A NARRATIVE

OF THE

LOSS

OF THE

ROYAL GEORGE,

AT SPITHEAD, AUGUST, 1782;

INCLUDING

TRACEY'S ATTEMPT TO RAISE HER IN 1783,

ALSO,

COL. PASLEY'S OPERATIONS IN REMOVING THE WRECK,

BY EXPLOSIONS OF GUNPOWDER, IN 1839-40-41.

FOURTH EDITION.

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THE SINKING OF THE ROYAL GEORGE

"THERE is scarcely a city, town, village, or even hamlet in this or any other Kingdom, but its inhabitants pride themselves with some recorded memorial of surprising events which have transpired within its precincts. The sinking of the Royal George, a first rate man of war, at Spithead, in 1782, was an event of no common occurrence,—the circumstance vibrated in the breast of an entire nation, and resounded to the extremities of the whole civilized globe."

From the introduction of 'The Narrative of The Loss of The Royal George At Spithead, August, 1782.'

On the morning of August 29th, 1782, one of King George III's warships, the Royal George, sank in the Solent during an operation to carry out repairs. Nearly 1000 men and women were drowned in what was then the biggest ever loss of life in a maritime incident.

In 1841, some 60 years after the event, "A Narrative Of The Loss of The Royal George at Spithead, August 1782" was published in the unusual form of a miniature book, measuring just 10 by 6 cm (4 by 2½ inches), many of them with covers made from wood recovered from the wreck site.

Local historian Steve Berden is in possession of a copy and has very kindly made it available for a transcription to be made of its contents.

The book gathers together a collection of powerful eye-witness accounts of the sinking and its aftermath and provides a fascinating glimpse into the workings of a ship of the fleet of His Majesty's navy.

What follows is a complete and faithful transcription of the book, transcribed by Alan Stroud. The black and white illustrations are taken from the book itself, while the colour illustrations are public domain images freely available online.

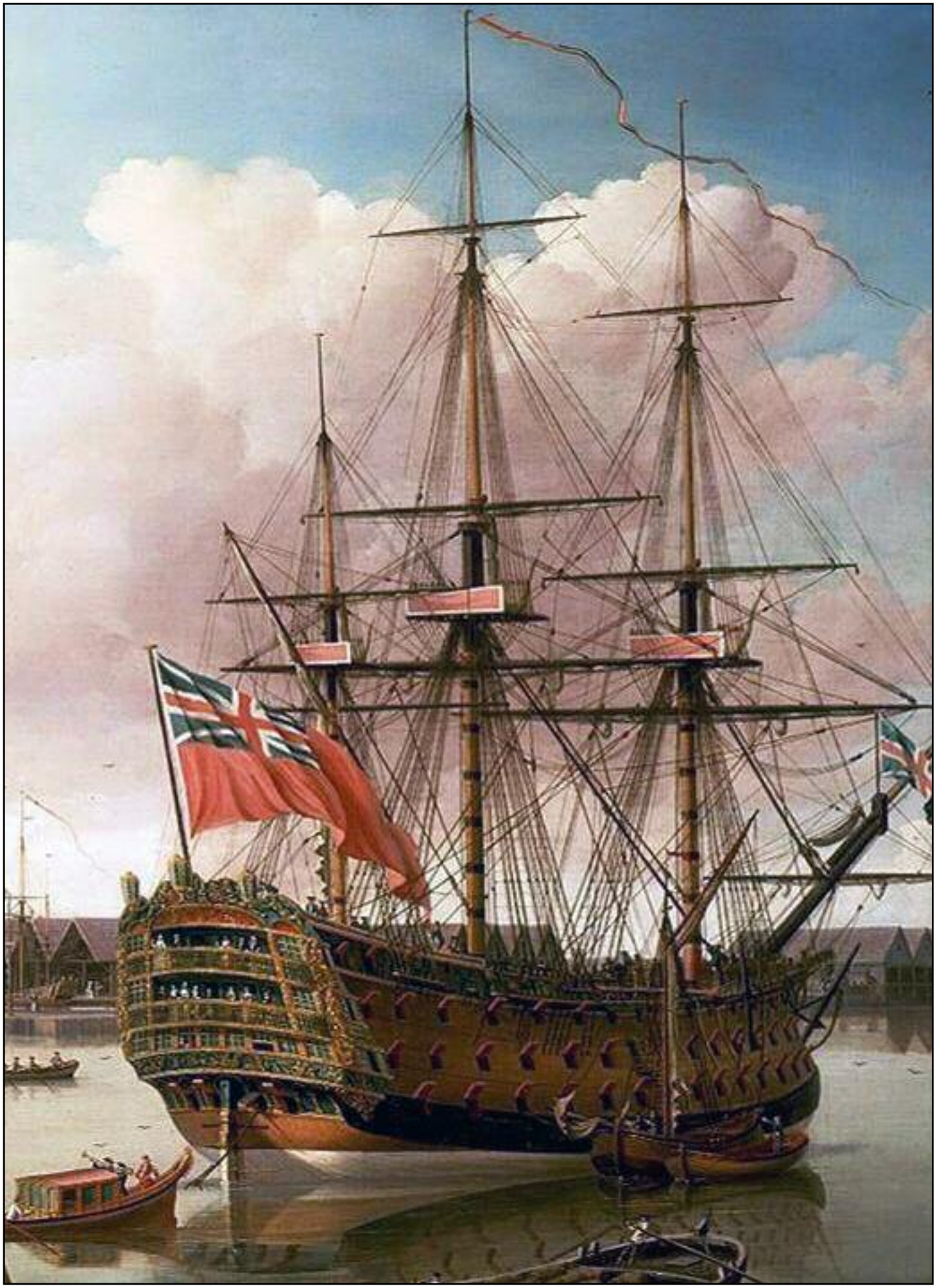
The book provides a meticulous and full account of the sinking of the Royal George and the subsequent attempts to raise her from the Solent seabed where her sunken remains became a hazard to shipping.

Numerous accounts of the sinking were published at the time, many of them being as fanciful as they were inaccurate, but most were of the opinion that the sinking of the Royal George was due to the ship being carelessly over-heeled, allowing the sea to enter through open sea ports. The Admiralty, not surprisingly perhaps, did not share this opinion, insisting that their officers were utterly blameless. They maintained that the real cause of the sinking was not due to the reckless over-heeling of the ship, but instead claimed that the hull of the ship was rotten and had given way during the operation.

This explanation, which conveniently exonerated the officers of the Royal George, was not believed by many outside the Admiralty.

In the years following the enquiry the Admiralty, as this account explains, did all in their power to frustrate and block subsequent attempts to raise the wreck, an enterprise that if successful would have exposed their explanation of the sinking as the self-serving falsehood it was.

Alan Stroud. 2025.



The Royal George seen shortly after launching at Woolwich in February 1756. With a displacement of over 2000 tons and carrying 100 guns on three decks, the Royal George was the largest ship afloat in the world at that time.

DEDICATION.

August, 1840.

Sir,

The permission so readily granted me, of dedicating this second edition of my memento of marine vicissitude to you, has been not only peculiarly gratifying to me as contributing by your patronage an assurance of the correctness of the statements contained in the narrative, but also from its propriety; for to whose auspices could the work have been consigned with so much legitimacy as to yourself—whose life has not only been frequently hazarded in the service of your Sovereign and in the defence of your country, but who also at the present time preside over the naval interests of the locality of the subject of the memorial.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
THE PUBLISHER.
43, Queen St., Portsea.

PREFACE

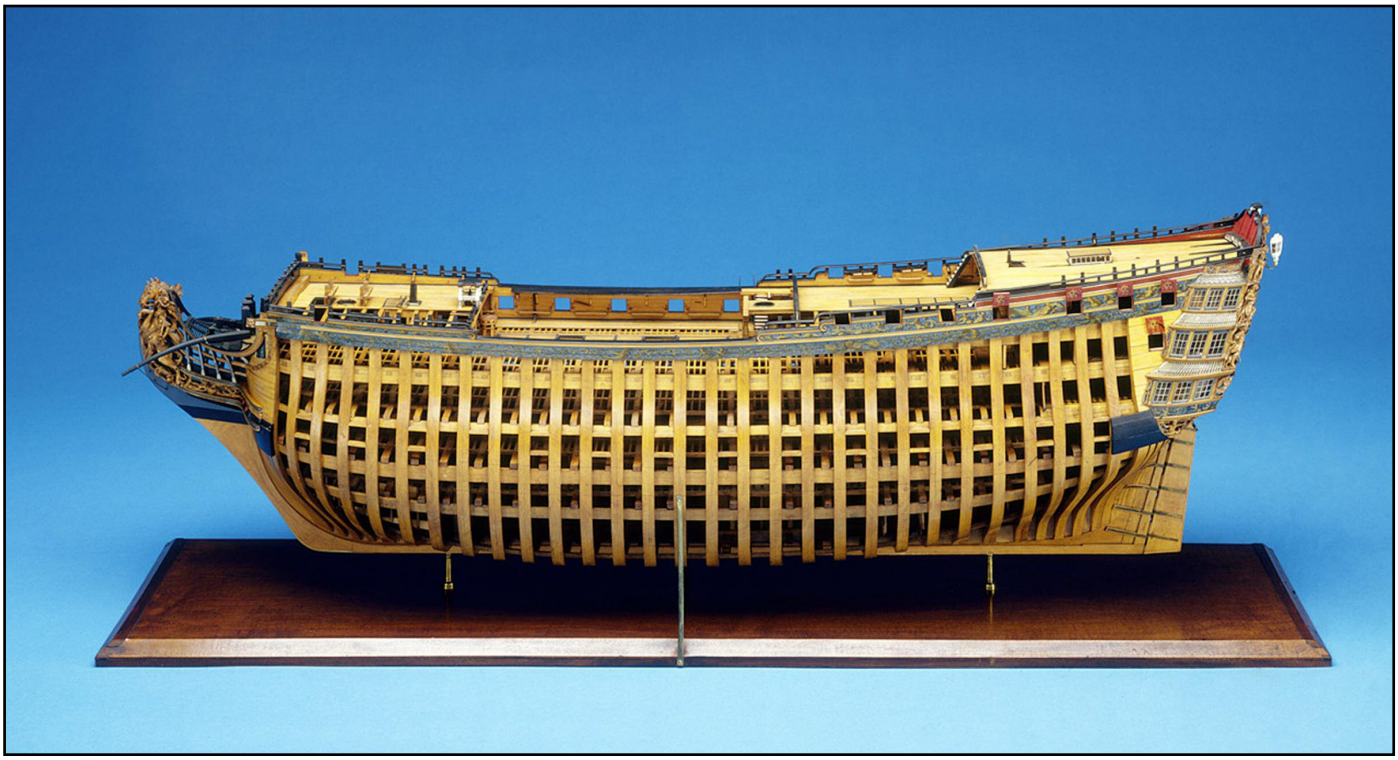
THERE is scarcely a city, town, village, or even hamlet in this or any other Kingdom, but its inhabitants pride themselves with some recorded or traditional memorial of surprising events, either incredible or insignificant, which have transpired within its precincts. The sinking of the Royal George, a first rate man of war, at Spithead, in 1782, was an event of no common occurrence,—the circumstance vibrated in the breast of an entire nation, and resounded to the extremities of the whole civilized globe. The consternation depicted in the countenances of the inhabitants of these towns, on the announcement of the catastrophe the writer well remembers, and is easier conceived than described; it seemed as though a complete knowledge of the dire calamity required time to digest in the mind, ere it could be fully admitted as fact. Volcanoes, earthquakes, and shipwrecks, are usually preceded or attended with fearful indications and concomitants ; while in the present instance all was calm and still, and as free from apprehension of evil, as any family might be supposed to be in the midst of its usual avocations, recreations, or enjoyments. At a moment, totally unapprehended, the briny element extended its voracious jaws, and nearly 1000 of our fellow-creatures, male and female, were in a moment engulfed in a premature watery grave,—nothing beside this awful circumstance could for some time occupy the conversation of either inhabitants or visitors; and when the time arrived for the buoyancy of the drowned persons the individual penning this saw them towed into Portsmouth Harbour, in their mutilated condition, in the same manner as rafts of floating timber, and promiscuously (for particularity was scarcely possible,) put in carts, which conveyed them to their final sleeping place, in an excavation prepared for them in Kingston Church Yard, the burial place belonging to the Parish of Portsea, where an elegant monument, with an appropriate inscription, has been raised to their memory.

It has occurred to the mind of the narrator, that the amalgamation of something tangible in the historic fact with its Publication, would in itself form a RELIC, novel in the republic of letters, and valuable in thus uniting demonstration with asseveration, which the BOARDS used in the BINDING of this little treatise present, having been ACTUALLY SAWN from the Leviathan TIMBERS of the long lost ship, which composed the coffins of many hundreds of our poor fellow creatures, who suffered on that melancholy occasion.

Marlborough Row, J, S.

Portsea.

A contemporary portrait of the Royal George.



A model of the Royal George made for King George III in the 1770's

THE LOSS OF THE ROYAL GEORGE

THE Royal George, so long the pride of our Navy, was the oldest first-rate in the service; she was built at Woolwich; her keel was laid down January 8th, 1746, and she was hauled out of dock February 18th, 1756; it being then unusual to build such large ships on slips to launch.

She was pierced for 100 guns, but having afterwards had two additional ports, including carronades, she mounted 108 guns. She was rather short and high, than agreeing with the rules of proportion at present laid down ; but still was so good a sailor, that she had carried more Admiral's flags than any other ship in the British service. She was always a flag ship from the period of her being first commissioned to her loss. Anson, Boscawen, Rodney, Howe, and several other principal officers having' repeatedly commanded in her. Lord Hawke commanded in her the squadron which defeated the French under Conflans, when the Superbe of seventy guns, was sunk by her brazen cannon, and the Soleil Royale, of sixty-four guns, was driven on shore and burnt. She carried the tallest masts and squarest canvass of any English-built ship in the navy, and originally the heaviest metal, viz. fifty-two, forty, and twenty-eight pounders, but they were afterwards changed to forty, thirty-two, and eighteen pounders. Her figure head was two horses, one on each side of the bowsprit, and both in a rearing position with saddles and bridles, their heads turned a little, open mouths showing their teeth, and also the shoes on their feet. The whole was painted white, so that they appeared like two beautiful animals.

