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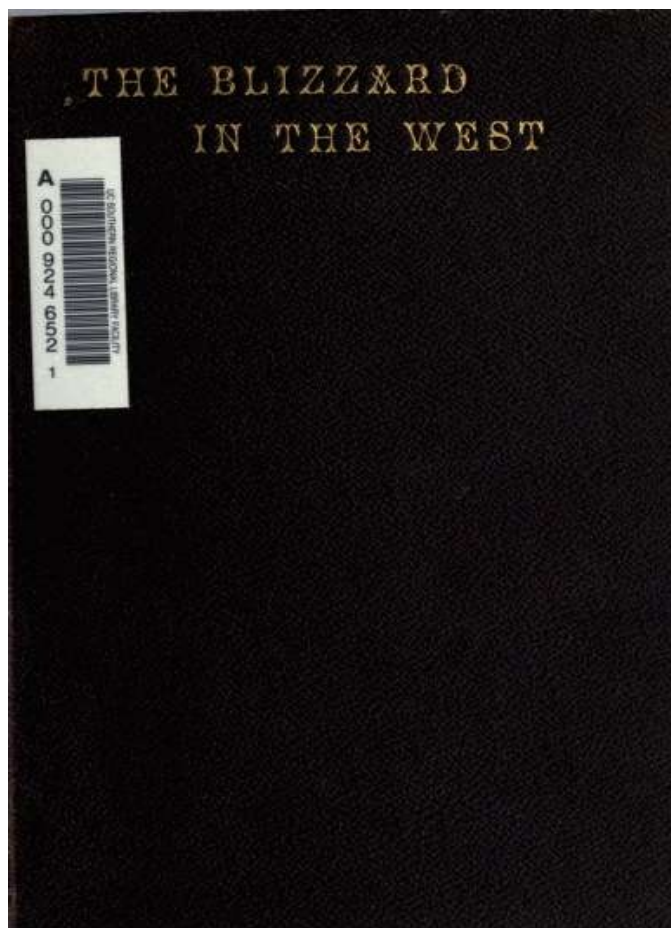
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THE
Blizzard in the West:
BEING
A Record and Story of the Disastrous Storm
WHICH RAGED THROUGHOUT
Devon and Cornwall, and West Somerset,

On the Night of March 9th, 1891.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

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PREFACE.

The record of the Blizzard of 1891 was undertaken in response to a generally expressed desire on the part of a large number of residents in the Western Counties.

It would have been impossible to compile the work, imperfect as it is, without the assistance and co-operation of the editor and staff of the *Western Morning News*, who have been most active in its promotion. Assistance has also been kindly rendered by the editor and staff of the *Western Daily Mercury*.

Thanks are also largely due to many others, who, besides furnishing us with interesting details and views, have offered us every facility for obtaining information.

Valuable particulars in some instances have been afforded by Dr. Merrifield, of Plymouth, and Mr. Rowe, public librarian, of Devonport, who has also sent some of the views appearing in this book.

To the artistic photographic skill of Messrs. Heath and Son, of George Street, Plymouth, Messrs. Denney and Co., of Exeter and Teignmouth, and Messrs. Valentine and Son, of Teignmouth, we are indebted for several of our illustrations. To the amateur photographers in various parts of the West who so kindly sent photographic views we tender our best thanks, and regret that space did not permit us to use a larger number.

Much necessarily remains untold, but we have endeavoured to depict a very remarkable event as fully as the pages at our disposal permitted.

Devonport, April, 1891.

NESTLÉ'S
FOOD

A Complete and Perfect Substitute for
Mothers' Milk.

THE BLIZZARD IN THE WEST

[1]

CHAPTER I. INDICATIONS AND OBSERVATIONS.

On the morning of the 9th of March, 1891, when inhabitants of the three westernmost counties in England set about preparing for the routine duties of daily life, nothing seemed to indicate that, with the approach of nightfall, the gravest atmospheric disturbance of the century—in that part of the world, at all events—would come to spread terror and destruction throughout town and country. The month, so far, had not been a gentle one. Following in the footsteps of a memorably genial February, March had been somewhat harsh and cold, without yielding the rain that was by this time greatly needed. There were rumours of "a change of some sort," of an approaching "fall of something," and other vaticinations of the same familiar character floating about, but in the west country these wise sayings fall so thick and fast and frequently as to possess little more significance than the most oft-repeated household words. When the day drew on, and signs of a rising gale were uncomfortably apparent on every hand, recollections of a promised storm from the Observatories of the United States began to be awakened, but it was found on sifting the matter, that if this were the disturbance indicated, it had come about a fortnight too soon. Students of "Old Moore's Almanack" were better informed, and it is probable that if this ill wind blew good to anybody, it was in the shape of discovery that by virtue of the truth of his forecast, a favourite and venerable prophet was deserving of honour at the hands of the people of his own country. Unhappily, however, there is nothing to show that advantage had been taken of this warning, in any practical sense. On the contrary, the blast came down swiftly upon a community that was almost wholly unprepared to receive it, and one of the saddest parts of the story of its fury will be the account of the devastation wrought among the unprotected flocks and herds.

[2]

On referring to the remarks on the subject of the weather published in the local press, and obtained from official scientific authorities, it will be found that at an early hour on the morning of March 9th the barometer had been rising slightly, and that the day "promised to be fine." Other accounts hinted at the probability of some snow showers, and snow was reported as falling heavily in North Wales, but north and north-easterly winds, light and moderate, were anticipated. Nothing was said about a great fall of snow, accompanied by a hurricane fierce enough to send it down in powder, without even allowing time for the formation of snow-flakes.

According to one Plymouth correspondent, whose observations are both reliable and valuable, the only intimation of the coming storm was by the barometer falling to 29·69 on the evening of the 9th, with an E.N.E. wind. The hygrometer was thick and heavy—a sign of rough weather. During the night the glass fell to 29·39. On Tuesday it fell to 29·180. Another account says that it has not, perhaps, occurred in the experience of many, except those who have known tropical storms, that the movement in an ordinary column barometer might be seen during the progress of a gale. Such, however, was possible in the case under notice. Though the glass had been falling during the day, yet there were no indications of any serious disturbance of the weather. On many occasions there have been greater falls in the barometer than on this occasion. When this storm was at its height, the barometer at Devonport was observed to be at 29·27, but in the course of half an hour pressure was indicated by 29·20, the rise being, of course, a considerable and sudden one. Within an hour of this register being made, a fall had again occurred to 29·25, and even a little below this was marked, at which point the column remained until the early hours of the morning.

[3]

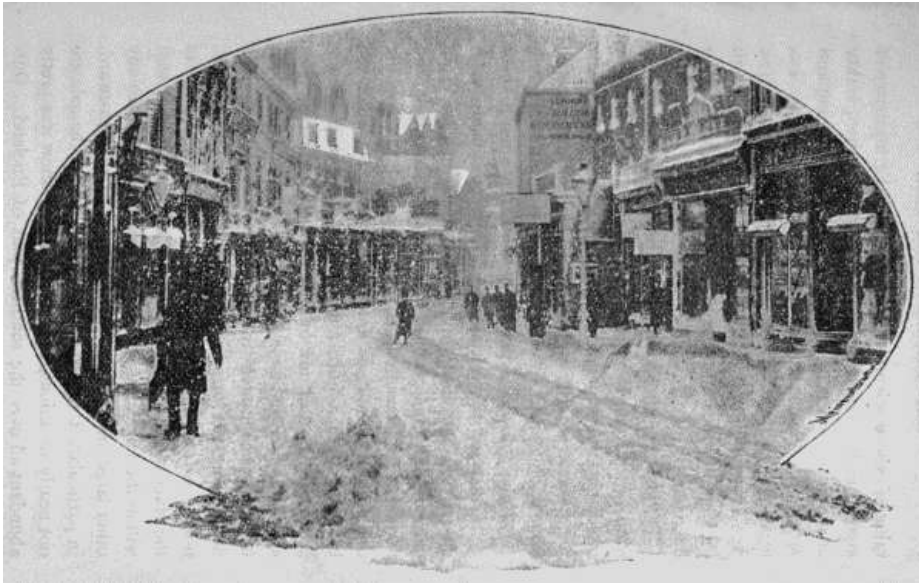
It is clear that during the whole progress of the storm the temperature was never very low. The great cold came from the strength of the wind. During the storm, and in the course of the severe days that followed, not more than five or six degrees of frost were registered, and on one day of the week, when there was snow on every hand, the thermometer never rose higher than freezing point. The wind, however, was terrific, its maximum force during the night being 10, and 12 is the highest possible. To this extraordinary velocity is due the fact that the visitation is best describable by the term "blizzard." With a less violent wind, there would have been a great fall of snow, as great probably as that of January, 1881, when difficulties and disasters painfully comparable with those of the present year were spread broadcast over not only the western portion, but the whole of England, but it would have been a snowstorm and not a blizzard, and many of the phenomenal aspects of the visitation under notice would have been absent. In the course of the present narrative many remarkable effects due to the powdery nature of the snow will have to be recorded. Before concluding the meteorological portion of the subject, and getting on with the story, it may be well to observe that according to the best authorities a blizzard is caused by the fierceness of the wind, which blows the cold into the vapour in the atmosphere and

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consolidates it into fine snow without allowing time for the formation of a snow-flake. We are accustomed to associate ideas of gentleness and beauty and stillness with the fall of snow. The blizzard, which is apparently—but, of course, only in name—a new acquaintance, shews us the reverse side of the picture, and suggests nothing beyond merciless fury and destructiveness.

As to the quantity of snow that fell, accounts differ. There were huge drifts in most places; in others there was a comparatively level covering of many feet in thickness. The condition of a part of George Street, Plymouth, which received a very fair quantity, is artistically portrayed in the accompanying illustration, copied from a photograph taken on the morning of Tuesday by Mr. Heath, photographer, of Plymouth. According to observations made by Dr. Merrifield, of Plymouth, the value of whose scientific researches into the mysteries of matters meteorological are beyond question, the quantity of snow and rain that fell between Monday evening and early on Wednesday morning was .68. This was registered at the doctor's residence, which stands 125 feet above the level of the sea, and faces S.S.E. With the depth of snow in other places, this record will deal in due course.

[5]



GEORGE STREET, PLYMOUTH.

During the whole time the blizzard was raging, the wind varied from N.E. to S.E. The changes were very rapid, but this was the widest range. Along the coast the greatest severity appears to have been experienced from a point or two eastward of Teignmouth to Falmouth Bay, many towns exposed to the sea having to bear their share of the burden, and unhappily many valuable lives being lost through disastrous wrecks. If a map of the three counties of Devon, Cornwall, and Somerset be consulted, it will be found that, taking this portion of the coast as an opening through which the broad shaft of a hurricane entered, now sweeping in a north-easterly, and now in a south-easterly direction, the area of country that has sustained the heaviest damage will be embraced, the intensity of the violence inflicted gradually diminishing the further one travels towards the east, north, and west. Dartmoor forms a kind of centre of the chief scene of desolation, and Plymouth, being well within the range, has suffered far more severely than any other large town in the three counties. To the eastward, in particular, it is clear that the effects of the gale are not nearly so serious, though the fall of snow was pretty abundant all over the southern part of England. Outside of Devon and West Cornwall there are no great lots of timber down, though here and there a fallen tree is observable.

[6]

[7]

Unhappily the departure of the storm was not so sudden as its advent. The Tuesday following the night of tempest was an indescribably wretched day, and the barometer fell to 29.180. Wednesday brought sunshine and hope with it, and afforded the one bright spot in this gloomy record by showing up many effects of wonderful beauty in the snow-covered landscapes. Still the wind was never at rest, though the thermometer went up to 120° in the sun. Thursday followed with more snow, and occasional sharp and ominous squalls, and some apprehension was felt that a repetition of Monday's experience was in the air, but fortunately the week wore away without further calamity, and the work of repairing to some extent the damage done, and thereby making existence for man and beast possible, a task hitherto carried on under tremendous difficulties, was vigorously pushed forward.

A letter, which will be found interesting, was, on the day after the storm, written to the editor of the *Western Morning News*, and published in that paper, by Captain Andrew Haggard, of the King's Own Scottish Borderers, now stationed at Devonport. The writer is a brother of Mr. Rider Haggard, and himself a novelist of repute. This letter was as follows:—

"SIR,—The cyclonic nature of the blizzard that has been annoying us all so much, and causing such a frightful amount of damage during the last two days, may be judged by the following observations taken by several officers in the South Raglan Barracks on the evening of the 9th instant. From these observations it would seem as if for a time the South Raglan Barracks were in the exact centre of the storm, being left for varying periods in a complete calm in consequence. Here are the notes we made:—At 8.12 P.M. the storm was raging so furiously that the solid old Raglan was shaken to its

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foundations, the fire was roaring up the chimney as if in a blast furnace, and the noise made by the blizzard generally was such that it was difficult to hear one's neighbour speak. But at 8·13 suddenly came a complete lull. The elements ceased to wage war, the fire assumed its normal demeanour, and an officer who went out to see what had happened came in and reported that it was so calm he was able to light matches outside. For thirteen minutes did this calm last. At 8·26 with a roar like thunder, the wind returned, and once more we were dreading that the armies of the chimney pots would fall upon us in their fury. Only for twenty minutes, though, did the hurricane scream and yell, and as before make itself generally obnoxious. At 8·46 there was another absolute cessation of wind until 8·53, when it 'blizzed' worse than before. And shortly afterward everyone started forth to put out fires, when all the amateur meteorologists discovered to their grief that whatever the cyclone might do in the way of lulling occasionally down at the Raglan, on the top of Stoke Hill it blizzed all night with perfect impartiality.

Yours truly,
"ANDREW HAGGARD.

"DEVONPORT, *March 10th.*"

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CHAPTER II. THE BLIZZARD.

Soon after daylight, on the morning of Monday, March 9th, over the whole of the West of England, the fine weather that had prevailed for several weeks past gave place to a most unpleasant condition of affairs. The temperature fell, almost suddenly, and in the neighbourhood of Plymouth, Devonport, and Stonehouse, snow was falling fitfully from about an hour before noon. There was a gradually rising wind, that assumed menacing proportions as the afternoon wore on, while the snow that had, for the first few hours, thawed as soon as it fell upon the yet warm ground, was rapidly forming a white covering on every position exposed to the sky. At six o'clock, in the three towns some four or five inches of snow lay upon the ground, and the wind had increased to a hurricane. Slates began to start from the roofs of houses, and chimneys to fall, and in a very short time the streets assumed a deserted appearance, and all vehicular traffic was stopped. Advertisement hoardings were hurled from their positions with some terrible crashes, and in many instances the splinters were promptly seized by a thrifty populace and taken away for firewood. Many trees were blown down in the early part of the night. In Buckland Street, Plymouth, a tree of sufficient size to block the roadway fell at about eight o'clock, and not long after another heavy tree fell from Athenæum Garden across Athenæum Street, the main road to the Great Western Railway Station, completely closing the thoroughfare. Our illustration, reproduced from a photograph taken by Mr. Heath of George Street, Plymouth, on the morning after the storm, gives a realistic idea of the condition of Plymouth streets, and of the quantity of snow that was blown about during the night.

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On Plymouth Hoe, iron seats were blown from their fastenings and rolled over and over, the ironwork in many instances being curiously bent. The statue of Drake, the Armada Memorial, and the Smeaton Tower looked, however, none the worse for the wild night. Perhaps, when the sun shone upon them on Wednesday they may be described as having looked better for the patches of glistening snow that clung to them in most picturesque form. Strange to say, the Pavilion Pier sustained no damage beyond a smashed pane or two of glass. Exposed as it must have been to the full fury of the gale, it stood the turmoil gallantly, and this fact speaks well for the soundness of the structure, and for the good workmanship and material used in its erection.

Trees were uprooted or snapped short off at Woodside, the residence of Mr. Bewes, at Portland Square, and in many other parts of Plymouth. Of these irreparable losses much more will be said in the course of this record. Concerning the damage wrought among houses and homesteads, and the marvellous escapes from injury to life and limb, our limited pages would not permit of the chronicling of one hundredth part of those that were met with in the Three Towns alone during that night. At Clifton Place, Plymouth, a chimney fell through the roof into a bedroom occupied by three little girls, and completely buried them, two being so badly injured as to necessitate their removal to the hospital. In this instance the staircase was blocked by the débris, and access to the terrified children could only be obtained by means of ladders, and with the greatest difficulty.

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ATHENÆUM STREET, PLYMOUTH.

On Mutley Plain, one of the most exposed situations in Plymouth, the storm raged with terrific fury, women and children being blown off their feet and half-suffocated with the rush of snow-laden wind, while such cabmen as had ventured abroad with their cabs, made their way back to more sheltered quarters with great difficulty. Numerous instances in this locality of strong men receiving severe contusions through being blown against walls and railings are recorded. At Alexandra Place, Mutley, a terrific gust of wind caught one of the chimneys of the house, sending it through the roof, and the only means of rendering the house habitable for the time was by stretching tarpaulins over the breach. There is no statement accessible of the number of fallen chimneys and damaged roofs that might have been discovered in the Three Towns alone during that night, and even if there were, to recount them all would only be to tell one sad story over and over again with wearisome monotony; but it is probably safe to say that scarcely one street in the whole of the district escaped without some house receiving injury. Fortunately the storm was at its height at about 8 o'clock in the evening, an hour when bedrooms are usually unoccupied. Had the chief fury of the gale been spent some hours later, it is more than likely that numerous fatalities would have had to be recounted. [12]

At a shop in Fore Street, Devonport, a similar accident occurred, two children while lying in bed being badly crushed through a chimney falling. At the Main Guard, at the top of Devonport Hill, the windows were blown in, but the soldiers on duty fortunately escaped without injury, and were removed into the barracks. The roofs of the "Crown and Column," and of the wine and spirit store in the occupation of Messrs. Chubb & Co., both in Devonport, were seriously injured, while at Wingfield Villa, Stoke, the residence of the rector of Stoke Damerel, soon after 8 o'clock, a terrific squall burst upon the house and sent a large chimney stack crashing through the roof into the drawing room, doing great damage to some valuable furniture. Altogether, a lengthy chapter of accidents might be recorded as the result of the gale on Monday evening in Devonport. In a few instances personal injuries of a more or less serious nature were sustained, but it is not a little remarkable, that here, as elsewhere in the immediate neighbourhood, while there were many narrow escapes no case of a fatal character occurred. [13]

Among other narrow escapes at Devonport may be instanced that of a gentleman living in Albert Road, Morice Town. He went to a back bedroom on the top storey to nail up a board to prevent smoke from blowing down the chimney, when a sudden gust struck the stack and precipitated it on to the roof, which fell through the ceiling into the bedroom, burying him and carrying a portion of the floor into the back drawing-room below. The gentleman in question managed to extricate himself from the débris, and escaped with a severe shaking. In another case, a family occupying two rooms at the top of an old house in Cannon Street, nearly lost their lives. The occupier, his wife, and mother-in-law, were sitting around the bedroom fire when the roof fell on them. Their injuries were not of a serious character, but considerable damage was done to their furniture. It is estimated that about £50 worth of damage was done to the buildings at the back of Hope (Baptist) Chapel in Fore Street; a chimney falling bodily crashed through the roof, and carried one of the class-rooms and the gallery of the Sunday-school into the vestry. A chimney stack falling from No. 7, Chapel Street, destroyed a conservatory, and did considerable damage to the roof of the adjoining house, No. 6. A large portion of the roof of the South Devon Sanitary Laundry, Cornwall Street, was blown away, and the work of the establishment was temporarily disarranged in consequence. Extensive damage was also done to property at 10, Stopford-place, Stoke. [14]

One of the most miraculous escapes that occurred was that at the residence of Mr. Perkins (Lord Mount-Edgcombe's surveyor) in Emma Place, Stonehouse. During the hurricane Mrs. Perkins heard the windows and doors rattling, and rushed up to the nursery to see that the windows were closed and doors fastened. The servant was closing the window, her mistress standing near the chimney breast, when there was a sudden crash. The servant clung to the framework of the window, but Mrs. Perkins immediately found herself buried in bricks and mortar. She was sitting on a portion of the floor near the window, with her legs dangling over an abyss; the floors having been carried away, with the exception of two floor boards, upon which, happily, she had been deposited. The snow found its way into the house, and although no one could distinguish her or [15]

the servant, she seems to have grasped the situation and called to her husband to bring a ladder to release her and the girl. This eventually was done, but the intense excitement of the moment may be well imagined. Mr. Perkins, having obtained a ladder and a light had the greatest difficulty in discovering the position of those above, but having done so, he released both from their perilous position, little thinking that the ladder was resting on fallen rubbish, the slightest shock to which would have precipitated all to the basement.

During this night of disaster, probably the most calamitous incident that occurred on land, was a fire which broke out at about 8 o'clock at 4, Wingfield Villas, Stoke, the residence of Mr. Venning, Town Clerk of Devonport, and which resulted in the total destruction of the house and its contents, as well as in material damage to the adjoining villa. A chimney-stack facing the direction from which the wind blew gave way and, crashing through the roof of the nursery, carried with it a quantity of débris through the floor of the nursery into the drawing-room below. Through the aperture thus made the fire from the nursery grate, and it is supposed also a lamp, were carried, and speedily ignited the contents of the drawing-room. The fire, being fanned by the fierce gale, just then at its height, increased rapidly, and the premises were soon in a blaze. [16]

Owing to the elevated position in which the house stood the conflagration was visible at a great distance, and in spite of the weather, large numbers of people visited the spot, although the journey thither, under the circumstances, was one of the most difficult it is possible to conceive. To those who ventured on the walk, however, the sight presented was an extraordinarily impressive one. The flames raged like the blast of a furnace, and the mingling of smoke, sparks and snow-dust produced an effect that was as novel as it was terrible. Sparks from the burning building were carried immense distances, and beaten, with the snow-powder, against the windows of houses that faced the burning villa. Standing at a distance of nearly a mile, with eyes fixed on the blaze, it was impossible to believe that the roar of the fire could not be heard, so nearly did the howling and surging of the wind resemble the roar caused by a great volume of rushing flame.

In connection with the fire several narrow escapes are recorded. Mr. Venning's daughter, about six years of age, had a perilous experience. She had been put to bed by her nurse, and, during the absence of the latter from the room for a few minutes, the chimney clashed through the roof into the drawing-room. Fortunately Mr. Venning's daughter received nothing worse than a severe fright, and she was quickly removed to a neighbouring house. The ladies who were in the drawing-room at the time of the crash were also greatly alarmed, and made a hasty exit from the building, being hospitably sheltered at Wingfield House by Colonel Goodeve, R.A., and also at the house of a relative, in Godolphin Terrace. [17]

The efforts of the firemen to prevent the spread of the flames, under circumstances of great difficulty, were crowned with a well-merited success. Water was not readily available, and when obtained was not abundant, but notwithstanding this a gallant fight was made, and although to save the one dwelling was impossible, the contents of the adjoining one were safely removed, and the structure itself was snatched from total demolition. In addition to the West of England and Devonport Fire Brigades, and a large staff of constables under the charge of Mr. Evans, the Chief Constable of Devonport, there were present Colonel Liardet, R.M.L.I., the field officer of the day, and a detachment of men belonging to the King's Own Scottish Borderers, under Captain Haggard. Several manual engines from the troops in garrison were taken to the scene of the fire, but, with one exception, they were not brought into use. A number of civilians were conspicuous for their energy in performing voluntary salvage duty. The damage resulting from this fire has been estimated at something like £7,000.

On their way to and from the scene of the fire by way of Millbridge, many pedestrians from Plymouth had narrow escapes from being blown over the parapet of the bridge into the Deadlake. About half-past eight, when the fire had somewhat abated, the majority of the Plymouth spectators moved back with the intention of re-crossing the bridge, but the wind had increased in violence, and the water in the lake was so disturbed that the waves could be heard lashing against the bridge and on the shores. Some who ventured on the bridge were driven back, and consternation began to spread among the crowd, many women screaming loudly. To proceed to Plymouth by way of Pennycomequick was also a matter of difficulty, as the full fury of the gale blowing down the valley had to be faced. Many waited on the Devonport side until there was a lull, when some of them linked their arms in those of their friends for safety's sake and so crossed to Plymouth. [18]

During the whole of Monday night Her Majesty's vessels in the Hamoaze were in positions of great peril, and those holding responsible posts in connection with them underwent great anxiety. The *Lion* and *Implacable*, anchored just above Torpoint, which form an establishment for training boys, under the command of Commander Morrison, dragged their moorings during the evening. The vessels were moored stern to stern, and connected by a covered gangway. The cause of the mishap was the parting of the starboard bridle of the *Implacable*. At about half-past nine signals of distress were made to the shore, and it was stated that the two ships had been driven ashore, and were in the mud off Thanckes. This, however, proved not to be the case, as the vessels never even touched the ground. As soon as the danger was known all available tugs at Devonport Dockyard were despatched with a view to taking off, if necessary, the hundreds of boys who were on board. At midnight, however, all apprehension for the safety of the vessels had been practically removed, although as the storm had by no means abated, the tugs were ordered to stand by all night in order to give any assistance that might be required. [19]

In the meantime there was great excitement in Sutton Harbour. Between eight and nine o'clock several of the trading vessels, trawlers, and fishing craft lying at anchor began to drag, and extra

warps had to be got out, and the vessels secured. The sea in the harbour was very heavy, and at one time some fear was felt for the buildings along the quay, but no damage of this nature occurred. Some of the stores along the North quay were roughly handled by the wind, the roof of the new coal store of Messrs. Hill and Co. was blown off, and a similar accident occurred to the premises in the occupation of Messrs. Vodden and Johns, but generally speaking the damage on the quays was satisfactorily light. A good deal of anxiety was expressed as to the welfare of trawlers who were known to be in the channel, and, as a subsequent chapter will show, these fears were by no means groundless. The cutter of the harbourmaster, lying in Plymouth Sound was reported to be in a sinking condition during the night, and a tug was sent to her assistance. She had four men on board, who were removed for safety, but ultimately the cutter weathered the storm, and is still afloat.

