

**CLASSICS TO GO**  
**TALES OF**  
**SHIPWRECKS**  
**AND OTHER DISASTERS AT SEA**



**THOMAS BINGLEY**

# **Tales of Shipwrecks**

**And Other Disasters at Sea**

**Thomas Bingley**

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Indiaman,

## **CHAPTER I. UNCLE THOMAS TELLS ABOUT THE ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN RICHARD FALCONER.**

"Shipwrecks, Uncle Thomas! oh yes, we shall be delighted!" exclaimed three or four voices, as the boys crowded round the fire, each striving who should sit nearest their kind old Uncle, who delighted to amuse them by telling them the nicest little stories in the world, of which, in the course of his reading, he had gathered together a great store. He had already related to them, with much applause, a variety of "Stories about Dogs," as well as "Stories about the Instinct of Animals," and now proposed to commence a series of narratives, "Tales of Shipwrecks, and other Disasters at Sea," a proposal which his little audience, as we have above stated, received with unbounded delight.

I am glad you have chosen Shipwrecks, Uncle Thomas, I am so very fond of such stories. I have just finished Robinson Crusoe, and almost wish I was, like him, cast away on a desert island, that I might have my man Friday, and my goat, and my gun!—It would be delightful!

I am afraid, Frank, you would not find it so delightful as you seem to think. However, as you like it so much, I will begin my tales by relating the adventures of Captain Richard Falconer, who was cast away on a desert island, and show you how he fared.

Falconer was a native of Bruton, England. His mother died when he was very young, and being thus thrown on his father's care, he was his constant companion. Having been

a great traveller in his youth, the elder Falconer delighted to recount his adventures, and his son thus acquired an ardent desire to follow in his steps. With this view, as he grew up, he often begged that his father would allow him to become a sailor. His father knew better, however, and always replied to his solicitations by saying, "Stay where you are; you know not the hazards and dangers that attend the life of a sailor: think no more of going to sea, for I know that it is only the desire of youth, fond of change, which now actuates you; and if I were to give you leave, one week's voyage would make you wish you were at home!" Young Falconer, however, was not satisfied with this reasoning, and again and again besought his father to comply with his request. All his entreaties were, however, unavailing, till at length an event happened which put an end to his father's scruples.

The elder Falconer held the situation of collector of taxes, and having collected a large amount of revenue, he was unfortunately robbed of it, before he could pay it over to government. Fearful that some negligence, of which he had no doubt been guilty, would expose him to punishment, and being thus a ruined man, he resolved to retire to some place where he was unknown, and thus escape the vigilance of his enemies.

One morning he called his son to him, and said, "Richard, you have often been desirous of going to sea, and I have always endeavored to dissuade you from it; but as what has happened makes it impossible for me to remain any longer in the place of my birth, I must now recommend you to the way of life which I should never have chosen for you, but that my circumstances will not now allow me to provide for you in any other way. Here," continued he, "take this money, which I can ill spare out of my little fortune; but since it is all I can do for you, take it, and may Heaven prosper you! May the blessing of a father, whose prayers shall ever be sent to

the Almighty Creator for your welfare, always be with you. Here is a letter to Captain Pultney, of Bristol, whose friendship, I am sure, will be of service to you." Then, with tears in his eyes, he embraced his son, and once more gave him his blessing, and took his leave forever. They never saw each other again!

Having packed up a few things in a portmanteau, Falconer gave them to an old servant of his father's, who, to show his gratitude in the only way he had in his power, determined to see him as far as Bristol. They set out in the morning, and reached it by noon.

Captain Pultney received him with great cordiality, and promised to do everything in his power to promote his views, and when, by his advice, Falconer had studied the mathematics, and he thought him capable of performing the duties of mate, he sent him on board the Albion frigate, commanded by Captain Wise; and, on the 2nd of May, they set sail for Jamaica, with a fair wind. As soon as they lost sight of land, Falconer began to be extremely sea-sick, and he bore the rough jokes of the sailors very indifferently. One cried out, "There's an excellent master's-mate; he'll hit Jamaica to a hair, if the island was no bigger than the bung-hole of a cask!" However, in a day or two, he perfectly recovered, and was never afterwards troubled with sea-sickness.