The Royal George had just returned from a cruise to Spithead, where Lord Howe's fleet, of between thirty and forty sail of the line, many frigates, and two or three hundred merchant vessels were at anchor, riding with a flood tide with their heads towards Cowes. Great Britain having at that time to contend not only with her rebellious colonies, but also with the united powers of France, Spain, and Holland, it was found necessary to keep as many ships of war as possible constantly at sea, and no less than six admirals' flags were then flying at Spithead.

Admiral of the Blue, Lord Howe, Victory.

Vice-Adm. White, A. Barrington, Britannia.

Rear-Adm. White, Sir S. Hood, Queen.

Vice-Adm. Blue, R. Milbank, Ocean.

Rear-Adm. Blue, Sir E. Hughs, Princess Amelia,

Rear-Adm. Blue, R. Kempenfelt, Royal George

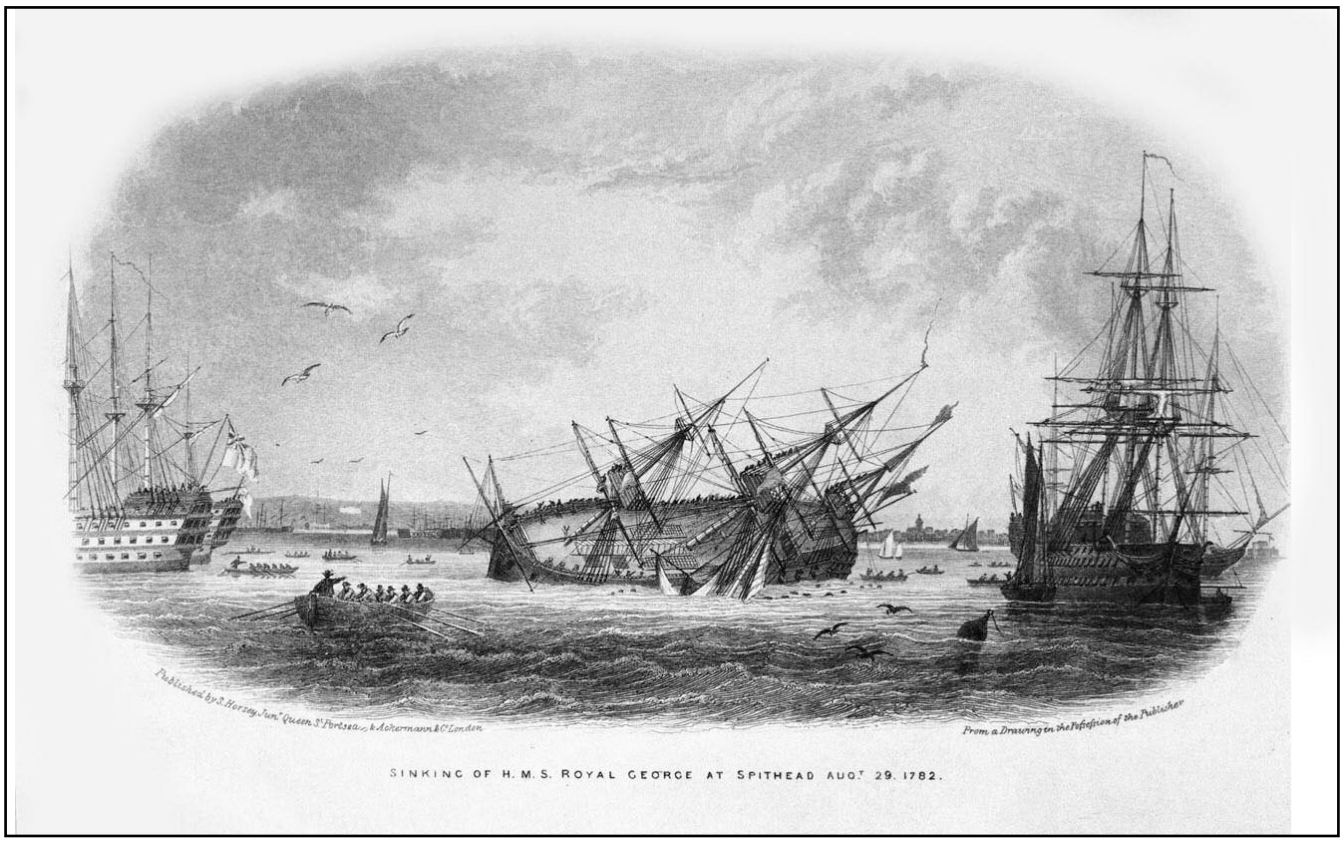
The Victory, Barfleur, Ocean and Union, all three deckers, were lying close to the Royal George. During this cruise, she made rather more water than usual; and as it did not decrease after she came to Spithead, an order was issued on Saturday, August 14th, 1782, for her to be taken into dock ; but after a strict survey by the carpenters and others, they discovered and stopped the leak, and the docking was dispensed with. During the washing of her decks on the 28th, the carpenter discovered that the pipe which admitted the water to cleanse and sweeten the ship, situate about three feet under the surface of the water, was out of repair; that it was necessary to replace it with a new one, and to heel her on one side, so that the pipe may be raised quite out of the water. To effect this, between seven and eight o'clock in the morning of the 29th, the guns on the larboard (or left) side of the ship, in the lower and upper decks were run out of the portholes up to the breasts of the guns as far as they would go, and the guns on the starboard (or right) side drawn in midships and secured by tackles or ropes. This brought her port hole sills on the lower side nearly even with the water. About 9 o'clock, the crew having just finished breakfast, the last lighter, called the Lark, of 50 tons, laden with rum, came on the low side of the ship to unload, when a number of the crew were ordered to clear lighter,' and the rum being put on board on that side before it was stowed away below, this, together with the weight of the men so employed, caused her to heel beyond what was apprehended, and every ripple or wave of the sea kept dashing in at her midship ports, which having no possibility of escape, she soon had so great a weight of water in her hold, that she gradually and imperceptibly stole still farther down on that side.

The carpenter perceiving the ship to be in danger went twice on the deck to request the lieutenant of the watch to order the ship to be righted: the first time he answered him very short, and the second with an oath, that if he knew better how to manage the ship than he did, he had better take the command.

The shipwrights, caulkers, and plumbers continued at work, and had almost finished the waterpipe and brass cock attached to it, for which the ship was heeled, when a sudden breeze blew on her raised side, and forced her still further down, and the water began to flow into her lower ports. As soon as the perilous situation of the ship was discovered, (instead of every man being ordered to the upper side, and twelve hundred persons would in a minute by their weight alone have saved her,) the lieutenant of the watch (who remained perfectly inactive for some minutes merely because he would not be dictated to by the carpenter,) then ordered the drum to beat to right ship, and the men instantly ran to their guns for that purpose; but in vain, it was too late! In a minute or two she sunk still more on her side, the water forcing itself in at every port—guns, shots, and every thing moveable falling from the upper side, accelerated her descent, and she fell on her broadside with her masts flat on the water, and continued so for several minutes. The starboard (or right) side of her bottom was then above water, on which

many hundred men and women had scrambled, making the most heart-rending lamentations. This continued as long as the air in the hold of the ship supported her in that position, but as the water forced out the air, she sunk from under them; the ship vibrating, the surge swept the whole of the unfortunate sufferers into the whirlpool ; the greater portion of whom perished, as those who could swim, were drowned by those who could not. They no doubt caught hold of each other in clusters of twenty or thirty together, and in that situation sunk beneath the mighty wave, having been afterwards found in that position. On touching the ground, she rebounded and finally settled ; and then her masts came nearly upright again, the cap of the bowsprit and part of the flag staff at her stern, appeared just above the water.

The ships at Spithead immediately fired signals of distress. There was no want of assistance; and if the ship had continued afloat a short time longer, most of those who had got on the bottom might have been taken off, as the boats from the men of war, lying to the westward with the wind and tide in their favour, were soon on the spot, and rendered the most prompt and efficient assistance ; but unfortunately they came just after she had sunk to the bottom, and could only rescue those who were swimming in the agitated water, and to secure the individuals who had the good fortune to cling to her masts and rigging. The victualling sloop, which was lashed alongside, became entangled in the main yard of the unfortunate ship, and was drawn into the vortex and sunk with her, by which several of the men on board belonging to her perished.



A contemporary portrait of the sinking of the Royal George.

At this fatal moment there were nearly 1,200 persons on board, including 250 women and several children, chiefly belonging to the seamen, very many of whom were natives of Portsmouth, who were permitted to visit and remain on board the ship, until the order should arrive for her sailing. The people who formed the watch upon deck, amounting in number to about 230 were mostly saved by running up the rigging, and were taken off by the boats which came to their assistance; but the swell, occasioned by the sinking of such a large body, produced a temporary whirlpool, and violent agitation of the water, which retarded the immediate approach of the boats to the spot. They succeeded however, in picking up about seventy, who rose to the surface after the ship had disappeared; among whom were four lieutenants, eleven women, and the remainder seamen.

By this dreadful accident (an event unparalleled in the annals of the navy) nearly nine hundred persons lost their lives; among whom was Admiral Kempenfelt, whose flag was then flying on board, and whose loss was universally lamented.

Rear-Admiral Kempenfelt was the son of Lieutenant-Colonel Kempenfelt, a native of Sweden, whose excellent character was so highly esteemed as to be depicted and immortalized by Addison, in the Spectator, where it has ever been admired under the well-known appellation of Captain Sentry. He followed the fortunes of King James the Second, and afterwards

invited by Queen Anne to accept a commission in her service: he died Lieutenant-governor of Jersey, during the reign of George the First. The colonel left two sons and two daughters, neither of whom were ever married. One of the sons, Gustavus Adolphus Kempenfelt. Esq. was a captain in the army: the other, Richard Kempenfelt, Esq., the admiral, whose death we are now lamenting, was born in Westminster, and soon discovering uncommon the command of the Elizabeth, and proceeded with Commodore Stevens to the East Indies, where he distinguished himself in three several actions against the French squadron, being in each instance opposed to a ship of superior force; and during the blockade of Pondicherry, his conduct and abilities were of the utmost importance, as well as during the subsequent reduction of Manila, by Admiral Cornish, in 1761. After serving some considerable time in the East Indies, he obtained leave to return to England, and during the peace constantly spent the greater part of the year in France, not in the pursuit of pleasure, but in ardent search of professional knowledge, in which if he did not excel, he at least equalled any naval officer in Europe. At the commencement of the American war, he was appointed to the command of the Buckingham, and served as first captain under the Admirals Hardy, Geary, and Darby; and his gallant conduct contributed in no small degree to the capture of the convoy under M. Guichen. His character in private life rendered his acquaintance an enviable acquisition, and his skill and ability as an officer, made his death a severe loss to his country.

Captain Waghorne, the admiral's first captain, tried to acquaint him that the ship was sinking, but the heeling over of the ship, had so jammed the doors of the cabin that they could not be opened. Besides the admiral, who was in his cabin writing, nearly every one who was between decks perished with her, from the almost utter impossibility of escaping. Captain Waghorne was fortunately on deck and was saved, but his son, a midshipman perished.

Several officers of marines, (among whom was Major Graham) three lieutenants, the surgeon, the master, several midshipmen belonging to her, with some ladies who that unfortunate morning paid her a visit, for the purpose of viewing her, and also Mr. John Greentree, the master plumber of the Dock-yard, Portsmouth, were all lost. The marine officers, with a detachment of marines, had the preceding evening only come on board from the depot at Portsmouth.

It is scarcely possible to conceive a more distressing scene than this disastrous calamity presented ; a multitude of gallant men, many of whom in the company of their wives and family, in the height of enjoyments, anchored in smooth water, and yet in a moment overwhelmed in the gaping flood, and with scarcely time to utter an ejaculation for mercy, precipitated into an awful eternity. The sinking of the Royal George while at anchor at Spithead, was not believed in London by many experienced naval officers and others, until it could no longer be doubted.

Among the officers snatched from a watery grave, was Admiral Sir Charles Philip Henderson Durham, recently commander in chief at Portsmouth, who was then a young lieutenant, and was returning from the shore; but when about a boat's length from the Royal George she went down, and his boat was drawn into the vortex. He was the seventh lieutenant and aide-de-camp to Admiral Kempenfelt. He threw off his coat and dashed into the sea, when he was seized by a drowning marine, by whom he was twice carried down. On rising to the surface the second time, the lieutenant succeeded in extricating himself from the dying marine's grasp, by tearing off his waistcoat, by which the marine clung, and he swam to the halyards of the mainmast, from whence he was taken by a boat. The body of the marine was washed on shore a fortnight afterwards, with the waistcoat firmly twisted round his arm,—a pencil case bearing the initials of Lieutenant Durham, was found safe in the pocket, and restored to its owner.