Under conditions like these the night of the ninth of March wore away in the Three Towns. To many the night was a long one, and crowded with all sorts of apprehensions. The wind, never for a moment silent, rose again and again to hurricane force, and the fine snow so swiftly covered the window panes that to look out upon the night soon became a matter of difficulty. There was no great feeling of security indoors, but to remain out for long was a matter of impossibility, and the imperfect and disconnected rumours of disaster that were disseminated created all the more alarm from the fact that they could not be investigated. Hundreds of households did not go to bed at all, while very many sat up all night because their bedrooms were in a state of hopeless confusion, or of absolute wreck. Some were without fire, through a defect having been brought about in the chimney, or through the chimney having fallen in altogether; and in those localities where the buildings were of the dilapidated or frail order the wretchedness for the night, and, indeed, for the week throughout, was very great.

[20]

Not the least serious part of the gale was the number of friends missing from the Plymouth district. Quite early there was a breakdown of the telegraph wires, which made all telegraphic communication with other parts of the country impossible, and the late arrival of many trains into the west, and the non-arrival of others, led to much anxious conjecture as to the fate of those whose appearance in Plymouth during the night had been confidently expected. The first indications of telegraphic interruption were observed as early as half-past four on Monday afternoon, when communication with Tavistock was suspended. Following this, the reports of breakdowns from all parts of the two counties became very frequent until about seven o'clock, when communication with London and all places above Plymouth ceased. Penzance, and one or two Cornish towns could be communicated with for some time longer, but soon all operations were suspended, and no messages were received at the Plymouth office after eight o'clock. As a general rule the breakdown was caused by trees falling across the wires, or by the telegraph posts having been brought bodily to the ground. As will be subsequently seen, this condition of things prevailed to a great extent, and in some cases the telegraph wires and posts got upon the railway lines and prevented the progress of the trains.

[21]

The interruption of the local train service commenced early on Monday. Trains due at North Road Station, Plymouth, between mid-day and eight o'clock in the evening were all considerably behind time, and the telegraphic and telephonic instruments being rendered useless, thus making communication with other stations impossible, the officials had an anxious period of waiting for information of belated trains. At about nine o'clock the "Jubilee," which left London at one o'clock, and should have reached North Road, Plymouth, at 7-30, came into the station. With the remarkable experiences of passengers by this, one of the last trains that reached Plymouth by either the London and South Western or Great Western lines from Monday night to Saturday, and other trains that failed to reach Plymouth at all, a subsequent chapter will deal, should space permit. A train from Tavistock, due at 8-40, did not appear until eleven o'clock, and the eight o'clock train from Launceston did not come at all. The "Alexandra," a train that left Waterloo Station at 2-40 arrived at nine o'clock, the driver stating that near Okehampton he had to drive through three feet of snow. These, however, are the trains that did arrive. There were many that did not, and in many scores of instances a member of a family was not heard of for days, although, happily, in the majority of cases, the missing one ultimately turned up with nothing worse than a severe cold and a great distaste for winter life in small Devonshire or Cornish towns.

[22]

So far the state of affairs in the Three Towns only has been dealt with, but it will be readily surmised that adjacent towns, and more especially those in the neighbourhood of Dartmoor, and the more open parts of Cornwall, suffered very considerably. Generally speaking, the damage to house property was nowhere so great as in Plymouth and Devonport. In the country districts, as a matter of course, calamities of a most serious and special character were met with, and trees were felled, sheep buried, and oxen frozen in enormous quantities,—in some instances, also, human life was sacrificed, but in none of the other larger towns was the devastation so widespread as in the Three Towns. At Exeter, the fall of snow was said to be the heaviest for years, and by reason of its suddenness, even more severe than the storm of 1881. The drifts of snow in some places were of great depth. As at Plymouth, traffic as well as business was suspended, but there were no serious mishaps, the force of the wind, though great, being evidently not so fierce as was the case further west. Railway communication between Exeter and Plymouth was of course impossible, but there were on Tuesday four trains trying to run between Exeter and Taunton. The North of England mail, which should have arrived at Exeter at half-past eight was four hours late, but it did put in an appearance. The trains of the London and South Western Railway ran to Exeter from the North just as usual, throughout the week.

[23]

At Torquay the storm was the severest experienced there for many years. There was a heavy fall

of snow on the night of Monday, and on the following morning the ground was covered to the depth of a foot. A strong easterly wind was also blowing, and trees were uprooted in every part of the district. At the Recreation Grounds the roof was blown off the grand stand, and a huge tree blew across the railway at Lowes Bridge, near Torre Station. An engine of the up-train cut through this and traffic was suspended until the line was cleared by a breakdown gang on Tuesday. The trains from London and Plymouth failing to run, Torquay soon became isolated, and telegraph and telephone communication was early interfered with in consequence of the poles being blown down and the wires broken by the burden of snow. Considerable damage was done to the New Pier works by the heavy gale. Plant for moulding the concrete was washed away, as was also a portion of the masonry, while parts of the sea-wall were damaged, and a flight of stone steps leading to the sea-wall were swept completely away. Street traffic was so much impeded by the snow that on the Tuesday after the storm the Town Surveyor constructed a wooden snow-plough, and with this, drawn by two horses, the roads were cleared. All the public clocks in the town were stopped by the snow.

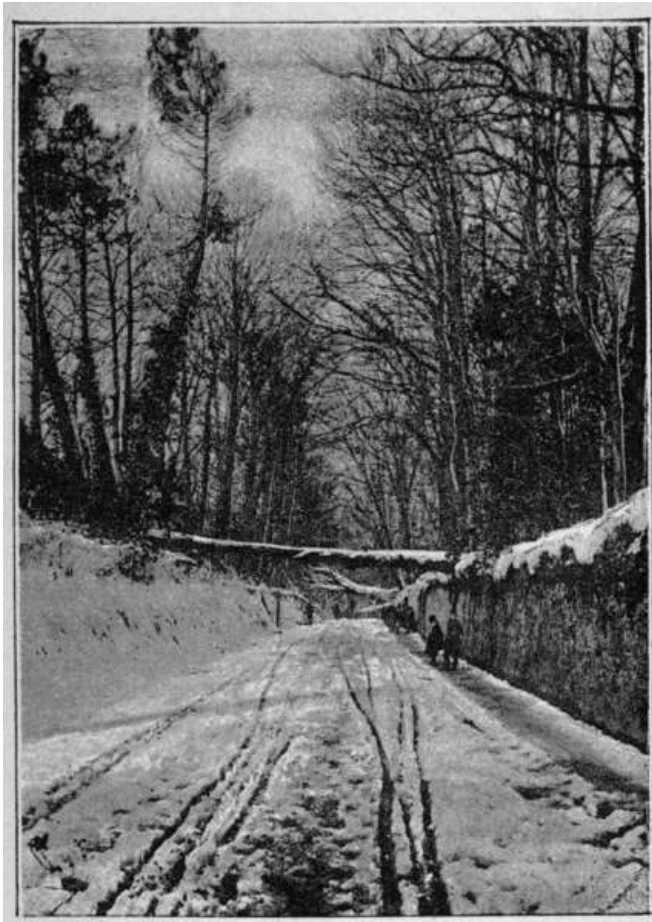
Tavistock was one of the towns that had the severest experiences. The barometer fell rapidly on Monday morning, and at about eleven o'clock snow began to fall; while, as the day advanced, it was accompanied by a high wind, that, towards seven o'clock in the evening, increased to a hurricane. In Tavistock, and all along the Tavy Valley, the full force of the storm was felt, large trees being uprooted, houses unroofed, and chimney-stacks blown down in every direction. One of the latter instances occurred in West Street, where the occupant, a lady, had been suffering from a serious illness. The chimney-stack being blown over, the débris fell through the roof into the bedroom where the invalid was lying. Her attendant received some cuts on the head, but the invalid escaped the falling masonry, although she received a severe shock to the system through the incident. A waggoner employed at the Phoenix Mills, Horrabridge, was returning to Tavistock from Lifton on Monday night, in charge of an empty waggon and three horses, and when within two miles of his destination, found that through the violence of the storm he was unable to continue his journey. He took the horses out of the waggon, and made an ineffectual attempt to drive them home. Failing in this the waggoner walked into Tavistock, and at about ten o'clock returned to the spot where he had left his horses. By this time the snow was so deep that the horses could not be seen, and it was necessary to leave them until the following morning. Eventually they were dug out, and driven home, not much the worse, to all appearance, for their night in the snow. Tavistock being an important market town, and the centre of a large district, experienced great inconvenience through the interruption in railway traffic, and the impassable state of the roads. Wednesday, March 11th, was the monthly cattle fair day, but not a single animal was brought in. At the Fitzford Church the window was blown in. Like many other towns in the Dartmoor vicinity, Tavistock received more than one disastrous visitation during this memorable week, and its record of lost sheep and cattle, to which more extended reference will be made further on, is a very serious one. [24]

At Bideford, and in the surrounding country, the weather was more severe than any experienced since the winter of 1881. The barometer had been steadily going back all day on Sunday, and on Monday a cutting east wind blew with considerable force. Snow commenced falling at noon, and continued until the evening, when the streets and roads were covered to some depth. Then the wind rose to half a gale, whirling the snow into little clouds, which filled both doors and windows. All through the night the wind increased in force, until it blew a perfect hurricane. Icicles hung inches long from windowsills and launders of the houses. In the country, traffic was completely suspended, the snowdrifts being as high as the hedges. Farmers were consequently unable to get into market, and provisions went up considerably in price. The mail coach started for Clovelly and Hartland as usual on Tuesday morning, and managed to reach Clovelly. There, however, the horses had to be taken out, and the driver rode through the deep drifts to Hartland on horseback. The return journey was performed by another man in a similar way. All the mails were delayed, and rural postmen's districts were mostly impassable. [25]

At Teignmouth, Exmouth, Dawlish, and most other seaside places from the estuary of the Exe to the Start, the effects of the gale were severely felt on Monday night. At the former place the sea ran high, and the breakers fell with great force close to the landwash and over the promenade. Opposite Den House the roadway was undermined and washed away, and had it not been for the fact that an hitherto existing stone wall lay buried beneath the surface, which acted as a breakwater against the heavy sea, it is almost certain that Den House and Bella Vista would have been washed away. As soon as the tide ebbed, the wind veered towards the northward, and the sea went down. A gang of men were at once set to work to shore up the embankment, and fill in the cavity made by the sea. The Promenade towards the East Cliff was also washed up in several places. In the Exeter Road and at Brimley a large number of trees were blown down, and traffic was generally suspended. [26]

An illustration from a photograph by Messrs. G. Denney & Co., photographers, of Exeter and Teignmouth, portrays one of the scenes in Exeter Road, which was impassable for a day or two.

At Totnes, Brent, and in fact every town in Devonshire, damage of a more or less severe character was sustained. Space will not allow of a separate reference to each locality in the present chapter, but in dealing with occurrences that took place after the early force of the blizzard had been exhausted on that memorable Monday night and Tuesday morning, there will be found few districts that necessity will not compel us to bring under notice. [27]



EXETER ROAD, TEIGNMOUTH.

Reference has already been made to some towns in the North of Devon. Throughout the whole of this district the storm raged furiously, rendering communication with many parts impossible. [28] Although snow did not commence to fall until Monday afternoon, by the evening of that day the drifts had reached a depth of several feet. The train which left Barnstaple for Ilfracombe at about half-past eight on Monday evening became embedded just below Morthoe station. At Ilfracombe a strong gale raged throughout Monday night, and the brigantine *Ethel*, of Salcombe, 180 tons went ashore at Combemartin, but in this instance no lives were lost, the crew having taken to their boats. In North Cornwall, a terrible snowstorm raged for twenty-four hours, resembling in many respects the great storm of the 18th and 19th January, 1881. The atmospheric pressure was about the same as then, and the storm burst from the same point. On the first day of the great storm in 1881, the temperature varied from 26 to 30 and on the second from 25 to 30. On the 9th of March in the present year it varied from 29 to 31½. The roads were soon blocked in all directions, trains on the lines ceased running, and no mails could be sent or received. Bude was cut off from the outside world, except by telegraphic communication. In the roads around Bude the snow was quickly as high as the hedges, so that traffic, even on foot, was rendered impracticable. Falmouth, Liskeard, Camborne, and indeed all other Cornish towns, had a rough night, and before our story is finished, like many towns in Devonshire, they will be found to have [29] suffered severely. To approach them with any hope of successfully relating how they all fared on the night of Monday and on the Tuesday following, we must deal with the railways, for from railway travellers who were detained in certain places on the course of their journeys, and from the energetic officials who after heavy and anxious toil succeeded in releasing them, many of the most thrilling narratives have been obtained.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE RAILWAYS.

Some incidents in connection with the suspension of the railway service on every line connecting Plymouth with the rest of the world have already been related. It is unnecessary to dwell at further length on the terrible mental and physical suffering entailed by this state of things. Facts need no comment that tell of passengers being snowed up in a train for thirty-six hours on a stretch, and others being unable to communicate with their friends for nearly a week, to say nothing of all that the engine-drivers and other officials had to endure.

One of the first expeditions that set out into the dreary night in search of the cause of delay was undertaken by Mr. C. E. Compton, the divisional superintendent of the Great Western Railway Co., and other gentlemen, who went out on a pilot engine as far as Camel's Head Bridge between eight and nine o'clock on Monday night. The cause of the interruption in the telegraph system was here ascertained, the poles being blown down and lying across the line. Later in the evening

Mr. Compton pushed on as far as Hemerdon, on the main line, where a similar state of things was encountered, and it was learned that at Kingsbridge Road and at Brent Station the snow had drifted to such an extent as to block the line. A train due from Penzance was known to be somewhere on the Plymouth side of Truro, but its exact whereabouts could not be discovered. There was some anxious looking out for the "Zulu" express from Paddington, due at Plymouth early in the evening, but the train was at Brent, with about ten feet of snow on the line, between it and Plymouth, and, as will be presently seen, the passengers were meeting with some novel and undesirable experiences.

[31]

The mail train from Plymouth for London left Millbay Station at the usual time, 8·20, and Hemerdon Junction was reached with much difficulty. Here the first deep cutting had to be encountered, and the driver, approaching it at a reduced speed, observed that the drifting snow had practically blocked the entrance. The seriousness of the situation was realized by one and all of the passengers, and, although there was an anxiety on their part to get to their destination as soon as possible, they agreed that there was no alternative but to either remain where they were or return to Plymouth. The latter course was decided upon, and shunting was at once proceeded with. The drifts of snow rendered this work very difficult, and the frequent jerkings caused the passengers much inconvenience. Eventually the driver, after most skilful handling of the locomotive, succeeded in reversing the position of the engine, and a start was made for Plymouth. Much to the relief of the passengers, the latter place was reached, after a slow but sure journey, about half-past one next morning. The utmost consideration was shown the passengers by the station officials, and accommodation was found them for the night at the "Duke of Cornwall" Hotel and in the station waiting-room.

[32]

All traffic on the London and South Western Railway below Okehampton ceased soon after eight o'clock on Monday night. One of the slow passenger trains from Okehampton was snowed up in a deep cutting between Meldon Viaduct and Bridestowe, one of the bleakest spots on the South Western system. The express due at North Road Station at 11·4 on the same night was stopped at Okehampton. The ordinary seven o'clock up-train was despatched on Tuesday morning from Mutley Station, and was drawn by three engines. Considerable danger attended railway travelling in consequence of the jolting and straining that occurred when the numerous obstructions were met with. All the points at the Tavistock Station were completely choked, and though for some hours a number of men were employed in an effort to keep them clear, the task was found impossible, and as a result the train that might have proceeded in the direction of Plymouth remained where it was as the engine could not be shunted to the Plymouth end of the train. The last up South Western train on Monday night was snowed up at Lidford, but the passengers were released. One of the vans of a goods train proceeding to Tavistock early on Monday evening was blown away.

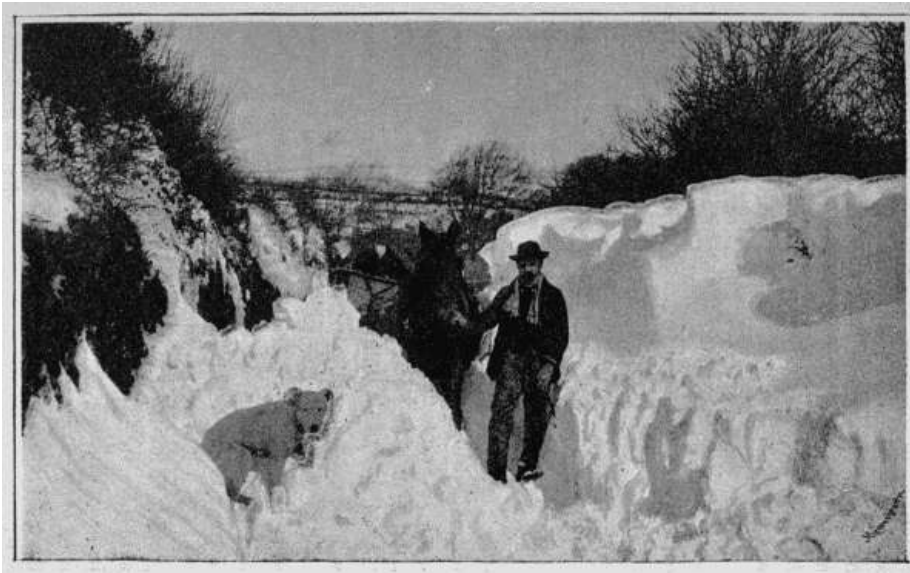
Serious as was the condition of things on all the railways on Monday night, on Tuesday matters became worse. During that day only two trains reached Millbay Station, Plymouth, and these, which came from Cornwall, should have arrived on Monday night. One account, of experiences as unique as they were unpleasant, is thus given by the *Western Daily Mercury*:—"The mail train from Cornwall, due at Plymouth at 8·10 on Monday night, reached Millbay at 9·30 A.M., bringing some eighty passengers; amongst whom were Mr. Bolitho, banker, of Penzance, and Mrs. Bolitho, who were wishful of getting to Ivybridge to attend the hunt, and Mr. J. H. Hamblyn, of Buckfastleigh, who was *en route* from Liskeard to Bristol Fair. All went well with the mail until St. Germans was reached at about 8 P.M. It was found that no further progress was possible, and that there was no help for it but to pass the night in the carriages under the shelter of the station. Mr. Gibbons, one of the assistant-engineers of the line, and Inspector Scantlebury, who were travelling in the train, resolved to walk to Saltash. The snow was not so very deep at this time, and the block was due principally to the wholesale destruction of telegraph poles. After a rough time of it the two officials reached Saltash, and afterwards pushed on to Camel's Head, where was the biggest block of all, fir trees and telegraph poles and wires being scattered about broadcast. Meanwhile at St. Germans the station-master (Mr. Priest) was doing his best to make the passengers as comfortable as possible. In fact, all of those who reached Plymouth after the night's adventure are loud in their praises of Mr. Priest. Messengers were despatched by him to the village, and loaves, butter, tea, and coffee were speedily bought up. At the station fires were lit in all the available grates, and very soon the passengers were in possession of hot tea and coffee, as well as bread and butter. This modest fare was repeated at intervals during the night, and it goes without saying was most welcome.

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"After spending something like ten hours at St. Germans the mail was able to leave at eight o'clock on Tuesday morning for Saltash, but here another delay of nearly two hours took place, in consequence of the block on the Devonport side of the Camel's Head bridge. To remove this a breakdown train had been sent out from Plymouth at 6 A.M. in charge of Mr. H. Quigley, the assistant divisional-superintendent. This train got as far as Keyham Viaduct without much interruption. Here an array of prostrate poles and fir-trees required removing, and then the breakdown train forged ahead slowly to the Weston Mills Viaduct, where there was a confused mass of poles and wires stretching from one side of the creek to the other. This accomplished, a move was made to Saltash, where the mail was met and safely escorted to Plymouth, which all were glad to reach, after a novel but most unpleasant night's adventure."

[35]



ROAD BETWEEN ST. CLEER AND LISKEARD.

The difficulty that beset those that attempted to travel by road the above view indicates, and is from a photograph by A. Leamon, Esq., of Liskeard. [36]

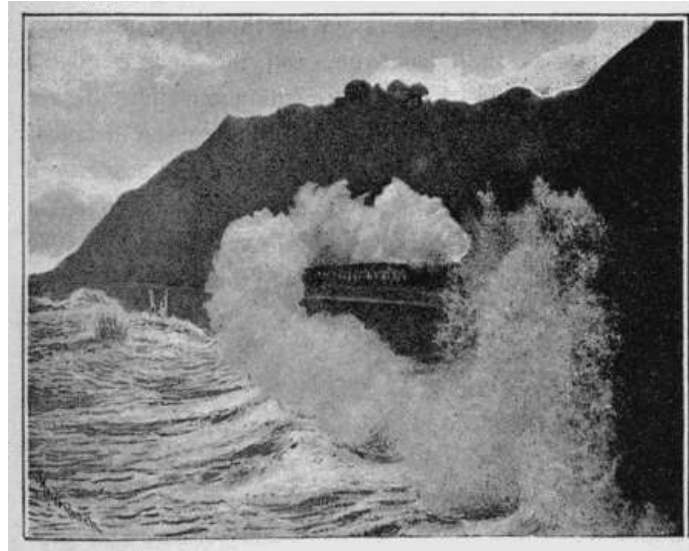
One of the passengers in the train snowed up between Princetown and Plymouth in the evening mail has related the following experiences:—"We left Princetown at 6:30 P.M. on Monday—the regular time—with five bags of mails. The snow beat in our compartment through closed doors, ventilators, and windows so much, that in a few minutes I had two inches of snow on my umbrella. We stuffed paper, handkerchiefs, and cloth into every hole or crevice we could find, and this remedied matters a little. The coach we were in was a composite one—of four third-class compartments, one second class, one first class, and one guard's, and we were all in one compartment. Well, the wind was blowing great guns, and we passed through two large drifts just after leaving Princetown, but it required some heavy pulling. We had just been congratulating ourselves on having been lucky in getting so nicely through the storm, when we suddenly stopped, and we knew we had stuck in the snow. The engine driver came and said, 'I was afraid of it; we have got over a bar, and we cannot go on. We ought not to have started.' The ladies became alarmed, and with that the driver, fireman, and guard went to the front of the train with shovels to try and dig a way for her, but it was no good. It is true that the place where we stopped is on a bit of decline, but the engine was choked with snow. The guard, having told us that we could not get on without assistance, proceeded in the direction of Dousland to get help. He had been gone about an hour, when he returned with the mournful intelligence that he had lost his way, and that it was no use for him to attempt to reach Dousland, as the snow blinded him. We decided to make ourselves as comfortable as we possibly could under the painful conditions to which we were subjected—six men and two ladies huddled together in one compartment—the cold being most bitter, and none of us having anything to eat or drink. We lived the night through, but in what way I can hardly tell.

"In the morning the wind was blowing as strong as ever, and the snow as it fell melted on the window panes, and the lamp—our only light—was extinguished at 7 A.M. Just at this time the guard and fireman left us, saying they were going to try and reach Dousland with the 'staff,' so as to let them know of the disaster, and see what help could be rendered. It is true that the fireman was lame, but I understand they had fearful trouble, as he was sadly knocked up and his foot badly lacerated. Some little time afterwards the driver, who has, I believe, been seriously ill, announced his intention of going to Dousland. We then felt in a particularly sad condition, feeling our only hope was gone now that the driver had abandoned us. The storm was raging as fiercely as on the previous night, but at 3 P.M. we were agreeably surprised to find three packers, who had tramped up from Dousland with refreshments for us, knock at our door. We were heartily glad to receive the refreshments, which, I believe, were sent from the railway company to us in our forlorn position—although it only consisted of cocoa, bread and butter, and cake, with a bottle of well-watered brandy to follow. We found there was enough for us to have one piece of bread and butter and one piece of cake each. This was not a very substantial bill of fare for people who had had nothing to eat for over twenty hours, but we were thankful for small mercies. There is one thing I forgot: the packers were very kind, and brought us out the guard's lamp from his van, which we afterwards lit. One of the party, I think Palk, asked if the packer thought we could weather the journey back. The packer replied, 'It will take you about two hours.' This was enough for Palk, who said he thought he was better where he was. Besides, we asked him to stay and not desert us in the time of trouble. [37]

"We then awaited the result of events. The wind was fearful, and we were all bitterly cold. We were nearly dead in the afternoon, and drank all the brandy by eight o'clock. If it had not been for that some of us would have given way. The weather was milder after midnight. About seven o'clock this morning one of us looking out of the window saw Mr. Hilson, of Horsford, farmer, whose farm is only about 250 yards from where our train was lying, picking sheep out of the snow. We whistled to him, and on his coming to us he was told of our predicament. He expressed his astonishment that he knew nothing of the accident. We do not see how he could have, because the snow had been so blinding in character until that day that it was impossible to see [38]

anyone ahead. He offered us the use of his farm, and we joyfully accepted the same, leaving the train after being in her for 36 hours. Poor Mrs. Watts was much distressed and we had to assist her down. We had breakfast at Mr. Hilson's, and then four of us—Hancock, Viggers, Palk and Worth—started to walk to Dousland, which we could see ahead of us. We got on fairly well over the snow, which was very deep in some places. We could not keep our eyes open owing to the snow when we left Princetown, and when we asked the station-master for tickets he said, 'You can have them, but I cannot promise you will get there.' It did not strike me at the time, but if a station-master had any doubts as to the safety or otherwise of a train he should not allow the train to travel. It is true the wind was in our favour when we started. Mrs. Watts is very bad indeed, and also the engine-driver and stoker. The engine of the train when we left was completely covered with snow, and the snow had drifted as high as the carriage, with a blank space between the body and the wheels. All the compartments into which I looked before I left her—although the windows and ventilators were closed and doors locked—were full of snow above the hat-racks. It was the most horrible experience of my life."

[39]



EXPRESS TRAIN, G. W. RY., TEIGNMOUTH.

Great anxiety was felt in Exeter and Plymouth on account of the sea wall which carries the line of the Great Western Railway Company from Dawlish to Teignmouth. In past years this piece of line has suffered very severely, and rumours were in circulation that it had been washed away in some places. Happily, however, it was found, as soon as communication became opened up once more, that the line remained intact, the damaged portion of the sea wall being a carriage-drive close to the town. One of our views, from a photograph by Messrs. Denney & Co., photographers, of Exeter and Teignmouth, gives an admirable idea of the force of the sea in this district, during the progress of a gale from the south-east.

