to submit:

That a national institution should be formed, equally worthy of Great Britain, important to humanity, and beneficial to the naval and commercial interests of the United Empire; having for its objects,

First, The preservation of human life from shipwreck; which should always be considered as the first great and permanent object of the Institution,

Secondly, Assistance to vessels in distress, which immediately connects itself with the safety of the crews.

Thirdly, The preservation of vessels and property, when not so immediately connected with the lives of the people, or after the crews and passengers shall already have been rescued.

Fourthly, The prevention of plunder and depredations in case of shipwreck.

Fifthly, The succour and support of those persons who may be rescued; the promptly obtaining of medical aid, food, clothing, and shelter for those whose destitute situation may require such relief, with the means to forward them to their homes, friends, or countries. The people and vessels of every nation, whether in peace or in war, to be equally objects of this Institution; and the efforts to be made, and the recompenses to be given for their rescue, to be in all cases the same as for British subjects and British vessels.

[Pg 17]

Sixthly, The bestowing of suitable rewards on those who rescue the lives of others from shipwreck, or who assist vessels in distress; and the supplying of relief to the destitute widows or families of the brave men who unhappily may lose their lives in such meritorious attempts.

The objects of the Institution being thus defined, and having, I hope, already obtained the powerful support of those illustrious personages and distinguished characters in the state, under whose fostering care, as patrons and presidents, the system would have the best prospect of being brought to maturity; it would only be requisite to proceed to the next duty of the meeting, which would be the formation of a numerous Committee, including liberal and enlightened men from all classes and departments, naval and military officers, members of the Trinity House and of Lloyd's, merchants and commanders in the East India and other services, &c.

[Pg 18]

In addition to this central Committee, it would be requisite, in order to carry the objects of the

association into active execution, that branches of the Institution, and subject to its rules, should be formed in all the principal ports, and on the most dangerous sea-coasts of the United Kingdom; each having its own separate Committee, in direct communication with that in London. But, on the general central meetings of Presidents and Committee in London, would devolve the primary measures for the permanent establishment of the Institution; the general system of finance, the formation of rules and regulations, and the plans for giving activity and effect to the whole.

Perhaps it might facilitate the progress of the measures in view, if the labour were divided, and two or more separate Committees or Boards were formed from the whole, consisting of individuals best qualified for the objects of each separate department, whose reports, before being finally adopted, should receive the sanction of the Institution at large.

Under this view of the subject, a Committee of finance would be desirable, whose duty, in the first instance, would be to arrange and pursue the best and most active measures to diffuse a general knowledge of the objects and principles of the association; and to obtain donations and subscriptions, for the purpose of carrying them into effect.

[Pg 19]

From the peculiarly interesting nature of this Institution, it is to be presumed, that this part of their duty would be found easy in its progress, and successful in its results.

When we see long columns filled with the first names in the country, with large sums placed opposite to them, for objects temporary in their nature, and small in importance compared with the present, which contemplates the rescue of thousands of human beings now in existence, and an incalculable number yet unborn, from one of the most tremendous of all perils,—who is there, to whom such an Institution once became known, that would refuse his aid? It is a cause which extends from the palace to the cottage, in which politics and party cannot have any share, and which addresses itself with equal force to all the best feelings of every class in the state.

The names of every branch of the Royal Family are to be found at the head of all the benevolent Institutions of the empire.

From the nobility and gentry large donations and subscriptions may naturally be expected. The clergy of every class will, no doubt, be foremost in the cause of humanity. To the whole body of the navy, the marines, and to the army, who, in the prosecution of their professional duties, encounter so many of the dangers of the sea, such an appeal will never be made in vain. Can it be supposed that there is one East India Director, one member of Lloyd's, an under-writer, a merchant, a shipowner, or commander in the India or merchants' service, from whom a subscription, liberal in proportion to his means, will not be obtained? Nor will the generous aid of any class of society, I am persuaded, be wanting for such a purpose; and as a stimulus to the whole, by example in their donations, and by the widely-extended circle of their influence, the British females of every station in life will, I am convinced, particularly distinguish themselves in aid of this cause.

[Pg 20]

From these opinions, which I so confidently entertain of the humanity and liberality of the British people, I rest firmly persuaded, that the most ample means will be easily and speedily obtained for every possible expenditure which can attend the objects of this Institution.

When the funds shall have been once established, the duty of the Committee will be, to have the permanent superintendence and regulation of their finance under the proper control of the whole society.

A second Board, or Committee, should be formed from the most experienced and enlightened officers of the navy, seamen, engineers, and scientific men, for the purpose of carrying the direct objects of the Institution into effect.

[Pg 21]

One of the most important duties of this Committee will be to combine, in a clear, concise, and well-digested system, the result of the joint knowledge and experience of the whole body, in plain and simple language, divested as much as possible of technical phraseology, and capable of being understood by every individual. This code of instruction should comprise the best and most prompt measures to be adopted in every sort of danger to which a vessel can be exposed, and on whatever kind of coast, in order that the most effectual assistance may be given, with the least possible loss of time, and with such means as in remote situations can most probably be obtained; and the Committee should be requested to report, from time to time, the result of those measures which they had found from experience to be most successful; whilst every friend to such a cause, who might suggest an invention or a means to facilitate these objects, would be certain, that in this Committee his plans would receive the most attentive consideration from those who would possess the power and the inclination to carry them into effect.

It will be desirable that this Committee should suggest the most eligible plans for permanent establishments in all sea-ports, road-steads, and resorts for shipping, and particularly on remote, wild, and exposed parts of the coast, where lifeboats, anchors, cables, hawsers, and the beneficial inventions of those enlightened and highly patriotic officers, Sir William Congreve, Captains Marryat, Manby, Dansey, Mr. Trengrouse, and various other meritorious individuals, should be kept in constant readiness for use, with every means for the preservation of lives in danger, and the assistance of vessels in distress, according to the nature of the coasts on which the respective depôts may be established. The purchase, safe custody, and control over the stores of the Institution, their being deposited in places best situated for instant issue on every emergency, and always in a state fit for immediate service, are objects which demand the utmost

[Pg 22]

circumspection and care.