Captain Crispo was a midshipman of the quarter-deck at the moment of the accident, and escaped by swimming. He was but nine years old at the time, and so small in stature, that when about being examined before the court martial, which sat to inquire into the circumstances of this lamentable event, one of the gallant members of the court lifted him up with one hand on the table, and said, Now, my lad, you can be seen, speak up and boldly; for from this moment you are an adopted son of the British Navy." At the end of twenty eight years from the day of its date, John Crispo was promoted to the rank of post-captain, and is still on the half-pay list. Lately, speaking of the exertions of Col. Pasley, Captain Crispo said, with some earnestness, " I wish he may fish up my chest, for there are twenty two guineas and two half guineas in it." Mr. Webb's escape from the ill fated vessel was a singular one, at a very few minutes before the catastrophe he left the vessel for the shore, in command of a boat's crew. After the boat had made a few strokes from the ship, a midshipman who was one of the company requested permission to return on board, which was acceded to, for the purpose of obtaining his dirk. The patience of the commander of the boat becoming exhausted for the return of the midshipman, they were ordered to pull towards the shore; this was scarcely responded to, before the ship capsized, and among the lives lost was that of the young officer, who went on board from the boat, on account of the trifling breach of etiquette which he committed on being destitute of his dirk. Mr. Webb is now residing in Morden College, Blackheath, upwards of eighty years of age, but still in perfect health, and in the enjoyment of his faculties.

The preservation of Mr. Henry Bishop, a young man of about nineteen years of age, was effected in a very extraordinary manner. He was on the lower deck at the time of the fatal accident, and as the vessel filled, the force of the water hurried him almost insensibly up the hatchway; when at the instant, he was met by one of the guns, which fell from the middle deck, and striking him on his left hand, broke three of his fingers. However, in a few seconds be found himself floating on the surface of the water, and was luckily taken up by one of the boats.

Among other remarkable escapes is the following. Just as the ship was sinking, the captain saw a young gentleman, named Pierce, about twelve years of age, and said to him, 'Pierce, can you swim?' to which he replied, 'No.' 'Then you must try,' and immediately threw him overboard. Mr. P. who related the circumstance to a friend, said, ' the moment I fell into the water, one of the seamen jumped overboard, and fell right upon me. I then thought it was all over; but fortunately, I know not how, I caught hold of him, and he swam well, he kept both of us above water, until the ship settled, when he swam with me to the main shrouds, and placed me on the top.'

A poor little child was also miraculously preserved by a sheep, who swam with it for some time, holding only by its fleece, when the little fellow was taken up by a gentleman in a wherry. His father and mother were drowned, and the boy did not know their names; all that he knew was that his own name was Jack. The gentleman ever after most humanely took care and provided for him.

The unspeakable distress this catastrophe occasioned is inconceivable. The shore for a length of time exhibited scenes of the most poignant grief, being lined with persons lamenting their fathers, their husbands, or children, who had perished in this calamity.

About ten days after the accident, thirty five of the bodies of the unfortunate men floated, and were buried in one grave at Kingston, over which the parish of Portsea has erected a monument as a grateful tribute to the memory of Admiral Kempenfelt, and his fellow sufferers. This monument is annually visited by thousands, it stands in the corner of the church-yard surrounded by iron rails.

Another stone has also been raised near the same spot, by an individual who styles himself a stranger both to the officers and ship's company, 'as a testimony of sympathy for the unfortunate.' Mr. Sanders, the first lieutenant, was picked up a few days after the accident under the stern of the Montague Indiaman at the Motherbank, his gold watch in his fob, and £5 15s. 6d. in his pocket.

A great many of the sufferers were washed on shore at Ryde, in the Isle of Wight, and were buried on the Dover, a low piece of ground to the Eastward of Ryde, near the castle, where the graves are still to be seen. It is to be regretted, that no public spirited individual has excited the opulent to put a solitary pillar on the sailor's grave. The hillocks are wearing fast away, and the ravages of the sea, and the feet of the traveller constantly passing over them, will in a very little time leave hardly the vestige of the 'narrow cell' remaining.

On the 9th of September a court martial was held at Portsmouth, on board the Warspite, on Captain Waghorne, for the loss of the Royal George; when, after an examination of all the evidence produced, he was honourably acquitted. A carpenter on board, who escaped, declared that she was so old and rotten, that when a plank started not a peg would hold together.

To the honour of the British public, a large sum of money was raised by subscription for the relief of the widows, children, and relatives of those who perished by this deplorable accident. Toward which fund Captain Gustavus A. Kempenfelt, brother of the deceased Admiral, contributed two hundred guineas.

The masts of the Royal George remained standing out of water for several years afterwards, one of which so late as the year 1794, when it was unfortunately run down in the night by an English frigate. —Some parts of her deck, before being covered with sand, could be indistinctly seen at low water of the spring tides.

A list of the Officers belonging to the Royal George, at the time of her loss:—

Richard Kermpenfelt, Esq. Rear-Adm. of the Blue
Joseph Bransom Secretary
Martin Waghorne Captain
George Sanders 1st. Lieutenant
Jeremiah Yiguers, 2nd ditto
Morris Holingbury 3rd. ditto
Joseph Whittman 4th. ditto
John Stephens 5th. ditto
John Me Killop 6th. ditto
Philip Charles H. Durham . 7th. ditto
Richard Searle Master
John Heron Purser
James Bertrum. Surgeon
Richard Vyvian Chaplain
William Harrison Gunner
Thomas Williams Carpenter
Richard Talbot Boatswain
William Richardson Acting Lieutenant
Dennis Sullivan Master's Mate
Benjamin Brady ditto
John Buchannon ditto
David Wilkins .
David Grey.
James Fish.,
Alexander Frazier.
John Culverhouse.
ditto John Greenlees
William Davie.
William Billing
Tho. Southcott
Thomas Little
William Jones
Philip Lys
William Waghorne.
John Crispo
William Leslie Surgeon's Mate
John Chelland
Joseph Webb
E. Damergne
Walter Storey Clerk
William Murray Cook
John Graham Major, Marines.
Richard Graham 1st. Lieutenant, ditto
Adam Currie 1st. ditto, ditto
William Smith. 2nd. ditto, ditto

INGRAM'S ACCOUNT
OF THE
LOSS OF THE ROYAL GEORGE

Mr. Ingram, who is a very respectable and intelligent man, was on board the Royal George from the time she was put in commission till she sunk, and was in the King's service for years after. He was with the grand fleet under Lord Howe, at the relief of Gibraltar, thence to the West Indies under Admiral Pigot, but never gained a pension, although he had repeatedly fought for his country. This narrative, (which may be regarded as a great biographical curiosity) is given exactly in his own words, except that occasional questions were asked where explanation appeared to be necessary. He now resides at Woodford, (1841,) a village midway between Gloucester and Bristol.

The Royal George was a ship of 100 guns. Originally her guns had been all brass, but when she was docked at Plymouth, either in the spring of 1782, or the year before, the brass forty-two pounders on her lower gun decks were taken out of her as being too heavy, and iron thirty- two pounders put there in their stead ; so that after that she carried brass twenty-four pounders on her main deck, quarter deck, and poop ; brass thirty-two pounders on her middle deck, and iron thirty- two pounders on her lower deck. She did not carry any carronades. She measured sixty-six feet from the keelson to the taffrail; and being a flag ship, her lanterns were so big, that the men used to go into them to clean them.

In August, 1782, the Royal George had come to Spithead. She was in a very complete state, with hardly any leakage, so that there was no occasion for the pumps to be touched oftener than once in every three or four days. By the 29th of August, she had got six months' provisions on board, and also many tons of shot. The ship had her gallants up, the blue flag of Admiral Kempenfelt was flying at the mizzen, and the ensign was hoisted on the ensign staff,—and she was in about two days to have sailed to join the grand fleet in the Mediterranean. It was ascertained that the water-cock must be taken out, and a new one put in. The water-cock is something like the tap of a barrel, —it is in the hold of the ship on the starboard side, and at that part of the ship, called the well. By turning a thing which is inside the ship, the sea water is let into a cistern in the hold, and it is from that pumped up to wash the decks. In some ships the water is drawn up the sides in buckets, and there is no water-cock. To get out the old water-cock it was necessary to make the ship heel so much on her larboard side as to raise the outside of this water cock above water. This was done at about 8 o'clock on the morning of the 29th of August. To do it the whole of the guns on the larboard side were run out as far as they would go, quite to the breasts of the guns, and the starboard guns drawn in a midship and secured by tackles, two to every gun, one on each side the gun. This brought the water nearly on a level with the portholes of the larboard side of the lower gun deck. The men were working at this water-cock on the outside of the ship for near an hour, the ship remaining all on one side as I have stated.

At about 9 o'clock, a.m. or rather before, we had just finished our breakfast, and the last lighter, with rum on board, had come alongside; this vessel was a sloop of about fifty tons, and belonged to three brothers, who used her to carry things on board the men of war. She was lashed to the larboard side of the Royal George, and we were piped to clear the lighter, and get the rum out of her, and stow it in the hold of the Royal George. I was in the waist of our ship, on the larboard side, bearing the rum casks over, as some men of the Royal George were aboard the sloop to sling them.

At first no danger was apprehended from the ship being on one side, although the water kept dashing in at the portholes at every wave; and there being mice in the lower part of the ship, which were disturbed by the water which dashed in, they were hunted in the water by the men, and there had been a rare game going on. However, by about 9 o'clock the additional quantity of rum on hoard the ship, and also the quantity of seawater which had dashed in through the port-holes brought the larboard port-holes of the lower gun deck nearly level with the sea.

As soon as that was the case, the carpenter went on the quarter-deck to the lieutenant of the watch, to ask him to give orders to right ship, as the ship could not bear it. However, the lieutenant made him a very short answer, and the carpenter then went below. The captain's name was Waghorne; he was on board, but where he was I do not know. However captains, if any thing is to be done when the ship is in harbour, seldom interfere, but leave it all to the officer of the watch. The lieutenant was, if I remember right, the third lieutenant; he had not joined us long ; his name I do not recollect; he was a good-sized man, between thirty and forty years of age. The men called him 'Jib-and-Fore- sail Jack,' for if he had the watch in the night, he would be always bothering the men to alter the sails, and it was 'up jib,' and ' down jib,' and ' up foresail,' and 'down foresail,' every minute. However, the men considered him more of a troublesome officer than a good one; and, from a habit he had of moving his fingers about when walking the quarter deck, the men said he was an organ-player from London, but I have no reason to know that that was the case. The admiral was either in his cabin or in his steerage, I do not know which; and the barber, who had been to shave him, had just left. The admiral was a man upwards of seventy years of age; he was a thin tall man, who stooped a good deal.

As I have already stated, the carpenter left the quarter-deck and went below. In a very short time he came up again, and asked the lieutenant of the watch to right ship, and said again that the ship could not bear it; but the lieutenant replied, 'D... .e, sir, if you can manage the ship better than I can, you had better take the command.' Myself and a good many more were at the waist of the ship and at the gangways, and heard what passed, as we knew the danger, and began to feel aggrieved ; for there were some capital seamen aboard, who knew what they were about quite as well or better than the officers.

In a very short time, in a minute or two I should think, the lieutenant ordered the drummer to be called to beat to right ship. The drummer was called in a moment, and the ship was then just beginning to sink. I jumped off the gangway as soon as the drummer was called. There was no time for him to beat his drum, and I don't know that he even had time to get it. I ran down to my station, and, by the time 1 got there, the men were tumbling down the hatchways one over another to get to their stations as quick as possible to right ship. My station was at the third gun from the head of the ship on the starboard side of the lower gun- deck, close by where the cable passes, indeed it was just abaft the bight of the cable. I said to the lieutenant of our gun, whose name was Carrell, for every gun has a captain and lieutenant (though they are only sailors,) 'Let us try to house our gun out without waiting for the drum, as it will help to right ship.' We pushed the gun, but it ran back upon us, and we could not start him.

The water then rushed in at nearly all the port-holes of the larboard side of the lower gun-deck, and I directly said to Carrell, 'Ned, lay hold of the ring bolt and jump out at the port-hole; the ship is sinking, and we shall be all drowned. He laid hold of the ring-bolt and jumped out at the port-hole into the sea: I believe he was drowned, for I never saw him afterwards. I immediately got out at the same port-hole, which was the third from the head of the ship on the starboard side of the lower gun-deck, and when I had done so I saw the port-hole as full of heads as it could cram, all trying to get out. I caught hold of the best bower anchor, which was just above me to prevent falling back again into the port hole, and seized hold of a woman who was trying to get out of the same port-hole, dragged her out. The ship was full of Jews, women, and people selling all sort of things. I threw the woman from me and saw all the heads drop back again in at the port-hole, for the ship had got so much on her larboard side, that the starboard port-holes were as upright as if the men had tried to get out of the top of a chimney with nothing for their legs and feet to act upon. I threw the woman from me, and just after that moment the air that was between decks drafted out of the port-holes very swiftly. It was quite a huff of wind, and it blew my hat off, for I had all my clothes on, including my hat. The ship then sunk in a moment. I tried to swim, but I could not swim a morsel, although I plunged as hard as I could, both with hands and feet. The sinking of the ship drew me down so, indeed I think I must have gone down within a yard as low as the ship did. When the ship touched the bottom, the water boiled up a great deal, and then I felt that I could swim, and began to rise.

When I was about half-way up to the top of the water, I put my right hand on the head of a man that was nearly exhausted. He wore long hair, as many of the men at that time did; he tried to grapple me, and he put his four fingers into my right shoe alongside the outer edge of my foot, I succeeded in kicking my shoe off, and putting my hand on his shoulder, I shoved him away,—I then rose to the surface of the water.

At the time the ship was sinking, there was a barrel of tar on the starboard side of her deck, that had rolled to larboard and staved as the ship went down, and when I rose to the top of the water the tar was floating like fat on the top of a boiler. I got the tar about my hair and face, but I struck it away as well as I could, and when my head came above water I heard the cannon ashore firing for distress. I looked about me, and at the distance of eight or ten yards from me I saw the main-topsail halyard block above water; the water was about thirteen fathoms deep, and at that time the tide was coming in.