[40]

Difficulties and dangers on all the lines of railway multiplied as time went on, and the horrors of the Monday night, of which the foregoing narratives present only a partial view, were succeeded by some sad instances of loss of life, besides great damage to the property of the respective companies, and as a matter of course, a heavy falling off in their traffic returns. The returns for the week, following March 9th, on the Great Western system, showed a decrease of £12,980 as compared with the corresponding week of the previous year, and the South-Western Railway's decrease amounted to £3,662—all but £650 of which was lost from the non-conveyance of passengers and parcels. This was regarded as especially unfortunate in the case of the South-Western Railway, as its traffic returns had previously been going up week by week, and in the eleven weeks of the year had increased by £12,120, as compared with the first eleven weeks of 1890. In addition to these losses heavy expenses were incurred by all the companies by the efforts made to clear away the snow, by means of snow ploughs, and the employment of large gangs of men. The inadequacy of the snow ploughs, which dated in England from the time of the heavy snow-fall in the early part of 1881, for clearing away heavy drifts, has been generally admitted. The ploughs are quite competent to get rid of from 4 to 5 feet of snow, but their capacity is not equal to depths ranging as high as 18 feet, such as were dealt with in some places between Newton Abbott and Plymouth, on the Great Western system, to say nothing of other sections and branches. The ploughs, which are kept at Swindon, have an iron ram in front, projecting like that of an ironclad, with a "cutter." The attention of engineers has, however, been now directed to a new kind of machine, with a revolving, spade-like apparatus, having a powerful shaft, and a propeller that is designed to scatter the snow with which it is brought into contact, and throw it clear of the rails on which the engine is travelling. The work of cutting out engines that had been absolutely embedded was very arduous, and in one case, lamentable loss of life accompanied the other misfortunes brought about by the storm.

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One or two instances of striking and unprecedented experiences of the night of Monday must be recorded before this part of the subject, which is, in itself, enough to fill a volume, is dismissed.

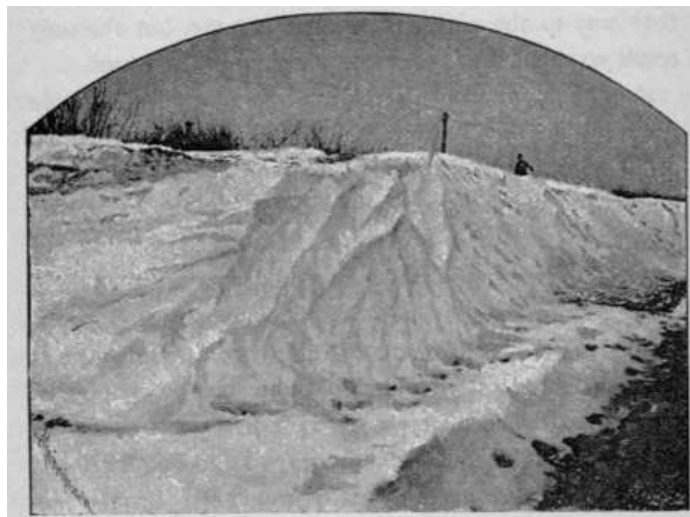
Passengers by the train which left Queen Street Station, Exeter, on Monday evening at 6:38, and was in connection with the 2:20 from Waterloo, had an exceptionally rough time. The train, a slow one, had to make its way across Dartmoor from Okehampton to Tavistock, and on starting, the guard, Mr. Moore, had orders to proceed as far as he could. After cutting through the snow

for some miles the train reached Okehampton, and then attempted to brave the force of the storm that was sweeping down from the Dartmoor hills. It got over the Meldon Viaduct safely, and then it was attempted to go on over Sourton Down, but in going through Youlditch cutting it ran into a snow-drift, and about three miles to the west of Okehampton it was brought to a stop. Efforts were made to run back to Okehampton, but the rapid drifts of snow, which were from ten to twenty feet in height, prevented this being done, and it was soon seen that there was nothing left but to remain until help of some kind could be obtained. There were only eleven passengers, including two ladies and two children. The ladies and children, who were well supplied with wraps, were bestowed as comfortably as circumstances would permit in a first-class carriage, the male portion of the party, with the guard, Mr. Moore, the driver, Mr. Bennett, and the fireman, Mr. Oates, trying to find some warmth in the guard's van. This, however, was a matter of impossibility, the bitter wind and the fine snow finding its way into the compartment, to the great discomfort of the occupants. The engine fire was kept alight, but was useless to impart warmth to the unfortunate party. It was only on the following day, and just before relief arrived, that Mr. Bennett had succeeded in getting a fire in the van by means of boring holes in one of the engine-buckets, filling the bucket with coal and, after much difficulty, kindling a flame, which the draught obtained through the holes soon increased into a most welcome blaze. Mr. John Powlesland, auctioneer, of Bow, was one of the belated travellers, and was especially assiduous in his efforts to do all he could for his fellow-sufferers. [42]

When the train first showed signs of becoming embedded, a telegram was sent from the nearest signal-box to Exeter for assistance, and two engines were sent down. These approached within three-quarters of a mile of the snowed-up train, but could not be taken nearer on that line. They were then, with some difficulty, shunted on the up-line, with the view of pushing their way to the carriages in that manner, but the only result was that they became snowed-up in their turn. [43]

As day approached Mr. Moore and Mr. Oates made their way to the Sourton Inn, which stood at no great distance, for the purpose of obtaining food, but their endeavour met with but slight success, the inn being also snowed-up, and the occupants having but little in the way of provisions that they could spare. No help arrived until Tuesday, at mid-day, when a search-party, headed by Mr. Prickman, the Mayor of Okehampton, and consisting of some half-a-dozen gentlemen of that locality, succeeded, after a difficult journey, in reaching the train. They took with them food and liquid refreshment, and were most heartily welcomed by the imprisoned travellers. By this time the train was entirely buried on one side, the engine having forced the snow on the left side up to a height of fully twenty feet. Only a small portion of the engine and carriages was visible, and the scene is described as a remarkable one.

The travellers were at once conducted by their rescuers to Youlditch Farm, where Mr. Gard treated them with much kindness, and took care of the ladies and children. The gentlemen subsequently made their way on to Okehampton, where they were detained for several days. The guard, engine-driver, and fireman were not able to leave the train until the following day, when a breakdown gang was employed to cut a passage for the train through the snow—a task that occupied nearly the whole of the week. [44]



**SNOW DRIFT, ROBOROUGH DOWN,
DARTMOOR.**

On the Launceston branch of the Great Western Railway, the down-train, which left Tavistock at seven o'clock on Monday evening, remained embedded in the snow outside Horrabridge for several days. Between the Walkham Viaduct and Grenofen tunnel very heavy work had to be done, a deep cutting being not only choked by the snow, but quite a score of trees having been blown across the rails. The accompanying illustration, depicting a snow-drift in this locality, from a photograph by Mr. Sheath, of George-street, Plymouth, conveys an excellent picture of the heavy masses of snow that had accumulated on this part of Dartmoor. [45]

A passenger by the train which left Penzance at 6.25 P.M. on Monday and arrived at Plymouth at 3 P.M. on Tuesday, has supplied an interesting account of the blockage near Grampound Road. The train, containing about a dozen passengers, was only a quarter of a mile above Grampound Road Station when it encountered a drift of snow fully twenty feet high. It was impossible to proceed or to retreat, for the blinding storm had drifted more snow on to the line behind, so that

passengers left the train and crossed some fields back to the village, and found shelter at the Grampound Road Hotel. It was then about 10·30 P.M. The guard Kelly remained on the train, and the under-guard Hammett walked back to Grampound Road and wired to Liskeard for a relief engine. He then walked on to meet an engine which had been sent for from Truro, and returned to the train on it. A relief gang arrived from Lostwithiel under engine-driver Harris, and the men dug at the drift until eleven A.M. on Tuesday, when the train was able to proceed. One of the workers described the cold as so intense that the snow froze on the men's clothes, practically encasing them in ice, and the under-guard Hammett, who had been at the work for over twenty years, said he never had such an experience, and even in the terrific storm of 1881 the snow was not so blinding.

Another passenger who travelled by the 6·50 Great Western up-train from Plymouth on Monday returned by a somewhat roundabout route, and he thus described his experiences: Hemerdon was reached without any delay on the journey, but at that point the train was drawn up for about three-quarters of an hour, to allow a down train to pass. It then proceeded slowly in face of a terrific gale, accompanied by blinding snow. After leaving Cornwood, a grating sound on the roof of the carriage suggested broken wires, and this was followed by a jerk and a stoppage, and the interesting announcement that one coach and the engine were off the rails, and embedded in a snowdrift. There was nothing for it but to wait, and the "wait" lasted the whole night. There was nothing to eat for anybody, and the forty or more passengers (amongst whom were several ladies) had to make their night watches as comfortably as was possible under the circumstances in the Langham cutting! It seems that the driver and one of the guards succeeded in reaching Ivybridge, about a mile away, in the late evening, but no notice of the proximity of the village was given to the passengers. On Tuesday morning a small party from Ivybridge, under Messrs. Brown and Greenhough, two engineers superintending the alterations to the line in the neighbourhood, came to the rescue of all who were willing to face the blinding storm. Only four consented to go, and they were very thankful to exchange the cold comfort of the railway carriage for the hearty hospitality offered by these gentlemen in Ivybridge.

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The officials here do not seem generally to have been equal to the exigencies of the situation, no notice of their whereabouts being given to the passengers, nor any organised attempt made at rescue or provisioning, but a porter and a packer from Ivybridge station arrived about daybreak with whisky and brandy. When the four passengers referred to were leaving at about 9·30 on the Tuesday morning, bread and butter and tea were being dispensed. Many of the remaining passengers were hospitably accommodated by Miss Glanville at her house close to the half-buried train, the ladies being assisted thither by the engineers and their party. Another train was detained at Ivybridge Station, and the passengers from it were lodged in the village.

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In West Cornwall three trains were snowed up. The train which left Plymouth at five o'clock on Monday night and should have reached Penzance at 8·45, arrived there at eleven. The "Dutchman" which should have, in the ordinary course of things, followed within fifteen minutes of this train, did not arrive at all, and news soon reached Penzance that the fast train was snowed up, but in what spot was only ascertained with much difficulty. A train was at once got ready, and on it Mr. Blair, the station-master, Mr. Ivey, the superintendent of the locomotive department, Mr. Glover, and a breakdown gang, proceeded to Camborne, which was reached about noon on Tuesday, it having taken about nine hours to accomplish a journey of thirteen miles. All the way along huge drifts of snow were met with, completely blocking the passage, and at frequent intervals the way had to be literally cut through the drifts by the men of the breakdown gang. Thus, with great difficulty, Hayle was reached, and from thence to Camborne the task became almost overpowering. Here the open country favoured the accumulation of snow, and the drifts were immense. In a deep cutting, close to Gwinear Station, was encountered a drift of about eighty yards long and nine feet deep.

On at length reaching Camborne it was discovered that the missing 8·45 train had left Redruth at about ten o'clock on Monday night—an hour and a half late. The storm was then at its height, and the snow was driving with such force that only very slight progress could be made. The train passed Carn Brea safely, but when within sight of Camborne Station, close to Stray Park, the engine left the metals, running on the south side, and finally bringing up at a hedge against which it lay on its side. Fortunately, at the time of the occurrence, speed was slow, and nothing more serious than some damage to the rolling stock, and the inconvenient detention of the twenty or thirty passengers occurred. These included five ladies, who were taken to the house of Mr. Maurice Reed, the Station Master at Camborne, the gentlemen of the party having good opportunities of finding comfortable quarters in the hotels of the town. Another train was embedded in fifteen feet of snow on the Helston branch line from Gwinear Road to Helston, and the guard, engine-driver, and stoker, with their one passenger, were compelled to abandon the train and seek shelter in a neighbouring farm-house.

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While great inconvenience and discomfort was caused by the blizzard on the Cornish railways as a whole, no fatalities were reported, and the work of clearing the lines, great and arduous as it was, was accomplished in less time than in the districts above Plymouth, and in the vicinity of Dartmoor. Communication between Plymouth and Cornwall was opened up some days earlier than that with Totnes, Exeter, and other towns. The scene here depicted shows the depth of snow in this neighbourhood, and is from a photograph by A. Leamon, Esq., of Liskeard.

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MAIN ROAD BETWEEN LISKEARD AND TORPOINT.

Above Exeter things were not so bad. In the Tiverton district the effects of the blizzard were rather severely felt, and communication between some towns was for the time cut off. The railway authorities were very active, and gangs of men were sent up from Exeter on Tuesday to clear the lines, but they could do little more than keep the points clear for shunting, watch the signals, and fix detonators where required, the driving snow being so blinding, and the coldness of the bitter wind so intense. The difficulties of the neighbourhood commenced on Monday evening at the Whitehall tunnel, when the pilot, in front of the express, got off the line. Daylight came before a gang of packers sent from Taunton could effect a clearance, and instead of passing at ten o'clock on Monday night, the express only struggled into Tiverton Junction, with two engines attached, at half-past six on Tuesday morning. The night mail, and the North mail followed some hours after, and managed to get through to Exeter, but after that, until Wednesday morning at eleven o'clock, no train could leave the junction.

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After being snowed up for some hours at Burlescombe, the first part of the newspaper train reached Tiverton at half-past ten on Tuesday night. The train was stopped at the home signal, and so intense was the cold that the machinery was, in a few minutes, frozen, and the train could not enter the station. The ladies—mostly for Plymouth—who were in the train, were carried on chairs by porters and packers to the adjacent Railway Hotel, where they, and some of the male passengers, were able to obtain beds for the night. The train remained in the same position until Wednesday morning. In a siding also stood a slow train, which should have reached Tiverton on Tuesday at ten in the morning, but which did not get in until the afternoon. The passengers by this train were transferred to the first down-train that was got out from Tiverton on Wednesday. The second part of the newspaper train remained at Burlescombe all Monday night. The store of provisions in the hamlet was already exhausted, and although as much as a guinea was offered for a bed by some of the passengers, neither food nor sleeping accommodation could be obtained. A very uncomfortable night was passed in consequence, and many of the ladies suffered severely from hunger and exposure.

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H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh, on his way to Devonport, was snow-bound at Taunton on Tuesday night, but with about two hundred other passengers, was able to proceed on his journey at the end of the week.

His Royal Highness afterwards conveyed to the Directors of the Company his appreciation of the courtesy and attention he received from the officials and servants of the Great Western Railway, on his journey during the gale and snowstorm, and during his detention at Taunton, on March 11th and 12th, and particularly thanked the Taunton station-master for his services.

At Brent, one of the most exposed railway towns on Dartmoor, the Zulu, from London, which was due at Plymouth at 8.55 on Monday night, came to grief, and a number of passengers spent several days of that week in this very bleak locality. Especial discomfort appears to have prevailed here, probably on account of the difficulty of obtaining assistance or information from any neighbouring town, and from the limited resources for personal comfort that the town afforded. There can be no doubt that the experiences of the first two days and nights must have been wretched in the extreme. After two hours waiting in the carriages, in a state of considerable doubt as to what was to happen, the travellers found themselves at length at the Brent station. Here there was neither refreshment nor accommodation, but the hotels of the town were made for. Quarters were difficult to obtain, however, as a large number of contractors men working on the new line of railway were residing in the place. On Monday night many passengers lay upon the floor, using their overcoats for pillows, and their rugs for coverings. A Mr. Stumbles, a commercial traveller, who was one of the Brent unfortunates, gave an account of his experiences to a representative of the *Western Morning News*, which has led to much subsequent controversy, and to a shower of letters, conveying many diverse opinions, being sent in to the editor of that paper. It appears that there were about forty passengers in the train, and that many of these remained at the station all night, either in the train or in the waiting-room. Next day Brent was visited, and refreshments were bought at, as Mr. Stumbles says, famine prices.

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The account referred to goes on to say:—"One gentleman bought a bottle of brandy, for which he

had to pay 6s., the inns charged us double price for ordinary meals, and some establishments refused to supply us at all, probably thinking that a famine was impending. We returned to the station as best we could, through the great drifts of snow, and, with such provisions as we could buy, did the best we could, cooking such things as bloaters in the station waiting-room. Our scanty supply, I must say, was most generously supplemented from the small stores which the railway officials, such as signalmen and others, had with them. There were a number of sailors and soldiers amongst the passengers, and most of them were without means. One gentleman gave them a sovereign, and ladies from Brent also brought them money, tobacco, and provisions during our stay. On the following monotonous days we spent our time in smoking and in conversation, and also in 'chaffing' the station-master, whom we christened 'Dr. Parr.' On Wednesday an enterprising amateur photographer from Brent took several views of our snowed-up train, with the eighteen or twenty passengers who stuck by it perched in various prominent positions upon it. We all united in praising the minor officials, and the men in charge of the train, for remaining faithful to us, and excused the want of sympathy of 'Dr. Parr' on account of his age. The driver kept the fires of his engine going all the time, but his boilers had to be filled with water by hand, and in this work valuable assistance was readily given by the soldiers and marines in the train. Just before we were enabled to leave Brent, we were visited for the first time by the clergyman of the parish, and our final leave-taking was celebrated by three sarcastic cheers for 'Dr. Parr' and for 'Brent.' The passengers in this train included Lieutenant Rice, of the Essex Regiment; Mr. R. Bayly, J.P., of Plymouth (who succeeded in getting through to his home on Wednesday) Miss Sykes, and a nurse who was travelling from Scarborough to the South Devon and East Cornwall Hospital, Plymouth."

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It is only fair to the station-master at Brent, and to the residents of the town generally, to repeat that this description has been extensively contradicted, and among others, by Mr. Robert Bayly, of Plymouth, who was another of the detained passengers. Mr. Stumbles, however, has adhered to his description, and in more than one instance his version has been supported. Among other interesting details of the week in Brent, is the account of the arrival of the first newspaper, a copy of the *Western Morning News*, which was brought over from Totnes on the Thursday morning by an adventurous policeman, who successfully undertook the dangerous walk. This paper was eagerly sought after, it having been the first account of the doings in the outer world seen since Monday, and one of the enforced sojourners in Brent is said to have paid five shillings for the use of the paper for one hour. The fortunate possessor of the journal declared that he had been offered two pounds for it, and had declined to trade.

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At Totnes a number of passengers were detained, among them being a reporter of the *Western Morning News*, who went to the town on Monday to report a meeting, and was only released on the following Friday night. A number of passengers who left Friary Station, Plymouth, by the 3-47 P.M. South Western train on Thursday, were taken into Tavistock on the following day, after having spent the night at Lydford. Instances innumerable of the same character occurring on the Launceston and other lines could be related, but as their points of interest bear such a strong resemblance to each other, it is unnecessary to proceed further with them.

Thursday, March 12th, was a day of very severe weather, and the efforts of the hundreds of men working on the various lines to clear the snow and also to release some of the buried trains were seriously retarded. By the end of the week, however, things were beginning to assume their normal aspect, and the trains were running with tolerable punctuality. The telegraph service, in a deplorable condition of collapse throughout the week, was restored, and the masses of accumulated correspondence in the post offices were sent on to their destinations. The labour of clearing the lines was as dangerous as it was arduous, and unhappily an accident, proving fatal to one man, occurred during the operations on the Great Western Railway at Ivybridge. Work was being carried on at this spot under the superintendence of Mr. C. E. Compton, and a number of men were engaged in getting an engine on to the line, when a train dashed round a curve among the workmen killing one, named William Stentiford, of Plymouth, and seriously injuring two others. The lamentable occurrence was purely accidental, and that this was the only fatal occurrence during the whole of the operations of this most trying week indicates the care that was taken by all those engaged on the railways from the highest officials downwards. Such an experience was never before met with, and it was a matter of congratulation that those in power were able to cope with the difficulties as well as they did. No doubt some practical lessons were learnt during the operations, and should such a visitation unhappily occur in the West of England on any future occasion, the experience gained during this terrible week will not be without value.

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CHAPTER IV. AT SEA.

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Sad and disastrous as were the effects of the blizzard on land on the night of Monday, March 9th, they were in most cases of a nature more or less reparable. At sea, however, the case was different, and from the afternoon of the day on which the storm commenced to the end of the week wrecks, resulting in the loss of over fifty lives, were strewn along the coast from Start Point to Falmouth. In most cases, such was the fury of the gale, but little help could be afforded from the shore. Generally, to launch a boat or to use a rocket apparatus was out of the question, and those on the shore, anxious to send help to the doomed vessels, had great difficulty in escaping

from being blown into the sea. In many instances gallant services were rendered, and all that courage and self-sacrifice could do with the hope of saving life was accomplished; but the time was one of no common peril, and on the Tuesday lives were lost in full view of the cliffs upon the rocky fringes of which the vessels had been driven.

In Plymouth Sound, and the Hamoaze, well protected as they are from the gales of winter, much damage was done on Monday night. In addition to the accident to the *Lion* and *Implacable*, and the critical position of the Queen's harbour-master's cutter already briefly described, the *Julia*, a small coastguard cutter, moored inside Drake's Island, parted her moorings during the early hours of Tuesday morning, and went ashore on Bottle Nose, a point eastward of Devil's Point. She was badly knocked about, but there were no men on board at the time. Whilst the heavy squalls were on Tuesday morning the *Impregnable*, training-ship for boys, Captain Harris; the *Cambridge*, gunnery school ship, Captain Carr, and the *Achilles*, battle ship, all dragged their moorings, but not to any alarming extent. Staff-Captain Burniston, who, with the dockyard tugs under his command, was afloat during the whole of Monday night, and on Tuesday, under very trying circumstances, succeeded in getting out fresh anchors and hawsers to make the vessels secure for the night, a course which was wisely adopted, as the hurricane showed no signs of abating, there being, on the contrary, another great fall in the barometer. The men who were on board the tugs on Monday night, speak of the weather as being the worst that they ever experienced, and the manner in which they did their work under such trying circumstances was, as was the case so frequently throughout that, and several succeeding days, most praiseworthy.

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Considerable damage was done during Monday night to many of the hookers belonging to the fishermen of Kingsand and Cawsand. The full force of the blizzard was experienced in Cawsand Bay, and ten of the hookers which had been moored up for the night were driven ashore and sunk. The only boat which rode out the storm was a craft owned by Mr. Andrews of Cawsand. A pilot boat went ashore in one of the little coves just south of the coastguard station, and a small fishing vessel was wrecked close under Lady Emma's Cottage, at Mount Edgcumbe.

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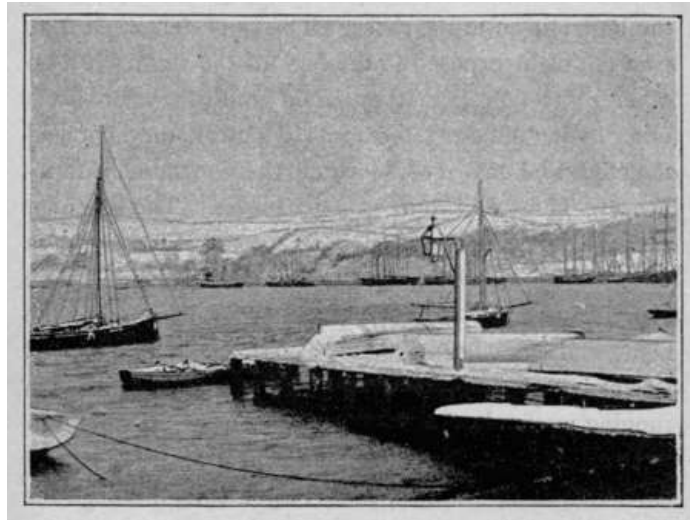
The captain of the Norwegian galliot *Falken*, from Shields, with coal for Portugal which was found on Tuesday off Fowey, by the tug *Belle of Plymouth*, half full of water, and with her sails blown away, stated at the time that on Monday his vessel was caught in a kind of small cyclone, and that whilst about twenty miles south-west of Start Point he had a strange experience. The vessel was being driven along at a furious rate by a north-easterly gale, whilst ahead, within sight, a westerly wind was blowing. This bears out the theory of the cyclone to some extent, as on other parts of the coast the gale was found to blow only from the north-east or south-east, in rapid changes. The Channel was very rough at the time, and the vessel was greatly endangered. On Tuesday the boats were smashed, and the sails carried away. Pumps were manned, and kept working so long as the crew could hold out, the endeavour being to reach one of the ports. It was while the *Falken* was in this condition that the *Belle* came opportunely to her assistance, and towed her into Plymouth harbour, where she was laid up alongside Bulteel's Wharf, in the Cattewater, to discharge her cargo and be repaired. Several of the Lowestoft boats, and other fishing vessels which had been out in the Channel on the Monday night, returned to Plymouth on Tuesday, and reported having experienced very bad weather. The sudden squalls encountered were terrific, and the oldest fishermen on board declared that they had never experienced such violent weather on the Devonshire coast.

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During the height of the storm the schooner *Alice Brookall*, from Swansea to Jersey with coals, ran ashore at Mutton Cove, near Godevy Hayle. She ran so far in that the crew—five in number—managed to drop from the bowsprit on to the rocks. The poor fellows had to pass the night exposed to the fury of the storm, with no other protection than they could mutually afford each other by huddling together. At daybreak they climbed the cliffs, and managed to reach the shelter of a farm-house. The vessel soon went to pieces. The schooner *Perseverance*, of Preston, Dandy, master, from Swansea to Salcombe, with coals, ran ashore a mile east of Hayle Bar. The crew of four remained by her during the night, and landed at daybreak. Both vessels experienced fearful weather on the way down Channel, the sea running mountains high. No one knew of their position until twenty-four hours after they struck.

At Exmouth, Dawlish, and Teignmouth, although the force of the wind was great, and all three towns sustained damage, there were no calamities at sea. Great injury was done to the pleasure and fishing boats at both of the latter places, but Teignmouth was not so unfortunate as Dawlish in this respect. Its harbour is almost land-locked, and from the beach where the boats are moored, as well as from the quays, the eye glances north-west and south-west upon a beautiful picture of river scenery, of which the distant Dartmoor Hills and the Haldon Heights form the background. The accompanying illustration, from a photograph by Messrs. Valentine & Son, of Teignmouth, taken during the week of the blizzard, depicts one part of this scene in as wintry a garb as any it has worn during the last half century. The village of Shaldon, on the opposite side of the Teign, lies exposed to a S.E. gale blowing across the low-lying sands of the Teignmouth "Point," and here the owners of fishing and other craft had much to lament in the way of destruction to their floating property.