This department is perhaps the most important of the whole—it is the operative; and on its judicious arrangements, the means of prompt and effectual efforts, the success of the most hazardous undertakings, the safety of those employed, and the rescue of those in peril, will unquestionably depend.

For these purposes, as well as every other connected with the Institution, the respective Committees proposed to be formed, in every port, and on every coast, will be of the most essential use. The zeal, and other requisite qualities, which the members of such Committees may naturally be supposed to possess, point them out as the most eligible persons to have the immediate direction of the measures to be adopted. From them also it is to be expected that the most experienced in nautical affairs may be selected to command.

[Pg 23]

To that department under which boats are to go out, and men are to risk their lives, for the rescue of those who may be in danger, the utmost attention is due: that, when they are so employed, it shall be under the direction of the most skilful advice which the occasion can afford; that their boats and equipments shall be such as best to insure their safety; and that the crews shall be selected from the bravest and most experienced persons who can be found.

To insure order and promptitude on these occasions, where the least delay or indecision may cause the loss of all opportunity of acting with effect, a previous and, as far as practicable, a permanent arrangement should be formed. Volunteers should be invited to enrol themselves from amongst the resident pilots, seamen, fishermen, boatmen, and others, in sufficient numbers to insure the greatest probability of having every aid at hand, which, in the moment of danger, may be requisite. Each man should have his department previously assigned, and the whole should act under their respective leaders.

[Pg 24]

To these regulations might be added a system of signals, equally available by night or by day, through which persons on board of vessels in distress could communicate the nature of the assistance of which they stood in need; and those on shore warn them of any danger, inform them of the succour they were going to afford, or give them any instructions requisite to their safety.

In addition to these means, a great source of assistance to vessels in distress might be secured to be at all times within reach, by permanent and judicious arrangements with pilot companies, steam vessels, anchor vessels, harbour boats, trawl and other fishing boats, which, under proper indemnities, and for reasonable remuneration, would doubtless at all times contribute their aid, and act under the regulations of the Institution; it might also be advantageous, on many parts of the coast, to give premiums to those owners of boats who should have them fitted up with air tight cases, casks or cork, so as to answer the purpose of life boats, and who should constantly keep them in that state, ready for immediate service.

At the same time care should be taken not to trammel by unnecessary regulations the spontaneous efforts of those, who, actuated by a generous ardour, on the emergency of the moment, seize on the first means which present themselves, and often accomplish their object in a manner which, to a cooler calculation, would appear impracticable.

[Pg 25]

To expect a large body of men to enrol themselves, and be in constant readiness to risk their own lives for the preservation of those whom they have never known or seen, perhaps of another nation, merely because they are fellow-creatures in extreme peril, is to pay the highest possible compliment to my countrymen; and that on every coast there are such men, has been fully evinced, even under the present want of system, when the best means for their purpose are not supplied; when they are without any certainty of reward; and act under the peculiarly appalling consideration, that if they perish, they may leave wives, children, and every one destitute who depend on them for support.

If, under such discouragement, we every year have so many instances of self-devotion, what might not be expected from the same men, when they knew that in the performance of their arduous duties, every possible means to execute them, with safety to themselves, and success to the objects of their efforts, would be supplied; that if they succeeded, they would be honoured and recompensed, according to their merits and situation in life; and if it were their lot to perish in so noble a cause, they had at least the consolation to know, beyond a doubt, that their families would not be left to deplore their loss in unassisted poverty?

[Pg 26]

To these objects the Institution ought unquestionably to extend, or it would be unworthy of the great country to which it belonged, and of the high patronage with which I hope it may be honoured.

Nor will I suppose that those whom I have specified are the only persons who will take an active part on such occasions. There is another class, who, from what I have individually seen, will, I am certain, become able and zealous leaders,—not only the employed, but the half-pay officers of the navy, now so widely spread over the coasts of the United Kingdom. Living in retirement in time of peace, they would not allow their energies to sleep when their brother seamen were in danger, but come forward with the conscious feeling, that those distinguished characters who preside over the British navy, would regard such meritorious services as being in the direct path of honour; and that to rescue a human being from the perils of shipwreck would not be less acceptable to their country than to subdue her enemies in battle.

The Romans rewarded with the civic crown those who had saved the life of a fellow citizen. Our

[Pg 27]

late venerable sovereign conferred the baronetage on the gallant Viscount Exmouth, then Captain Pellew, for his noble and successful efforts, at the extreme hazard of his own life, to save the crew of an East Indiaman, wrecked at Plymouth, when the situation of every one on board appeared beyond the reach of human aid.

The whole class of the preventive service, with many departments of the revenue, could not be more honourably employed, and they must naturally feel that their brave exertions, on such occasions, would be fully estimated.

The assistance of medical men, who would enrol themselves to be ready to attend, might frequently be of the utmost importance to succour and restore those who might have sustained severe injury, or whose lives might be nearly extinct; and it is confidently to be hoped, that the happiest consequences would frequently result, from having always ready for use, the apparatus of the Royal Humane Society for restoring suspended animation—also by the circulation of their instructions for the treatment of persons in that situation.