I swam to the main-topsail halyard block, got on it, and sat upon it, and there I rode. The fore, main, and mizzen-tops were all above water, as were a part of the bowsprit and part of the ensign-staff, with the ensign upon it. In going down, the main-yard of the Royal George caught the boom of the rum-lighter and sunk her, and there is no doubt that this made the Royal George more upright in the water when sunk, than she otherwise would have been, as she did not lie much more on her beam-ends than small vessels often do when left dry on a bank or mud. When I got on the main-topsail halyard block, I saw the admiral's baker in the shrouds of the mizzen-top-mast, and directly after that the woman whom I had pulled out of the port-hole came rolling by: I said to the baker, who was an Irishman named Robert Cleary, 'Bob, reach out your hand and catch hold of that woman;—that is a woman I pulled out at the port-hole. I dare say she is not dead.' He said 'I dare say she is dead enough; it is of no use to catch hold of her.' I replied, 'I dare say she is not dead.' He caught hold of the woman and hung her head over one of the ratlines of the mizzen-shrouds, and there she hung by her chin, which was hitched over the ratline, but a surf came and knocked her backwards, and away she went rolling over and over.

A captain of a frigate which was lying at Spithead, came up in a boat as fast as he could. I dashed out my left hand in a direction towards the woman as a sign to him. He saw it, and saw the woman. His men left off rowing, and they pulled the woman aboard their boat and laid her on one of the thwarts. The captain of the frigate called out to me, 'My man, I must take

care of those that are in more danger than you.' I said, ' I am safely moored now, Sir.'

There was a seaman named Hibbs hanging by his two hands from the mainstay; his name was Abel Hibbs, but he was called Monny, and as he hung from the main-stay the sea washed over him every now and then as much as a yard deep over his head, and when he saw it coming he roared out: however, he was but a fool for that, for if he had kept himself quiet he would not have wasted his strength, and would have been able to take the chance of holding on so much the longer. The captain of the frigate had his boat rowed to the main-stay, but they got the stay over part of the head of the boat, and were in great danger before they got Hibbs on board. The captain of the frigate then got all the men that were in the different parts of the rigging, including myself and the baker, into his boat, and took us on board the Victory, where the doctors recovered the woman, but she was very ill for three or four days. On board the Victory I saw the body of the carpenter, lying on the hearth before the galley fire ; some women were trying to recover him, but he was quite dead.

The captain of the Royal George, who could not swim, was picked up and saved by one of our seamen. The lieutenant of the watch, I believe, was drowned. The number of persons who lost their lives, I cannot state with any degree of accuracy, because of there being so many Jews, women, and other persons on board who did not belong to the ship. The complement of the ship was nominally 1000 men, but it was not full. Some were ashore, and sixty marines had gone ashore that morning.

The government allowed £5 each to the seamen who were on board and not drowned, for the loss of their things. I saw the list, and there were only seventy-five. A vast number of the best of the men were in the hold stowing away the rum-casks; they must all have perished, and so must many of the men who were slinging the casks in the sloop. Two of the three brothers belonging to the sloop perished, and the other was saved. I have no doubt that the men caught hold of each other, forty or fifty together, and drowned one another—those who could not swim catching hold of those who could ; and there is also little doubt that as many got into the launch as could cram into her, hoping to save themselves in that way, and went down in her all together.

In a few days after the Royal George sunk, bodies would come up, thirty or forty nearly, at a time. A body would rise, and come up so suddenly as to frighten any one. The watermen, there is no doubt, made a good thing of it: they took from the bodies of the men their buckles, money, and watches, and then made fast a rope to their heels and towed them to land.

The water-cock ought to have been put to rights before the immense quantity of shot was put on board; but if the lieutenant of the watch had given the order to right ship a couple of minutes earlier, when the carpenter first spoke to him, nothing amiss would have happened ; as three or four men at each tackle of the starboard guns would very soon have boused the guns all out, and have righted the ship. At the time this happened, the Royal George was anchored by two anchors from the head. The wind was rather from the north-west,—not much of it,— only a bit of a breeze; and there was no sudden gust or puff of wind which made her heel just before she sunk ; it was the weight of metal and the water which had dashed in through the port-holes which sunk her, and not the effect of the wind upon her. Indeed, I do not recollect that she had even what is called a stitch of canvass, to keep her head steady as she lay at anchor. I am now seventy-five years of age, and was about twenty-four when this happened. This was written in 1834.

ANOTHER ACCOUNT OF THE LOSS OF THE ROYAL GEORGE.

BY

MR. WILLIAM GILL.

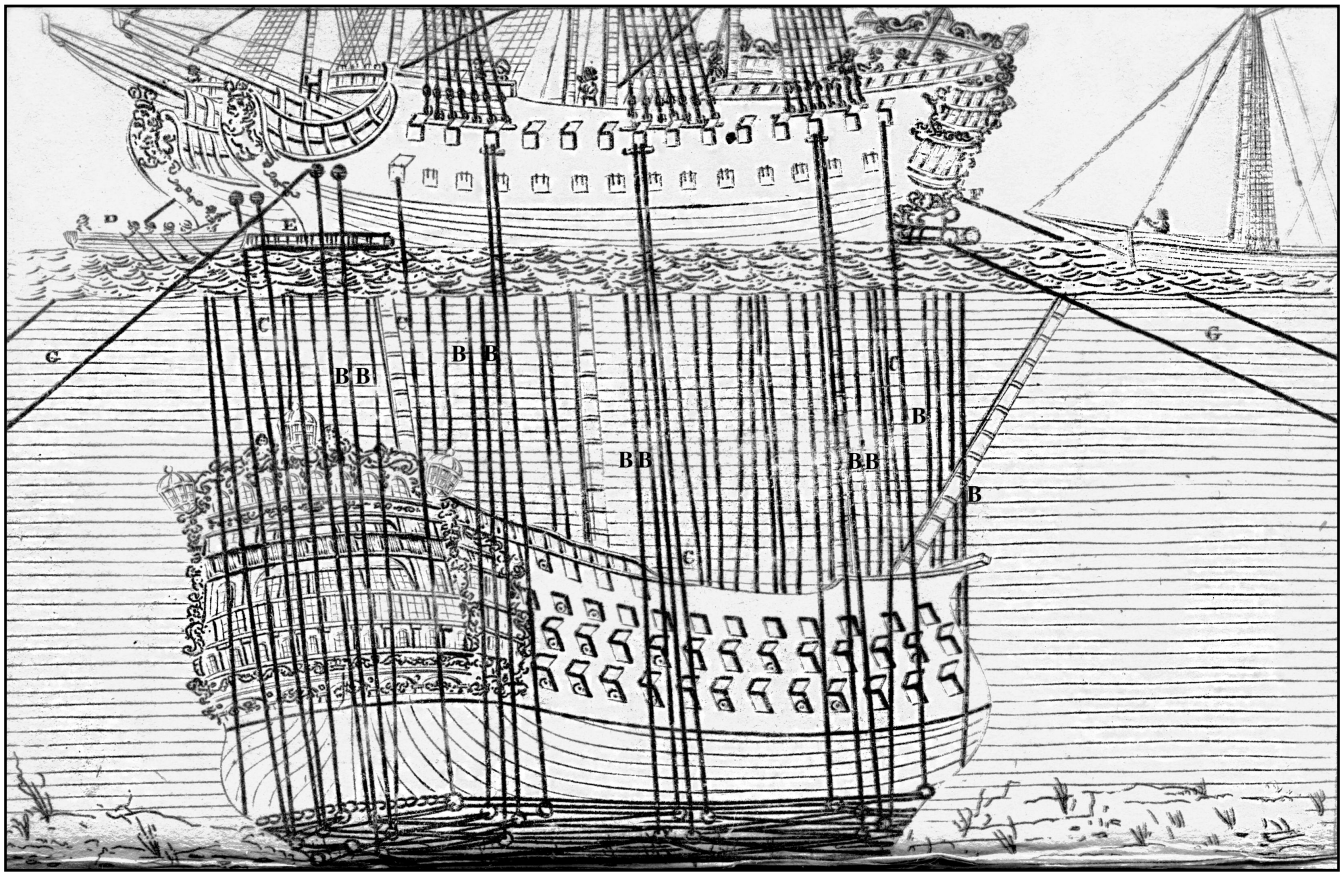
(From the Literary Gazette.)

When we arrived at Plymouth, the Royal George was nearly ready to come out of dock; I was then drafted on board the Royal George, and went on a cruise off Brest. On board us a cistern was fixed under the orlop-deck, for water to wash the two lower gun-decks; a hand-pump was fixed in the middle gun-deck; the pipe that let the water through from the ship's side was stopped up for many weeks. At the time we joined the grand fleet at Spithead there were 36 sail of the line; the officers thought they would careen her to let the pipe come out of the water to clear it; but having the larboard lower deck guns run out, and the ports being open, the water came in so fast, that she soon passed her bearings. My humble opinion is that if the lower-deck guns had been run in, and thrown fore and aft, and the ports barred in, all would have been right. I was on the middle gun-deck when she began to sink, but was soon on the main deck, and went through a port-hole under the main chains, on the starboard side. I sat there until she was almost full of water,—the people being so crowded in that part, it was impossible to make way. Being a good swimmer, I and one of the officers jumped off the starboard quarter-gallery, and swam on board the Victory, Admiral Howe. The day the ship was lost, I was 19 years and three months old, next August, seventy-six."

TRACEY'S ATTEMPT
TO
RAISE THE ROYAL GEORGE

Mr. Tracey, an ingenious and enterprising individual residing at Portsea, submitted to the Lords of the Admiralty a plan, in September 1782, for raising the Royal George, which was referred to the commissioners of the Navy, and afterwards sent, together with several other proposals, to Portsmouth Dock-yard, to be reported on. In the mean time Mr. Tracey used every means to make himself acquainted with the position and state of the ship, the nature of the tides, &c., and finding from some local peculiarities, that his first plan was not practicable, he submitted in the following month, another plan, which was approved by the Admiralty and Navy Board in preference to 117 other proposals, that had been sent in, but which were rejected in favour of his method.

Mr. Tracey's plan was to pass sling cables round the lower part of the hull of the wreck, (see plate and description annexed,) to these were made fast a number of other cables, which were earned up to the ship, and lighters moored over the wreck. These purchase cables were hove taut at low water, so, that as the tide rose, (and at the spring tide the vertical rise is 15 feet,) the wreck being suspended as it were in a cradle must, if the cables bear an equal strain and of sufficient strength, rise also from the bottom.



REFERENCE TO THE PLATE.

A. A.—The two long stages, made of three first and second rate main-masts, secured by a number of strong pieces of oak timber, both above and below, bolted through with large iron bolts, and otherwise secured and lashed in a very strong swimmer, and are of immense strength; length 118 feet, and 10 broad; their use were in conjunction with three other stages of 46 feet long, made in the same manner as the above and were to be placed over the wreck, between the two ships, in equal distances with the long stages, and have large bundles ,of old rope, shakings, &c., in strong rope nettings at each end, in order to make an easy pressure on the ship's sides, when the extension of the two ships was necessary, which would not be until the Ships were removed into shoal water; and then, with the addition of other pieces of masts, a great number of empty leagers and butts, all ready, strongly lashed, and could be affixed with the greatest ease, to a certainty of nearly floating the wreck, if found necessary. Those stages were likewise of great service in slinging the ship, and laying the cables down, and keeping

their ends clear above water, inasmuch, that it was impossible to have done without them, or some similar substitute. The long stages had likewise very large swivel-rings affixed, of half a ton weight at each end, for the cables to pass through, to secure the ship's heads and sterns apart, when in shoal water.

B. B.—Shews in what manner the cables come up in each ship,' viz. 4 cables a head at the hawses, 2 on each side; 4 cables in the third port from forward, 2 on each side: 4 cables a midships, 2 on each side; 4 cables in the third port from aft, and 4 cables into the stern port, which are raised and properly bolstered to receive them; all of which cables have 4-fold purchases to receive them within board, secured by leading blocks, &c. The falls are led to the capstan in such order, that by racking them the whole cables in both ships (with due assistance) can be hove taut down in less than half an hour, which at low water the tides cannot flow so much in that time as to hinder the cables from bearing equal strains; and as the tide flows, after all is brought to bear, the two ships must be forced bodily to sink, or the wreck must lift (which the Royal George actually did on trial.)

C. C.—The four cables affixed to the chain which was put round the stem and stern-post of the Royal George, just above the other slinging cables, to prevent any flying up &c. Their ends came up two to each ship.

D. D.—The two large mooring lighters, upwards of 100 tons each, which indeed, ought to have been four, had they been allowed, and bear their burden on the Royal George, by 14-inch centre cables, from the slings below.

E. —The space between the two ships where the three short stages were placed, and casks lashed (as before described at letters A. A.)

F. —Large pieces of half-rounded mast, 6 feet, in length, bolted to the ship's side for the cables to pass over into the ports, and to prevent the weight to bear on any particular timber or place ; that at the stern, pieces of very large masts of 30 feet length, well lashed and secured to the body of the ship above, for the cables to pass over into the stern ports.

G. G.—The mooring cables which held the ships, to the East and West. There were likewise the same to the North and South, which do not appear in the plate.

N. B.—The sling cables are made, in a great measure, similar to jar slings, and jamb to the body of the ship below, in the part intended to' bear on with the greatest exactness. This invention is entirely new for such purpose, and can be depended on to a certainty, as the greater the weight the more sure to hold fast; and they are constructed with this peculiar utility, that if any one end of the four, or the two opposite ends give w ay, the remaining ends will preserve their power.

ACCOUNT OF STORES AND WEIGHT ON BOARD THE WRECK.