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TEIGNMOUTH JETTY, WITH HALDON HEIGHTS.

In Torbay a French brig, the *Emilie*, of Cherbourg, was driven ashore at Hogg's Cove, under Berry Head, at about four o'clock on Tuesday afternoon. The coastguards and Royal Naval Reserve, under the direction of Mr. Drayton, chief officer of coastguard, and assisted by a large number of fishermen, got out the rocket apparatus, and the crew, eight in number, were quickly landed. They were at once invited to the house of the Misses Hogg, at Berry Head, and provided with refreshments. The vessel was badly injured, and became a total wreck. [61]

The ketch *Sunshine*, of Faversham, from London to Exmouth, with manure, was fallen in with on Thursday at noon, by the Brixham fishing ketch *Inter-Nos*, Berry Head bearing north-west, and distant twenty-five miles. She had her mainsail blown away, and her boats and water-casks washed overboard. When fallen in with, the crew were without water to drink, and their vessel was labouring heavily in the trough of the sea. The *Sunshine* was taken in tow by the *Inter-Nos*, £250 being agreed upon for the service, and both vessels arrived at Brixham on the same night. The fishing ketch *Gertrude* arrived in Brixham on Thursday, having on her deck the boat of the *Crusader*, of Aberystwith, which she had picked up in the channel with eight hands on her, and landed at Falmouth on Friday. The ketch *Annie* also arrived, with sails blown away, and her ballast shifted. The *Olive & Mary* and the *Pickwick*, ketches, had their sails blown away and their bulwarks damaged. All the crews described the gale as the heaviest they had ever been out in, and one skipper stated that he had seen four vessels founder without being able to render assistance. Later news has not, however, verified this story.

Some trawlers were reported during the week as missing from Brixham, but in course of time anxiety on their account was removed, and they either reached home or news of their safety was received from other ports to which they had run for shelter. Some Plymouth trawlers were also in difficulties, and it was feared that they had been wrecked, but in a few days their whereabouts was ascertained, and it was discovered that they had escaped with somewhat severe damage. [62]

Start Point was on Monday night and again on the succeeding Tuesday a scene of some heartrending disasters. Many vessels, including the iron steamer *Marana*, 1,682 tons register, belonging to Messrs. George Bell and Co. of Liverpool; and the full-rigged ship *Dryad*, 1,035 tons register, owned by J. B. Walmsley, of Water Street, Liverpool, were totally wrecked within a short distance of each other, resulting, it is calculated, in an aggregate loss of over fifty lives. The *Marana* left Victoria Dock, London, at 11 A.M. on Sunday, March 1st, with a crew of twenty-eight. She was bound for Colombo with a cargo of sleepers, but was proceeding first to Swansea for coal. Whilst going down Channel on Monday night she encountered the gale which, charged with blinding snow, was blowing heavily from the S.E., and struck on the Blackstone Rock, at Start Point. Seeing that the vessel must go to pieces very shortly, the officers and crew took to the boats, most of them having life-belts on. The starboard lifeboat, in charge of the boatswain and with twenty-two men on board, proceeded in the direction of Prawle Point, and was almost immediately followed by a smaller boat in which were the captain, the chief engineer, the mess-room steward, and three seamen. The latter boat was soon separated from the lifeboat, and was never seen again. The lifeboat got under the coastguard station at Prawle, but the appearance of the coast was threatening, and the crew pushed off again. Almost immediately a sea struck the boat and capsized her. A bitter struggle for life on the part of the twenty immersed seamen succeeded, and those who had clung to the boat managed to get her righted, and clambered on board, but soon after she was again turned over. Once more she righted, and eventually drifted on to the Mal Rock to the east of Prawle Point, where the four occupants—all that remained of the crew of the vessel—contrived to get on to the rocks. [63]

After a while they climbed the cliff, three of them carrying the fourth survivor, who was suffering from exhaustion and injuries, and after heavy toil they managed to get near to Prawle. Here two of the men agreed to remain with the shipmate, who to all appearance was fast succumbing to exhaustion, while the other went into the village for help. The man, like his three surviving comrades, was a Swede, and consequently unable to make himself understood, but Mr. Perry, Lloyd's signalman at Prawle, and the coastguardsman on duty, supplied him with food and clothing, and then went to search for traces of the wreck which had clearly taken place not far off. It was not until long past midnight that the mates of the Swede were discovered, and then it

was too late to save the exhausted man, who died almost immediately after their arrival. The remaining survivors were taken into Prawle, and under kind treatment soon recovered.

Mrs. Briggs, wife of one of the lighthouse keepers at the Start, says that she was looking out of her window a little after half-past five o'clock on Monday evening, when she saw the steamer pass very close to the east side of Start Point as if she had come out from the bay. Seeing her great danger, and thinking it was impossible for her to clear the rocks running off from the Point, she hastened to another window, from which she had a view of the Blackstone Rocks. She then saw the steamer broadside on to the rocks. She at once gave an alarm to Mr. Jones, the head-keeper, who hurried out to give any assistance in his power, but within a very few minutes the vessel parted in two, the stern part sinking near the rocks, while the fore part washed away and sank a short distance to the west of the Start. [64]

Mr. Crickett, chief officer of Coastguards at Hallsands, has stated that he received intelligence of the casualty at 6.40 P.M. by a messenger sent by Mr. Jones, of the Start Lighthouse, who said the vessel had struck the rocks about 500 yards south-east of the Start. He immediately despatched a messenger to Prawle, a distance of nearly five miles, for the life-saving apparatus. Another messenger he sent to Torcross to Mr. Ridge, the chief officer of Coastguards there, and Mr. Crickett then proceeded to the scene of the wreck, but on arriving, nothing could be seen of the vessel, as she had totally disappeared, and she was supposed to have gone to pieces five minutes after she struck. The coastguard at Hallsands say that they saw the *Marana* fully an hour before she struck, and she was then near the Skerries Bank, off the Start, acting in such a manner that they considered her steering gear was out of order. They saw her come into the bay and afterwards go out again, and watched her very closely, but they thought she had gone clear of the Start until they heard otherwise from the lighthouse-keepers. [65]

John Nelson, one of the survivors, said in the course of his evidence at the inquest held on the first eight bodies recovered from the wreck:—"On Monday, 9th inst., I had tea at five o'clock, and went to my bunk. It was the first mate's watch. As I was turning into my bunk I heard someone shout out, 'Land right ahead.' It was blowing a bit stiff in the afternoon at three o'clock, and as the gale increased the canvas was taken in. The vessel struck almost immediately after I heard the shout, and the engines were going full-speed at the time. I came out and stood in the fore-castle door. The captain was then on the bridge. The vessel struck first at the bow. When I came on deck she struck aft as well, knocking her propeller and rudder away. The captain then gave the order to get the starboard lifeboat ready for launching. All the three officers were on the bridge. The wind was blowing hard, and the waves were dashing all over the ship. It was daylight, but the Start light was lit. We could see the land plainly enough, although it was thick with heavy rain. There were two lifeboats, one on each side of the ship, and two smaller boats. We lowered the lifeboat and got into it, some 20 or 22 being in it, and got away from the ship on the starboard side. The boat was in charge of the boatswain, and the second and third engineers and the chief steward were in the boat. We left on board the captain, the three mates, the chief engineer, and the mess-room steward. Just as we were turning to get clear of the rocks, we looked at the ship, and saw the captain and the others leave in the other boat on the starboard side. They got safely away from the ship. After the vessel struck we hoisted a red pennant with a white ball as a signal of distress. When we got away it was getting dark, and we saw nothing of the other boat afterwards, but supposed they were following us. We pulled in shore to a kind of bay, but not thinking it safe to land, we went out of that. We could see nothing but rocks on our coming down, and in getting out of the bay our boat capsized. There was a very heavy sea running up against the rocks. We got hold of the keel of the boat, some twelve or fourteen of us that remained, and then the boat turned over again. After that only four or five of us remained sticking to the boat. We stuck to the boat until she broke up on the rocks. When I let go the boat I could feel the rocks with my feet, and I then walked on shore. There were four of us that came on shore, but I could see nothing of any others. When we got on shore we walked to a brake and got shelter. We had to help Rasmussen up, as he had no boots on. He was living half an hour before the coastguards found us, but we had been on shore a long time before they found us—about five or six hours." [66]

Many of the bodies of the unfortunate men were washed ashore within a few days, and not far from the spot where the vessel went down. All of them were not identified, as the survivors had joined the ship too recently to be acquainted with all the officers and crew.

Another serious calamity in Start Bay occurred during Monday night, and not many hours later than the wreck of the *Marana*, when the ship *Dryad*, bound for Valparaiso, with a crew of 22 hands all told, went ashore about a mile to the eastward of Start Point. When the ship went on shore Mr. Hewett, with the life-saving apparatus, had left Hallsands for Prawle, from whence rumours of disaster had been brought, and he had got as far as Chevilstone Cross when he was overtaken by a mounted messenger despatched by the chief officer of the coastguard at Torcross, who desired him to return to the Start to the assistance of the *Dryad*. He got to the scene of the wreck at half-past two in the morning. By that time the vessel had broken up, all her masts having gone overboard, and but little of her could be discerned in the darkness. The place where she struck was right under the high land of the Start where the cliffs are very precipitous. With regard to this vessel, the coastguardsmen say that they saw no signals of distress whatever, and it has been considered probable that she was proceeding with a fair wind down Channel, and no land being visible in the snow-filled gloom of the night, those on board were unconscious of their proximity to the land until they found themselves on the rocks. In this case there was, perhaps, no time to show distress signals, and the ship may have been some time ashore before she was discovered by the coastguards. [67]

About midnight on the ninth, the storm was at its height, and all men of Start Bay agree that they never remember such a violent storm, the water of the bay being one mass of foam, it being almost impossible to look to the windward. Mr. Jones, the head keeper of the Star Lighthouse, says he was standing in the yard by his home a little after midnight, looking in the direction of the Bay, when he saw right under the headland, and close to the Start, what he considered to be a ship's lights. He called the other keepers, and as well as they were able they got down to the place where they saw the lights. It was at the risk of their lives that they went down the cliffs, and it was only by holding on to each other they were prevented from being blown away. When they got down they could not discover a vestige of anything, neither did they hear a cry of any sort. The coastguards at Hallsands also saw lights, and fired off a rocket and burned a blue light to warn the ship of her danger, but the vessel's lights were only seen a few minutes before they disappeared.

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In spite of all the efforts of those on shore no trace of a ship could be seen, and it was not until daybreak the next morning that a man was discovered lying on a low rock, known as John Hatherley's Nose, some 500 yards from the spot where the *Dryad* ultimately proved to have struck. Help was at once sought for, and Mr. Briggs, one of the keepers, and Mr. Pollyblank, the coastguard, then returned to the rock with ropes. They threw the rope on to the rocks, which fell only about a foot away from the sailor. He saw it and then slid down, evidently with the intention to secure the rope, but he seemed to be afraid, and instead of slipping on the lower ledge of the rock where the rope was, he climbed on the top of the rock again, and laid himself flat on it on his face and hands. He then seemed to lose his hold, and slid down, holding on to the rocks for several seconds, when he fell head over heels, and was washed away and drowned. Those trying to rescue him, seeing how exhausted he was, had fetched a ladder to get to him, and Mr. Briggs fastened a rope to himself to swim out to him, but in the meantime he was washed away. He was a young man. Grave doubts were expressed as to what vessel he came from, for it seems almost impossible he could have got to the rocks from the *Dryad*; and there was some wreckage visible near the rocks that did not appear to have belonged to the *Dryad*. The coastguards at Hallsands said distinctly that the lights they saw were a steamer's lights, whilst there is no doubt that the lights the lighthouse-keepers saw were those of the *Dryad*. Only a piece of the bow of the *Dryad* was discovered in the morning, but a large mass of broken wreckage was discovered along the coast, and tons of it were washed out to sea by the next tide. Eight bodies were recovered, and friends of those composing the crew of the *Dryad* journeyed to Hallsands for the purpose of identifying their friends or relatives. There were no survivors, and consequently no details are known, but a statement has been made that the channel pilot had warned the captain that the ship's compass was two points out.

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Whilst Mr. Crickett and some of the coastguards under his charge at Hallsands were at the Start Point on the night of the 9th, trying to render assistance to the stranded steamship *Marana*, they saw a light in the bay, and they answered it by burning a blue light, and one of the coastguards was sent back to try and discover the place the light proceeded from. On the remainder of the coastguards returning to Hallsands shortly after, a light was seen near Beesands, and on reaching that place they found the schooner *Lunesdale* stranded. Mr. Ridge, the chief officer of coastguards stationed at Torcross, had arrived with some of his men, and they, with the assistance of the Beesands fishermen, were trying to effect a communication with the vessel. The captain was in the fore starboard rigging, and the remainder of the crew, four in number, were in the starboard mizen rigging. All these men were thus on the weather side of the ship, and the captain not being so exposed from his position as the others, succeeded with the utmost difficulty in getting round to the other, or shore side of the vessel. A fisherman named Roper, of Beesands, then at the risk of his own life, made a desperate effort to save the captain. He got a line with a lead attached to it, and threw it close to the captain's feet, the latter succeeding, after a frantic effort, to fasten the line to a lifebuoy, and attached himself to it, and was then safely hauled on shore. The other seamen were not so successful in changing their positions, and in their endeavours they were washed away and drowned. All this time the seas were breaking right over the vessel. The coastguards and fishermen remained by the vessel for nearly an hour afterwards, shouting to see if they could get any response from the crew, but getting none, all hope of saving them was given up. When it was found that the Prawle life-saving apparatus, in charge of Mr. Hewett, could be of no service to the *Marana*, a message was left at Start farm for it to be brought on to Beesands to the help of the *Lunesdale*, but it arrived too late to be of any service. The *Lunesdale* was a three-masted schooner of 141 tons register, owned by Messrs. James Fisher & Sons, of Barrow, and was bound from London to a Lancashire port.

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While efforts were being made at Beesands to save the crew of the *Lunesdale*, a schooner named *Lizzie Ellen*, 73 tons register, and belonging to Mr. Samuel Coppack, of Chester, with a cargo of clay from Charlestown for London, went on shore just opposite Hallsands. In spite of the tremendous force of the wind and the blinding spray and snow six fishermen, named T. Trout, George Stone, Robert Trout, James Lynn, William Mitchell, and John Patey, at the imminent peril of their lives, made a gallant effort to rescue the crew of the vessel, which consisted of four hands. With great difficulty, and by the aid of ropes, these men succeeded in lowering themselves to the bottom of the cliff. By throwing lines on board the schooner the mate and the third hand were saved, but the captain and the boy were lost. The captain, Robert Dood, urged the boy, who was crying bitterly, to jump over into the sea, with the chance of being drawn on shore, but he could not persuade him to take the leap. At length the captain jumped himself, but at the wrong time, and he was carried out by a receding wave. The boy, Frank Davis, also perished.

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For some time after this week of tempest, all along the coast from Prawle to the Start, could be seen broken wreckage. Such was the fury of the gale that everything seemed split to matchwood.

It is supposed that other wrecks than those of which some knowledge has been obtained occurred on this eventful night. Mr. Crickett, a coastguardsman, picked up on the following Saturday a board bearing the words "Nymph of T—," it being broken off at the letter T, and it is conjectured that this may belong to one of the vessels referred to. A painful sequel to the wreck of the *Marana* occurred on Wednesday, March 18th, nine days after the catastrophe. A molecatcher of Prawle found at about half-past eleven, in a field half a mile from a village named Furze Brake, and about a quarter of a mile from the sea, the body of a man. The corpse was lying flat upon its face, and was clothed in an oil-skin coat in addition to the ordinary kind of seaman's dress. A life-belt was lying close by, and the locality was not more than a hundred yards from the spot where the two survivors from the *Marana* had been found supporting to the best of their power their dying comrade. Unknown to the other survivors this man must have succeeded in reaching the shore, but only to die. Undoubtedly he walked in search of help and shelter until he sank from exhaustion, and was covered with a fall of snow thick enough to screen his body from view until a thaw had set in.

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The inquests held on the bodies of those unfortunate seamen who lost their lives in the vicinity of the Start have had the effect of a communication being made to the Board of Trade as to the necessity of life-saving apparatus being placed at Hallsands. In the face of a hurricane of almost unprecedented force, many gallant and eager attempts were made to save life, but with only a very limited measure of success, owing as much to the want of suitable appliances as to the rugged character of the coast, and the merciless fury of the gale.

Along the coast, in the neighbourhood of Falmouth, which from its exposed position was fully open to the strength of the blizzard, there were more disastrous wrecks, and here also the loss of life was great. The most serious calamity occurred at about half-past one on Tuesday morning, and was that which, at Penare Point, near Helford River, befell the four-masted steel ship *Bay of Panama*, of London, 2,282 tons register. This vessel, owned by the Bullock's Bay Line, was from Calcutta, with a cargo of 17,000 bales of jute for Dundee. The captain, David Wright, of Liverpool, his wife, all but one of the six officers, four apprentices, and six of the crew, were either frozen to death in the rigging or drowned. This made a loss of eighteen lives out of a company of about forty all told.

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At the village of St. Keverne, not far from Penare Point, it became known at about noon on Tuesday that a wreck had occurred at the mouth of the Helford River, and from there the first news of what had occurred was conveyed into Falmouth, with great courage, and in the face of tremendous difficulties, by Mr. J. H. James, of Old Vicarage, St. Keverne. At one o'clock, Mr. James started on his pony for Helston in the midst of a terrible snowstorm. His intention was to telegraph to Falmouth, but all the wires were down, and communication was impossible except on foot. This he undertook, and by dauntless perseverance at length accomplished; but his experiences during the journey are among the most thrilling personal incidents connected with the gale. After proceeding for about two miles, he could only get along by crawling on his hands and knees through the snow, and his face had become coated with snow, and icicles hung from his ears. He at last found shelter at a wayside cottage, and at daybreak next morning again set out, reaching Falmouth at 9 o'clock, and giving information to Messrs. Broad and Sons, who sent out steamers to the scene of the wreck. The *Bay of Panama* was discovered with her head to the north, broadside on to the sea, and jammed under the Nare Head, close against the cliff. Her mainmast was gone, and the sea was making clean breaches right over her.

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Fortunately for the survivors clinging to the stranded ship, before Mr. James had started on his adventurous journey to Falmouth, on Tuesday morning, the rocket apparatus, in charge of the coastguard, who were aroused by Mr. Nicholls, of Penare, had reached the scene from Helford. The first rocket fired threw a line right over the ship, and within fifteen minutes the whole of the survivors were safely on shore. Chief boatman Fisher, of the coastguard, went on board the vessel after the hands taken off to see if any one was left alive, but his self-sacrifice was without result. Accounts of survivors, including those of Mr. Fred Evans, boatswain's mate, Mr. Charles Higgins, quartermaster, and Mr. Beresford, apprentice, relate that the *Bay of Panama* was 111 days from Calcutta when she struck. There had been forty-two days of severe weather before reaching the western end of the English Channel, and here severe snowstorms and heavy squalls were encountered. At half-past eleven on Sunday night they sighted a light, and being in a position of danger they burned several blue lights, the captain thinking the light came from a steamer. The vessel was now drifting to leeward without a stitch of canvas on her, and the captain soon expressed the opinion that they were to leeward of the Lizard and clear of all land. At half-past twelve the watch went below, put on some clean clothes, and got into their bunks. The captain remained on deck, his wife being in her cabin.

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Within an hour from this time the ship struck and began rapidly to fill. Most of those who had been below went forward, though the forecabin had been burst in, and was flooded. Seas were breaking over the vessel, and nearly all the officers were early swept away. The second officer went to fetch a rocket, and was never seen again. Attempts were made to get a line on shore, and one seaman is said to have volunteered to swim the distance, but the former was found impracticable, and in the latter case the other seamen held their comrade back. Some of the crew took refuge in the rigging, and at daybreak the second quartermaster died there, the mate died an hour after, and the boatswain, in a state of delirium, jumped from the mizzen-top into the sea and was drowned. Just before six o'clock in the morning, the after-end of the ship broke in two, the mainmast having previously fallen. It is said that, at the time the rescuing party arrived on the scene, six men were frozen in the rigging. The survivors were taken to St. Keverne Farm, which they reached at half-past ten on Tuesday morning, and where they were kindly treated.

They remained there until four in the afternoon, when they were conveyed to Gweek in a 'bus. From here it was absolutely necessary for them to walk to Falmouth through the snow, and as many of them were thinly clad, and had no boots, their trials were not over until Falmouth was reached, where Messrs. Jewell and Burton, and Mr. and Mrs. Weir, of the Royal Cornwall Sailors' Home, treated them with all the kindness and attention they so much needed. Most of the bodies from the *Bay of Panama* were recovered, that of the Captain's wife having been found lying on the shore early on the morning of the wreck.

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Though this was the most serious wreck near Falmouth, it was far from being the only one. Reports of wrecks and loss of life continued to be received for many days following the beginning of the gale on Monday. Near Porthoustock, on Monday night, the sloop *Dove*, of Topsham, was lost, but in this case the crew were saved. The *Dove* left Exmouth Bight on March 8th, arriving at Plymouth Breakwater early on Monday morning. Just after daybreak, in company with several other vessels, she left for Falmouth. There was a strong wind blowing, which, as time went on, increased with much violence, and was followed by a blinding snowstorm. The captain and mate of the *Dove*, who were both at the helm, could, they said afterwards, scarcely see their hands before them. At about three o'clock in the afternoon the vessel was near the Manacle Rocks, and off Porthoustock Cove, and here, while in a most critical situation, the tremendous sea lifted the little craft clean over the rocks, and she was washed up on the beach. The skipper threw his little boy overboard, he and his mate following in the same way, and all were rescued by those persons on shore. Near the same spot, the ketch *Aquilon*, of Jersey, and the ketch *Edwin*, were reported lost with all hands.

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The steamer *Stannington*, from Newport to Exeter with a cargo of potatoes, broke her shaft on Monday off the Longships, and was towed into Falmouth on Wednesday afternoon. The barque *Frith*, of Lorne, 333 tons, from Hamburg to Glasgow, in ballast, was in a critical condition on Tuesday, about ten miles south of the Lizard. She slipped from the tug towing her, and was on her beam ends, and fast making water, when she was picked up by the s.s. *Anglesea*, of Liverpool, and towed into Falmouth. A German steamer, the *Carl Hirschberg*, from Hamburg to Cardiff in ballast, drove ashore at Portscatho. The schooner *Agnes and Helen*, of Beaumaris, went ashore on Tuesday morning in Bream Bay. A steamship named the *Dundela*, from St. Michael for Hull, with fruit, was totally wrecked at Portloe, near Falmouth, on Monday night. All the crew, except a boy named Taylor, who was lost, were brought ashore over the rocks by the aid of the fishermen and coastguard, who contrived to get a line from the shore to the vessel. The brig *Crusader*, of Aberystwith, from Carnarvon, with slate for Hamburg, was abandoned at one o'clock on Tuesday off Trevoise Head, with seven feet of water in her hold. The *Crusader* left Carnarvon at nine o'clock on Monday morning, in fine weather. It remained fine up to six o'clock the same evening, when severe weather was encountered. At nine o'clock, off the Bishop, it was blowing a gale, and the brig was fast making water. The pumps were kept going until one o'clock on Tuesday afternoon, when it was found impossible to keep the water under. The brig was therefore abandoned, having seven feet of water in her hold. The captain and crew, seven all told, took to the boat, in which they were tossed about for nineteen hours, enduring great privation. The weather was bitterly cold, and the men were almost frozen. One of the crew, Thomas Owen, succumbed to his sufferings at four o'clock on Wednesday morning. "Another two hours in the boat," remarked Captain Williams, "and we should have all perished." To keep the boat from being swamped, she rode with sea-anchor out, and everything was thrown overboard, including spare clothes. At eight o'clock on Wednesday morning, when thoroughly exhausted, they were fortunately picked up by the fishing smack *Gertrude*, about thirty miles off the land, and arrived at Falmouth on the same day. The crew were received at the Sailors' Home.

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The crew of the Netherlands barque *Magellan* were taken into Falmouth on the evening of Sunday, March 16th, the vessel having foundered on the previous Thursday in the Channel, in lat. 47-48 N., long. 6-53 W.

A large number of minor accidents at sea occurred on this part of the coast, and while the Channel outside contained numerous traces of floating wreckage, disabled vessels of all descriptions were either being towed or making their way into Falmouth. Rumours of missing vessels were being continually received, and the time was one of great anxiety. All the help that could be given was needed for those who had escaped with their lives, and others who were known to be still at sea, probably in situations of peril, and this assistance was very willingly afforded. Most efficient and welcome aid was rendered by the local Branch of the Shipwrecked Mariners' Aid Society to the distressed crews. The captain and crew of the *Crusader* (six men), the crew of the *Agnes and Helen*, the crew of the *Dungella* (eleven men), and the survivors of the crew of the *Bay of Panama* (sixteen men) were provided with free railway passes to their several homes, and each man supplied with food for the journey, by the hon. agent of the society at that port (Mr. F. H. Earle), who also boarded, lodged, and otherwise provided for the crews of the two first-named vessels, the men being more or less destitute. The homes of the men were Bangor, Aberystwith, and other places in Wales, and London, Liverpool, Hull, and Great Yarmouth. At a public meeting held in the public hall on Tuesday evening, many promises for subscriptions towards a fund in aid of the boatmen were received.

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Some dissatisfaction was expressed that during the wrecks at Porthoustock and Porthalla, on March 9th, when about thirty lives were lost, no life-boat had been launched, and the National Lifeboat Institution sent to St. Keverne, about a fortnight after the occurrence, Commander Biddors, R.N., who made inquiries into the matter. It appeared on investigation that some of the life-boat crew did not readily respond to the call signals, their explanation being that they did not hear or see them. When they arrived at the life-boat station the storm had increased, and it was

dangerous to put to sea. A proposal for the provision of a smaller life-boat, requiring fewer oars, has been submitted to the life-boat committee.