There is not perhaps any subject connected with this proposed Institution, more worthy of its utmost attention and care, than the protection of persons and property from the cruel rapacity of those abandoned marauders, who, on some parts of our coasts, have but too long followed a practice disgraceful to a civilized state, and dangerous in its example as fatal to its victims, of plundering from wrecks, and there is much reason to fear, often suffering to perish, from want of assistance, many who might otherwise have been rescued from peril, and restored to their friends and their country; but by means of the numerous establishments of this Institution, the effects of a better example, the stimulus of rewards given for the preservation of life, the vigilant care and the vigorous measures which in such cases would unquestionably be pursued, it is confidently to be hoped that such atrocities would be heard of no more on our shores.

[Pg 28]

In time of war, it might be advisable that a limited number of known, steady, and brave seamen, who had already distinguished themselves on these occasions, should be protected from the impress, by belonging to this service. The number need not be large, as the retired veterans of the navy, and the fishermen on the coast, would constitute the majority to be employed.

The nature and extent of the recompenses for time and trouble, and the reward of those who hazard their own lives in the rescue of others, would form another important branch of the Institution for the labours of this Committee.

[Pg 29]

The qualifications for these rewards naturally form themselves into classes.

First, in case of successful efforts, where persons, at the risk of their own lives, save from imminent peril those of their fellow-creatures,—it should be established, beyond all doubt, that they should receive such reward for each life saved, as the Institution, on mature consideration, may determine. This might be fixed at not less than a certain sum, with power to extend it to a greater amount, to be decided by the Committee, according to the nature of the case; but, at all events, to the smallest of these rewards the parties to have an absolute claim, on furnishing unquestionable evidence of having saved a life.

In many cases of persons rescued from the wreck, saved amongst rocks, or when found washed by the breakers on shore, particularly on remote coasts, but too often exposed to scenes of lawless depredation, the parties should equally be entitled to reward.

Where lives are saved, without those employed hazarding their own, they should at least receive the smaller of the premiums conferred.

Rewards should also be given where every possible effort has been made, though unhappily without success.

[Pg 30]

When vessels are actually in distress, proportionate premiums should be given to the first, second, and other boats which get alongside, and for other assistance.

Remunerations should be given, and every inducement held out, for the prevention of plunder, and for the preservation of lives and vessels, in every situation of danger to which they may become exposed.

When a life is saved by a person who had been equally fortunate on a former occasion, his reward should be larger, and increase progressively for other successful efforts. In case of crime, the second offence is punished more severely than the first, and the third than the second. In meritorious acts, it were only sound policy that the rewards should bear a similar proportion.

Where an individual perishes in his attempts to rescue lives from shipwreck, or when assisting vessels in distress, his wife, children, or aged parents, if dependent on him for support, should have every relief which it may become practicable to give, and according to the particular circumstances of the case.

The Institution should also recompense for severe injuries, ascertained to have been unquestionably sustained in the actual performance of such services.

[Pg 31]

Ample and general powers should be given to confer rewards for such other acts as the Committee may consider justly entitled to them.

It might, perhaps, also be worthy the consideration of the Institution at large, whether any badge or medal conferred on a man who had saved a life from shipwreck at the hazard of his own, might

not have a very powerful effect. To many minds, even in the humblest walks of life, such a recompense would be more acceptable than a pecuniary reward, whilst a laudable ambition might be thus excited in others to imitate so meritorious an example—thus holding out every species of inducement, to the brave and the generous—to the humble but humane, to render their utmost aid to the shipwrecked of every land, in the moment of their extreme distress.

To receive applications for rewards, to examine into the nature and extent of services performed, and to make reports, and forward certificates and recommendations to the general Committee, would become one of the most important duties of the local departments, on the judicious and faithful performance of which the honour and credit of the Institution would materially depend.

[Pg 32]

These appear to me to be the principal objects to which the attention of the Committees should be directed, in the original formation of the establishment, and subject to the decision of the general meetings of the Institution, to whom their reports should be submitted.

It is to be presumed that various parts of the interior of the United Kingdom will furnish considerable funds to the Institution, without calling upon it for any supplies; that many of the great sea-ports may perhaps raise means equal to the amount of their expenditure, in their immediate district; whilst there is a vast extent of the most rugged coast lying far distant from any prompt assistance, on which, above all others, vessels are exposed to the greatest danger. For such places, establishments could only be formed at a considerable expense; it being obvious, that from the solitude and remoteness of the surrounding country, only small pecuniary aid could be obtained; yet in these situations the seamen and fishermen ought to be stimulated by every possible incitement to take an active and decided part in the cause of humanity; since on these very coasts the vessels belonging to the most distant ports might be lost, and the relatives of those who resided in the very interior of the kingdom might perish. The cause, therefore, becomes common to all, and it will be of the highest importance to its success, that arrangements should be formed between the central Committee and the district associations, that, united in funds and in measures, they may as much as possible act in concert, in carrying the objects contemplated into the fullest effect through the whole extent of the British dominions.

[Pg 33]

How far it may be desirable to apply for an act of parliament, or to establish the Institution into a chartered association, will remain for the general Committee to decide, when the whole has assumed a distinct form. It is also probable that great advantages might result from the investigations of a Committee of the House of Commons into the insufficiency of the enactments and regulations now in force for the preservation of life, and the prevention of plunder, from vessels which may be wrecked within the jurisdiction of our laws.

I also venture, with deference, to recommend, that other maritime nations should be invited to form similar establishments, so far as accords with their respective laws and usages, and to concur in mutual arrangements with Great Britain for the reciprocal aid of the subjects and vessels of each other.