Previously to giving an account of Mr. Tracey's operations, it may, perhaps, be interesting, at this distance of time, to enumerate the stores, and state the dead weight she had on board at the time the direful calamity occurred:—

	Tons	Cwt.
Weight of her anchors	20	14
Ditto of guns	220	2
Ditto of shot	71	18
Ditto of powder	4	2
Ditto of ballast	550	0
Ditto of coals	50	0
Ditto of beef	12	2
Ditto of pork	14	2
Ditto of bread	43	0
Ditto of butter	2	0
Ditto of peas	14	0
Ditto of flour	9	0
Ditto of vinegar, oatmeal, smiths' forges, tools, cables, cordage, and sundry articles	20	0
Total	1031	0

Her sheet anchor weighed 4 tons and 3 cwt. and her burthen and tonnage was 1,953 tons. The depth of water from the taffrail to the ground was 65 feet; from the forecastle, 50 feet 9 inches; from the starboard gunwale, 46 feet 10 inches, from the larboard gunwale, 42 feet. The forecastle was under water 4 fathoms: the main-deck, 6 fathoms; the quarter-deck, 44 fathoms; the poop, 3 fathoms, and the rounding of the taffrail, 2 fathoms. She was sunk thirteen feet into a solid bed of blue clay.

The following are the dimensions of the Royal George in Feet and Inches:—

Length of keel	144 6
Extreme length from figure head to the rounding centre of the taffrail	212 9
Length of gun deck	178 0
Extreme breadth of beam	51 0
Depth in the hold	19 10
Length of the mainmast	114 3
Draught of water	22 0

By an agreement entered into between Government and Mr. Tracey, the former engaged to supply two ships of the third rate, with such other vessels and seafaring craft, as well as such stores as might be considered necessary, without prejudice to his Majesty's sea-service.

In November Mr. Tracey went to London, and procured diving machines, pipes, and other necessary apparatus.

The agreement was liberal on the part of Government, and the reward to Mr. Tracey, in case of his succeeding, was to be bountiful. The ship and stores were to be valued by the officers of Portsmouth Dock-yard. The damaged stores were likewise to be estimated, and Mr. Tracey was to have a preference in purchasing them, after the valuation had been made, beside which, he was to receive a considerable sum of money as a remuneration for his services. There was also a clause inserted to the effect, that in case he did not succeed in raising the ship, he was to be permitted to recover whatever guns, stores, &c. he could. This agreement was entered into between Lord Barham, Comptroller; Sir John Williams, Commissioners, Hunt, Marsh, and Palmer, of the Navy Board, on the one part, and Mr. Tracey and his sureties (who were bound for him in the sum of £1000 to complete the undertaking by a certain day). The deed was prepared by Mr. Dyson, the Admiralty solicitor, but was not signed before the 15th of May, 1783, when Mr. Tracey repaired to Portsmouth, to commence operations.

In conformity with this agreement, he was supplied with the Diligente and Royal William, in lieu of the Dragon and Warspite, which had been originally fixed on, but which were considered by him unfit for the service required. The Diligente was taken from her moorings off the Hard way to the Dock Jetty, and the Royal William was also taken from the Fountain Lake to the North Jetty, both at his own expense, in order to get the necessary stores and casks on board. The ships were rigged in a proper manner, and on the 5th of June the Diligente was ordered from the Jetty to the moorings off the Common Hard, and on the 7th, Mr. Lawford, a pilot, was put on board the Diligente, by command of the Admiralty, contrary to the wishes of Mr. Tracey, for the purpose of conducting her to Spithead, which he did; but from the fact of her having been moved away before the proper arrangements had been made, it was the 19th of June before she was properly moored at Spithead. This separation of the two ships caused great inconvenience and expense to the contractor, inasmuch as his men were separated, and additional hands were necessary to get the stores on board the latter ship.

On the 13th of June the Royal William was also ordered from the Dockyard Jetty; and on the 21st, in consequence of an order, issued against the urgent entreaties of Mr. Tracey, she was taken to Spithead and moored. Lighters had also been promised from the Dock-yard, but, from some cause or other, they were afterwards refused, and Mr. Tracey was told he must hire vessels at his own expense.

During the whole of these operations, there appears to have been a great aversion on the part of Mr. Gilbert, the Master Attendant, to grant any assistance; and the premature removal of the Diligente and Royal William to Spithead, as well as the refusal of the promised aid with regard to the lighters, was attributed by Mr. Tracey, to the interference of this officer, who is represented as having subsequently thrown every kind of obstacle in the way of his progress. Application was then made to Sir Henry Martin, the Commissioner of Portsmouth Dockyard, on the ground that Government had agreed to supply craft proper for the purpose, but Mr. Gilbert had previously informed the Commissioner that no lighters could be spared, as they were all employed in getting stores out of ships. Mr. Tracey was however allowed the use of the Truelove sloop, and promised a lighter as soon as one could be spared.

With these limited means, Mr. Tracey proceeded, under great disadvantages, till the 29th of June, when another earnest

application was made to Mr. Gilbert for a lighter, but which was peremptorily refused. Mr. Tracey then wrote to the Navy Board on the subject, who sent down an order, by which he obtained on the 7th of July an order for one lighter; but Mr. Gilbert supplied him with one that was so rotten and leaky, and altogether in so bad a condition, that on the 11th of October following she sunk, having been of but very little use in the mean time. Mr. Tracey, however, succeeded on the 11th of July, in getting up the Lark sloop, which lay close alongside the Royal George, in fourteen fathoms water, and which it was necessary to clear away before he could proceed in his operations on the larger ship.

At this period an application was made for two more lighters in order to sling the Royal George with, but Mr. Gilbert said he could not spare them. In this situation, finding it impossible to proceed with such limited aid, and having so recently written to the Navy Board, Mr. Tracey, on the 5th of July, sent a memorial to the Admiralty, which was referred to the Navy Board, and the consequence of which was, that an order was received from the latter, directing the officers of Portsmouth Dockyard to give such assistance, as they could, consistently with the King's service, but which order, being in such general terms, was of little use, as it still left it to Mr. Gilbert to throw effectual obstacles in the way, if he should feel disposed to do so, and of which it appears he availed himself to the fullest extent. In accordance with this spirit of opposition, Mr. Gilbert informed Mr. Tracey on the 13th of July, that he could not spare him any lighters, but that he might have the old Sherborne cutter.

In this dilemma, Mr. Tracey thought it better to accept the latter, although she was actually rotten and crazy, without even a capstan, and had been just returned into dock as utterly unfit for service. Indeed she was in so bad a condition that the pumps were obliged to be kept going, night and day, to keep her above water.

At this period, the arrangements being in a forward state, and every day's delay tending but to increase the difficulties and expense, from the determination evinced by the Master Attendant to oppose his progress in every way he could, Mr. Tracey thought it best to make an attempt at once, rather than wait for the promised aid, and which he clearly foresaw would never be granted.

The carpenters were accordingly set to work. They fixed a crab on board the Sherborne for a capstan, and rollers at her bows; and having patched her up in the best way they could, they still found her so ricketty, that they were obliged to thrape her round with 9-inch hawsers in order to keep her together on a strain ; and in addition to this disappointment, instead of two lighters which had been promised, one only was supplied, and that not until the 23rd of July.

By the arrangements which had been originally made, Mr. Tracey expected to have had everything ready for the grand trial by the end of July, but, in consequence of the obstacles which were thrown in his way, this was found impossible.

It must here be observed, that the delay was not only exceedingly prejudicial to the contractor in point of expense, but that it rendered the experiment much more difficult and hazardous, inasmuch as the best time of the year for carrying the plan into execution had already passed by, and every day was now of consequence. The weather in June and July had been remarkably moderate and favourable to his operations; but now the days began to shorten, and the weather to become less settled and moderate,—a point of the utmost consequence in works of this nature.

Notwithstanding these impediments, however, Mr. Tracey had succeeded, by the 26th of July, in getting eight cables fixed down on the Royal George, but for the four following days it blew so hard that no progress could be made. By the 2nd of August four more were fixed. From that day to the 7th, it blew so hard that the work was suspended. On the night of the 15th, a pair of the principal sweep cables were fouled, it was supposed by design, and it required the labour of six days to take them up and replace them. Notwithstanding all these discouraging circumstances, Mr. Tracey persevered, and by the 23rd of August he got the last cables down and fixed on the Royal George, and all hove taut in their proper places.

On the 24th it began to blow hard, and continued a constant gale till the 1st of September, when he got the chain and all the cables again properly in their places. On the 2nd he received the assistance, for the first time, of the King's men from the ships at Spit-head, but not till he had effectually fixed the sweeps and purchase cables down on the Royal George.

On the 13th he was proceeding to anchor the ships properly in their places, when it again came on to blow so hard, that he was obliged to run the Sherborne and Truelove into the harbour for safety. The gale did not cease till the 20th, after which it moderated for three days. These were employed in putting the cables, stays, &c. in order, as they had suffered some considerable disarrangement during the gale. On the night of the 25th, however, it came on to blow again, and one of the lighters broke adrift and cut a large cable, exclusive of her own mooring cables, and drove on shore near Haslar Hospital. On the 26th the Diligente was got alongside the wreck, and would have been on it, owing to the King's men leaving their work at twelve o'clock, had it not been for the assistance rendered by the boats crews of the Ganges, Mediator, and Diadem. On the 27th the Royal William was also moored alongside.

On the 1st of October the Royal George was fairly in a cradle, and the ropes attached thereto were all on board the two ships, and on the 3rd and 4th all hands were employed in heaving on the cables.

On the 5th the latter began to strain equal, and having been stretched to the utmost at low water, the Royal George was raised by the flowing tide, and at high water was observed to move and swaddle in her bed, by Sir Hyde Parker and the officers of the Goliath. The gear was hove and strained every day, taut, at low water, and she lifted every high water; and on the 9th she was hove ahead at least thirty or forty feet to Westward, when a general cry arose on board the Royal William that the Royal George was going ahead. Of this fact there can be no doubt, as it was verified on oath by fourteen persons who witnessed it, on the 1st of November 1783, before Richard Godman Temple, esq, the then Mayor of Portsmouth.

On the 10th, it was agreed by the officers of the commodore, Sir Hyde Parker, and others, that upon Mr. Tracey making a signal of three lights upon the ensign staff, the men from the ships should come early in the following morning, Saturday the 11th, in time to heave the purchase cables down all taut at low water, and have the advantage of the first strain on the gear, and it was fully expected that the Royal George would have been got away on that day. With sanguine expectations he made the signal accordingly, but to his infinite mortification not half the required number of men came till it was too late to make the effort. He was, therefore, forced to wait, for the second strain, and at high water, moved her again a little to the Westward. The gear still held fast and well, and it was agreed to defer bearing down again till the next morning.

On the afternoon of the 11th, it suddenly came on to blow a gale at S.E. and so heavy a sea was caused, that one of the lighters, being leaky and rotten in her upper works, was filled almost in a moment. Every exertion was made to save her, but before she got half a cable's length from the Royal William, she went down. The other lighter, from the great swell, struck against the cap of the bowsprit of the Royal George, and was also near being lost, but by great exertions was got safe on shore, on Stoke's Bay.

The wind continued increasing all that night and the next day, and at the very time when he most wanted assistance, Mr. Gilbert took away the riggers and boatswains with whom he had been supplied.

He was now destitute of every effectual help, and his prospects were truly discouraging. At high water in the night tide, from the heavy sea which was rolling, and the pitching; and ascending of the ship, which caused a too sudden, and a very unequal strain of the cables, several of those forward broke.

On Monday, Oct. 13th, the weather moderated, but it was found impossible to substitute fresh cables for those which were broken, in time for the present spring tides. Mr. Tracey therefore determined to make the last effort with what cables he had left, and in order to take every advantage which his distressing situation afforded him, he started all the water which he had on board, amounting to upwards of one thousand tons in casks, and set all his pumps to work to discharge the water which had been let in for the purpose of sinking the ships deeper.

On the morning of Monday he made the signal, agreed on for assistance, before daylight, but a very small proportion of the number who had been promised him attended. The cables were, however, hove down in the best manner his limited strength would permit, and although this part of the operation was done very imperfectly, it was found that the Royal George, long before high water, was afloat forward. As the strain increased, owing to the cables being unequally hove down, two more of them gave way in the Diligente; one in the starboard gun-room port, and the other on the larboard bow. But all the midship cables still held fast.

It was now found, however, hopeless to make any further attempt till the lost cables were replaced, and other necessary steps taken; but here again Mr. Gilbert interposed and took the charge of the ships into his own hands, by sending off 600 men to Spithead and brought the Royal William into the harbour.

After this unsuccessful attempt, Mr. Tracey was on the 24th of October, ordered to London by the Lords of the Admiralty, where he remained in attendance for a considerable time, and was obliged to keep possession of the other ships and stores during the whole winter, and to victual the men at his sole expense till the midsummer of 1784.

Mr. Tracey, in the mean time, made several applications to be allowed another trial, but he received no answer till the 18th of May, when he was favoured with a reply, which being very short, it is here given complete:—

" Navy Office, 17th of May, 1784.

Mr. Tracey, We have received your letter of the 11th instant, and acquaint you that no further assistance can be given you by this Board, with respect to your raising the Royal George, and your security will be prosecuted as soon as the time elapses.

We are, your affectionate friends,

Charles Middleton, Edward Hunt, George March."