Off Scilly, several accidents occurred, but they were neither so numerous nor attended with the same fatal results as those on the coast further east. The ketch *Aunt*, Bude, was taken into Plymouth in a disabled condition, and with only two of the crew that remained severely ill from frostbites. On Saturday morning, 14th March, when in latitude 7·20 W., and longitude 48·7 W., about 233 miles S.S.W. of Scilly, the *Astrea*, Captain Burton, sighted the *Aunt* some miles off with her sails down and flying a signal of distress. She bore down upon her, and Captain Burton sent alongside a boat's crew, who found the captain, H. Hines, and a sailor named Jewett wrapped in the mainsail in a shocking state, and scarcely able to speak. Their hands and legs were also so much swollen from frostbites and exposure that they could not handle anything or lift themselves up or stand. Brandy and medicine were administered to them, and after a time they sufficiently recovered to be able to inform their rescuers that the *Aunt* was ten days out from Sandersfoot with coals. Four days before a lad named Stapleton had died from exposure, and his body was thrown overboard.

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A serious collision, resulting in the loss of twenty-two lives, happened during the week of the gale about 140 miles south-west of Scilly, at 9 o'clock on the evening of Friday the 13th March. Two vessels, the *Roxburg Castle*, of Newcastle, a steamship of 1,222 tons register, and the *British Peer*, ship, 1428 tons, came into collision just as the gale that had been blowing all the week was moderating, and the steamer was struck with considerable force by the *British Peer* a little abaft the funnel. She was almost cut in two, and filled so rapidly that in about ten minutes she sank, losing twenty-two out of a total of twenty-four hands. As a further result of the collision, the *British Peer* had her bows stove in, and carried away her bowsprit, jibboom, and head gear. The forward bulkhead held good, and kept the vessel afloat. After the collision nothing could be done to save the lives of the crew of the *Roxburg Castle*, although their piteous cries for help were plainly heard on the *British Peer*. Captain Tyrer, a splendid swimmer, whilst in the water combated the waves, took his clothes off in the water, and was picked up by the *British Peer*, as was also one of the seamen, an A.B. The drowned men are reported to be principally from Newport. After the *Roxburg Castle* had sunk, the *British Peer* was fallen in with, about ninety miles south-west of the Wolf Rock, by the steamship *Morglay*, of Southampton, Captain Hughes, from Cardiff to Marseilles, and towed to off the Manacles, where she was transferred to the tug *Triton*, and taken into Falmouth harbour. Captain Tyrer was very much knocked about during his swim to the *British Peer*.

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The Hamburg American Company's steamship *Suevia*, 2,440 tons, had a narrow escape in the Channel on Monday night. The *Suevia* passed the Lizard on Monday morning, and there were then evident indications of a coming storm. At 11 A.M. the wind began to blow heavily from the north-east, and at 2·30 P.M. it raged with hurricane fury, accompanied by a blinding snowstorm. The seas ran very high, and the ship laboured heavily. At about three o'clock, when eight miles east of the Start Point, the engineer reported that the lower pressure piston rod had given out, and that in consequence the machinery was disabled. An endeavour was then made to work the other engine, but unsuccessfully, and sail was then put on the vessel. By this means she was prevented from driving ashore during the terrific squalls that were blowing dead on the land. After a night and day of great danger, a schooner was sighted on Tuesday afternoon, which the captain of the *Suevia* considered went down in one of the squalls. On Wednesday the steamer *Acme* was fallen in with, and on her the chief officer proceeded to Falmouth for assistance. During Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, efforts were made to repair the machinery, and these meeting at last with some success, by early on Friday the vessel was headed up channel, and proceeded at a slow pace until the Eddystone was sighted. The passengers of the *Suevia* were landed at Plymouth, from whence they were sent on to Hamburg. The distance the *Suevia* drifted from the scene of the accident until Friday at noon was 125 miles, and it was very fortunate that they were able to keep clear of the coast. Steamers from Plymouth, London, and Falmouth, the latter with the officer of the *Suevia* who had gone on shore for help, were looking for the vessel, but happily their services were not required. But for the excellent seamanship and mechanical skill of those on board, another dreadful calamity would doubtless have been added to the long list already recorded.

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CHAPTER V. IN TOWN AND COUNTRY.

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ASHBURTON.—Enormous drifts fell at Ashburton during the blizzard, and most of the roads were completely blocked. At Holne Turn, half a mile from the town, there was an enormous drift a quarter of a mile in extent, and varying in height from eight to twenty feet. Railway and postal arrangements were pretty well adjusted by the end of the week, and business began to proceed as usual. There were some serious losses of stock by farmers in the neighbourhood, and apple-orchards were greatly injured. Masses of snow lodged in the branches of the trees, and broke them down, many of the younger trees having every branch broken off close to the stump. In sheltered valleys the drifts of snow were so great that scarcely a tree escaped injury. Bakers who supplied country residents were unable to go out to them with their supplies.

BARNSTAPLE.—The chief town of North Devon had a very harsh experience. Traffic was for some

time suspended, but the inconvenience in this respect was not nearly so great as in the south of Devon and in Cornwall. In the districts around Barnstaple there were very heavy losses of sheep and lambs. Farmers near Morthoe were particularly unfortunate, nearly two hundred sheep and lambs belonging to them having perished. Through roads and railways being blocked the markets were greatly interfered with, and this, besides cutting off from many of the country people their weekly supplies, was a great loss to the tradespeople of the town.

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BIDEFORD, which has already been referred to, did not suffer so severely as many other North Devon towns. Railway communication with Ilfracombe was entirely suspended throughout Tuesday, the 10th, but as the weather moderated the line was cleared without any very great amount of inconvenience having been experienced.

BODMIN.—In this important western town there was an almost entire cessation of traffic from Monday afternoon until the closing days of the week. The telegraphic and train services were suspended, causing the usual amount of loss and distress. Business on the Tuesday was entirely suspended, snow falling heavily all day, and a large quantity of snow in the street stopped all vehicular traffic. The drifts were so high that residents who had driven from the town on Monday could not return, and great anxiety was naturally felt for their safety. It was found on the following day, however, that in all cases, the travellers were safe. Not infrequently they had been obliged to take the horses out of their vehicles, leave traps or carriages in the roads—often under the snow—and seek shelter in the nearest farm-house. There were very serious losses of sheep in this district. Among others, losses of this description were sustained by Mr. Rowse, of Llancarpe, Mr. Glanville, of Pen Bugle, and Mr. G. Spear, of Bodmin. Many sheep were rescued, but only after great difficulty. On Thursday night there was again a heavy snowstorm, accompanied by a gale of wind, but it was neither so severe nor of such long duration as the blizzard of Monday and Tuesday.

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BRENT.—This moorland town has grown famous through the snowing up at its gates of the "Zulu" express, from London, on the memorable Monday night. Snow fell there from Monday afternoon to Wednesday morning. A snow-plough with three engines arrived from Newton Abbott on Thursday morning, but for some time it was not very effective, the snow being so high on either side of the line that as soon as the way was fairly clear the banks in the rear of the plough toppled over, and the line was once more blocked. The depth of the snow in the town was so great as to be frequently above the windows and doors of the houses. A road cutting scene was photographed at the time by Mr. Rowe, of Devonport, to whom we are indebted for the view. The loss of cattle here was very great, nearly every farmer having suffered. A large number of cattle, sheep and ponies in the possession of residents of the neighbourhood grazed upon the adjacent moor, and many of the former, at all events, perished. Mr. Linerdon, of Yelland, lost cattle to the value of over £100; Mr. Pinney, of Diptfort, dug out 100 sheep from the snow; while Mr. Heath, of Brent Mills, Mr. Vooght, of Lutton, and Mr. S. Northmore were heavy losers. Mr. Luscombe, of Hall, Harford, had on the moor 600 Scotch cattle and 1,200 sheep, a large proportion of which he has not yet recovered. Mr. J. Smerdon, of Brent, and Mr. Hurrell, of Bradridge, lost sheep; and Miss Maunder, Mr. B. Hingston, and Mr. J. Hard lost ponies. Until Saturday the residents of Binnicknowle, a village about two miles from Brent, and largely dependent upon it for supplies of food, were unable to obtain provisions. On that day, however, a party of labourers succeeded in cutting a footway and thus communication was opened up.

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CUTTING A ROAD AT BRENT.

BRIXHAM.—This historic fishing town, which has before now witnessed some dreadful instances of the disaster to life and property that furious gales with blinding snowstorms can bring about, was not on the occasion of the blizzard of 1891 allowed to pass off very lightly. There was no loss of life, but some rather serious injuries happened to the trawlers at their moorings. At daylight on Tuesday it was seen that many of these had fouled each other, by dragging their anchors. In the inner harbour most of the craft had broken adrift, running against the quays and other places, and doing themselves all kinds of damage. One trawler, named the *Alice*, which broke adrift at high tide, was carried up to the head of the harbour with her bowsprit eight feet in over the Strand, close alongside the Prince of Orange statue. About 200 feet of the breakwater was washed away, and its pedestal was lost. Timber in large quantities was washed away from the yards of the principal shipbuilders, and in addition to the wreck of the French brig, and others before mentioned, a boat was driven on the rocks at Fishcombe, and the Seamen's Orphan Home

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lifeboat went ashore, and was badly knocked about. In the town many houses were unroofed, and slates flew about, serious damage being also done to a wall and embankment in Higher Street. Large quantities of glass-roofing were smashed in, and a good deal of glass was destroyed at Newmarket Hall. Many farmers lost sheep and lambs in the snow-drifts.

BUDE.—The outside world and Bude were not so thoroughly estranged during the days succeeding the storm as was the case in some other instances, telegraphic communication remaining unbroken. All the other inconveniences of the blizzard—absence of mails, presence of immense drifts of snow, and similar discomforts—were freely experienced. There was an anxious time among the shipping interest in the port, many of the coasting vessels being at sea at the time the hurricane was raging. These vessels did not all escape without calamity, but, on the whole, the damage wrought to the shipping of Bude was not great. [88]

CALSTOCK.—The mining town of Calstock received some rough treatment during the Monday and Tuesday of the storm, and damage was here and there done to house property, but as far as the town was concerned it may be safely said to have escaped marvellously well. Bearing in mind its exposed position on the river bank, and the many tall chimneys that rear their heads from the hillside, it is singular that no smash of any magnitude has to be recorded. This is all the more remarkable when the tremendous destruction that occurred in the district, and even close to the town, is considered. On the opposite side of the river, the tracks leading through the woods to Buralston Station were rendered nearly impassable by the number of trees that fell, and the whole wood through which the path runs was a complete wreck. Mr. James, at the Passage Inn, from which the ferry leaves to cross to Calstock, was very unfortunate, his loss being a severe one. In addition to great damage to his rose-trees, for which his house has for many years been famous, the well-known blossom-covered wicker bower, standing to the left of the house, was blown bodily away into the orchard, and almost simultaneously his cherry and apple trees began to fall. Of these he lost fifty-six.

One curious incident happened at the grounds of Mr. James, in the apparently narrow escape of a couple of geese. The geese were sitting behind a barn, with twenty-two eggs under them. During the storm of Monday, the barn having been badly knocked about, and the whole orchard in a state of wreck, the fate of the geese was not held in much doubt, and the depth of the snow in the place making salvage operations very difficult, their place of concealment was not reached until Thursday after the storm. The snow being cleared from the back of the barn, however, the geese were found still sitting in the same position as that in which they had last been seen. With the exception that they had evidently worked their heads about, keeping the cavities large enough to give them breathing room, it was quite clear that they had not attempted to move. Warm food and hay were at once given to them, and they were made as comfortable as possible, and in due course, eleven goslings were hatched from the twenty-two eggs upon which the parent geese had sat through such a trying time. The young geese are now as sturdy as could be desired, and Mr. James is naturally very proud of them for having seen the light in spite of such difficulties. The mother geese will also, in all probability, be preserved as curiosities for some time to come. [89]

On the other side of the river a shed belonging to Mr. Goss's shipbuilding yards was blown down, and cattle-sheds were unroofed and carried great distances by the force of the gale. At Danescombe Bottom, at the foot of Kelly Rock, an iron schooner, the *Naiad*, 250 tons, owned by Captain Samuels of Calstock, was blown over on her beam ends. The river banks, against which the masts of the vessel struck, only prevented her being turned completely over. After considerable labour she was righted, but was found to have sustained some damage. At the Rumleigh Brick-works, and at the yards of Mr. Roskelly, builder, of Albaston, much injury was occasioned. The mineral and goods line, the property of the East Cornwall Mineral Railway Company, running from Calstock to Kelly Bray, near Callington was blocked with a drift of snow some eight feet deep, and work was stopped for two days. At the end of that time it was cleared by a gang of the company's own men acting under the direction of Captain W. Sowden. On the same property about fifty yards of fencing were completely levelled. Honeycomb House, about two miles from Calstock, was damaged to the extent of about £100; Mr. Gill, of Tray Hill, lost over 100 apple trees, and Mr. German 250 fruit trees. The heaviest damage to trees was at Cotehele Woods, the property of the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe, and overlooking Calstock, which would appear to have received the full fury of the blast. The terrible night passed here, and the extent of the destruction to timber, will be found dealt with at length in the chapter on Parks and Forests. [90]

CAMBORNE.—The change at Camborne would appear to have been an unusually startling one, since a few days before Monday, butterflies were to be seen flying about. Snow commenced to fall in the district at two o'clock on Monday afternoon, and this soon developed into the blizzard. The storm is described as the greatest and the most severe known by the oldest residents in the parish. The telegraph wires were blown down, and, lying across the streets, threw several horses down. The houses were so covered with snow as to be almost unrecognizable, and in many places the drifts were over six feet deep. Ornamental, and other trees in the town were completely spoiled, and traffic was suspended. Anxiety was at one time felt in the town for the safety of four young girls, dressmakers, of Beacon village, who left the town on the Monday evening, but it was afterwards learned that they were all in safety. In Burse-road and Pendarmes-road the shrubs and trees were broken down, and lay overhanging and obstructing the footpaths. Passages had to be cut to get to the houses, half as high as the houses themselves. A 'bus running between Camborne and Truro was snowed up near Pool, and left in the road; and near it was an abandoned organ, the peripatetic performer on which had been unable to bear it with him to a place of safety. [91]

At a village about a mile and a half from Camborne drifts of snow were observed thirty feet deep. In the town the Board schools were closed for the week. All communication with surrounding towns was, as a matter of course, cut off for several days. At Beacon and Troon, adjoining villages, people were taken from their bedroom windows by means of ladders; and in one case, at a funeral, the coffin had to be slid down over a snowdrift. At Breage a woman was found dead in the snow. Farmers were busy in every direction rescuing their cattle and sheep from the exposed positions, but the losses in the neighbourhood were very great, hundreds of sheep being buried. Among others who suffered in this way were Mr. Carter, of Troon, who lost nearly twenty sheep and lambs; Mr. Hickens, of Tregear; Mr. Glasson, of Crowan; Mr. Josiah Thomas, of Roskear, Tuckingmill; and Mr. P. Thomas, of Camborne. Several donkies and ponies in the district perished. The little villages of Penponds, Kehelland, and Pengegon, presented a wretched appearance, and at Penponds especially it was impossible to distinguish any hedges. Mr. E. Rogers, who had undertaken to carry out some funeral arrangements at this village, was obliged to take the coffin over hedges and ditches in order to get it to the house. At Pengegon, where the water-supply is solely obtained from wells and springs, it was found necessary to use melted snow for domestic purposes. The old thatched farmhouse of Pengegon, on the Wednesday, when the sun shone, presented a strikingly beautiful appearance, and was a prominent feature of the landscape.

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The village of Treslothan also shared the effect of the storm. Trees were damaged and blown down in large numbers, and even as late as Good Friday snow nearly a foot deep lay on some of the paths. A large amount of damage was also done to trees and shrubs at Reskadirmick, the abode of Captain W. C. Vivian, the beautiful carriage drive to the house being terribly disfigured. At the factories and mines business operations were, for some time, entirely suspended, and it is calculated that during the week quite a thousand persons of both sexes were enforcedly idle. Work might have gone on at the factories, but in many cases the operatives were unable to leave their homes. At the mines there was great anxiety, it being feared that the engines would stop for want of coals. Passages were, however, in time cut through, and not more than two or three engines actually ceased working. Cuttings were made from the railway station to South Condurrow and Wheal Grenville mines, a distance of more than a mile. So urgent was the need for coal at West Seaton mine on Saturday, the 14th, that forty miners were sent to help the labourers from Portreath to make a road from the railway to the mine. The Wheal Grenville and Newton mines were stopped for want of coal for some days. At Dolcoath, however, considerable difficulty was experienced on the floors in getting a sufficient supply of water to work the stamps, owing to the leats being blocked. At the fire stamps, in particular, both engines for a time ceased work, and operations were not again renewed until late on Tuesday afternoon. The openworks suffered considerably, as it took nearly the whole of the week to clear away the snow from the frames and huddles. The miners themselves were greatly inconvenienced owing to some of their homes being situated at a distance from the mines, and their being unable to get to their work; while many who had been working underground during the afternoon, found, on coming to the surface, that they could not reach their residences. At Crowan, the Rev. H. Molesworth St. Aubyn, organized and worked hard with a body of men to help in opening up communication with Camborne.

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CAMELFORD.—At this place experience, for almost the entire week, was very bitter. The residents were absolutely shut in from Monday to Friday. The last sign of the outer world was when the North Cornwall Coach, notwithstanding the snow already accumulated on the moors, passed through on its way from Launceston to Wadebridge. The market on Thursday was a dead failure, no live stock being obtainable, and carcasses very scarce. There were many narrow escapes met with, but no actual loss of life occurred. As the week passed away provisions became very scarce, and there was a growing alarm. On Friday, however, four persons on horseback, unrecognizable from the quantity of snow that covered them, entered the town in single file. The party consisted of Mr. George Martyn, late of Trewen, Manager of the North Cornwall Coach Company, Mr. Hicks, one of the clerks at Wadebridge, and the coachman and guard of the coach which had gone through on Monday. The party, who brought with them a very welcome copy of the *Western Morning News*, held an interview with Mr. Evelyn, the Town Clerk of Camelford, and subsequently, under the direction of the road-surveyor, a body of men was organized to cut through the three miles of snow-covered road between Camelford and Wadebridge, for the purpose of opening up a means of obtaining provisions from the latter place. This was ultimately accomplished, and by Tuesday, March 17th, the North Cornwall Coach was once more able to run to Launceston, and the Mail, from Camelford to Boscastle, also ran. Hundreds of sheep were lost, the drifts of snow being so high that much time was lost in getting at those that were buried beneath, and they were taken out dead in large numbers. Mr. Pethick, Mr. Inch, Mr. Lobb, and Mr. Greenwood, in addition to many farmers, suffered severely in this respect.

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CARGREEN.—At this riverside village, situated on the banks of the Tamar, the gale of Monday and Tuesday caused great havoc among the fruit-trees. Mr. E. Elliott, of Landulph, lost about three hundred apple-trees, many of which had been planted by himself thirty years before.

DARTMOUTH.—At Dartmouth the storm was severe, and all telegraphic communication was cut off during the week of the gale, but by the following Sunday a staff of telegraphic engineers had restored communication with Exeter by a single wire, and also with Brixham. On one night during the week a wall gave way at the Castle churchyard and fell on to the rocks beneath, carrying with it several tombstones, and disturbing the coffins in the graves. At the market on Friday morning buyers arrived in the town by train, from all parts, for the purpose of buying provisions, but their journey was fruitless, as the farmers had not been able to get into the town, the roads being impassable for vehicles. Railway traffic was only partially suspended, but the first through

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communication to Kingsbridge was not effected until Monday the 16th, when Mr. Sanders, driver of the Dartmouth coach, managed, with the assistance of Mr. Cross, of Strete, Mr. Watson, of Chillington, and a number of volunteers, to get a conveyance through from Dartmouth. They had to cut their way through about two miles of snowdrifts, which in many places, were upwards of six feet deep. When Mr. Sanders and his party got to Frogmore they invited the co-operation of the villagers, offering money and beer for help. This, however, was declined, but the party arrived in Kingsbridge shortly before three o'clock, about two hours later than the usual time of the arrival of the Dartmouth coach. Messrs. Cross and Watson rendered admirable service. The only papers delivered between Dartmouth and Kingsbridge since Monday the 9th, were the copies of the *Western Morning News* and *Western Daily Mercury* distributed by Sanders along the line of route on Thursday and Saturday. Among other damage enormous destruction was done to the plantation at Blackpool, almost the whole of the young trees being spoiled.

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DAWLISH.—During the progress of the storm at Dawlish on Tuesday, the Ladies' Bathing Pavilion, which stood on the beach in front of the Marine Parade, was carried away by the sea, and almost entirely destroyed. The pavilion was erected by a limited liability company in 1880, and the annual income accruing from it had reached between £70 and £80. The fishermen and others of this attractive watering-place sustained great losses by the destruction of fishing and pleasure boats. At the Coastguard Station the boathouse was partially unroofed, and large blocks of granite were hurled a great distance. As on Plymouth Hoe, the iron seats on the sea-wall were rolled over and broken. Houses in various parts of the town lost chimney-tops and slates, and some large trees, standing in the grounds of the Manor House, were stripped of their branches. At Dawlish Water, a cow, belonging to Mr. Dufty, was killed by a falling tree. Discomfort was experienced by the few passengers who travelled from Exeter to Dawlish on the night of Tuesday, by the train which should have reached the latter town by about eight o'clock. On reaching the boathouse, near Powderham Castle, a block in the shape of a snow-drift was encountered, and the passengers made for a hut which was found not far off, and a fire being got alight, they remained there until five o'clock on Wednesday morning, when a relief engine and snow-plough, with a carriage, arriving, they were conveyed to their destination.

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ERMINGTON.—Roads everywhere here were completely blocked for a week, and neither supplies of provisions, letters, nor newspapers were received. The farmers were great sufferers, scores of sheep having been buried in the snow, which in some places was fifteen feet deep. The work of digging out the sheep commenced during the bright weather of Wednesday, when many ewes were found to be dead, the lambs, in some cases, being found alive by the side of the dead mothers. Instances were met with as late as Saturday where sheep got out of the snow fresh and vigorous, after having been buried since the Monday. At Kingston, near Ermington, nearly thirty sheep belonging to one farm were blown into the sea, and from Ringmore, another village in the same district, 350 sheep were lost.

EXETER.—In addition to the interference with railway traffic, and the collapse of telegraphic communication between the capital of the county and the other portions of Devon and of Cornwall that has been already briefly described, great inconveniences were experienced in the city and all the surrounding villages through the violence of the wind and the depth of the drifts of snow. Several accidents to house property, in the way of falling chimneys and walls, occurred, but nothing of a particularly serious nature was heard of. Business was partially suspended, and the streets were almost entirely deserted. Great interest was felt in connection with the railway blocks further west, and various exciting rumours were circulated from time to time, many of them being, fortunately, without foundation.

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EXMOUTH.—In the outlying districts in the neighbourhood of Exmouth, a peculiarity in connection with the late blizzard that also struck observers in many other parts of Devon and Cornwall, was very noticeable. This singularity was that localities, commonly regarded as the most sheltered, suffered most severely. In such situations the drifts became impassable, and the cottagers were without fresh supplies of provisions until footways were cleared across fields. The narrow lanes were filled with snow. Near the Littleham Church the drift was so deep, that a tunnel was made sufficiently wide and high for carts to pass through. At one part of the road leading from Lypstone to Withycombe, a lane had to be cut for a considerable distance, the drift being five or six feet deep. By the end of the week the Exmouth streets were all clear, and business was going on much as usual.

FALMOUTH.—Some of the disastrous effects of the blizzard at this sea-port have already been recounted, but Falmouth was unfortunate in other respects, besides being the scene of so many wrecks with attendant loss of life. The weather has been described by residents as the heaviest experienced in the district since 1853. Scarcely a house exposed to the gale escaped injury, and in many cases property suffered severely. Were there space to record them, innumerable instances could be given of roofs being blown off, chimneys having fallen, and marvellous escapes of residents having occurred during these accidents. At the well-known "Curiosity Shop" of Mr. Burton, a slate from some opposite premises went through a large window, and two vases within, valued at £85, narrowly escaped destruction. The back premises of Mr. Webber, jeweller, which overlooked the harbour, were completely washed away, and all the fowls in the fowl-house were drowned. In the rope-walk several fine Cornish elms were uprooted, one of them cutting through a neighbouring roof. Telegraph wires also were broken by the falling timber, and many huge limbs of trees were blown down outside Grove Hill. Between Monday night and noon on Wednesday no train arrived at or left Falmouth, and telegraphic communication being cut off the inhabitants knew nothing of what was transpiring in other parts. It was not until the Saturday evening that telegraphic communication was re-established with Truro, and two hours later a

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wire was got through to London. Messrs. Fox & Co., shipping agents, having urgent telegrams to send to London, despatched them via France and Spain. The London morning papers despatched on Tuesday reached Falmouth on Saturday night, by which time postal affairs were commencing to be put in order. All along the quays the damage to small craft of every kind was immense, and the shore was strewn with wreckage and crowded with damaged boats. At one spot on the market-strand, between the King's Arms and the establishment of Mr. Grose, a big sail boat was driven ashore, followed by a coal hulk belonging to Messrs. Vivian & Sons, the latter knocking down a wall. The s.s. *Carbon*, belonging to the Falmouth Coal Company, sank at her moorings in the harbour, and the Harbour Board's steamer, *Armenack*, had a narrow escape of being wrecked. About a dozen well-known residents had trawlers, sailing-boats, and punts damaged or totally wrecked, but these form only a small proportion of the losses by the gale. Among the fishermen distress was great, and, as already stated on another page, a fund for their relief was inaugurated without loss of time.

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FOWEY.—At this sea-port very severe weather was experienced. The whole country round was covered with snow, and communication by telegraph, except to Lostwithiel and St. Austell, was impossible. Fowey does not appear to have experienced much of the effects of the gale on Monday night and Tuesday, but a strong wind with snow showers, visited the town on the following Thursday. There were no casualties, and no great loss of sheep, as, though many were buried in the snow, nearly all were recovered.

GRAMPOUND ROAD.—Here snow commenced falling at about noon on Monday, and continued with only a few minutes' cessation for twenty-four hours. The blizzard nature of the storm was most severely felt, and among other distressing events hundreds of sheep were lost. All telegraphic communication was completely stopped. The last up-train from Penzance, due at Grampound Road at about twenty minutes past eight in the evening, was blocked by the snow a quarter of a mile west of the station. The passengers were got out, and, under the guidance of some of the villagers, made their way across the fields, and took shelter in the hotels. Strenuous efforts were made to extricate the train, but it was not until half-past four on the following morning that the difficult task was accomplished, and that the passengers were enabled to proceed on their journey. The loss of sheep in this district was very great.