Nor is the universal adoption of this system more imperatively demanded, by those feelings which should incite us to afford the most prompt assistance to the people of every country who may be in danger of shipwreck on our shores, than it is consistent with a wise and enlightened policy, which should extend our views from our own immediate coasts, to the most remote quarters of the globe, and to every neighbouring state; more particularly from the entrance of the English Channel to the frozen regions of the North. And when we recollect the vast commercial fleets which the enterprise of our merchants adventures into every sea, and during every season; when more than a thousand sail of British vessels pass the sound of the Baltic each year; ought we not to bear in mind to what hazards the subjects and vessels of Great Britain are constantly exposed, on the whole of so extended a coast, and in every stormy and dangerous sea? and shall we not be wanting to them and to humanity, if we do not endeavour to obtain for our own shipwrecked countrymen, in every foreign land, the same effectual aid in the hour of danger, which, I doubt not, it will become one of the proudest objects of this Institution to extend to the vessels of every nation which may be in distress on the British shores?—Even during the most arduous prosecution of war, the cause of humanity, and the progress of civilization, would be eminently promoted by these noble and generous efforts, for the rescue of those, whom the fury of the elements had divested of all hostile character, and thrown helpless and powerless on a foreign coast.

[Pg 34]

[Pg 35]

Thus would nations be drawn by mutual benefits into more strict bonds of amity during peace, and thus might the rigours of war be ameliorated, by having one common object of benevolence remaining; in the exercise of which the jealousies and angry passions incident to a state of hostility could not have any part with a generous and a high-minded people; whilst the experience and penetration of liberal and enlightened governments could, without difficulty, form such arrangements as would prevent that which was intended as a benefit to mankind, from being made subservient to any political abuse.

My utmost wishes would be accomplished by seeing these international regulations established, in connexion with one great Institution, to extend to the most remote province of the empire, on the exalted principle, that wherever the British flag should fly, her seamen should be protected; and that those who risked their own lives to save their fellow-creatures from the perils of shipwreck should be honoured and rewarded; whilst every stranger, whom the disasters of the sea may cast on her shores, should never look for refuge in vain.

[Pg 36]

APPENDIX.

A year had scarcely elapsed after the first edition of the preceding Pamphlet was committed to the press, when the great object it recommended was accomplished, with an unanimity and a promptitude which the irresistible power of such a cause could alone effect, by the establishment of the Royal National Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck;—district associations on a very extended scale have also been formed in the county of Norfolk, and on various other important parts of the coast, avowedly founded on the plan which this work had projected.

It has therefore become expedient, in the future circulation of this Pamphlet, to add a few pages, containing authentic statements of those proceedings by which the Institution was organized—how cordially this measure has been received and adopted, and how much in conformity with that outline which I had ventured to offer to the consideration of my country, these documents will best evince.

It will at the same time be seen, that the resolutions of the General Meeting do not extend to the remuneration of the Salvors of property in cases of shipwreck, where not immediately connected with the preservation of life, it having been the opinion of the Provisional Committee that the existing laws had already made such regulations as to render that measure unnecessary. [Pg 38]

In reference to those passages which treat of the rewards to be conferred for services which may be performed, and more particularly as to the relief to be afforded to the destitute families of those who unhappily may perish in their attempts to preserve the lives of others, it will be obvious that the extent of such recompenses and relief must of necessity be guided by those means, which the liberality of the nation may supply—at the same time, I have the utmost satisfaction in stating the humane declaration of the Institution, that their operations will be limited only by the amount of those funds which may be placed at their disposal, or the number of cases calling for assistance; and I most sincerely concur in the confident hope which the Central Committee express, that the contributions may be so general as not only to give present effect, but also permanence, to this great national undertaking.

Honoured, as this Institution has been, by the high patronage of the King, and of his illustrious family—constituted a Royal Institution by his Majesty's gracious command—sanctioned by many of the most distinguished characters in the church and state, and sustained by the bounty of a generous nation—it is not for me to have the presumption to offer my acknowledgements, for that support which the cause of our shipwrecked fellow-creatures has obtained from the sovereign and the people of this great country. [Pg 39]

But there are some names, the omission of which would be an act of injustice—the gentlemen of the Provisional Committee, who prepared the way for that success which attended the public meeting, over which his grace the Archbishop of Canterbury presided, in a manner as advantageous to the measures which he so essentially contributed to promote, as honourable to his own benevolent feelings; and the equally zealous members of the Central Committee, who now so ably conduct the affairs of the Institution, are eminently entitled to the warmest thanks of every friend of this cause, for their early and important exertions in its establishment, of whom I may perhaps be permitted to name Thomas Wilson, Esq. one of the representatives in parliament for the City of London, and George Hibbert, Esq. as having been amongst the foremost in affording their valuable co-operation in the formation of this Institution. [Pg 40]

It only remains for me to express the heartfelt satisfaction which I experience, in witnessing the attainment of this object of my most earnest solicitude, and in the firm conviction with which I am impressed, that this Institution is now established on principles which will extend its beneficial effects to the most distant shores, and to generations yet unborn.

WILLIAM HILLARY.

May 29, 1824.

[Pg 41]

No. I.

Circular, convening a preliminary and select Meeting, to consider of the Suggestions in the Pamphlet by Sir William Hillary, Bart. of an Institution for the Rescue of Lives from Shipwreck.

No. 33, New Broad Street,
February 4, 1824.

SIR,

You are respectfully requested to attend at the City of London Tavern, on Thursday, the 12th

instant, at twelve for one o'clock precisely, to confer on certain measures which will then be submitted, and to determine on the expedience of calling a General Meeting in London, for the formation of a "National Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck."

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient servant,

S. COCK.

[Pg 42]

No. II.

Proceedings of a preliminary Meeting of Noblemen and Gentlemen, held at the City of London Tavern, on Thursday, the 12th of February, 1824.

Thomas Wilson, Esq. M.P. was called to the Chair.

Resolved unanimously,

That this Meeting, taking into consideration the frequent loss of human life by shipwreck, and believing that by the preconcerted exertions of practical men, and the adoption of practical means, such calamities might often be averted, are of opinion that a National Institution should be formed (to be supported by voluntary donations and subscriptions) for the preservation of life in cases of shipwreck on the coasts of the united kingdom; for affording such immediate assistance to the persons rescued, as their necessities may require; for conferring rewards on those who preserve their fellow-creatures from destruction; and for granting relief to the destitute families of any who may unfortunately perish in their attempts to save the lives of others.

