

FROZE IN HUSBAND'S ARMS

Capt. Darling's Wife's Death on Water-Logged Schooner's Deck.

A STORY OF THE GREAT STORM

Crew, Left to Perish by Passing Vessels, Saved at Last and Brought to New York.

Amid the joyous greetings of friends and passengers who arrived last night on the Old Dominion steamer Guyandotte, from Norfolk, there was a spectacle of inexpressible sadness when Capt. Elvin H. Darling of the ill-fated schooner James E. Bayles and his shipwrecked crew came down the gangway. The story of that awful night of the recent storm when, amid the ocean's havoc, the young wife of the Captain died in her husband's arms, literally frozen to death, was told briefly in the dispatches from Norfolk printed yesterday.

The Captain, who is a tall and sturdy man, wept like a child last night when he confronted the sympathetic friends who had come from his home at Huntington, L. I., to meet him and extend their sympathy. Tears streamed down his weather-beaten cheeks, and for a time he could not speak.

Charles Sodderman, chief mate, who lives at 164 Columbia Street, Brooklyn, stood near the Captain, and around about were the six members of the crew, looking gaunt enough after their fearful experience. The mate spoke with a Swedish accent. The James E. Bayles sailed from Tuxpan, Mexico, with lumber, on Jan. 23, and all went well till she ran into the storm off the Delaware Capes on Feb. 13. It came on to blow a gale at 3 P. M. The seas were lashed into a fury, and the snow, fine and cutting, was blown aslant and so thick that one could see hardly a cable's length ahead.

The three-master was headed up to the north under double-reefed foresail and a trysail bent to the main. Worse grew the storm, and the fabric of the old schooner—for she was a product of '74—was sorely wracked. She began to leak, and the pumps were set a-going, and they were kept going all night. Despite that, at day-break there were seven feet of water in the hold, and it was gaining. Then, with the heaving and tossing of the craft, the pumps snapped off at the deck.

Soon the water reached the cabin floor. It seemed that the woman—the woman for whom the sailor man makes any sacrifice at sea, even to life itself—must soon be driven out before the elements with the men. The fear was soon realized when, with a thundering noise, a part of the mahogany logs in the cargo burst through the stern and opened a hole into which the water rushed, making of the craft a water-logged hulk.

The Captain's wife was driven to the decks, over which the combers were sweeping, and lashed to the bitts on the port quarter. The Captain wrapped about her all that could add to her warmth and protection, but this soon became wet and then frozen stiff. The galley was flooded, the water casks had been carried out through the hole in the stern, and there was therefore neither food nor fresh water. The schooner rolled till it seemed she would go over, and the crew set to work cutting away the masts and rigging, and the big sticks went crashing by the board.

The Captain went continually to his wife. He rubbed her hands. He was desperate, but with the temperature at zero, the wind blowing now a hurricane, and the waves claiming his ship, he was helpless. A steamer was seen. Would she see the flag, union down, set in the yawl's mast? She seemed to be approaching, but she passed on. The day wore on. The cold was intense. The Captain's wife had become weak and almost lifeless. The clothing wrapped about her was incrustated with the frozen sea water. The clothing of the men was stiff, save at the joints, kept pliable by their moving.

It calmed a little toward night. The Captain was aft holding his wife in his arms. He knew then that she was not for him much longer. At 11 o'clock a steamer's lights were seen to the south. She was heading north. The mate came aft. "There's a steamer to the south'ard, Sir," he said.

"It won't do me any good," the Captain answered. "My wife is dead; frozen," and then he was silent. He knew then that she was dead, but still he sat there holding her body, and all that night he held it tenderly, but with strong arms, the cold seas continually breaking over them.

The morning of the 15th broke cold and gray, and the sea was still sullen, filling the atmosphere with a vapor of spume. A bark was sighted five miles to the northeast. The wind was working around to the southeast. The strange sail disappeared, steering a course northeast by north. At 4 o'clock in the afternoon a schooner was sighted. She, too, passed. At 9 P. M. another schooner was made out to leeward. She did not see them.

The men then took the forestaysail and, spreading it on the after house, they lay down and drew it about them and tried to sleep, keeping hour watches, one man on watch. A steamer headed north-northeast passed a mile astern of them at midnight. The next morning it rained. The men cleaned off the roof of the deck house and tried to collect a little water, licking it up as it fell, and now after three nights and two days without food and up to this time without water, they were to be saved.

At 9 o'clock the schooner Mount Hope came along, saw them, and bore down. Her boat made three trips, the schooner's boats having been lost. In one the body of the captain's wife was taken. Half an hour later it was buried at sea, Capt. McLean of the Mount Hope reading the burial service. The shipwrecked men were landed at Norfolk Monday.

When Capt. Darling reached Norfolk he sent a telegram to his old mother at Huntington, L. I., telling of his wife's death, not knowing his mother had died on Jan. 10. He had been away from Huntington for several months. The Captain's wife was thirty years old, and the Captain, who is thirty-seven, married her in Maine six years ago. She accompanied him on all his voyages except once, when she remained at Huntington to see to the building of their cottage. It is said that the Captain, who has followed the sea since his sixteenth year, had intended to retire when his vessel reached New York this time, and live in the cottage with his wife and mother.

The sailormen spoke bitterly last night of the craft that had passed them without giving heed. They had shown signals of distress and had shouted in vain, yet it seemed that they must have been seen by one or more of the vessels that passed.