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GUNNISLAKE.—Throughout the whole of Monday night the blizzard raged in Gunnislake, and only slightly abated its force on Tuesday. Havoc was spread on every hand, and in one case a very serious accident, that narrowly escaped fatal consequences, occurred. This was at the house of Mr. Bowhay, surgeon, where a neighbouring chimney crashed through the roof and fell into the kitchen. Two servants and an infant child were in the kitchen at the time, and one of the former was knocked to the floor, and on being extricated was found to have had her leg broken. The other servant girl and Mr. Bowhay's child received cuts. On the opposite side of the road a chimney fell upon a house named East View, crushing in the end roof of a house in which, soon after, and in a room immediately below that into which the rubbish fell, a child was born. Large trees, over fifty years' old, were rooted up and thrown across the main thoroughfares. At Drakewell's Mine serious damage was done to the roofs, and at Heath Cottage, adjoining the mine, nine tall Scotch firs, which stood within fifteen feet of each other, were rooted up, and left lying in all directions.

HELSTON.—At Helston, every road leading to other towns was blocked up. No newspaper arrived, nor were any mails sent off until Saturday. Telegraph wires and poles, and innumerable trees were blown down, the plantations in the district suffering severely.

HEMERDON.—No less than six engines were snowed up on Monday night in the neighbourhood of Hemerdon, many of them containing parties despatched from Plymouth by the Great Western Railway to the relief of the train that left Millbay Station at 6.50 on Monday night, and was snowed up on a bridge some distance beyond the Ivybridge Viaduct. In two cases timely rescues of drivers were effected by Mr. Harold S. Williams, of Torridge, the story of which will be found related in a subsequent chapter. One very sad fatality occurred to the wife of a miner, named Ann Farley. She left Plympton on Monday afternoon to visit her father at Hemerdon village, and setting out for her home in the evening would appear to have lost her way, as her body was found on Thursday evening in a field at Lobb Farm, in about three feet of snow.

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HONITON.—In a path field leading from Offwell to Land Wood, in the Honiton district, on the Sunday morning following the Monday and Tuesday of the blizzard, the body of a man named Bidgood was discovered. It transpired at an inquest subsequently held that the man was a labourer, who had left work at Gittisham Hill on Tuesday evening to proceed to his home at Offwell. After calling at the New Inn, Honiton Hill, he was not again seen alive. The body was found, lying flat upon its face, by Mr. F. J. Harford, who was looking for some sheep. In many places near Honiton the snow drifts reached to a height of twenty feet, and it was almost impossible to find the main road. Sheep were buried in the snow in many parts of the district, and large trees were rooted up and thrown across the road.

ILFRACOMBE.—At Ilfracombe, during Monday night, a strong gale raged, and the brigantine *Ethel*, of Salcombe, went ashore at Combemartin early on Tuesday morning, and became a total wreck, but the crew were all saved. The schooner *Pride of the West*, of Padstow, had her bowsprit carried away, under Hillsborough, and was towed into Ilfracombe harbour. Considerable damage was done to property, and business for a day or two was suspended. Five large trees were blown down in the churchyard. The last train from Barnstaple to Ilfracombe on Monday night was brought to a standstill in the Burrow cutting, where the snow had reached a great height. The passengers were got safely out, and proceeded to the Fortescue Hotel at Morthoe.

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IVYBRIDGE.—A full share of destruction of every kind was experienced at Ivybridge during the storm. Trees fell in all directions, a large one breaking in the roof of the newly constructed Navy Mission Room. The Navvy Missioner, Mr. MacLean, was in the room at the time, and had a very narrow escape. Over a dozen trees fell between the station and the village, most of them being uprooted. For some time provisions in the town showed serious signs of running short, but by a laudable system of mutual accommodation between the residents and tradespeople any actual privation was averted. Several of the passengers by the 6.50 P.M. snowed-up train from Plymouth on Monday night, and the down night train due at Plymouth about 8 P.M. on Monday night, also blocked at Ivybridge Station, were located in the village, but some of the passengers, as late as Thursday evening, were still in search of lodgings. The railway guards and drivers were also in dire straits, and Mr. Bohn (the proprietor of the London Hotel), promptly and generously came to the rescue with free dinners to the railway servants. Many hundreds of people visited the scene of the principal block at Langham Bridge, where the unfortunate train from Plymouth on Monday night became embedded in a deep snow-drift.

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KINGSBRIDGE.—This neighbourhood underwent some wretched experiences, not only during the blizzard of Monday and Tuesday, but for fully a fortnight subsequent to the storm. The roads leading to surrounding towns were in a terrible condition through the fall of snow that appears to have exceeded here the fall in any other part of Devon, and the losses of farm-stock were very great. The first episode occurred at seven o'clock on Monday evening, when the mail-cart for Totnes was snowed up after having proceeded a mile out of Kingsbridge, and the driver was compelled to return with his pair of horses, leaving the van in the road. The mail-bags were brought back to the town on the following morning. In another case, Mr. Waymouth, of Woolston, four miles from Kingsbridge, started from the latter place in his carriage for home on the same evening, but was stopped by a fallen tree, and he and his coachman were compelled to take shelter at Coombe Royal, and to remain there until the following Thursday. There were the usual instances of damage to house property, and there was also tremendous destruction to trees, and to the shrubberies of the various residences in the vicinity of the town. All communication was cut off from outside by the destruction of telegraph wires and posts. The telegraph wires have been described as presenting a very singular appearance, the coating of hardened snow in many instances extending to a thickness as great as six inches in diameter. No communication with any other town was received or sent for four whole days, and the post-office was closed for three days, as no mails could be received or despatched. Several commercial travellers who got into the town on Monday were compelled to remain till Friday, when they escaped from confinement by going to Plymouth by steamer. The hardships endured in neighbouring villages for a week were severe, some of the villagers having been without coals, and, the bakers having run out of flour, bread in sufficient quantities could not be obtained. There was considerable injury to some of the crops, and almost every farmer lost sheep in the snow. Mr. Hooppell, of Bigbury, lost between three and four hundred, the greater number of which were probably blown into the sea. Mr. J. Langworthy, of East Allington, lost about seventy sheep and lambs, computed to be worth £300. Mr. S. Square, of Thurlestone, also lost over 100 valuable sheep and lambs. One gentleman had the task imposed upon him of endeavouring to keep alive forty young lambs which had lost their mothers.

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Great havoc was wrought in the grounds of Coombe Royal, the American garden being laid almost bare. In the vicarage grounds many of the trees and shrubs were blown down. Improvised sledges were used during the second week by residents as well as the local carriers, these being, indeed, the only vehicles that could be used with any safety.



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ST. CLEER ROAD, LISKEARD.

LAUNCESTON.—Considerable inconvenience was experienced in Launceston throughout the week of storm, but scarcely anything more serious. From Tuesday to Thursday there was a complete cessation of intercourse with other parts of the country, no mails being despatched, or papers or

news of any kind being received, and no telegraphic service was available throughout the week. Some damage was inflicted by the wind to both glass and trees, and the roofs of houses were more or less damaged, but altogether Launceston was much more fortunate than the majority of west-country towns. [107]



COLDSTILE LANE, LISKEARD.

LISKEARD.—The greatest discomforts experienced at Liskeard were those brought about by the impassable condition of the roads, and by the blocking of the leat on Bulland Down, which supplies the town with water. The reservoirs on St. Cleer Downs were nearly empty on Wednesday morning, when Mr. Sampson, the inspector of the water, visited it, and found that an immense snow-drift was blocking it on the north side of the down. For nearly twelve hours a gang of men dug at the drift, and succeeded in freeing the leat and saving the town from a water famine. The leat was on a very exposed part of the down, and the height of the snow-drifts in the locality may be judged from the view we give of one of these. The illustration is from a photograph kindly supplied by Mr. A. W. Venning, solicitor, of Liskeard. A horse and cart had been dug out from this drift just before the photograph was taken. The town was completely isolated for several days, and the distress among the poorer inhabitants was very great. Everything possible was done to mitigate the temporary distress, relief committees being formed under the active superintendence of the Mayor of Liskeard—Mr. T. Lang. On Friday, after Thursday's snowfall, the rural postmen could not go their rounds, the height of snow in the roads being so great. Our view of Coldstile Lane, near Liskeard (also from a photograph contributed by Mr. Venning), which was impassable for days, reveals in a forcible manner the state of this part of Cornwall. Here, as elsewhere, hundreds of sheep were buried in the snow. [108]

LYME REGIS.—One of the heaviest snowstorms that ever visited the south of Dorset was experienced at Lyme Regis on Tuesday, March 10th. The town lies six miles from the nearest railway station, and the only communication is by two well-appointed three-horse 'busses. On Tuesday the 'bus, with an extra horse, left the town at nine in the morning, carrying the mails. The conveyance, with great difficulty, reached the high hill known as Hunter's Lodge, where, notwithstanding all efforts, it was found impossible to proceed further. The one lady passenger walked to the hotel at Hunter's Lodge, while the driver, Mr. Blake, rode back to Lyme Regis and obtained assistance. By the time the luggage and mails had been transferred to a light waggonette the 'bus, except for the roof, was invisible, and the roof was only kept clear by the strong wind blowing at the time. Later on the same night, the driver of the mail cart from Ilminster to Lyme started to do the journey on horseback, driving being out of the question. On about the same spot as the 'bus had been buried, the driver lost his horse, and accomplished the rest of the journey on foot, arriving at Lyme at one o'clock on Wednesday morning. Both horse and 'bus were eventually recovered, and the mail carts resumed running on March 17th. [109]

MEVAGISSEY.—The gale of Monday and Tuesday raged with great fury at Mevagissey, blowing from E.S.E., accompanied by blinding snow. On Tuesday morning the parapet of the new breakwater on the southern side of the harbour was found to have been washed off for a distance of two hundred feet, and the sea was rushing through the gap. By the end of the week the breakwater was in three parts, and it was feared that the whole structure would have to be taken down. The damage was estimated at over £10,000. The fishermen suffered greatly through the loss of herring and pilchard nets, which were shot at anchor in the bay, and swept away by the gale.

MODBURY.—The blizzard was very destructive in the Modbury district, and the town was completely isolated from the Monday to the Saturday. On Monday evening several farmers who had attended the market and left for their homes, were driven back, and had to remain in Modbury several days. The loss of sheep in the neighbourhood was unusually large, it being estimated that within the postal district of Modbury nearly one thousand sheep were lost, besides several head of cattle. Some of the snow-drifts were immense, and one labourer had his house completely covered. A boy, who had been sent on Monday to deliver bread at some neighbouring villages, was discovered in the evening sitting in the trap almost insensible from cold, while the trap was nearly buried in the snow. The horse was released, and the boy taken to the nearest house, where he soon recovered. [110]

NEWQUAY.—At Newquay there was a great fall of snow, and many sheep were buried. Mr. T. Cardell lost over 100, and other farmers as many as forty each. A man named Ambrose

Matthews, a hawker of wild flowers, was found dead under three feet of snow in a field near Tower Lane, where he was probably trying to crawl into a shed for shelter. He was last seen selling flowers in the town at half-past eight on Monday night.

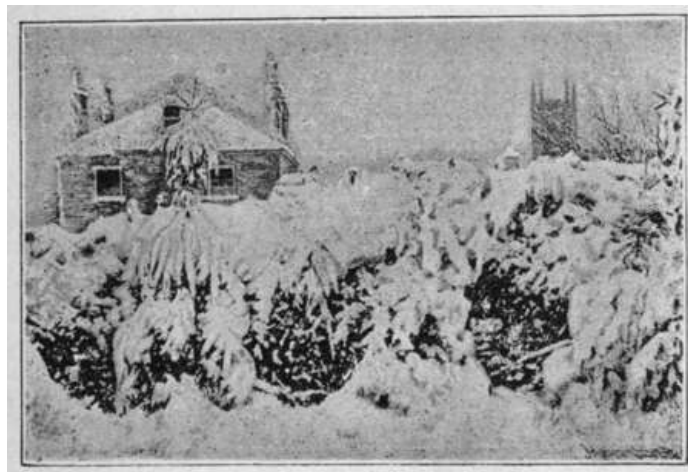
NEWTON ABBOTT.—The greater part of the railway traffic at Newton Abbott was suspended. The last up-train that arrived on Monday was the 4:30 P.M. express from Plymouth; and the Monday evening's mails from Paddington, and Tuesday morning's Bristol and Newton Abbott travelling post-office, which arrived several hours late, were unable to proceed further than this town, and about one hundred passengers were compelled to remain in Newton. There was, in the streets, an average depth of three feet of snow, whilst in some places the drifts were from ten to twelve feet in height. Considerable damage was done to the trees and shrubs in the park, and in the private gardens.

PADSTOW.—This was another town that suffered very severely. Great quantities of unexpected snow fell, and the gale was terrific on Monday night and all day on Tuesday. People who were out of town on the Monday night had great difficulty in returning to their homes, and one woman, named Rebecca Chapman, did not succeed, but was found buried in the snow on the following Sunday. Miss Chapman, of about sixty-two years of age, who resided at Crugmere, about a mile-and-a-half from Padstow, had been in the latter town on Monday, and left for home at about seven o'clock in the evening. At a place named Trethillick she lost her way, and calling at one of the houses in the village was put upon the right road. She was never again seen alive. On perceiving on Tuesday that the woman was not at home, the neighbours raised an alarm, and search parties were instituted, but the body was not recovered until the following week. From the position of the body when found, it would seem that the unfortunate woman had mistaken the gate of the field in which she was lying for that of her own home, and, entering the field, had fallen exhausted. Her basket, containing the provisions she had bought in the town, was found lying beside her. When the storm was at its fiercest, on Monday evening, the dandy *Louisa*, of Exeter, in entering Padstow harbour, ran into the schooner *Ballanheigh Castle*, and damaged her galley and bulwarks. A praam, weighing nearly a ton, which was lying keel upwards on the quay, was caught during one of the squalls, and carried completely over the quay. On many farms large numbers of sheep were buried, but in most cases these were rescued alive. [111]

PAIGNTON.—Great damage was done at Paignton on Monday night and Tuesday. The roof of one wing of the house of Sir Thomas Seccombe, K.C.S.I., on Coninence, was blown in, and crashed through the building, but nobody was hurt. In the Totnes-road the roof of Miss Scale's house was blown off, and several trees were blown down. The landing-stage of the Promenade Pier was washed away, and the sea-wall front of Redcliff Tower undermined. The Artillery Volunteer ammunition shed was completely wrecked. A tall elm at Dr. Goodridge's residence fell over and nearly crushed the roof. Steam launches were much injured, and several fishermen lost their boats. [112]

PENZANCE.—During Monday night's storm, at Penzance, there was such a terrific sea running that the north dock gate was unhung, and much damage was occasioned to the shipping in the port. Some of the most beautiful trees in the vicinity were ruined. On the following Tuesday the storm continued, and business almost entirely ceased, no shops being opened for the day. There was a good deal of anxious looking out for the return of travellers who had left the town before the commencement of the storm on Monday, but by degrees they either returned or their whereabouts was ascertained. At Wheal Vor, Breage, however, a woman, sixty years of age, perished in the snow. Supplies of food were almost daily fetched by boat from Penzance for little fishing villages in the district, and a small coasting steamer was chartered to take in a stock of provisions and land it on the sands at Porthcurno, just within sight of Logan Rock.

PLYMPTON.—At Plympton, matters were very serious. Hundreds of trees were destroyed, and large numbers of sheep died from exposure and starvation. [113]



CHURCH, AND CHAPLAIN'S HOUSE, PRINCETOWN, DARTMOOR.

PRINCETOWN.—This moorland town passed through some trying experiences during the storm week. The roofs of several cattle and sheep-sheds were blown away, and every house in the neighbourhood suffered considerable damage. A part of the church roof was unslated, and the church itself, and the chaplain's house, were almost buried in the snow. An illustration shows the condition of these two buildings, for the photographic views of which, as well as for the picture of

the convicts cutting a road, we have to thank Mr. J. Richards, clerk of works at the convict establishment, who took a great number of interesting views of extraordinary scenes to be met with after the blizzard. At the Prison Officers' School, some four or five of the moor children had to be detained all night, fires being lighted and hot provisions provided. The block on the Princetown railway line, where the evening train had been snowed up on Monday evening, was a very serious one, and it took a gang of fifty men and a snow-plough several days to work through the accumulated mass. The inhabitants were without letter, paper, or telegram from Monday morning until Saturday, when the postmaster, Mr. W. Tooker, with the rural letter-carrier, and a prison officer, Mr. Rodway, who accompanied the party as a volunteer, risked a walk to Yelverton. There they found twenty-five bags of mails awaiting them. They succeeded in walking back to Princetown, taking with them fourteen bags of mails and a small quantity of newspapers, and were received with much enthusiasm. No fear was felt that provisions would fail at the prison, as there was a large stock on hand, but it was deemed advisable to kill a number of sheep and pigs belonging to the farm. The roads were cleared after immense labour, some of this work being carried out by convicts from the prison. [114] [115]



CONVICTS CUTTING A ROAD AT PRINCETOWN, DARTMOOR.

REDRUTH.—On the Monday and Tuesday at Redruth there was such a storm as had not been known for thirty-five years in West Cornwall. It snowed almost incessantly for twenty-four hours, and left drifts, in some parts, from ten to twelve feet deep. The trains could not get into Redruth either from east or west for two days, and even Camborne could not be reached. Trees in various parts were much injured. There was little business done, and the quantity of provisions brought into the town being so small, the prices were of the most extravagant description. Milk could hardly be obtained, and what butter was in the market was sold at the price of 2s. per lb., a heavy price for Redruth. There was a scarcity of coals in the neighbourhood, and the stock (of coals) at the brewery was exhausted before the end of the week. Most of the roads in the district were impassable, and it was found impossible as late as Friday to dig out the vehicles that Monday's storm embedded in the Redruth highway. Mining operations were greatly impeded, tunnels in the snow having in some instances to be cut to enable the miners to get to their work. There were many rumours of persons missing since the memorable Monday, and fears for their safety were entertained which in one unhappy case proved to be only too well grounded. A boy named Wallace left his work at the Wheal Basset mine on the afternoon of the storm to walk to his home. He did not reach it at the usual time, nor at all on that day, and great anxiety resulted, search parties scouring the country in all directions. At length, ten days afterwards, his body was found in a snow-drift between thirty and forty yards from his home. Another lad had a very narrow escape. He was missed for some hours, and was found almost unconscious in an outhouse, where he had taken refuge under some straw. Not the least serious inconvenience attending this week of disaster at Redruth was the unavoidable postponement of a number of funerals, to make way to the parish church and cemetery being found impracticable. [116]

ST. COLUMB.—The advent of the blizzard at St. Columb was sudden and unexpected, and the force of the wind drifted most of the snow into the roads and hedges in such a way as to completely stop all vehicular traffic. In some spots the drifts were fifteen feet high. No letters or papers arrived in the town from Monday until Wednesday evening, and among other inconveniences was the unavoidable postponement of a wedding which was to have taken place. As this event was not fixed for any earlier date than the last day of the week, and could not take place then, some idea of the condition of the country may be formed. The farmers were apparently taken by surprise, as most of their sheep were out, and hundreds were buried beneath the snow. Many lambs and sheep were found at a depth of seven or eight feet, and instances occurred of lambs, who had been born under circumstances such as these, being found alive and healthy. Buried houses were by no means an uncommon occurrence. At Winnard's Perch, about two miles from Redruth, a woman was snowed in from Monday until Wednesday at noon, when she was dug out. Great [117]

damage was also done to trees, and for a time business was suspended.

ST. IVES.—A tempestuous sea was the chief cause of suffering at St. Ives. The blizzard blew mainly from the E.N.E., and caused sad havoc along the coast on Monday night and Tuesday. Ships in positions of peril were occasionally observed, and the lifeboat crew, with rocket apparatus, held themselves in readiness, and in some cases, endeavoured to get near the endangered vessels, but the tracks to the shore were impassable. The window of a cottage on the Warren, overlooking the sea, was blown in, and the sea rushed in and partly filled one of the rooms. Slates and chimneypots were blown about to the imminent danger of the inhabitants. A man named Metters left St. Ives for St. Just, with a donkey cart, on Monday, to sell herrings, and after nearly a week's absence his friends gave him up for lost, but he returned to his home on the following Monday, having been snowed up at St. Just for the entire week.

SENNEN.—The Land's End district was altogether cut off from other parts of the country from Monday to Friday, and even after that time communication was only effected with great difficulty. The snow-drifts were immense, and many sheep and lambs were buried. Supplies having begun to fail by the end of the week, a shopkeeper inaugurated a novel expedition which, grotesque as it was in its make-up and appearance, succeeded in the object the organizer had in view. He obtained a number of donkeys, and having placed baskets upon their backs, formed them into procession, he leading the way with a shovel, with which he cleared a path to St. Just. There provisions were obtained, and the adventurous tradesman, followed by his donkeys,—now laden with well-filled baskets,—returned triumphant to St. Sennen. Two cottages near the Land's End were buried in the snow, and the cottagers had to be dug out. The Rev. J. Isabell, of St. Sennen, by way of getting the roads clear, set an admirable example. He headed a party of some seventy men, all being armed with shovels, and effected good work in making the parish roads fit for traffic.

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TAUNTON.—The train due at Taunton at seven minutes past nine and the "Flying Dutchman" reached Taunton at about the same time on Monday night, and were unable to proceed further. Among the passengers was the Duke of Edinburgh, on his way to Devonport, who was detained for some few days, after which he was enabled to reach Exeter, and from thence to proceed without further mishap to his destination.

TAVISTOCK.—Some account of the devastation caused in this district by the storm has already been given. The destruction to timber was especially heavy, but perhaps the most serious feature of all is the loss of sheep and cattle. Mr. H. Dingle, of Taviton, had over two hundred sheep embedded in the snow, and a number of these were taken out dead. Mr. Perkins, of King-street, Tavistock, and Mr. Walkem, of Hartshole, also suffered heavily in this respect. On the estate of the Rev. J. Hall-Parby there was also a great loss of sheep. Out of sixteen sheep buried in a drift, nine, belonging to Mr. Warne, were dug out dead, while in the neighbouring parish of Walkhampton the loss was still greater. Mr. Giles, of this parish, dug out 40 dead sheep. Mr. J. Squire, of the Bedford Hotel, had a flock of sheep and lambs buried in the snow, on his moorland farm on Whitchurch Down, but he succeeded in rescuing most of them.

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TEIGNMOUTH.—The destruction wrought on the sea-front of this well-known watering-place and seaport, which has been briefly alluded to in earlier pages, appears to have had the effect of waking up the residents to a sense of the innumerable natural beauties that belong to their town, and the advisability of preserving, and, if possible, improving them. Not many months before the blizzard of 1891, a gale from the south-east was near demolishing that portion of the bank above the beach, that has since fallen before the action of the waves, and from time to time the dangerous position of the houses abutting upon it, and standing within a stone's-throw of the sea, has been pointed out by a large number of the residents themselves. Nature has now taken the matter in hand, and the probabilities are that a sea-wall will be built that will extend from the "Point," or lighthouse, to the Hole Head tunnel, a distance of over a mile and a half, and thus the finest sea promenade in the country will be secured.

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TORQUAY.—The snowstorm was more severe at Torquay than at any of the surrounding districts, the fall having been heavier than at either Teignmouth or Dawlish. Few mishaps occurred, however, and there was not any really serious damage. Railway communication with Exeter, London, and the north, was never interrupted. Some injuries to trees occurred, and a few telegraph posts were blown down, but, on the whole, Torquay sustained its reputation as a desirable winter abode.

TOTNES.—Some novel incidents occurred at Totnes during the week of the storm. The town was for days completely isolated, the only journey possible in search of news appearing to have been a perilous one, on foot, to Brent, where ignorance of the doings of the outside world was as great, if not greater, than at Totnes itself. A number of travellers, among them Mr. H. S. Jenkins, of the *Western Morning News* (who had gone to the town on duty on the Monday night), were detained until the end of the week, and all the inconveniences resulting from an enforced imprisonment of such an unusual description were experienced. The first indication of an actual block on the railway was at about nine o'clock on Monday night, when the down-train, due at Plymouth at ten o'clock, arrived at Totnes station, and was not allowed to proceed, as no communication could be exchanged with stations further down the line. After hours of waiting, some of the passengers sheltering themselves in the carriages and others in the waiting-room (where they were made as comfortable as circumstances would allow, Miss Inskip keeping the refreshment-room open until four o'clock on Tuesday morning), all were compelled to take up their quarters in the town for what was to them, at that time, a very indefinite period. There were, in the neighbourhood of Totnes, great losses among the farming community, hundreds of sheep being buried in the snow. One farmer, of Ashprington, dug out a flock of fifty, of which fifteen were dead. Orchards were

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completely wrecked, and many fine forest trees were destroyed. In the town the damage done to property was not very great, but the glass roofs of several conservatories were broken in by the weight of snow. The snow in the streets was three feet deep, and in the adjacent country roads a depth of from six to eight feet was recorded.

TRURO.—At the cathedral city of Cornwall trade was at a complete standstill for days, owing to the heavy fall of snow. Snow lay three feet deep in all the roads outside the town, and, going farther into the country, the drifts were from ten to twelve feet deep. Great damage was done to property, and some accidents, none of them, however, having a fatal termination, occurred. To make matters worse for those having business matters to look after, the train service was altogether disorganised. The "Dutchman" arrived on Monday night forty minutes late, and then had to wait the arrival of the train from Falmouth. This, due at Truro at 7·25, did not arrive until ten minutes to nine. Its course was blocked by fallen telegraph poles and wires, which had to be cut away before the train could proceed, the most serious obstacle being between Penryn and Perranwell. The "Dutchman" had to pass by Grampond Road at full speed, or it would probably have been in danger of being embedded in the snow. It was only when the end of this memorable week had been reached that telegraphic and other communication with neighbouring towns was restored, and that the city once more returned to its usual condition of comfort and tranquillity.

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CHAPTER VI. IN PARK AND FOREST.