Nothing material happened till they entered the Bay of Biscay, when they encountered a dreadful storm; the billows ran very high, and the vessel seemed to be the sport of the waves. So high did these run, that a ship, that overtook the Albion the day before, and accompanied it, was sometimes altogether lost sight of, though they were not half a furlong distant from each other: this continued for three days, when the storm abated something of its fierceness, though it still blew very hard. The other vessel, by firing a gun and

showing a signal, made it appear that she was in distress; but the sea ran so high, that it was impossible to afford her any assistance; yet, the Albion, being to windward, bore down upon her, to be as near as possible without endangering her own safety. They found that she had sprung a leak, and though they had all hands by turns at the pump, yet the water gained upon them. They begged the crew of the Albion to hoist out a boat, as their own was stove. They accordingly sent out their long-boat, with two men, but the rope that held her to the ship unfortunately broke, and she drove away with the two men in her, who were never afterwards heard of. They undoubtedly were either swallowed up by the sea, or perished of hunger, as they were then twenty leagues from shore. The ship sunk in less than ten minutes afterwards, with fifty-seven men on board, of whom four only were saved by clinging to the ropes which had been thrown out to them by the crew of the Albion.

From the four men who were thus saved, they learned that the vessel, which had sunk, was a pirate, which, but a short time before, had attacked a French ship, murdered the captain, and such of the crew as would not agree to join them, and that they were only waiting for the abating of the storm in order to attack the Albion. They also said, they were forced, with several others, to become pirates; but whether this was true or false, they behaved with great propriety during the remainder of the voyage.

On the 28th of May they made the Canaries, and saw the peak of Teneriffe. On the 4th of July, they anchored in Carlisle Bay, Barbadoes, after a desperate action with a pirate, who boarded them, but was beat off. On the 20th of July they sailed for Jamaica, on the 1st of August anchored at Nevis, and on the 7th of September arrived in Port Royal harbor.



Finding that the affairs of the ship would detain it about half a year in Jamaica, Falconer obtained leave of the captain to go in a sloop, with some of his companions, to obtain logwood, at the Bay of Campeachy, on the South American coast; and on the 25th of September, they set out on this expedition. For six days they sailed merrily on their course, with a fair wind, towards the Bay; but on the seventh, the clouds darkened, and the welkin seemed all on fire with lightning, and the thunder roared with frightful violence. In short, a dreadful hurricane approached. The sailors had furled their sails and lowered their topmasts, waiting for it under a double-reefed foresail. At length it came with extreme violence, which lasted three hours, until, as if exhausted, it insensibly abated, and was followed by a complete calm.

On the 6th of October they anchored at Trist Island, in the Bay of Campeachy, and sent their men ashore at Logwood Creek, to seek for the logwood cutters, who immediately came on board. The bargain was soon struck; and, in exchange for rum and sugar, and a little money, they got in their cargo in eight days, and again set sail for Jamaica.

During the homeward voyage, Falconer one day went down into the hold to bottle off a small parcel of wine which he had there: on coming upon deck again, wanting to wash himself, he went into the boat astern, which had been hoisted out in the morning to look after a wreck. Having washed and dressed himself, he took a book out of his pocket, and sat reading in the boat; when, before he was aware, a storm began to rise, and finding that he could not get up at the ship's side as usual, he called for the ladder of ropes that hangs over the ship's quarter, in order to get up that way. Whether it broke through rottenness, it being seldom used, is uncertain, but down he fell into the sea; and though the ship immediately tacked about to take him up,

yet, as evening was now coming on, and the storm had considerably increased, they soon lost sight of him. For some time he swam boldly in the direction in which he expected to see the vessel, but at length he was forced to drive with the wind, which, fortunately, set in with the current; and having managed to keep himself above water for about four hours, he felt his feet touch the ground; and at last, by a great wave, was thrown upon the sand.

It being now quite dark, he knew not what to do; but got up and walked as well as his numbed limbs would let him, and every now and then was overtaken by the waves, which were not high enough, however, to wash him away. When he had got far enough, as he thought, to be out of danger, he began to examine what sort of place it was upon which he had been thrown: he could not, however, discover anything of land, and conjectured that it was but some bank of sand, that the sea would overflow at high tide. He now sat down to rest his weary limbs, and prepare himself for death, which, it was evident, was now staring him in the face. At last he fell asleep, though he tried all he could to prevent it, by getting up and walking, till he was obliged, through weariness, to lie down again.

When he awoke in the morning, he found that he was on a low, sandy island, surrounded by several others of the same description, and separated from each other, about half a mile or more, by the sea. Finding that things were thus not quite so bad as he had anticipated, he became a little cheerful, and walked about to see if he could discover anything that was eatable, as he now began to get very hungry; but, to his great grief, he found nothing but a few eggs, which he was obliged to eat raw. The fear of starving seemed now to be worse than that of drowning; and often did he wish that the sea had swallowed him, rather than have thrown him on this desolate island; for he could