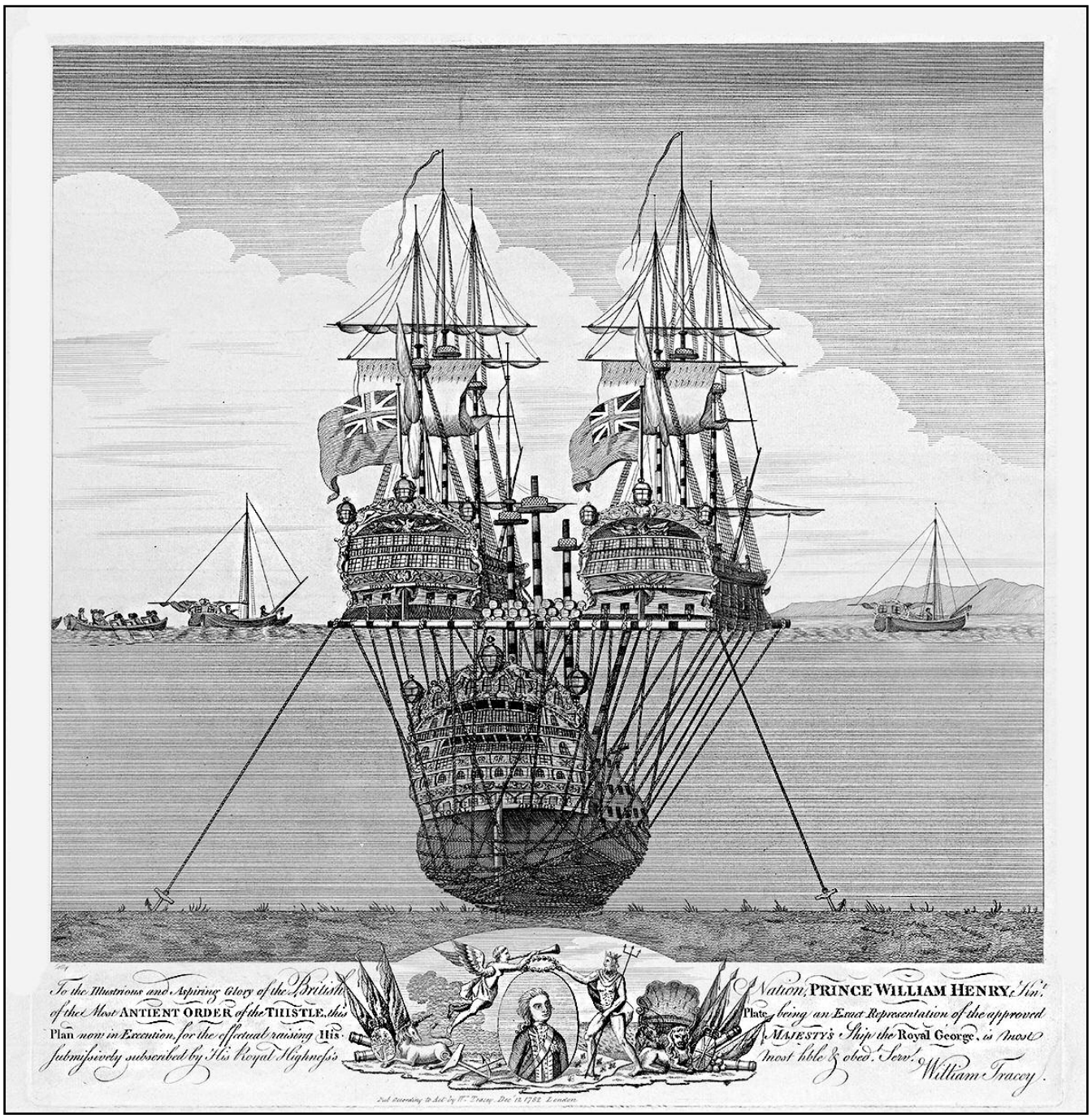
Other parties were then employed, Messrs. Braithwaite, but after recovering the sheet anchor by means of the very purchase which Mr. Tracey had fixed on it, and an inconsiderable portion of stores, they gave up the undertaking.

Mr. Tracey made another application to be allowed to resume the work, but he was not permitted even to attempt the recovery of any of the stores, although the agreement expressly stated that he should do so, in case he should fail in raising the ship.

Another plan was then proposed by Commissioner Hickes and Samuel Remnant, Esq. of the Sick and Hurt Office, which was by means of a machine of great size and power, to screw ring-bolts into the Royal George, to which cables might be attached, to sling her. These gentlemen received every assistance from the Government authorities at Portsmouth; but when the machine was put down in deep water, the weight of water made it .entirely useless, and the plan, although it appeared very ingenious, was found totally impracticable. This mode was suggested by a Mr. John Jackson, who had previously offered it to Mr. Tracey, but who rejected it as being impracticable; it was afterwards adopted by Messrs. Hickes and Remnant.

These are all the efforts that have been made to raise the Royal George, or to recover her stores, and it is generally considered, by practical and scientific men, that had Mr. Tracey met with the support from Mr. Gilbert, the Master Attendant of Portsmouth Dockyard, and others, to which he was fairly entitled, the Royal George would most assuredly have been raised by the very ingenious and judicious means adopted by him.

Mr. Tracey himself expended upwards of £4000 in his endeavours to weigh the wreck, and the Government loss was estimated at £8000. It is lamentable to consider, that Mrs. Scoflield, a widow, now living at Portsea, the only child of the late Mr. Tracey, should be suffering in partial penury in consequence of the immense property her father lost in an enterprise which, had it succeeded, would have rendered him affluent, and his posterity independent.



An alternative 1782 plan of Tracey's attempt to raise the Royal George.

AN ASSIGNED CAUSE

OF

TRACEY'S FAILURE

Sir John Barrow, in his " Life of Earl Howe," recently published, has placed the failure of Tracey in a perfect novel point of view, and explains the reason of the obstructions thrown on his operations. Sir John, at page 139 states, "Very erroneous opinions were entertained of the cause of the loss of the Royal George, which were however corrected by the evidence on the court martial, so as to satisfy the members of the court, that it was not the heeling of the ship that caused her to sink, but that "from the short space of time between the alarm being given and the sinking of the ship, the court was of opinion, that some material part of her frame gave way, which can only be accounted for by the general state of the decay of her timbers, as appears upon the minutes." Admiral Milbank saw her in dock at Plymouth and found her so bad, that there was not a sound timber in her; the officers of the yard said she was so very bad, they could scarcely find fastenings for the repairs she underwent. Sir John Jervis confirmed what the Admiral bad stated. It was therefore the general opinion* of the court, that her whole side, had given away bodily; and it was supposed, that on this account, the Navy Board discountenanced all attempts to raise her, which might easily have been done, from a conviction of the state in which she would have made her appearance, and which must have sealed their, or rather their officers', condemnation

* The decision of the Court differs materially from Ingram's opinion at page 28 and Gill's at 47, both of whom represent the catastrophe as arising from an act of inattention on the part of the officer in charge of the ship, and not from any sudden giving away of any material part of her hull. According to their statement she was in good condition; had she been new from the stocks and similarly circumstanced, the same calamity would doubtless have resulted. If therefore the Navy Board indirectly threw impediments in the of way Tracey's efforts, as alluded to in the above remarks, he had just reason to complain as a greatly injured man.

MR. ANCELL'S OBSERVATIONS.

Mr. Ancell, of His Majesty's Dock-yard, Portsmouth, descended on the 11th of June, 1817, on the wreck, in the diving machine, and made the following observations on the state of the Royal George :—

"The wreck appears to lay with her head about W. S. W. with a considerable list to port. The quarter-deck, fore-castle, and round-house, with the larboard top-side, as low down as the range of the upper deck, are entirely gone. The starboard side I did not see. The oak strakes, amidships of the flat of the upper deck, are very much eaten by worms in several places, so as to show the beams and framing beneath. The whole of the fir appears sound, and as perfect as when first laid, but the deck is much twisted by the ship's falling over so much forward and aft.

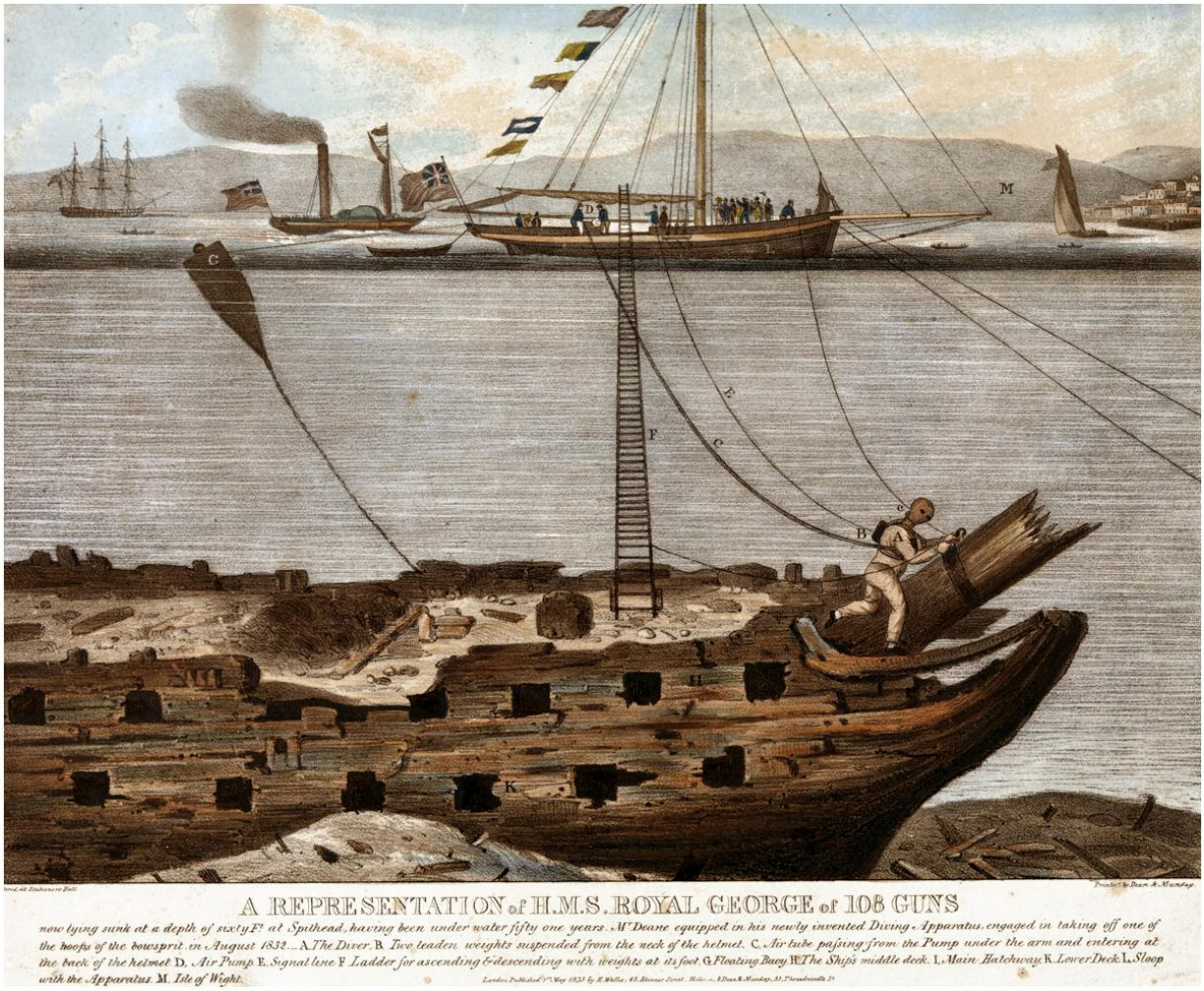
The wreck has a beautiful appearance, when about a fathom above the deck, being covered with small weeds, interspersed with shells, star-fish, and a species of the polypus, lying on a thin greasy, grey sediment, about an eighth of an inch thick. From the great inclination of the deck forward and aft, I was enabled to extend my view considerably beyond the limits of the diving machine, which was lowered down about the after hatchway, and proceeded from thence forward over the larboard bow, passing over the different hatch and ladder ways, where we occasionally stopped to examine the size of the beams, &c. All below the upper deck, is a perfect solid mass of fine black mud.

When suspended over the larboard side of the ship, she appears a rude mass of timber, lying in all directions, and I have every reason to believe the after part is fallen in, as I found it so much more perfect, and less inclined as I approached the midships and the increase of soundings abaft, still tend to confirm my opinion on this head.

There can be no doubt, I think of the state of the ship being such, as to preclude the possibility of her removal either together or in detached parts."

MR. DEAN'S OPERATIONS

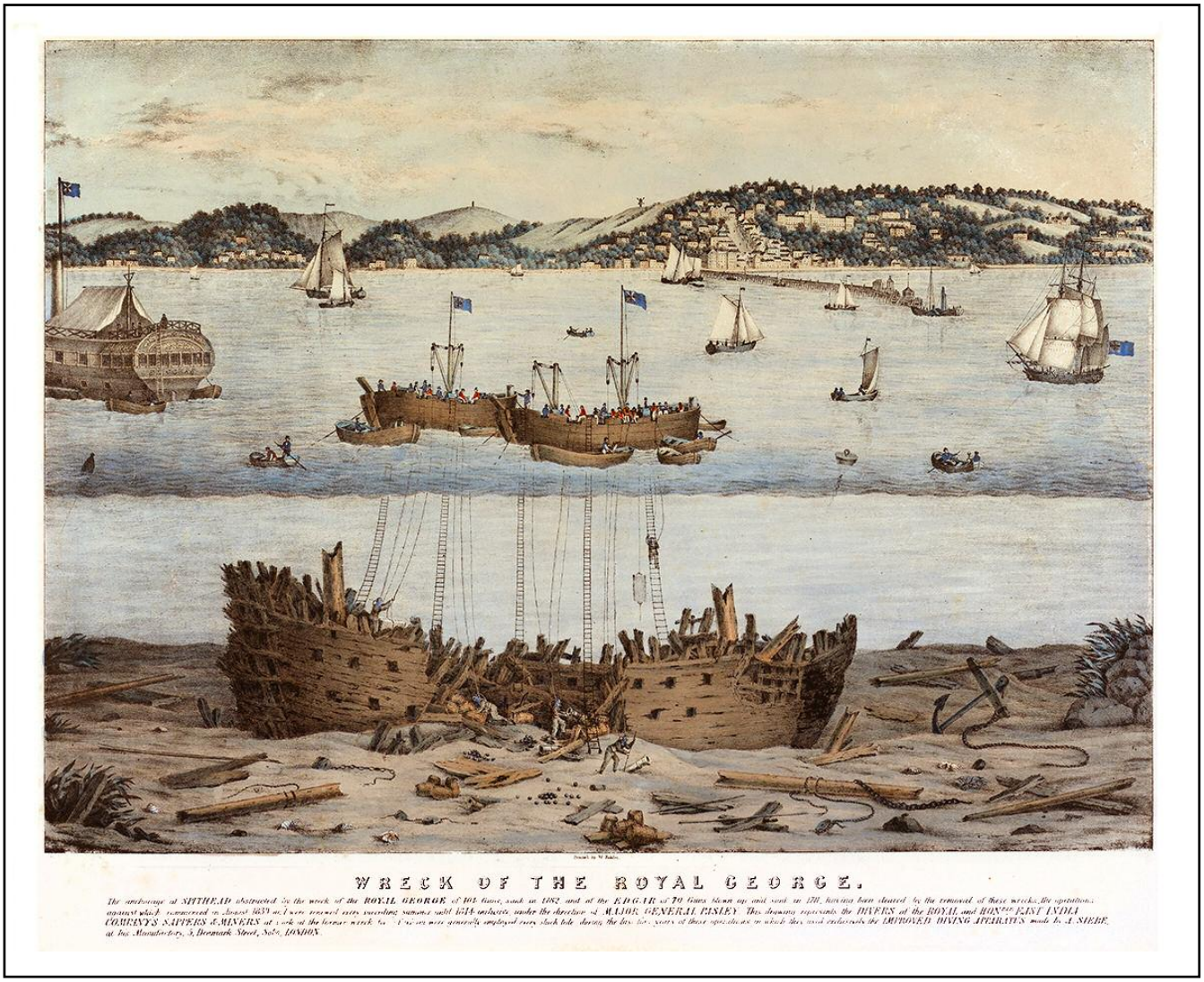
Mr. Dean, in the years 1834, 1835, and 1836, having permission of the Government, descended by means of a ladder to the wreck, being attired in an ingenious apparatus of his own invention. He found her one huge indescribable mass of old timber, stores, and materials confusedly mixed and intermingled with mud, clay, sand, &c. His dress was composed of Indian rubber, made perfectly water-tight, having an helmet of metal on his head, extending to his shoulders large enough to allow him to turn his head round at pleasure, having three glass lenses to admit light, and a tube of the same flexible materials on the top to supply air by means of an air pump, worked by men in attendance from above.