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There is no stronger testimony to the overwhelmingly destructive character of the blizzard of March, 1891, than that afforded by the spectacle of thousands of forest trees, that had, in numerous instances, withstood the storms of centuries, lying, some with their roots above ground, others snapped short off or twisted asunder, but all mercilessly and hopelessly wrecked. Many of these fallen monarchs had experienced heavier gales undoubtedly, but they had not been so rapidly laden with the heavy burden of clinging snow that caused them to sway and stagger, and rendered them helpless victims to the fury of the blast. The effects of this blizzard-like nature of the storm are apparent in the peculiar form the havoc in the parks and forests has assumed—some trees appearing as if the tops had been wrenched off, and in other instances a trunk being left standing—a mere bare pole—denuded of all its branches. Many trees that were old and feeble weathered the storm best, the apparent cause being that their stronger brethren sheltered them from the fatal garment of snow as much as from the gale, and that when the protector at last fell the fury of the blast was spent.

The manner in which the snow clung to, rather than fell upon, all objects that it encountered, is strikingly shown in the accompanying illustration of Membland after the storm. The illustration is from a photograph of a water-colour drawing. The photograph, and the following narrative, have been courteously supplied to us by one who was a deeply interested spectator of the scene:—

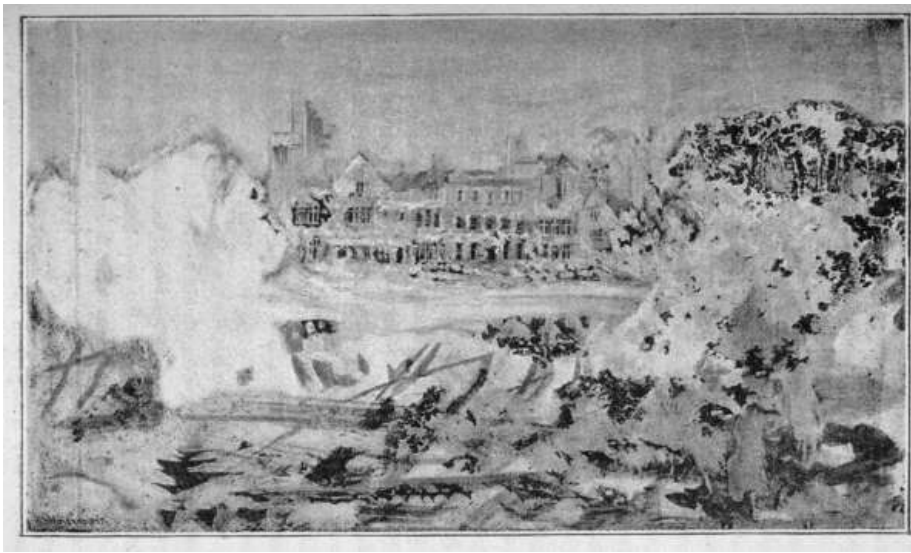
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"At Membland, Lord Revelstoke's place ten miles from Plymouth at the mouth of the Yealm, the devastation and havoc caused by the storm of the 9th of March are indescribable.

"The appearance of the house on the Wednesday following, the 11th, will not easily be forgotten by its inmates. That Wednesday was a glorious day of sunshine. The house was entirely, to all appearance, snowed up to the top storey; the wind in its fierceness having flung the snow against the house, where it froze on the windows, giving a weird look; a pane of glass here and there coming out in relief, and prismatic colours darting across, in and out of the snow where the sun shone in full power.

"Where the ivy covers the north side, the effect was very beautiful: each leaf covered as it were with a bell of crystal, and festoons of crystal hanging down in every direction. Outside the front door the snow was fourteen feet deep. From eight to ten on that memorable Monday evening when the storm was at its height, the gardener, Mr. Baker, stood out and saw the trees right and left, here rooted up, there felled down with the rapidity and report of a volley of musketry. Over a thousand trees are down, among them the finest trees surrounding the house, and which can ill be spared, such as the *Insignis*, the *Ilex*, &c. Every orchard is laid low.

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MEMBLAND, RESIDENCE OF LORD REVELSTOKE, AFTER THE STORM.

"The two plantations near the house present the appearance of hundreds of trees felled down for the advance of an invading and cruel enemy. On the carriage-drive you come across a huge tree torn up by the roots, leaving the whole road cracked as from an earthquake! By the side of this devastation, at every turn, you see the most curious sight of all,—a tree frail from age or extreme youth left untouched! The drift at the lodge was from fifteen to twenty feet deep. The lodge-keeper took one hour and three-quarters getting from the lodge to the house, on Tuesday, the 10th; a distance under three-quarters of a mile. Mr. Methyrell, a tenant of Lord Revelstoke's, residing one mile from Membland, lost fifty of his sheep. Lord Revelstoke was fortunate in not losing more than seventeen sheep and one black lamb. The village of Noss Mayo, situated in the estuary of the Yealm, in the parish of Revelstoke, has sadly lost in beauty and picturesqueness from the destruction of trees, these falling headlong in some instances on the boats of the inhabitants, and causing distress and ruin.

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"Lord Revelstoke was in London—Lady Revelstoke was alone in the house with her niece, Miss Bulteel: the experience of being cut off from all communication with the neighbouring villages, the impossibility of procuring the services of Dr. Adkins were it a matter of life or death, the cessation of all postal or telegraphic communications, being told the last portion of flour was exhausted—this lasting from Monday until Saturday—all the different incidents arising from this "*Great Unforeseen*" are recollections which will never be effaced from the memories of the inhabitants of the parish of Revelstoke. The postman from Plymouth to Yealmpton and Newton Ferrers, including the parish of Revelstoke, deserves praise. His return was looked for anxiously by the inhabitants of Noss Mayo and Newton, morning after morning. He got to Yealmpton, and sallied forth like the dove after the flood to try and find his way to Newton, but was forced to turn back. He succeeded on the Saturday, and was hailed with delight.

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"At Flete, Mr. Mildmay's place, three-and-a-half miles from Ivybridge, the damage is great, but the loss of trees not as irreparable as in other places. The family were away. But the snug little corner between Flete and Membland, at the mouth of the Erme, inhabited by Mr. Bulteel, was a haven chosen by this merciless blast upon which to vent its worst fury. The peaceful valley strewn with trees, and the beautiful laurels shattered.

"A little incident is worth recording to illustrate the friendliness and kind-heartedness of the neighbours. The town of Modbury is six miles from Pamflete. Mr. Bulteel has for years dealt with Mr. Coyte, the butcher. On Thursday, the 12th, Mr. Coyte feared Mr. Bulteel might run short of butcher's-meat; he accordingly started three men at 8 A.M. from Modbury, one man carrying a basket of meat, and the other two with shovels, for places found too impassable to ensure a footway.

"These men reached Pamflete (Mr. Bulteel's) at 6 P.M., after a struggle of ten hours to get there. It is needless to say they were welcomed by Mr. Bulteel, who was thoroughly grateful to Mr. Coyte for his kind thought."

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Another account says:—"At Mount Edgcumbe Park, the principal seat of the Rt. Hon. Earl of Mount Edgcumbe, the wreck to the timber is enormous. So large are the gaps made in the groups and avenues of trees, that the unaccustomed open spaces are distinctly visible from Plymouth Hoe, and from even greater distances. Altogether, the Earl estimates his loss at two thousand trees (at Mount Edgcumbe alone), and calculates that it will take two years to sufficiently clear his park of fallen timber to enable him to again throw it open to visitors."

The reproduction of a photograph by Mr. Heath, of George-street, Plymouth, shows the entrance to Mount Edgcumbe Park. Here there are down three fine elms, each four hundred years old. One fell right across the path, the other two fell towards the lodge, which they only escaped by a few inches, the branches even sweeping off some of the slates from the roof of the building. Had the trees fallen but a little more to the north, the lodge must have been crushed like cardboard. All the way up the avenue leading to the house the trees are lying in every direction. In the private garden behind the house (the favourite resort of the Earl and his family), the beautiful cedars, known only to those who have had the privilege of visiting this retired spot, are all down or shivered where they stand. Particularly and painfully noticeable are a fine old lime, a chestnut

tree, and a beautiful Turkey oak, not only rooted up but split to pieces. These the Earl describes as having been his favourite trees.

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THE ENTRANCE, MT. EDGCUMBE PARK.

"On the hill overlooking the ruins of the old castle, all but one of the umbrella pines, so well known to all visitors to the park, are rooted up, and scattered. In the laurel walk, dozens of fine trees are down, quite obstructing the pathway, but the saddest scene of all in this portion of the park is the fall of a fine silver beech, which stood just at the end of the walk. Strange to say, this tree has fallen in the opposite direction to every tree in the park, as if its sole purpose had been to crush a beautiful camellia tree that stood exactly opposite, and that has yearly yielded a thousand blooms. Close by is still standing a fir, the tallest tree in all the park, looking as though, through all the stormy night and day, it had reared its proud head in defiance of the tempest.

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"The greatest havoc of all is in that part of the park known as Beechwood, situated on a slope facing almost due east. This slope was exposed to the full fury of the gale, and quite four hundred trees were blown down. Our illustration, from a photo by Mr. Heath, pours some of this fallen grandeur. A gardener, who lives in Beechwood Cottage, far more familiarly known as Lady Emma's Cottage, relates, that on Monday night, when the storm was at its height, which was between half-past seven and eight o'clock, he with his wife and young family were in the house in an awful state of suspense and apprehension. Momentarily they were dreading that a fallen tree would crush in their cottage, and yet they dared not venture out among the crashing timber, nor face the blast that would in all probability have blown them over the cliff into the sea. Their terror can be well understood when it is stated that from time to time the branches of falling trees actually brushed the walls of the cottage. As if by a merciful dispensation of Providence, a huge beech, standing almost due east to the house, remained standing, while other trees, less exposed, were blown down. If the beech had fallen, the fate of the cottage with its inmates must have been quickly determined.



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BEECHWOOD, MT. EDGCUMBE PARK.

"In the English and Italian gardens more disastrous wreckage meets the view. On the lawn, in the English garden, a splendid cork tree, and also a famous holly, were uprooted. The orangery in the Italian garden narrowly escaped damage by a falling elm."

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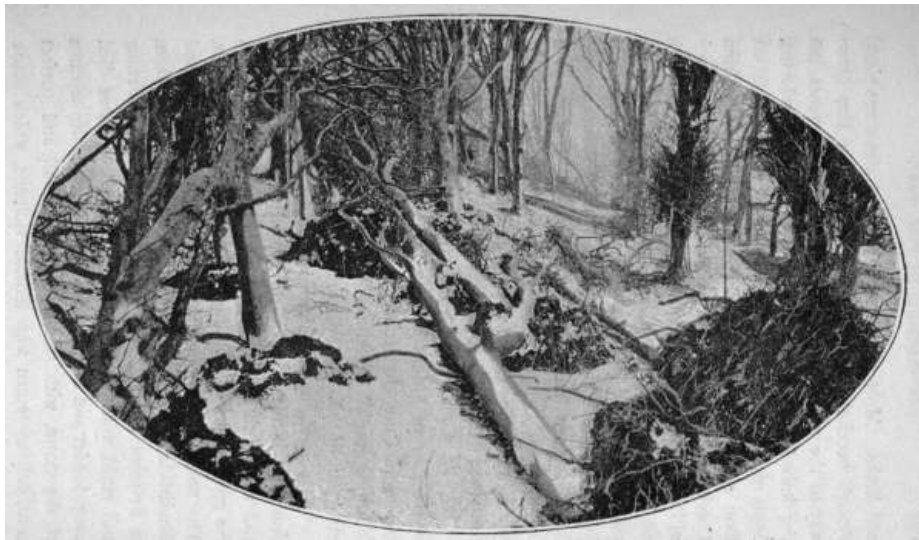
Many of the large trees, lying prostrate, and others completely wrecked, are depicted in the accompanying view, also from a photo by Mr. Heath.

Seriously as the noble owner of Mount Edgcumbe suffered at his principal seat, that was not, however, the extent of the calamity. The condition of the woods was described by one who visited

the locality after the storm in the following terms:—

"At Cotehele, the devastation in the woods is beyond all description. Few, indeed, except the very oldest persons, have ever been able to see Cotehele House from the town of Calstock. This historic mansion is now, however, in full view, and the monarchs of the wood have fallen low to the extent of thousands. It is only as one goes through the woods that the vastness of the destruction can be comprehended. In the glade that fronts the house towards the Tamar, below the ornamental pond, the crash and fall has been so great as to make a tangled mass of roots, branches, and limbs. Most of the trees that are down are elms, though beeches, ashes, and sycamores have also given way to the gale. Oaks have held on at the roots, but the limbs have suffered, and firs have gone by the board. Most of this species of tree have broken short off, rather than have been uprooted. The beautiful walk from Cotehele Quay to the house is a wreck that fifty years will not set in the same form as it existed before the 9th of March. Trees three feet through have been blown out of the ground as though they had been saplings, and in some cases the weight of the earth and stones around the roots must have been several tons." Not less than two thousand trees were blown down in Cotehele Woods, representing over 100,000 feet of timber. One tree alone contained over two hundred cubic feet.

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FALLEN MONARCHS, MT. EDGCUMBE PARK.

Mr. W. Coulter, the highly respected house-steward of the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe, at Cotehele, and who resides in Cotehele House, has favoured us with the following graphic account of what took place during the early part of this eventful week:—

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"The wind, having blown a gale the whole day, continued to increase in violence as evening approached, and from 7 till 9 o'clock P.M., accomplished, if not all, the greater part of the devastation to house and woods. The noise of the storm resembled the frantic yells and fiendish laughter of millions of liberated maniacs, broken, at frequent intervals, by what sounded like deafening and rapid volleys of heavy artillery, and, as these died away, louder and louder again rose the appalling screams of the storm, with slight intervals of lull and perfect calm, only to return with tenfold violence, which made the whole house tremble and vibrate. At 7 P.M. two heavy skylights were blown from their position on the roof of the kitchen, and from the chimney of the same building a huge metal plate was hurled into the court below, carrying the masonry through the roof and into the room underneath.

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"Several of the windows facing the east were swept in as easily as a spider's web; lead and glass, scattered all over the room, leaving only the shattered frames, through which rushed the resistless wind and blinding snow. One window, being almost new, the hinges and fastenings were snapped asunder like joints of thread, the snow lying in heavy wreaths over beds, furniture, and floor. Most of the windows on the weather-side were more or less broken evidently, in the first instance, by the scattered branches of fallen trees just in front of the house. Through the joints of doors and windows the cracks and crevices, before unknown to the eye, the drifting snow penetrated and piled up in ridges, so that rooms and passages had to be cleared like the pavement in the streets.

"It is absolutely impossible to picture the scene of desolation revealed at daybreak on the morning of the 10th all round the house. The ground was strewn and literally covered with fallen slates and branches of trees. The appearance of the courtyard, or quadrangle, presented that of a grave-yard, the slates in all shapes, sizes, and forms, standing on end, like grave-stones projecting above the snow.

"Notwithstanding the great number of huge trees levelled all round the house, neither the inmates of Cotehele, nor a single individual outside, once heard the crash of falling timber above the fierce howling of the blast.

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"We inside the house, at much risk, and after much labour, managed to find and secure the displaced skylights, and from that time, 7 P.M. till 4 A.M., we were hard at work clearing rooms of the snow and barricading broken windows with whatever material came first to hand, such as packing-cases, door-mats, old books and cardboard, battened firmly into the granite mullions. Many times during the fierce cannonade we feared the whole building would collapse, but beyond shattered windows and roof, the granite walls remain intact, and during the storm fires

had to be extinguished, smoke and flames being driven into the room and the occupants driven out.

"A somewhat remarkable incident in reference to this may here be recorded. Perched on the extreme point of an abrupt and precipitous rock, overhanging the river Tamar, stands the venerable old fane, better known as Sir Richard Edgcumbe's Chapel. Right and left of the building, nearly the whole of the timber was levelled, but the Chapel itself and a small clump of sturdy oaks surrounding the spot are, with the building, left intact, save one small insignificant tree whose roots and fangs were clinging to an almost barren piece of rock.



A FALLEN MONARCH, COTEHELE, CALSTOCK.

"On an examination of the Cotehele Woods, the scene presented gives one the idea of an earthquake rather than that of a storm. The majority of the hundreds of trees vary from two to three hundred years and even older, torn up by the roots, and tearing up like so much turf yards of macadamized road and huge blocks of strong stone walls, leaving their ponderous roots standing erect, to which may be seen clinging several tons of huge rock firmly clasped by root and soil, and in many instances, these giants of the forest are found lying athwart each other, shewing the storm to have practised all the antics of a whirlwind." A huge fallen tree, lying prone across a pathway in the woods, may be seen in the above illustration, which is from a photograph taken by Mr. Rowe, public librarian, Devonport.

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A description of another scene of melancholy devastation, written in April, some weeks after the storm, said:—

"At Maristowe, the seat of the Right Hon. Sir Massey Lopes, Bart., the storm did irreparable damage on Monday. The grounds presented on Tuesday a scene of terrible desolation, and even now it can be seen that the beauties of Maristowe are all destroyed. Mr. Merson, steward to Sir Massey, states that fifty thousand trees are down, and that the respected owner is much affected by his loss. Nearly all the lime trees in the avenue leading from the croquet and tennis lawns to the garden, and which formed the chief attraction to visitors, are lying in hopeless confusion, and the avenue, considered the most beautiful walk in all Devonshire, is now utterly impassable and destroyed for ever. In the main coach road, from the gamekeeper's lodge to the mansion, fifty beautiful beeches have fallen.

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"The greatest portion of the damage within the park itself, occurred in the immediate vicinity of Mr. Merson's house, the occupants of which expected every moment that it would be crushed by falling trees.

"A strange incident occurred in connection with the sycamore trees. It appears that on the Saturday previous to the storm Sir Massey decided that two old and decayed trees of this kind, which were somewhat in the way of contemplated improvements to the steward's residence, should be cut down, and gave Mr. Merson instructions accordingly. The gale came on, and hundreds of stately trees, one a monarch elm of unusual size, and another a stately macrocarphus fir, sixty feet high, and of exceptional beauty, succumbed within a short distance of the spot where the two old and despised sycamores still reared their heads. The storm could not destroy them, but they have since been sawn down. Near this same spot some very choice laurels and rhododendrons were torn up by the roots and hurled fifty yards away, being discovered days afterwards buried under from twelve to twenty feet of snow. In the fir wood, facing the mansion, on the opposite side of the Tavy, quite half the trees are blown down, while the plantation close to the main entrance on Roborough Down is almost entirely destroyed. The plantation adjoins the residence of Dr. Clay, of Plymouth, and contained about three thousand very fine firs and pines of which only about one hundred remain.

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"Looking towards the woods opposite Maristowe House, the owner must witness such a wreck as never was before seen since the house has stood there. From the entrance of the road from Beer Ferris to Lopwell, trees of every description lie twisted and thrown in every direction, and the road itself must, for some time, be only available for traffic with care. The great trees in falling have crashed through others, and thousands of broken limbs are visible on every hand. On the other side of the Tavy towards Denham Bridge, the damage is great, and in the hollows, here and

there, more than three weeks after the storm, were considerable quantities of snow. At Denham Bridge several very fine firs have gone, broken off short some five to eight feet above the ground in most cases, and in the Tavy here and there are other trees. On the road from Beer Alston to Tavistock one plantation of black firs, consisting of several hundred trees, has lost to the extent of nine trees out of every ten, and the cutoff ends of the trees jutting on the highway present a remarkable appearance. A little further away, on the road to Milton Abbot, another fir plantation has nearly every tree down." [140]

At Buckland Abbey, famous as the ancestral home of Sir Francis Drake, the ruin is singularly disastrous. Messrs. Ward & Chowen, of Burnville, Bridestowe, have kindly forwarded an interesting communication which sets forth vividly some startling results of the blizzard. They write:—

"As agents to the Buckland Abbey property, our Mr. Chowen visited the Abbey on the Saturday after the storm, that being the first day it was possible to arrive at the nearest station, namely, Horrabridge, and in getting to the Abbey he had to walk over fifteen feet of snow in some parts, the average depth being about five feet. On reaching the North Lodge, he was astounded at the devastation which met his view. The whole of the Rookery between the North and South Lodges at the back of the farm-house, commonly known as Place Barton, was literally levelled—scarcely a tree remained standing, and the few that were left were completely shattered, partly by the storm, and partly by the falling of the other trees in their sudden descent.

"The fine old timber around the Abbey, which doubtless gave character to the place in the renowned Sir Francis Drake's time, has been more or less ruthlessly torn up by the roots by the effects of the disastrous storm, and a noble avenue of beech to the north of the Abbey grounds has suffered terribly, almost every alternate tree having succumbed. In the Abbey grounds, an interesting sycamore, centuries old, on the stock of which, at the point where the branches diverged, accommodation was afforded by seats and a centre table for a quiet tea-party, shared the fate of the others, and in its terrific descent crushed down another fine ornamental specimen as if it were a sapling. Many of the fine old cedars have been sadly mutilated, whilst some of the tulip trees have been destroyed, but the Abbey buildings have, most fortunately, escaped injury." [141]

"Our Mr. Stevenson, at the North Lodge, has recounted a marvellous incident which took place on the Monday evening of the storm. It appears a neighbouring farmer and his wife paid a visit to their friends at the Barton, and discovering that the storm was increasing in violence, decided to leave early. In passing through the Rookery towards the North Lodge, the way by the South Lodge being already inaccessible, they had arrived just where the Rookery terminated at this point, when down came the last tree over them without warning, and, marvellous to relate, the horse, conveyance, and occupants were imprisoned between the large branches diverging from the stock without the slightest damage whatever being done. After great difficulty in clearing the branches, the party were rescued, but could get no further than the lodge, the horse having to be put up in the kitchen or living room, whilst the owners were accommodated in the sitting room, where they remained until the following Wednesday at midday. Immediately after this occurrence, the whole Rookery was swept down, completely covering the road which had been so recently passed over, and one of the trees was blown on the back roof of the farm-house, crushing in one of the bedrooms to within six inches of where a child was sleeping.

"In tracing the ravages of the storm it is most interesting to notice the vagaries of the current, as it affected everything with which it came in contact. In some cases the force would appear to descend vertically in gusts, seizing the top or tops of trees lying together and wrenching off the same as if turnip-tops, leaving the stock intact; whilst other trees within a few feet escaped untouched. Undoubtedly the force of the gale assumed a variety of forms. In some cases it could be seen that the extreme violence of the wind reached a breadth of an eighth of a mile, more or less, when in other places it was only a few yards wide, clearing everything before it. In other parts it assumed a circular or vortex form, and in its tortuous route decimated everything in its way, tearing up huge trees, as if telegraph poles, and even stripping off the thick bark of the Scotch fir, leaving it as clean as a rinded pole." [142]

"So far as we know the buildings have pretty well escaped, only partial damage being done, and in some instances trees which might have smashed down dwelling-houses have been spared, whilst those immediately around the building have been stranded."

The Rev. Frederic T. W. Wintle, rector of Beerferris, who, in addition to severe damage to his residence suffered considerably from loss of trees, contributes the following information which was written on the Wednesday after the blizzard:—

"The barometer on Monday morning at 9 A.M. had risen from 29·60 on Sunday to 29·70. About 12 noon slight snow began and continued, but did not lie much until towards evening; the gale freshened towards sunset, and at 7·30 was furious. One of my chimney-stacks fell at that time, wrecking the roof and three rooms, and it blew a hurricane for some hours, with blinding drifts of fine snow. I dreaded daylight, but was quite unprepared for the horrible desolation around me. I had some fine fir trees, and others, almost everyone was blown down; and oak trees either uprooted or boughs twisted and broken in a remarkable way. I have nineteen good trees all down, and twenty apple trees in an adjacent orchard. Indeed, my garden, of which I was justly proud, is completely wrecked and ruined. The barometer had fallen to 29·20 yesterday (Tuesday) morning, and there was a high wind and fine snow partly falling, partly drifting, till after dark. The average depth is from five to seven inches, but deep drifts all about, five feet at least. This morning (Wednesday) we have a cloudless sky, calm, and barometer 29·60. Great destruction is everywhere. In one orchard over 100 trees are down, in another cherry orchard they are [143]

described as lying as if they were mown with a scythe. The roads are mostly impassable with huge drifts, so that we can get no communication at all. No post, no papers. The trains are all blocked beyond Tavistock, and the telegraph won't work. No doubt the accounts of the storm will reveal some curious details. Although the whole of my place suffered so extensively, in a field just outside there are several fine oaks which are untouched. I imagine the storm to have swept down from Dartmoor pretty well north-easterly, over a high hill and down upon us, and we must have been right in its vortex: the trees all show signs of twisting, as if there had been a circular force. I am curious to see how wide an area it grasped."

At Saltram House, a country seat of Lord Morley, four hundred trees were blown down, and damage was done to the farm buildings. The kitchen chimney at the mansion was also blown down, and crashed through the roof into that apartment. [144]

The very fine beech avenue, leading from the entrance lodge to the mansion at Bickham, the residence of Reginald Gill, Esq., banker, of Tavistock, is totally destroyed.

At Warleigh, the residence of Walter Radcliffe, Esq., two thousand trees were blown down, and at Derriford, P. C. C. Radcliffe, Esq., lost sixty.

In the plantations at St. German's, between two and three hundred trees were uprooted or broken off. The park covers four hundred acres, and much of the damage is in the home plantations.

On the Kitley estate, near Yealmpton, over 1,500 trees were blown down, amongst them being some of the small leaf elm for which the property is noted, while on the Blatchford estate four hundred trees fell.

At Woodtown, near Tavistock, the residence of W. F. Collier, Esq., hundreds of large trees were blown down, amongst them being several exceptionally fine American conifers. At Foxhams, in the same district, M. Collier, Esq., lost some magnificent Scotch and silver firs and other trees, many of which had attained a great age. A large number of conifers and rhododendrons, planted by Mr. Collier himself some eighteen years ago, also perished.

Pentillie Castle suffered very severely; the house and the gardens both escaped with but little damage, but trees of all sizes and ages were blown down in all directions, from the majestic oaks of two centuries' growth to the more recently planted Pinus and other rare and ornamental trees and shrubs. So far all the strength of the woodman's establishment has been directed to the clearing of the roads and walks, which of itself is a herculean undertaking. The wreck may be cleared away in time, but restoration to its former state is impossible. [145]

At Efford Manor, Plymouth, the blizzard struck with great force the edge of the lane on the eastern side of the house, and then recoiling, and turning right and left, uprooted about twenty trees on the northern side, and the same number on the southern side, leaving the house and grounds untouched.

