

with water, especially in the night, many persons are drowned between decks and in their cabins, so that their bodies are prevented from rising again to the surface. The vessel often strikes upon an uneven bottom, and is overturned; in which case the ballast, consisting of sand, shingle, and rock, or the cargo, frequently composed of heavy and durable materials, may be thrown down upon the carcasses. In the case of ships of war, cannon, shot, and other warlike stores, may press down with their weight the timbers of the vessel as they decay, and beneath these and the metallic substances the bones of man may be preserved.

*Number of wrecked vessels.*—When we reflect on the number of curious monuments consigned to the bed of the ocean in the course of every naval war from the earliest times, our conceptions are greatly raised respecting the multiplicity of lasting memorials which man is leaving of his labours. During our last great struggle with France, thirty-two of our ships of the line went to the bottom in the space of twenty-two years, besides seven 50-gun ships, eighty-six frigates, and a multitude of smaller vessels. The navies of the other European powers, France, Holland, Spain, and Denmark, were almost annihilated during the same period, so that the aggregate of their losses must have many times exceeded that of Great Britain. In every one of these ships were batteries of cannon constructed of iron or brass, whereof a great number had the dates and places of their manufacture inscribed upon them in letters cast in metal. In each there were coins of copper, silver, and often many of gold, capable of serving as valuable historical monuments; in each were an infinite variety of instruments of the arts of war and peace; many formed of materials, such as glass and earthenware, capable of lasting for indefinite ages when once removed from the mechanical action of the waves, and buried under a mass of matter which may exclude the corroding action of sea-water. The quantity, moreover, of timber which is conveyed from the land to the bed of the sea by the sinking of ships of a large size is enormous, for it is computed that 2000 tons of wood are required for the building of one 74-gun ship; and reckoning fifty oaks of 100 years growth to the acre, it would require forty acres of oak forest to build one of these vessels.\*

It would be an error to imagine that the fury of war is more conducive than the peaceful spirit of commercial enterprise to the accumulation of wrecked vessels in the bed of the sea. From an examination of Lloyd's lists, from the year 1793 to the commencement of 1829, Capt. W. H. Smyth ascertained that the number of *British vessels* alone lost during that period amounted on an average to no less than one and a half *daily*; an extent of loss which would hardly have been anticipated, although we learn from Moreau's tables that the number of merchant vessels employed at one time, in the navigation of England and Scotland, amounts to about twenty

\* Quart. Journ. of Agricult., No. ix. p. 433.