Resolved unanimously,

That, with a view to the formation of such an Institution, a general Meeting of the Nobility, Gentry, Merchants, Traders, and others, be convened for Wednesday, the 25th instant, at twelve for one o'clock precisely, or such other day as may be found more convenient.

Resolved unanimously,

[Pg 43]

That the following be a provisional Committee in the interim, with power to add to their number.

THOMAS WILSON, Esq. M.P. Chairman.

Henry Baring, Esq. M.P.
Vice-Admiral Lord Amelius Beauclerk, K.C.B.
John Blackburn, Esq.
Henry Blanchard, Esq.
John William Buckle, Esq.
James Cazenove, jun. Esq.
Simon Cock, Esq.
Captain J. W. Deans Dundas, R.N.
David C. Guthrie, Esq.
Samuel Gurney, Esq.
George Hibbert, Esq.
Sir William Hillary, Bart.
Samuel Hoare, Esq.
George Lyall, Esq.
Rev. H. H. Norris.
John Clark Powell, Esq.
Joseph Pulley, Esq.
John Vincent Purrier, Esq.
Christopher Richardson, jun. Esq.
Benjamin Shaw, Esq.
Right Honourable Lord Suffield.
Christopher Tenant, Esq.
Mr. Alderman Thompson, M.P.
William Vaughan, Esq.
Joshua Walker, Esq. M.P.
Joshua Watson, Esq.
Thomas Wilkinson, Esq.
George Frederick Young, Esq.

Resolved unanimously,

[Pg 44]

That the thanks of this Meeting be given to Sir William Hillary, Bart. for his exertions in bringing this interesting subject before the Meeting, and for his assistance in its deliberations.

Mr. Wilson having left the chair,

It was resolved unanimously,

No. III.

ROYAL NATIONAL INSTITUTION

FOR

THE PRESERVATION OF LIFE FROM SHIPWRECK.

LONDON, MARCH 4, 1824.

PATRON—THE KING.

Vice-Patrons.

His Royal Highness the Duke of York.
His Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence.
His Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex.
His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge.
His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester.
His Royal Highness Prince Leopold of Saxe Cobourg.

PRESIDENT—The Earl of Liverpool, K.G.

Vice-Presidents.

His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury.
His Grace the Archbishop of York.
His Grace the Duke of St. Alban's.
The Most Noble the Marquis of Lansdowne.
The Most Noble the Marquis of Hertford, K.G. Vice-Admiral of Cornwall, and of the Coast of Suffolk.
The Most Noble the Marquis of Camden, K.G.
The Right Hon. the Earl Spencer, K.G.
The Right Hon. the Earl of Craven.
The Right Hon. the Earl of Lonsdale, K.G.
The Right Hon. the Earl of Harrowby.
The Right Hon. Earl Brownlow.
The Right Hon. Lord Amelius Beauclerk, K.C.B.
The Right Hon. Lord John Russell, M.P.
The Right Hon. Viscount Torrington.
The Right Hon. Viscount Melville, K.T.
The Right Hon. Viscount Exmouth, G.C.B.
The Lord Bishop of London.
The Lord Bishop of Durham.
The Lord Bishop of Chester, now Bath and Wells.
The Lord Bishop of Bristol.
The Right Hon. Lord Suffield.
The Right Hon. Lord Braybrooke.
The Right Hon. Lord Amherst, Governor-General of India.
The Right Hon. Lord Stowell.
The Right Hon. Robert Peel.
The Right Hon. George Canning.
The Right Hon. Frederick John Robinson.
The Right Hon. William Huskisson.
Sir William Hillary, Bart.
Sir Claude Scott, Bart.
Sir Charles Forbes, Bart. M.P.
William Haldimand, Esq. M.P.
George Hibbert, Esq.
William Manning, Esq. M.P.
The Chairman of the Hon. East India Company.
The Deputy Master of Trinity House.
The Chairman for Lloyd's.
N. M. Rothschild, Esq.

John Smith, Esq. M.P.
Joshua Walker, Esq. M.P.
Joshua Watson, Esq.
Thomas Wilkinson, Esq.
Thomas Wilson, Esq. M.P.

Central Committee.

[Pg 47]

Thomas Wilson, Esq. M.P. Chairman.

Captain Astley, R.N.
Henry Blanchard, Esq.
Richardson Borradaile, Esq.
Captain William Bowles, R.N.
John William Buckle, Esq.
John Capel, Esq.
David Carruthers, Esq.
James Cazenove, jun. Esq.
Jonathan Chapman, Esq.
G. R. Clarke, Esq.
Simon Cock, Esq.
William Cotton, Esq.
Captain Ed. Henry a'Court, R.N. M.P.
Captain C. C. Dansey, R.A.
John Deacon, Esq.
Captain Joseph Dowson.
Captain Deans Dundas, R.N.
Captain John Foulerton.
Charles Francis, Esq.
James Halford, Esq.
Edward Hurry, Esq.
Captain John Locke, H.C.S.
Edward Hawke Locker, Esq.
George Lyall, Esq.
W. A. Madocks, Esq. M.P.
John Marshall, Esq.
John Petty Muspratt, Esq.
John Clark Powell, Esq.
John D. Powles, Esq.
Joseph Pulley, Esq.
John Vincent Purrier, Esq.
Christoper Richardson, jun. Esq.
Captain R. Saumarez, R.N. K.L.
Thomas Snodgrass, Esq.
Christopher Tennant, Esq.
Mr. Alderman Thompson, M.P.
Mr. Alderman Venables.
John Wild, Esq.
H. S. H. Wollaston, Esq.
George Frederick Young, Esq.