A contemporary engraving of Dean's (Deane) operation.

Mr. Dean, by this simple dress, although he had attached to him near 901bs. weight to make him sink, readily walked about the ship, used freely the hatchet, saw, &c., could remain down more than an hour at one time. By these descents Mr. Dean succeeded in recovering 19 brass twenty-four pounders, 3 brass eighteen pounders, and 8 iron thirty-two pounders, all in a high state of preservation. One of the guns has since been placed in the tower of London, and another in Woolwich arsenal as relics from the wreck. Mr. Dean having recovered these guns and a variety of interesting articles of minor importance, closed his operations on this unfortunate wreck.

Mr. Dean had previously used with considerable success his diving apparatus in the Carnbrea Castle, Indiaman, wrecked at the back of the Isle of Wight, some years since.



A contemporary engraving of Colonel Pasley's attempt to raise the Royal George in 1832.

COL. PASLEY'S OPERATIONS.

For more than half-a-century this immense frame had lain engulfed, with nearly all the paraphernalia belonging to its characteristic designation, as a man of war—the scorn and the ridicule of the scientific both British and Foreign. The efforts of Tracey for its unbroken, entire restoration, had, with the schemes of others, proved abortive; some blaming the plans themselves, and others, reflecting on the withholding of the necessary cooperation that might have insured success, when it occurred to the ingenious mind of Colonel Pasley that gunpowder, so constantly and successfully employed, in rending asunder rocks of the most solid texture, and so efficient in the work of human destruction, in springing mines, or otherwise hurling vengeance in national warfare, might be enlisted on the present occasion with certain advantage.

Apprehensions having been entertained that a partial removal of the wreck would prove more injurious to the roadstead than when she lay entire, it had long been a question of policy with nautical men, whether the attempt should be made, least her dismemberment in parts in huge pieces would prove prejudicial to the anchorage; but Colonel Pasley having successfully removed a vessel by explosions in the River Thames, that offered serious obstacles to its safe navigation, dispelled their apprehensions, and his volunteered services to the Admiralty to remove the Royal George by similar means, was accepted.

In August, 1839, Col. Pasley commenced his operations, for the entire removal of the wreck, by explosions, and for the recovery of her brass ordnance, to the number of thirty-two, and iron thirty-one, copper sheathing, &c., which would contribute considerably towards the expense incurred. The Colonel being aided in his arduous undertaking by the efficient services of F. W. Sadler, Esq., the Assistant Master Attendant of Her Majesty's Dock-yard, Portsmouth.

Two divers and two sets of workmen were employed in two different lighters, moored so near one another as to be within hail; and when the tide served, the divers went both down, and thus the most eager, but at the same time most cheerful competition was kept up between the two parties. The divers employed in these operations were furnished with India rubber

dresses, helmets, &c., similar to those which Mr. Dean used in his submarine adventures, as described in page 77. The first attempt, however, proved a failure, from unforeseen omission and accident in the cylinders and apparatus used; and indeed it would be almost utterly impossible to calculate accurately, upon every dubious point in so complicated an undertaking. It is but fair to consider the commencement of the business rather in the character of an experiment; as a failure oftentimes, in an enterprise, has a tendency to arouse the intellectual energies to a development of a process more congenial with the leading design.

Other cylinders which had been prepared under the direction of Mr. Stebbing, and a larger one by Mr. Taplin were then chosen; and on Thursday, August the 29th, being the anniversary of the sinking of the Royal George, five charges were sunk and exploded with great effect; the largest contained only 180lbs. of powder, and the other four of 45lbs. each.

The fuses invented by the ingenious Beckford were the medium by which these explosions were effected; the surface of the water, when these operations took place, was not particularly affected at the moment of the explosion, though there was produced, after the lapse of a few seconds, a bubbling motion, and an elevation of the water several inches above its natural position.

On Monday, September 23rd, the large cylinder charged with 2400lbs. of powder was lowered and properly placed by the divers; the Success lighter and lumps in attendance, were then removed to a proper distance, the conducting wires of the voltaic battery, previously connected with the charge, were removed into a boat in which the battery was placed, to a distance, when Colonel Pasley directed it to be fired. The explosion immediately took place, and produced a great commotion in the water, attended with a most sensible shock. Many spectators were present from Portsmouth, its environs, and the Isle of Wight, who were both amused and astonished at the effects produced; and more particularly so, by the sort of artificial fountain or water-spout, of immense magnitude, forced upwards to a considerable height, by the irresistible ignition of the charge below. As soon as the water had subsided the divers descended again, and reported that the explosion had been most successful in dissevering her massy timbers, frame-work, knees, &c.

On Monday, October 14th. two charges were exploded in succession; by which means the lower part of the foremast and part of her stern were recovered ; in these operations several large fishes which had been locating about the wreck were killed and rose to the surface.

George Hall, from Whitstable, that dexterous and adventurous diver, was of essential advantage to the Colonel in descending the briny deep, and adjusting the fastening of ropes, and the placing of cylinders, and even communicating with those above by signals, or occasionally rising when he was not perfectly understood.

On Tuesday, the wrought iron cylinder of very considerable magnitude, which had not exploded on the Saturday prior, was emptied and refilled, and fired by the voltaic battery, at twenty minutes before 3 p. m. The effect was wonderful, in separating a considerable portion of the massy frame work of the ship, and even breaking in pieces the strong iron knees by which the parts were secured.

Some of the fragments got up could not possibly be put on board the large Dock lighters, and were therefore obliged to be lashed to them, and thus conveyed to the Dock-yard, where they were found too ponderous for the cranes; and the sheers, of great mechanical power, were put in requisition, by which they were landed.

Four brass twenty-four pounders, one brass twelve-pounder, weighing 26072 lbs. (valued as old metal at upwards of .£1000,) seven iron 32 pounders, and two capstans have been recovered; one of the latter, we understand has been sent down to Her Majesty's Dock-yard, at Plymouth, and the other still remains at Portsmouth yard.

On Thursday the fire-hearth was brought up, the boilers of which are of pure copper, and calculated to contain upwards of four hundred gallons. Among the particular articles which have been recovered, were some of minor consideration, such as two large copper fish kettles, pieces of junk, some shoe buckles, part of a German flute, and other matters, trifling in their nature, but rendered important in their relative capacity. Two guineas were found in good preservation, one of which, we understand, Colonel Pasley presented to the Lords of the Admiralty; this would not be an insignificant contribution to the British Museum. A gold ring was also found wedged into a cracked piece of timber and enveloped in some torn lead.

Thus the Colonel's operations for the season of 1839 necessarily terminated, owing principally to the unfavourable weather and the advanced state of the year.

From the auspicious manner indeed, in which the operations have proceeded, we may safely predict that this fine anchorage for line-of-battle ships, will be speedily cleared of this grievous and long-standing drawback to its efficiency as a roadstead, and for which Colonel Pasley will acquire the reputation of genius, perseverance and generous design; for we have not learned that any stipulation or remuneration has been proposed. Magnanimity, however, (especially in Britain) seldom loses its reward.

Colonel Pasley resumed his proceedings for the removal of the wreck of the Royal George, on the 1st of May, 1840, having the Success hulk, several Dockyard lighters, two divers, sappers, miners, riggers, and naval pensioners, in all nearly eighty men under his orders, but up to the 10th of the month nothing very remarkable was effected. An iron 32 pounder, the rudder, and a quantity of timber were recovered ; but as these were merely fragments of last year's work, which the inclemency of the season prevented the engineers from securing, no serious measures were deemed necessary till the 11th of the month.

At 8 in the morning of that day the red flags at Spithead announced that a great explosion was to be attempted, and at 11 o'clock one of those huge cylinders, which have already been described, and filled with 2,116 lbs. of gunpowder, was lowered to the bottom. One of Colonel Pasley's divers, (George Hall), who has acquired great celebrity from his expertness in these operations, descended his rope ladder a little in advance of the cylinder, and succeeded in fixing it securely to one of the lower gudgeons or braces attached to the rudder-post, within six or eight feet of the keel. These arrangements were all made by Lieutenant Symonds, the executive engineer.

The diver again remounted, and the vessels being drawn to a safe distance, the enormous charge was ignited by means of the voltaic apparatus. Within less than two seconds after, the shock was felt, the sea rose over the spot to the height of about 15 feet, or not quite half so high as it did on the occasion of the great explosion last year,— a difference ascribable probably to the cylinder on the present occasion having been placed under the hull instead of alongside it. The commotion in the water, however, was so great, as to cause the lumps and lighters to pitch and roll at a great rate. The whole surface of the sea for several hundred yards round was presently covered with dead fish and small fragments of the cylinder. Amongst these were innumerable tallow candles, and a mass of butter, a foot and half in length, evidently driven up from the purser's store room.

As soon as the vast commotion in the water had subsided, and the boats had returned from the universal scramble for the candles and dead fish, the diver again descended to the bottom, and soon reported that the whole stern of the ship had been driven to pieces; and that, so far as he could ascertain, there was now a free and wide channel, directly fore and aft the ship, from stem to stern, through which both the flood and ebb tides will rush, and thus the mud with which the hull of the Royal George has been silted for half a century will be washed out, and the way cleared for Colonel Pasley's further operations.

The stern-post has been got up, but broken in three pieces by the explosion; a large fragment of dead wood above the keel connected with the stern-post; also, a hempen cable, of 90 fathoms, measuring in circumference 24 inches, and an iron 32 pounder, have all been secured.

On Saturday, the 23rd of May, at ten o'clock, two explosions of 250 lbs. each took place; one of the cylinders was placed under the main hatchway of the orlop-deck, and the other, near the bread-room, by the two divers, George Hall and John Fullager; one of the explosions was effected by Professor Daniell's battery, by Lieutenant Symonds, at the distance of 240 feet; and the other by Mr. Alfred Smee's new voltaic battery, by Serjeant-Major Jones, at the distance of 460 feet. After the agitation of the water had ceased, the divers went down, and lashed, and took up several large pieces of timber, part of an immense beam, plank, knees, &c., also a human skull with teeth, which was found in the after-part of the wreck. On the 15th of June, two more 32 iron pounders which had been recovered, were landed at the Gun-wharf.

Another great explosion took place on the morning of the 23rd day of June.— The effect was extremely beautiful, and the intention of firing it having been generally known, it was witnessed by a vast number of spectators, notwithstanding it blew a stiff breeze. Lieutenant Symonds first sent down Mr. George Hall, the diver, who placed two charges of 47 and 260 lbs. on the spot originally occupied by the main hatchway on the orlop-deck, which were fired by Professor Daniell's battery. The object of these charges was to make a deep crater or hole, for the great charge to be fired at the afternoon slack- tide. Colonel Pasley came out at one o'clock, and at half-past one the great cylinder, loaded with 25 barrels, or nearly 2,300 lbs. of gunpowder, with the voltaic conducting apparatus attached to it, was lowered into the water, and accompanied in its descent by Hall, who had a line attached to it, and who made signals to the men above either to lower or occasionally to raise it, as required, until he guided into its proper place, where he lashed it to her timbers. This being completed, the voltaic conducting apparatus attached to the cylinder was veered out, and the other end was taken on board the lump, and placed near the battery where Lieut. Symonds had stationed himself. All being now ready, Colonel Pasley ordered his bugler first to sound 'the preparative', and in about a minute afterwards, 'the fire'. At that moment, Lieut. Symonds completed the circuit with the voltaic battery, and an immediate explosion took place, the shock being felt, and the report heard at the same instant. In a few seconds afterwards, the surface rose three or four feet in a circle of moderate size, from the centre of which, almost immediately afterwards a splendid column of water at least fifty feet high, and of a conical form, was thrown up, beautifully sparkling in the sun, which was hailed by the hearty cheers of all the workmen employed, as well as of the numerous spectators; and soon after, several large fragments of wreck came floating up to the surface, a piece of which proved to be the lower part of the mainmast. After this the mud from the bottom came up, blackening the circle of water, which spread outwards, discolouring the surface as it extended, and stilling the swell of the sea, for a space of perhaps 200 yards in diameter.