At Greenbank, Plymouth, several very fine trees were lost, and others old and withered were left standing.

On Pitt Farm, near Ottery St. Mary, a magnificent Scotch fir, standing alone, and measuring fifty-six feet to the lowest branch, was blown down. This had for many years been a familiar landmark, and will be greatly missed in the neighbourhood.

What transpired at the Elms, Stoke, the residence of Dr. Metham, our illustration, next page, from a photograph by Mr. Rowe, Devonport, plainly shows.

To enumerate here the instances of lamentable destruction to woods, parks, and forests, all similar in character to the cases recorded above, would be an impossible task. It will be long before the extent of the damage is fully known, and where nearly every acre of ground on which trees stood, more particularly in Devon and West Cornwall, has been more or less rifled, anything like a comprehensive account is out of the question. The same remark applies to the loss of fruit-trees. We have hundreds of instances of farmers and fruit-growers who have to lament the destruction, in some cases, of whole orchards; others, not quite so unfortunate, having lost fruit-trees upon which for various reasons they placed an especial value. The few facts given are but typical of many scores of others, special reference to which the time at our disposal does not permit. [146]



THE ELMS, STOKE, DEVONPORT.

Generally speaking, the nurserymen have not met with any very great loss. Some glass has been broken, but in the winter season nearly all the valuable stock, with the exception of choice trees and shrubs, is protected. Among shrubs, many of the half-hardy specimens are destroyed, their strength permitting them to stand an ordinary western winter, but not one of the severity of that of the memorable blizzard year of 1891.

CHAPTER VII.

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AFTER THE STORM. THE WATER FAMINE IN PLYMOUTH.

As soon as the gale of Monday night and Tuesday had spent its force, and it became possible for the work of clearing up to be proceeded with, movements in this direction were rapidly organized in the Three Towns, as well as in all other parts of the west where men were obtainable, or traffic was at all possible. In Plymouth, Stonehouse and Devonport, the earliest opportunities had been seized of clearing the snow away from the door-ways; to free the pavements as a whole was the next important step; and finally, in the temporarily fine weather of Wednesday, the congealed masses in the roadways were attacked, and that to such good purpose, that by the following Sunday, while traces of the recent fall were frequent enough, in the majority of the streets pedestrians could walk about with comfort, and vehicular traffic was fully resumed. George Street, Plymouth, assumed before long a very different appearance from that which it bore on Tuesday morning, when Mr. Heath took the photograph from which our illustration is reproduced, and the marvellous wintry mantles that enwrapped the other portions of the town were removed with equal despatch. Hundreds of men were employed shovelling the snow into carts, from which it was subsequently tipped into the sea at Sutton Harbour and the Great Western Docks.

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CLOCK TOWER AND THEATRE ROYAL, PLYMOUTH.

The railways by the end of the week had commenced to run with something like regularity, although there were one or two temporary hitches at first; and the postal telegraph services had already been partially restored. To effect the latter object, large numbers of engineers had been

at work, and in the course of their labours, as may be supposed, they met with a great deal of discomfort, and some very startling adventures. Bricklayers, plumbers and plasterers plied a busy trade for weeks after the storm, their services being required to some extent in every house. [149]



DEVONPORT PARK.

At Stonehouse, the main streets were soon freed from snow, and the usual busy throngs of people began once more to pass along this highway between Plymouth and Devonport.

At Devonport, by Friday, in many parts of the town the snow had quite disappeared, though in several of the streets heaps of slush remained, and at the railway station business went on much as usual. In Devonport Park great quantities of snow remained for a considerable time, though the paths were cleared, and traffic for foot-passengers was made easy. Mr. Rowe, of Devonport, has supplied a photograph of a very familiar scene in the Park, which is here presented. The view of the Water Steps, Milehouse Road, is also from a photograph by the same gentleman. [150]

All over the storm-swept district, farmers were busy looking for cattle and sheep, and some marvellous instances have been told of sheep being recovered alive after being entombed for various lengthy periods, one term of snow imprisonment lasting as long as sixteen days.

As early as the Tuesday morning following the storm of Monday night, Mr. Bellamy, the Plymouth Borough Surveyor, notified to the inhabitants of that town the imminent danger of a cessation of the water supply, in consequence of the blocking by snow of the leat through which the water is brought into the town. That these warnings were needed was evident from the fact that since the Monday night the only water obtainable had been from the Hartley reservoir, which, when full, contains only two million gallons, or two days' supply. On Wednesday the whole of the available staff of the Corporation, including the men whose usual task is the repairing of the leat, were set to work, under the personal supervision of Mr. Bellamy, to clear away the frozen snow which completely filled the leat at the Head Weir, and prevented the passage through it of any water from the river. The whole leat from the Head Weir to Roborough was found to be one mass of frozen snow. On the same day, the Mayor of Plymouth, Mr. J. T. Bond, accompanied by Mr. R. Monk and Mr. G. R. Barrett, set out to walk up to Roborough, to ascertain if possible how the work was progressing. The Mayor and his companions arrived safely at Roborough, and were enabled to have communication by telephone with the borough surveyor who was at the weir head. They ascertained from him the condition of the leat, and received an urgent appeal for at least two hundred more workmen to be sent up immediately. The party then set out on their return journey, and again on foot. [151]



WATER STEPS, MILEHOUSE ROAD, DEVONPORT.

Arrived in Plymouth, a meeting of the Water Committee was hastily convened, and it was

ascertained that four Plymouth contractors would be able to supply about one hundred men to proceed to Roborough. This force was inadequate, and consequently the Mayor proceeded to Devonport, and having stated the case to General Sir Richard Harrison, K.C.B., commanding the district, at once received a promise of the services of a military force of two hundred—one hundred of the Welsh Regiment from the North Raglan Barracks, and another hundred of the Royal Marines, the latter by permission of Colonel Colwell, second colonel commandant. [152]

On Wednesday the efforts of Mr. Bellamy, ably supplemented by those of Mr. Duke and Mr. Shadwell, to make rapid progress with clearing the leat near the well-known Rock Hotel at Head Weir, had been somewhat retarded. Many of the labourers employed were ill-clad, and showed signs of weakness, and when it was found that no sufficient provision had been made to supply them with food, they threw down their shovels and returned to Plymouth. Others, however, worked gallantly on through the night. On Thursday morning, things looked more promising. At an early hour the new contingent of workmen engaged on the previous day, and the two detachments of the military—the men of the Welsh Regiment under Lieutenants de la Chapelle and Ready, and the Marines commanded by Captain Kelly and Lieutenants Mullins and Drake-Brockman—were on the spot, and these, being divided into gangs, set vigorously to work on the leat at various points. During the morning large commissariat supplies were received from Plymouth, and the men, besides having a plentiful supply of food, were served at intervals with hot coffee.

Some serious difficulties were encountered, and heavy labour on the part of the civilian labourers and the soldiers was entailed. There were nearly ten miles of leat to be cleared, and much of the snow was frozen into hard solid masses, against which but slow headway could be made. In some places the leat was completely buried under frozen snow of great depth, and for hundreds of yards snow rose in drifts from ten to twelve feet in height, burying the rails guarding the leat, and rendering it difficult to trace its course accurately. The young Welsh soldiers worked well, and the services of the Marines were found invaluable. [153]

By nightfall, when work ceased, it was found that the leat had been cleared for a mile and a half from the Head Weir towards Yennadon. On Yennadon Down Lieutenant de la Chapelle's men had cleared the way nearly as far as Dousland, and near the Roborough Reservoir a clearance of three miles had been made. At about six o'clock the troops and civilian labourers, numbering about 450, returned to Yelverton Station, and ultimately, after a vexatious, but, fortunately, not serious mishap, reached Plymouth.

Fears were expressed during Thursday night that there would be another snowstorm on Dartmoor, and this proved to be the case. A violent gale raged on the moor, and three feet of snow fell, undoing much of what the heavy toil of the previous day had accomplished. Much of the snow that had been removed from the leat had drifted back, and part of the work had to be done over again.

On Friday morning, a special train left Millbay with 200 general labourers. There were also 100 Marines under Lieutenants Sousbie and Garrett; 150 men of the Dorset Regiment, under Captain Lushington and Lieutenants Mangles and Household; and 50 men of the Welsh Regiment, under Lieutenant Woodville. The civilians were under the direction of Mr. S. Roberts, and the Mayor of Plymouth, Mr. G. R. Barrett (deputy-chairman of the Water Committee), Mr. W. H. Mayne, Mr. R. Monk, and Mr. G. Bellamy, junior, accompanied the party. The train had a rough time, on account of the heavy gale that was blowing, and just before Bickleigh Station was reached it was brought to a standstill by a snow-drift. About fifty of the labourers had to cut a way through the snow, enabling the party, after nearly an hour's delay, to proceed on their journey. [154]

On arriving at Yelverton the weather was found to be so bad that, after some consultation, it was considered advisable to send the military back to Plymouth, and, after clearing the rails for the return of their own train, they, with about fifty civilian labourers, started on the return journey. Mr. Roberts, however, with his men proceeded along the leat to a point near Clearbrook, but so fierce was the storm that work could not be commenced, and an adjacent barn was used as a temporary refuge. In less than two hours work was begun, and by four o'clock in the afternoon a clear way of four feet in width was made from Yelverton Bridge to Roborough Reservoir, a distance of six miles. A contingent under the direction of Messrs. T. and W. Shaddock, and another directed by Mr. Duke had been progressing most satisfactorily, and, when night approached and success was within view, all the men expressed their readiness to work all night if needful, so that the leat might be all clear before the morning. This, however, was not necessary, and before seven o'clock a clear passage for the water had been made along the whole ten miles of leat. The water had still to be brought on, and a hundred men volunteered to remain, under Mr. Bellamy, and work on until a good stream was running. Their services were accepted, and the other two hundred men, with the Mayor and Messrs. Roberts and Duke returned to Plymouth by a special train at nine o'clock. The great piece of work thus happily accomplished had been ably assisted by the Mayor of Plymouth, Councillors G. R. Barrett, and R. A. Monk, and Messrs. A. R. Debnam, S. Roberts, Duke and Shaddock, contractors under the Corporation. Mr. Bellamy, with his staff, Messrs. Prigg, A. G. Davey, S. Chapman, and G. A. Picken, worked without intermission, and had an arduous and an anxious time. Messrs. Barrett, Monk, and Mayne, managed the commissariat department, which was no light task, with admirable efficiency. Before the party of workers broke up the Mayor thanked, in the name of the town of Plymouth, all those who had assisted in the labour of averting a great calamity. Thanks were also offered to the railway officials for the efficiency of the train service. It was not until Sunday morning that a full supply of water began to flow into the cisterns, but after Saturday night all apprehension had ceased, and within a few hours the discomforts of the previous few days, as far [155]

as want of water was concerned, were removed.

Although great and growing inconvenience was caused towards the latter end of the week to all the inhabitants of Plymouth by the partial deprivation of water, things never reached the same pass as they did in the famine of 1881. Stonehouse had plenty of water, and was able to assist in supplying the western end of Plymouth. By order of the Local Board standpipes were on the Saturday erected at the Malt House, and in Millbay Road, Union Place and Eldad Hill, and all day long residents of Plymouth were supplied from these. In some parts of Plymouth families were in great difficulty, and water borrowing, where practicable, went forward on a large scale. Messrs. Polkinghorne, at their brewery in Bedford Street, Messrs. Denniford & Son, mineral water manufacturers of Russel Street, and Mr. Lewis, aërated water manufacturer of Athenæum Street, supplied hundreds of the inhabitants, free of charge, from their artesian wells.

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At a meeting of the Plymouth Borough Council subsequently held, formal votes of thanks were passed to a number of citizens, as well as the military authorities, for the services they had rendered, and a rate of remuneration to the soldiers for their valuable service was fixed upon.

As soon as the Plymouth water difficulty was satisfactorily overcome, it was discovered that the Devonport leat, also on Dartmoor, was blocked. Mr. Francis, C. E., manager to the Devonport Waterworks Company, set out for Princetown to inspect the place, and as speedily as possible gangs of men were put on to work on the different parts of the leat. Some serious difficulties were encountered, most of the snow being frozen quite hard, and forming barriers fifteen feet deep, while in one spot, near Lowery Lane, a tree, fourteen feet in girth, had, fallen right across the leat. This tree was removed by means of lifting jacks, after having been cut in two. After many trials of patience, extending over several days, the toilers were rewarded with well-deserved success, and the water once more flowed freely. This was a fortunate result, for, besides the inhabitants of Devonport and Stonehouse, the regiments in garrison, the Naval Barracks, the Engineer Students, and the Royal Marine Barracks, are dependent on the Devonport Water Company for their supply of water.

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CHAPTER VIII. SOME STRANGE EXPERIENCES.

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For many years to come residents of the western counties will have tales to relate of marvellous incidents, involving both great and small consequences, that occurred in connection with this memorable blizzard. The remarkable tenacity of life exhibited by birds and animals had been probably wholly unsuspected, until this recent sudden storm supplied the opportunity for its discovery. We have already heard of lambs born under the snow; of geese hatching their young within a day or two of release from days under a heavy snow coverlid, which not only covered but enwrapped them; and of horses being dug out alive and well after a night's chilly burial.

An experience of this kind, as curious as any, was that of Mr. J. Trant, of Redlap, Stoke Fleming, who dug a lamb out of a snow-drift, where it had lain buried for sixteen days. To quote the words of our informant, "the little creature seemed none the worse for its long imprisonment, but began to graze as soon as it was released. I have just seen it, and it was busy making up for lost time." Mr. Trevethan, of Beer Barton Farm, Beerferris, also met with some instances of this kind. After he had succeeded in releasing his lambs, of which he had missed a large number, he found them generally weak, and rather drowsy, but they at once bleated for their mothers, and their call being answered, they trotted off in the direction from which the call came. A bottle of gin was kept on hand for the resuscitation of the recovered creatures, and its efficacy in imparting the needed warmth is highly spoken of.

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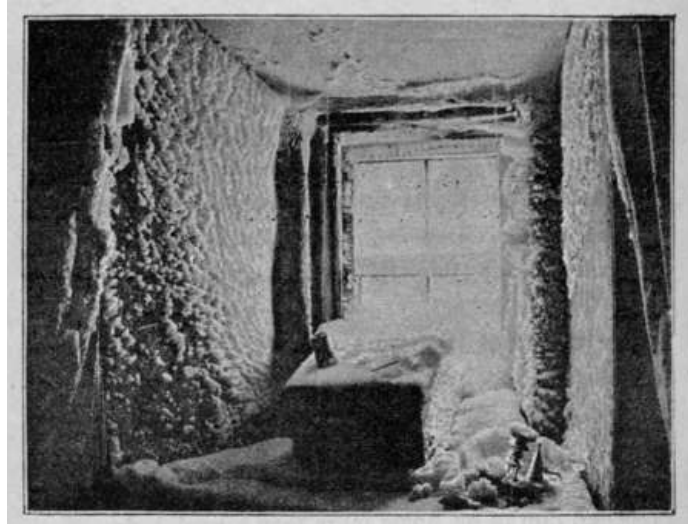
Mr. Trevethan's shepherd was making for his cottage on Monday evening, carrying with him a basket of provisions which he had been into the village to purchase. In attempting to get over a gate, within a short distance of some outhouses that stood between him and his cottage, he was separated from his basket by a violent gust of wind. Picking himself up, he reached his home in safety, and his basket was found, after a few days, empty. In the course of the following week, while clearing up his garden, he discovered, under some feet of snow, a package of tea, which had formed part of the Monday's stock of provisions, lost from the basket. The package, which was unbroken, and in good condition, had evidently preceded him to his home more than a week before.

"Mrs. Hatherley, living near Bickleigh, missed a hen, which she naturally gave up as lost. After a lapse of ten days, a cackling was heard to proceed from under a heap of snow. On going to the place, Mrs. Hatherley was surprised to find the long-lost hen force an exit through the snow, and, flapping its wings, make its way home to the house with all speed. Mrs. Hatherley then examined the spot, and found on the ground two eggs which the bird had laid whilst held prisoner by the snow."

Mr. George Sara, of Plymouth, traveller for Messrs. Cadbury Bros., was enabled during the Monday night of the storm to administer comfort to his fellow-travellers. The train by which he was travelling on the Great Western line from Penzance to Plymouth became snowed up at St. German's. Mr. Sara, happening to have his samples with him, and hot water being available, was able to dispense cups of chocolate to his companions. Some Easter eggs, made of chocolate, are

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described by the narrator of the story as forming an excellent ingredient for a beverage of this kind. Approval of the samples of Messrs. Cadbury Bros.' wares was expressed by all the belated travellers who had the good fortune to taste them.



A ROOM AT WALREDDON MANOR, TAVISTOCK.

Snow effects resulting from this storm were remarkable in many places, but perhaps none could be found more striking than the illustration we give of the result of leaving open, a few inches, a lattice window, facing north, at Walreddon Manor, near Tavistock, on the night of Monday, March 9th. The illustration is from a photograph kindly supplied by Henry D. Nicholson, Esq. [161]

At the Land's End the gale was very severe, and the snowed-up passengers on the omnibus from Penzance to St. Just on Monday night had a dreadful time. They left Penzance about six o'clock, and should have reached St. Just by half-past seven, but it was nine o'clock before the 'bus reached the point where it had to remain, some three miles from St. Just. The horses failed to proceed, and the driver, a young man about 20, was also very much exhausted. He unhitched the horses, and proceeded to a farmhouse near and asked for shelter. This was refused him, the people of the house saying that there was no room for the horses, as all their cattle were in the house. He begged for admittance, and offered to stand by the horses all night, but he was again refused. Not knowing what else to do, he took the harness off the horses, turned their heads towards St. Just, and told them to go home. The horses went off in the darkness, and he saw them no more. They did not reach home, but were recovered alive next day. The driver returned to his passengers in the omnibus, and remained with them until midday on Tuesday.

Mr. William Penrose, of Bojewan, St. Just, had also a terrible experience on Monday night. He arrived at Penzance by the half-past six down-train, intending to catch the omnibus, but, finding it gone, he walked after it. Not catching it, he struggled on through the storm for several hours. Some time in the night he found himself near a farmhouse. The people of the house had gone to bed, and there was no light, but he knocked vigorously at the door, succeeded in awaking the inmates, and asked to be admitted, as he was well nigh exhausted. The farmer, however, refused to admit him, and, after a long rest under the shelter of the house, he battled again with the storm, determined to make another effort for life. He finally reached the snowed-up omnibus at six in the morning more dead than alive, having been exposed to the storm for twelve hours. Instances of inhospitality such as these were rare during the blizzard, and they are worth recording on that account. [162]

Mr. Theo H. Willcocks relates as follows:—

"On the memorable Monday night, the storm raging furiously and showing no signs of abating, I left the Molesworth Arms, Wadebridge, at about eight o'clock, after being persuaded to do otherwise by the worthy proprietor, Mr. S. Pollard, and numerous other friends, and made tracks for Tregorden, some two miles distant. The town itself was desolate in the extreme, the streets being absolutely deserted except by a passing chimney-pot or tile.

"The wind howled and whistled as I wended my way over the bridge, hurling the flakes in my face with almost blinding force, but at the far end I found myself greatly sheltered, and made fairly good progress over the hill until I reached Ball, where I encountered the full force of the gale. It must have taken me at least ten minutes making 100 yards, at the end of which I was thoroughly exhausted, but managed to reach the cottage occupied by Eliza Burton, which I entered; after furiously rapping the door to wake the inmates, who had retired for the night. Here I received the kindest attention, also severe ridicule from 'Dick,' a person of no mean size, and the man of the house, for being obliged to seek help. He immediately volunteered to accompany me, so after lighting a lantern, and getting tied up securely, as we thought, from the tempest we closed the door behind us. [163]

"By this time the snow in the highway was several inches in depth, and the storm raged with greater fury than ever. On turning down Tregorden Lane, this road, though running nearly at right angles to the wind, was being rapidly filled, for the blizzard came rushing across a twelve-acre field, with nothing to impede its course, and, gathering the snow up in clouds, whirled it along until it reached this sheltered lane, where it came over the hedge and through the bushes in streams of sleet, and it was as though we were inhaling icicles, for when we turned our backs

it was just the same. It pierced our clothes, freezing as it did so, and our hair and necks became saturated with the driving snow which formed into a mass of ice. The lane was rapidly becoming impassable, the snow being now even up to our waists. In this state we plodded along for a short distance, I being determined that this time 'Dick' should be the first to be beaten, and I had not long to wait, for he gasped out 'Let's turn back, I am done;' so round we turned and struggled back to the cottage more dead than alive, having been out for some twenty-five minutes. Eliza, prophesying our return, had by this time got up a roaring fire, and at once forced some hot brandy down our throats, after which we changed our stiff clothes and made ourselves comfortable for the night before the fire, and I enjoyed a cup of tea as I did not know how to before." On the following day the narrator was able to proceed to Tregorden.

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Among other peculiar and beautiful forms taken by the blizzard snow, and seen with great effect during the sunshine of the Wednesday after the storm, were the huge, shell-shaped hollows scooped out by the wind from the snow-drifts. An examination of many of our illustrations will reveal examples of this very unusual feature. In the accompanying scene, which is a view of a drift in the Liskeard cricket field, the peculiarity is very marked, the hollow being apparently sufficiently deep to cause the surface of the drift to overhang for some two or three feet.

Brief reference has already been made in another chapter to the gallant exploits of Mr. Harold S. Williams, of Torridge, near Plympton. On Tuesday afternoon, at about five o'clock, he left his home and proceeded in the direction of the Great Western Railway line. Making his way in the storm, he found No. 160 engine standing in a deep drift which had formed on the bridge crossing the lane leading from the George Hotel. Alone on the engine was the driver, Coleman, in imminent danger of being frozen to death. Getting back as fast as possible to Torridge, Mr. Williams procured stimulants. Returning to the driver, he found him almost in a state of collapse. All he could say was, "I'm dying, I'm dying." Mr. Williams, who showed great pluck and presence of mind, got him off the engine, and conducted him towards Torridge, nearing which a portion of a relief party was met, and they carried the driver into the house. By that time he had become unconscious, but restoratives having been administered, and Coleman's limbs vigorously rubbed, he in about an hour was restored to partial consciousness. He remained the guest of Mr. Williams all night, and next day had sufficiently recovered to be removed to his home.

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DRIFT, CRICKET FIELD, LISKEARD.

Not long after Coleman had been received into Torridge, news was brought that another driver, rather further up the line, was dying. Mr. Williams, who is only nineteen years of age, again started on an errand of mercy and rescue. This time he was accompanied by Mr. Thornton, his tutor, and some of the relief party, who had helped to carry Coleman into his hospitable home. About 150 yards beyond Coleman's engine the party came across another engine completely buried in the snow, even to the funnel. Lying near to it was its driver, who had evidently crawled off the footplate in the hope of reaching shelter from the bitter snowstorm. At once he was carried to Torridge, apparently dead, and was laid on a mattress before a large fire.

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An attempt to administer restoratives failed, so tightly was the man's teeth clenched. All that could be done was to promote circulation by the warmth of fire and friction. Rubbing the limbs and body was persevered in, and at length the man gave a groan. That, however, was the only sign of life he gave for three hours, during which time the rubbing was persevered in by relays of helpers. Two hours afterwards—that is five hours after he had been brought in—he was sufficiently recovered to speak, but it was some time after that before it could be said that he was out of danger. When he first recovered speech he was found to be delirious, and he continued in a state of delirium, more or less, the whole of the night.

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When Mr. C. C. Compton, the divisional superintendent, called at Torridge early next morning, to ascertain how the driver was, it was reported that he was making favourable recovery, but that it

would not be possible to remove him for some days. The man suffered much in his legs and feet, which are believed to be considerably frostbitten. His hands appeared to be all right. He remained some time at Torridge, and was most carefully tended. Eventually he and the driver first rescued recovered.

A plucky journey was undertaken on the Wednesday after the storm by Captain Cowie, R.E., with a view to ascertaining the damage done between Totnes and Plympton to the postal telegraph wires, and being unable to proceed on the journey by rail in consequence of the blocks *en route*, he set out from the former place with a determination to cover the distance on foot. He was the first to attempt the venturesome task, and the consciousness of the difficulties that would have to be encountered did not appear to trouble him. Proceeding as fast as circumstances would permit, he eventually accomplished the journey of nineteen miles, meeting with hardly a solitary individual the whole of the way.

It is almost needless to say that his experiences were of a most trying and perilous character. The road being impassable at many points he mounted the hedges, and occasionally losing his footing he fell into snowdrifts many feet high, being completely buried. He succeeded in releasing himself from his dangerous predicament, but on each of the occasions he met with this misfortune there was absolutely no assistance at hand even should it have been required. He ultimately reached Kingsbridge Road, and notwithstanding the adventures which he had already experienced, he decided to continue the journey to Plympton. [168]

Having regaled himself with a little milk and some light refreshment, he started off again, and the remainder of the journey was no less perilous than the portion already accomplished had been. He had to wade through accumulations of snow almost as high as himself, and was frequently compelled to crawl along on his hands and knees. He eventually reached Plympton, saturated with water and sore from the difficult and dangerous ordeal he had passed through, and here left instructions for some men to follow him, finding, however, that the wires *en route* had suffered very little damage.

THE END.

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Transcriber's Notes:

In the first chapter, much of the meteorological data does not make sense but there was no way to correct it. Obvious punctuation errors repaired.

Hyphen removed: bed[-]rooms (p. 141), break[-]down (pp. 23, 44, 47).

Hyphen added: down[-]train (pp. 46, 51, 120, 162), sea[-]port (pp. 98, 100).

The following words appear both with and without hyphens and have not been changed: farm[-]house, life[-]boat(s), mid[-]day.

"a.m." and "p.m." changed to small capitals (pp. 33, 103, 110).

P. 57: "on on" changed to "on" (Whilst the heavy squalls were on Tuesday).

P. 143: "thermometer" changed to "barometer" (calm, and barometer 29-60).

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE BLIZZARD IN THE WEST ***

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