[Pg 48]

Treasurer.

William Sikes, Esq. 5, Mansion House Street.

Trustees.

Thomas Wilson, Esq. M.P.
James Cazenove, jun. Esq.
John Clark Powell, Esq.

Auditors.

Timothy A. Curtis, Esq.
Henry Sikes, Esq.
Mr. Alderman Thompson, M.P.

Secretary.

Thomas Edwards, Esq.
Office of the Institution, No. 12, Austin Friars, London.

[Pg 49]

At a Public Meeting of Noblemen, Gentlemen, Merchants, and others, held at the City of London Tavern, this day,

His Grace the ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY in the Chair,

The following resolutions were passed unanimously:—

I. Upon the motion of his Grace; seconded by Captain Bowles, R.N.—That an Institution be now formed for the Preservation of Life in cases of Shipwreck on the Coasts of the United Kingdom, to be supported by donations and annual subscriptions; and to be called the "National Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck."

II. Moved by W. Wilberforce, Esq. M.P.; seconded by Captain Deans Dundas, R.N.—That medallions or pecuniary rewards be given to those who rescue lives in cases of shipwreck.

III. Moved by the Lord Bishop of London; seconded by Mr. Alderman Bridges, M.P.—That such immediate assistance be afforded to persons rescued as their necessities may require.

IV. Moved by the Lord Bishop of Chester; seconded by William Manning, Esq. M.P.—That relief be supplied to the widows and families of persons who may unfortunately perish in their attempts to save the lives of others.

V. Moved by Captain John Foulerton;—seconded by Mr. Alderman Venables,—That the subjects of all nations be equally objects of the Institution, as well in war as in peace; that the same rewards be given for their rescue as for British subjects; and that foreigners saved from shipwreck, and being in a state of destitution, be placed under the care of the consuls or other accredited agents of their own nations, or be forwarded to their respective countries.

VI. Moved by Joshua Walker, Esq. M.P.; seconded by John William Buckle, Esq.—That medallions be conferred on the authors of such inventions for the preservation of lives, in cases of shipwreck, as shall be most effectual for that purpose.

VII. Moved by Matthias Attwood, Esq. M.P.; seconded by Thomas Wilkinson, Esq.—That the Institution be established in London, and be conducted by a patron, vice-patrons, a president, vice-presidents, governors, forty committeemen, a treasurer, three trustees, three auditors, a secretary, and assistants. [Pg 50]

VIII. Moved by John Blades, Esq.; seconded by John Marshall, Esq.—That the committee be denominated the "London Central Committee," and do continue to act for the first two years; and that after the expiration of that term, an election of six new members take place at each annual meeting, in the room of the six who shall be found to have attended the fewest number of times in the preceding year: and that the vice-patrons, president, vice-presidents, and treasurer, be also members of the committee.

IX. Moved by Joseph Pulley, Esq.; seconded by John Atkins, jun. Esq.—That donations and annual subscriptions be now entered into, and solicited, for carrying the objects of this Institution into effect.

X. Moved by Captain Manby; seconded by Thomas Shirley Gooch, Esq. M.P.—That maritime counties or districts, the principal sea ports, and the inland counties of the united kingdom, and the British isles, be earnestly invited to form district associations, as branches of this Institution, for the purpose of promoting donations and subscriptions, and for assisting to carry its general objects into effect.

XI. Moved by Captain Richard Saumarez, R.N.; seconded by Christopher Richardson, jun. Esq.—That it be recommended to such district associations, that their affairs be managed in conformity with the principles of the London central committee, and that their committees do consist of a chairman, and such other members as they may deem expedient.

XII. Moved by Mr. Alderman Bridges, M.P.; seconded by David Carruthers, Esq.—That the committee be empowered to form rules, regulations, and by-laws, for the government of the Institution, which are to be submitted to the next general meeting.

XIII. Moved by Quarles Harris, Esq.; seconded by James Cazenove, Esq.—That a copy of these resolutions be transmitted to the ambassadors, consuls, or other representatives of foreign states, resident in this country. [Pg 51]

XIV. Moved by Sir Charles Flower, Bart.; seconded by William Walcot, Esq.—That his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury be requested to convey to the King's most gracious Majesty, the deep and grateful sense which this Meeting entertains of the distinguished honour which his Majesty has conferred upon the Institution in becoming its patron.

XV. Moved by Captain Deans Dundas, R.N.; seconded by John Wilson, Esq.—That the grateful thanks of this Meeting be respectfully offered to their Royal Highnesses the Dukes of York, Clarence, Sussex, and Gloucester, and Prince Leopold of Saxe Cobourg, for their readiness to become the vice-patrons of the Institution.

XVI. Moved by John William Buckle, Esq.; seconded by John Vincent Purrier, Esq.—That the thanks of this Meeting be given to the Earl of Liverpool, for his acceptance of the presidency of the Institution.

XVII. Moved by William Cotton, Esq.; seconded by Jonathan Chapman, Esq.—That the thanks of

this Meeting be also given to his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the other noble and distinguished personages who have accepted the office of vice-presidents of the Institution.

XVIII. Moved by George Lyall, Esq.; seconded by Thos. Wilson, Esq. M.P.—That the best thanks of this Meeting are due to Sir William Hillary, Bart. for his patriotic efforts in bringing this subject before the public, and for his zealous endeavours to promote the establishment of the Institution.

XIX. Moved by Thomas Wilkinson, Esq.; seconded by Thomas Maltby, Esq.—That copies of the resolutions entered into this day be transmitted to the Admiralty, to the Trinity House, and to Lloyd's; and that copies of the resolutions be published in several of the provincial papers.