A great number of small fish, dead, as on former occasions floated. The two Admirals, and the General commanding the garrison, with a great number of naval and military officers, and most of the officers of the Dock-yard with their families, were present. The Bishop of Norwich, the Astronomer Royal, and the Russian Consul- General, were also among the spectators. On the 23rd. of June one brass 12 pounder, and two iron 32 pounders which had been recovered were landed.

The cylinder used at this explosion, was of wood with iron hoops, like a mooring buoy, made by Mr. Harding, the master capstan-maker in Chatham Dock-yard, and protected by two coats of canvass, and several coats of a waterproof composition, which was found to be far superior to any in former use, as it combines absolute resistance to the greatest pressure of water, with a certain degree of elasticity, that does not allow it to crack.

Besides the divers, whose services are of the most essential importance, the dock-yard riggers, under Mr. Clewitt, of Portsmouth, and Mr. J. Chapman, of Chatham yard, have been most usefully employed, as well as the naval pensioners, about 40 in number, most of whom were petty-officers, and who, though all middle-aged or elderly men, have been extremely zealous and efficient. The Lively, sailing lighter, commanded by Mr. Hartfield, goes backwards and forwards, continually, and the seamen belonging to her are kept in constant employment in taking on board and landing the timber, guns, copper, iron, &c. recovered from the wreck. An iron 32 pounder was landed on the 29th of June, and another of the same caliber on the 13th of July.

July 27, 1840.—The removal of fragments of the wreck is steadily proceeding every slack tide. The three divers, George Hall, John Fullager, and Corporal Harris, are very successful in their operations. Besides massy timbers, planks, &c., pieces of bulk-head, cables, staves of casks, firewood, broken squares of glass, a window-frame, a cutlass, part of a bedstead, and a telescope—have all been recovered from the wreck—the latter much bruised, and the object-glass gone, but the brass and small glasses are perfect, and the words " Dolland, London," mark the celebrated maker; the screws are all perfect as if just manufactured. The proportion of wreck brought up now is much less than last year, or at the commencement of this because most of the largest pieces have been recovered, so that little more than the contents of the hold remain, with the floor timbers, keelson and keel; and until the hold is cleared, the latter is not very accessible.

A large of piece of the keelson was this day (July 27,) got up, measuring 23 feet in extreme length, 15 inches in width, and 22 inches in depth—It was perfect at the fore end of it, which terminated in a scarf, and the whole of the timber was sound; but the centre had been nearly split across, and the after end of it broken off short, by the first great explosion fired on the 11th of May, of this year, which entirely demolished the stern of the vessel. Some shorter fragments of the same, which were near to and under the stern-post, had been previously got up; so that more than 30 feet of the after part of the keelson of the Royal George have now been removed, together with the floor timbers over it, which were previously secured.

On Wednesday, the 5th of August the large charge of powder, containing 25 barrels or 2,500 lbs. of powder was most successfully fired, and was by far the most magnificent exhibition ever witnessed of the enormous force of gunpowder when exploded under water. No attempt at description could convey just conception of so vast and novel an operation, nor could the beholder conceive how that under circumstances apparently similar, such very different effects should be produced. On the former occasions when Colonel Pasley exploded his large cylinders at the bottom of the sea, the water rose 30 or 40 feet, and generally in a solid mass, in form like that of a hay cock; but on this occasion it was forced to the height of 103 feet (according to a scientific calculation made on the spot) in a sort of pyramid, or set of pyramids or jets, which not only dispersed the water far in the air above, but carried it to a distance of more than a hundred yards on the lee-side. The charge was nearly over the original position of the fore hatchway of the wreck.

The collection of yachts and boats on this occasion by far exceeded all that had been drawn together before. Scarcely had the word been given to "Fire!" and the trumpet sounded, when the whole area was shaken, as if by an earthquake, the surface became ruffled like the top of a glacier, and in the next instant, literally in less than two seconds, to the height of about 20 feet; after which a sort of second burst or bulge occurred, which projected the sea in huge masses high into the air. Such was the violence of this effort, that the spray was thrown completely over all the adjacent vessels in a drenching showier, accompanied by a violent gust of wind radiating from the centre. Immediately a loud shout was heard; and when this first involuntary expression of satisfaction was over, three deliberate cheers from the vast crowd saluted the gallant officer whose successful perseverance afforded them so extraordinary a treat.

By the indefatigable exertions of Colonel Pasley and his divers, we are becoming every day better acquainted with the bottom at Spithead, with the surface of which we have long been so familiar. The extent and importance, however, of these operations, must not be measured, as they too often are, by the quantity and intrinsic value of the materials brought up and those persons who at times canvass rather freely the proceedings at Spithead, would do well to recollect the real objects in view—the complete clearance of this excellent roadstead, which is fast approaching towards its accomplishment, so that ships may with safety anchor on the spot which, though in the best part of Spithead, has, for more than half a century, been so

greatly injured. To effect this, not only must the materials above the mud be removed, but those which are buried under it. To enable the divers to get at, and sling the fragments of the wreck, it is necessary to dislodge the superincumbent bank of sand and mud accumulated over them. Great and small charges of gunpowder have accomplished a great deal in this way, but as it is found that the washing of the tides speedily fills up the craters formed by those explosions, another device has lately been adopted by Lieutenant Symonds.

This consists of a large rake made of a strong spar, with long teeth, and loaded, so as to sink in the mud. This machine or mud comb is drawn backwards and forwards along the bottom, by ropes extending from one of the lump lighters, to the other, and as it passes along, it harrows up and loosens the mud so effectually that the tides wash it away. The bank already is sensibly diminished in height, and numerous timbers, plank, and even guns, are beginning to show themselves above the surface of the bottom, and come within reach of the divers.

During their last official visit to Portsmouth, on the 31st of August, the Lords of the Admiralty, accompanied by Admiral Sir Edward Codrington, Commander-in- Chief, at Portsmouth, Admiral Bouverie, and Major-General Sir Hercules Pakenham, took the opportunity of inspecting these operations in the "Firebrand" steamer; and going on board No. 4 Lighter, Colonel Pasley and Lieutenant Symonds were in readiness to receive them. Corporal Harris went down in Mr. Siebes's improved diving dress, and placed a charge of 260 lbs. of powder, which he secured to the wreck. On his coming up Lord Minto himself fired the charge by completing the circuit with the voltaic battery, which had been got ready for the occasion. Corporal Harris went down again and slung a large piece of timber, which was brought up by the capstan.

Their Lordships expressed their decided approbation of Mr. Siebes's diving helmet and dress which combine so many improvements; a principal feature of which is, the diver can descend head foremost with safety, which Corporal Harris did for experiment when first he tried it; his air pumps are also superior to any other in use. On the 8th September, another iron 32 pounder which had been recovered was landed at the Gun Wharf.

The immense rake is still successfully used for loosening the mud on the wreck, by which means the removal of the fragments is gradually progressing; some of which are six or seven tons weight; and on one occasion, one of twenty-seven tons was raised and conveyed to the shore in one piece. About the middle of the month the mud over the Royal George stood nearly twelve feet in the highest part above the general level of the anchorage, covering the whole surface of the wreck, sloping off from the sides and end. Since then it has been reduced several feet by the use of the rakes, aided by the action of the tides, which continually, but slowly, diminishes this sort of hill of mud.

Mr. Fullager slung a twelve-pounder brass gun on the 24th of September, a quantity of plank, and pieces of large beams and floor-timbers, some of which being buried one or two feet beneath the mud, gave a great deal of trouble to the divers, who were obliged sometimes to use the spade to dig round them.

Lieutenant Symonds, the able and indefatigable assistant of Colonel Pasley, quitted Spithead on the 12th of October, previously to his embarkation for Syria.

Another useful expedient has recently been adopted, by drawing a half-anchor without a palm, weighing 7 cwt. over the wreck, which nearly buries itself in the mud; and on meeting with beams, plank, or floor-timbers, tears them, and partially raises them out of the mud, and thus enables the divers to secure them.

The extreme length of the shoal is now ascertained to be about 150 feet from east to west, and 125 feet in width,—its extreme height above the general anchorage nine feet six inches, but its average height is much less, and it slopes away gradually on all sides. In August last, it measured from east to west, nearly 300 feet, and 200 feet from north to south, and its extreme height 14 feet; this proves incontestably, that at least one half of the mass of mud covering the wreck has been washed away by the rakes and the action of the tides. When Col. Pasley began his operations last year, several parts of the wreck stood 33 feet above the level of the anchorage, for the stem and stern were perfect above the level of the lower deck, and the whole starboard side was standing to nearly the same level,—the larboard side having fallen over; whilst the fragments of the upper deck, whose fastenings have been eaten away by the worms, lay in a confused mass over all.

Several officers are of the opinion that men of war may anchor over the wreck in its present state with safety, but the natural action of the tides, by washing away the mound of mud which now covers the floor timbers, guns, (40 in number,) stores, &c. &c. still remaining, estimated at £4,000 value, will soon leave them bare, and form an impediment to its efficiency as a safe anchorage; and until the whole of the present shoal of mud, and all that remain under it shall be reduced to the level of the bottom around it, the roadstead cannot be considered to be in a satisfactory state.

List of some of the Articles recovered by Colonel Pasley :—

Seven pieces of brass ordnance weighing 32424 lbs. value as old metal at upwards of £1300.—16 iron ditto ; 95 cwt. of copper; 46 cwt. of mixed metal; 75 cwt. of lead; 235 cwt. of iron: about 300 fathoms of timber, consisting of beams, deck and other planks, knees, stantions, riders, sleepers, &c. &c. 90 fathoms of 24-inch rope cable; a fire hearth with copper boiler

complete, blocks, and a great quantity of smaller stores.

Among articles of minor importance are two ink stands, one of ebony, and the other of lead; the ebony one is 14 inches long by 8 inches broad, and not quite an inch high; it has one large and one small ink glass remaining of the three; it has a brass handle, and a brass candlestick fitted to it. Near this lay an ivory folding cutter, one end of which is much decayed; a large lump of red sealing wax; a fragment of the handle of a penknife was found near the same spot; and as the position was not far from the stern there seems reason to suppose it may have belonged to Admiral Kempenfelt.

Several beautiful specimens of real dragon china ware, blue-and-white, some of it in perfect preservation, was found in the same neighbourhood: also, sundry wine glasses; several small punch glasses: also, two salt cellars, with horn egg spoons, and three cruet bottles. Several dozens of wine have been brought up, the contents of which proved any thing but palatable.

With the articles recovered are the well preserved remains of a woman's gipsy hat. It is composed of chip, covered with silk, and trimmed with gauze, the crown is entirely gone, but the head-lining, also of gauze, is complete.

Some weeks after this hat was brought up, the hood and collar of two silk cloaks were found. One of a woman's size, trimmed with lace; the other, which is evidently that of a child's, is without trimming. It is probable, these cloaks being interwoven, that their wearers, perhaps mother and daughter, perished at the awful moment in each other's arms.

There have been many torn fragments brought up, such as arms, breasts of jackets, coats, silk handkerchiefs, shoes, shoe buckles, skulls, human bones, a checquer board, broken crockery, an old fashioned wooden quadrant, made by Cole, of London—besides a confused heap of heterogeneous articles.

Among other articles taken up have been some of the Surgeon's implements, the brass part of the scales being perfect, though very thin, as well as the brass chains by which they were hung, but the iron work was all gone; a pair of black satin breeches and a large satin waistcoat with flaps, were got up, of which the satin was perfect, but the lining entirely gone, as well as the buttons, from the thread giving way.

A most interesting relic has just been recovered and is deposited in the Dock Yard. One of the identical pipes, with the brass cock attached to it, in perfect condition, the repairing of which caused the sinking of this magnificent ship.

Colonel Pasley on the 24th of October, 1840, terminated his second season's successful operations; operations certainly of no mean description. In fact, they have been confessedly of the highest order; such indeed as will transmit the name of Colonel Pasley to posterity, with a degree of celebrity as a man of science and practical efficiency. There is no doubt the most complete success will attend his next attempt to clear from our roadstead this long existing encumbrance.

On the 26th, the Success frigate hulk, and the two mooring lighters, Nos. 4 and 5, were towed into harbour, the pensioned seamen paid off, and the stores supplied from Portsmouth Dock-yard landed ; the remainder were put on board the Lightning, navy steamer, Lieutenant Waugh. Colonel Pasley, with all the Royal Sappers and Miners, and assistants, and the Chatham riggers embarked in her, where they landed the next day. On breaking up his establishment for the season, the Colonel expressed his satisfaction with all the men employed, and declared that he will be happy to receive them again on the next occasion.

The gallant Colonel on the 1st May resuming his arduous undertaking, and large pieces of timber, plank, iron, Sec- have already been recovered; and it is confidently anticipated that this season's operations will completely clear the roadstead.

LINES ON RECEIVING

A PIECE OF THE WRECK

OF THE ROYAL GEORGE.

Poor fragment of a mighty structure—won
From thy dark charnel-house beneath the wave;
There thou with human bones hast made thy bed
Fifty-eight summers, in thy watery grave.
Could'st thou but speak, oh! what a tale were thine!
How many tears have over thee been shed!
How many hearts in silent anguish heaved.
How many kind and kindred bosoms bled!
And dost thou now re-visit us, to show
How fast our rolling years have pass'd away.
And to remind us of the hastening hour—
When the last trump shall wake our slumb'ring clay
When earth and sky shall like a dream have fled,
And the vast deep shall render up her dead?

London, Nov. 1840. W.H.

THE END.

Horsey Sen., Queen-street, Portsea.