XX. Moved by John William Buckle, Esq.; seconded by Sir Charles Flower, Bart.—That the warmest thanks of this Meeting be presented to Thomas Wilson, Esq. M.P. for his humane, zealous, and persevering exertions in the establishment of this Institution.

[Pg 52]

His Grace the Archbishop having left the chair, Thomas Wilson, Esq. was unanimously called upon to take it.

Moved by Thomas Wilson, Esq. M.P. seconded by Sir Chas. Flower, Bart. and resolved unanimously,—That the best thanks of this Meeting be given to his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, for the important service which he has rendered the Institution, and particularly for his condescension in taking the chair this day.

(Signed) THOMAS WILSON,

Chairman.

[Pg 53]

At a General Court of the Subscribers and Friends to the Royal National Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck, held at the City of London Tavern, on the 10th of March, 1825.

The Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Bath and Wells in the Chair.

It was moved by George Hibbert, Esq.

Seconded by Thomas Wilson, Esq. M.P.

And resolved unanimously,

That the Gold Medallion of the Institution be presented to Sir William Hillary, Bart., by whom this NATIONAL INSTITUTION was first suggested, and ably recommended by his publications on the subject.

(Signed) THOMAS WILSON,

Chairman of the Committee.

[Pg 54]

Having thus shown, by official documents, the great outline of the Royal National Institution, now happily established for the preservation of Life from Shipwreck, a brief recapitulation of the important nature of its objects and its plans, will perhaps be the best conclusion I can offer to those pages, which have already been received by the public in a manner so gratifying to my own feelings.

From the most early periods, and in every state of society, shipwreck has been one of those never ceasing evils which has excited the commiseration of mankind; but, until recently, appears scarcely ever to have called forth their humane efforts to mitigate its deplorable consequences. For centuries our mariners have been left, unassisted, to endure every peril of the sea, as if shipwreck were a calamity in every instance utterly beyond all reach of mortal succour, and in every age, thousands of our fellow-creatures have thus miserably perished, who unquestionably might have been rescued.

Of late years, various efforts have been made on parts of our coasts for the preservation of life from impending peril, and some excellent inventions have been introduced for that purpose; these had however hitherto been only a means, not a system—local, not national.

But when we reflect on the great waste of human life attendant on these dreadful catastrophes, and the vital importance to their country of those who have thus been abandoned to their wretched fate, it cannot fail to excite our astonishment that amongst all the noble Institutions of this great empire, which have been patronized by the crown, promoted by the government, or sustained by the bounty of the people, there never before has been established, in this the most powerful maritime state of ancient or of modern days, one general association, or national Institution for the preservation of Life from Shipwreck.

[Pg 55]

The humane attention of the British nation has at length been roused to this important object,—this void in our benevolent establishments has been supplied, by the formation of the Royal National Institution, under the immediate patronage of the King.

The objects contemplated by this Institution are, in their nature, deeply interesting to the cause of humanity—important to the naval and the commercial interests of the nation, and calculated to extend their beneficial influence to every age and every country.

It will be seen by the preceding documents that it takes within the scope of its efforts, the preservation from shipwreck—not only of the seamen and the subjects of these kingdoms, but those of every nation who may become exposed to that misfortune on the British shores, equally in peace and in war. It invites to its aid the humane and the brave, urging them to the rescue of their fellow-creatures, by supplying them with every means, that their attempts may be made with all attainable safety to themselves—conferring honorary and pecuniary rewards for their generous efforts—rendering every practicable relief to the destitute widows and families of those who unfortunately may perish in their attempts to save the lives of others, and for those who happily may be thus preserved. It purposes to provide them with that food, clothing, medical aid, and shelter, which their forlorn situation may require—to enable those who may belong to this country to proceed to their homes, or to the nearest port where they may obtain future employment. And the subjects of other powers to return to their native land, or to place them in safety under the care of the accredited authorities of their own nation.

[Pg 56]

This Institution also confers honorary rewards, on the authors of such inventions as shall be the most effectual, for the preservation of Lives from Shipwreck.

Such are the leading features of that system, which is presumed to be the best calculated for calling forth the energies of a great maritime people—to stimulate those feelings which have but too long remained dormant, or hitherto have only been partially exerted, and to arouse our countrymen to the rescue of the best bulwarks of British power from those direful calamities to which they are perpetually exposed—which are not the casual misfortunes of a day, once overcome and not liable to recur, but extending their destructive ravages to every sea and to every coast—each year sweeping thousands to a watery grave, and certain to continue their devastating effects to thousands yet unborn; augmented, in the number of their victims, in proportion as our commerce shall extend itself over the globe.

[Pg 57]

To all who revere the naval glory of Britain—to all who duly estimate the commercial greatness of their country, or who profit by its success—to all who feel the humanity and the policy of preserving the brave defenders of the state, and the hardy conductors of that commerce, from those dangers, to which, in the exercise of their arduous duties, they are continually exposed—this Institution cannot appeal in vain.

Every class must feel how deeply it is connected with the national honour, and the maritime interest of their country, that all the means which the bounty of a wealthy and a liberal people can supply, and all the efforts which experience and humanity can prompt, should be devoted to so sacred a cause.

Each in his respective sphere is earnestly solicited to bear a part—the great and the affluent, and those residing in the interior of the kingdom, by their influence and their contributions—the active and the zealous, by their energetic efforts—those on the coasts, by the more hazardous exertions of enterprise and bravery—and all, according to their power and their stations, to promote the success, and to recompense the endeavours of those who voluntarily encounter the greatest perils, for the rescue of the unhappy mariner, of every nation, who may be in danger of shipwreck on our coasts.

[Pg 58]

The accomplishment of so many and such important objects, on a scale commensurate with the frequency and the extent of the misfortunes they are intended to alleviate, requires the combined efforts of numerous public bodies and zealous individuals—preconcerted arrangements on every dangerous coast, and considerable pecuniary resources.

Under these convictions, I presume most earnestly to recommend, that public meetings should be held in those maritime counties and great sea ports of the united kingdom which have not yet come forward in this cause, for the formation of district or local associations on all our coasts, regulated in their internal concerns by their own committees, as departments of, and in direct communication with, the parent Institution, having an union of funds, of object and of effort, for the most extended adoption of every means which the magnitude of the evil to be averted imperatively demands at our hands.

[Pg 59]

Nor are those whose residence is the most remote from the scenes of these disasters, less interested in the universal establishment of this system.—Where is to be found that family, of any station, even in the very interior of the kingdom, which has not some near and dear connexions, some valued relatives or friends, who, from their professions or their pursuits, may become exposed to the hazard of shipwreck, and who may be thus preserved, through the very means to which their bounty may contribute? Themselves distant from the scene of danger, they may, without effort or toil, become instrumental in the rescue of those they most value in life—equally then are they called on to take measures for the collection of funds in the midland counties as on the coasts, in order to give increased resources to the Institution, for the most effectual prosecution of its plans.

As this great national measure shall continue to establish itself in the public mind, the adoption

of more extended and systematic plans will naturally impress themselves on our consideration.

From an almost universal want of foresight in our seamen, and a carelessness in providing against future dangers, naturally arising from the reckless bravery of their character, they would turn with contempt from any proposition that each should always take with him to sea, some one of those simple but practicable means by which his rescue from shipwreck might be greatly facilitated. In like manner the owners or masters of vessels, some from an ill timed parsimony, but far more, from thoughtlessness or prejudice, neglect to provide their vessels with any of the apparatus which would, in many instances, insure the safety of the passengers and crews.

[Pg 60]

What is thus the duty of every one, will, amongst such a numerous class of individuals, be either entirely neglected or imperfectly executed, and a continued sacrifice of life be the certain consequence.

Our seamen constitute one of the most valuable properties of the state. The preservation of the life of the subject is one of the most imperative duties of an enlightened government—it has therefore become indispensably requisite, in this great maritime nation, that these evils, arising from causes which no unity of opinion or of action, in the parties most interested, can ever be expected to remove, should as far as possible be obviated by legislative enactment—and that vessels should not, after a given period, be permitted to clear out at the ports from which they are to sail, until, according to their tonnage, the number of their passengers and crews, and the nature of the voyage on which they are bound, it shall have been ascertained that they have been provided by the owners, and according to established regulations, with those means of safety which shall be required.

[Pg 61]

These should consist of the most simple and effectual apparatus for establishing a communication in case of wreck, between the vessel and the shore—materials for the construction of rafts—lifebuoys—cork jackets, or other buoyant means of safety to individuals; boats in a reasonable proportion to the numbers on board, to some of which the properties of life boats might immediately and easily be given—with other measures which the great importance of the object demands, on a scale consistent with that economy which should ever attend compulsory regulations.

The extent and nature of these precautionary measures require mature consideration, and would best be ascertained by a committee of experienced and scientific officers and individuals selected from the navy, the Trinity House, Lloyd's, the Ship-owners' Society, and other departments connected with maritime affairs, on whose reports, and after minute and deliberate investigation, perhaps an enactment could alone be founded to produce the much desired effect.—It is only by reducing into a system those measures which are now left to chance, or to the forethought or the caprice of thousands, that such effectual precautions can be taken, as will insure that at all times the danger may be promptly met by adequate means of rescue.

[Pg 62]

It has been allowed by those of much ability and experience, that it would be very important, that seamen in the merchants service should be examined, by some competent authority, to be established for the purpose, as to their possessing that knowledge of their profession, on which the safety of their vessels and the lives of their crews must continually depend, before any one, who has not already filled that office, should be allowed to take the command of a vessel, of such tonnage and description, and with such exceptions as, on more full investigation of the subject, might be deemed requisite.

We have only stedfastly and undeviatingly to persevere in our course,—the greatness of our objects—the goodness of our cause—the conviction to the public mind, which time and experience cannot fail to bring, of the practicability of our means; and above all, the benevolent feelings of a gallant nation, excited by the continued rescue of their fellow creatures, will combine irresistibly to advocate this system, and ultimately to insure its complete success.

Much has recently been accomplished—several noble establishments have already been formed on our coasts—rewards for many lives preserved have already been bestowed—ininitely more remains yet to be done—nor should we for one moment desist from our exertions, nor relax from their ardent pursuit, until the whole of the British coasts shall be surrounded by well organized branches of the Institution—until every mariner, who may be in danger of shipwreck on our shores, may feel assured that his rescue will be attempted by all the efforts which a generous enterprise can make, supported by every means which human foresight can arrange—and until, prompted by our example, and witnessing that succour which their own shipwrecked seamen will have received on the shores of these kingdoms, the governments and the people of every maritime nation may become impressed with the vital importance of this cause; and joining their efforts to ours, by the formation of similar establishments in their respective countries, thus essentially contribute to the adoption of an inter-national and universal system for the mitigation of the calamity of shipwreck, on every coast of the civilised world.

[Pg 63]

WILLIAM HILLARY.

19th July, 1825.

[Pg 64]

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK AN APPEAL TO THE BRITISH NATION ON
THE HUMANITY AND POLICY OF FORMING A NATIONAL INSTITUTION FOR THE
PRESERVATION OF LIVES AND PROPERTY FROM SHIPWRECK (1825) ***

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE
THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE
PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg™ License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.

**Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg™
electronic works**

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg™ electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg™ electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg™ electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg™ works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg™ name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg™ License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg™ website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”
- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.
- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.
- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or

group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you ‘AS-IS’, WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™’s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations (\$1 to \$5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.