

**WRECK OF THE STEAMER CHEVIOT.**

**FORTY PEOPLE DROWNED.**

[BY ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH.]

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

MELBOURNE, October 20.

News was received here last evening that a vessel was reported to be ashore on Back Beach. A party proceeded along the beach from St. Paul's to London Bridge, but up to the present (ten minutes past 1 a.m.) no tidings have been brought. The lifeboat set out from Queenscliff, but was unable to get outside the Heads against the wind. Three of the crew came from Queenscliff to Sorrento in a sailing boat and have proceeded to Back Beach between Portsea and there. The night was very rough and a very strong south-westerly wind was blowing.

1.45 a.m.

The vessel ashore is Howard Smith and Sons' steamer Cheviot. She is about one mile on the Portsea side of Point Nepean. A man reached the barracks at Point Nepean much bruised and cut. He is the only one as yet who has turned up from the wrecked steamer. He states that he was in the forecabin at 9 o'clock last night when the vessel struck on rocks. He and others subsequently made for the water. His name is Calcraft, and he was a lamp-trimmer on board. He was washed ashore, and on reaching the land he climbed up the bank and followed the telegraph line until he reached Point Nepean. He is being taken care of by the soldiers there. Calcraft says that when he left the vessel the after part was still together, and a number of people were congregated there. He states that he was in the rigging for fully three hours before he finally made for the land.

Later.

The lifeboat and crew have set up a life-saving apparatus from the vessel to the shore, and are landing people from the vessel. It is evident that the vessel is breaking up, as portions of the cargo are floating ashore. It is reported that between thirty-five and forty persons are drowned.

The following telegram was posted at the Merchant Shipping and Underwriters' Association Office this morning:—"Queenscliff, 8.50 a.m. Fishing boat just arrived from Portsea reports twenty-four lives saved; between thirty-five and forty lives are lost. Vessel going to pieces and cargo going ashore."

Captain Richardson had only very recently joined Howard Smith and Sons' employ; he

joined Howard Smith and Sons' employ; he until then had command of the steamer Palmerston. There were sixty-five souls aboard—passengers, crew, and officers, all told, against which news has been received that twenty-four have been saved, thus leaving the large number of forty-one supposed to have perished. The Cheviot is only partly insured in Melbourne, the balance being at owners' risk.

The following is a list of the saved:—Fred. Campbell, John King, David Turnbull, C. J. Laing (third engineer), Mr. and Mrs. Apperly, Mr. and Mrs. Marriott, Mrs. J. O'Brien, Miss Wilson, Miss Edwards, Mr. Ralph, Mr. Ryan, Mr. Mayfield, Mrs. J. Ball, Mr. J. H. Baily, J. Stranderwick, A. E. Nailer (chief steward), Captain Richardson (master), Anderson (chief cook), Edward Coombes (bedroom steward), Calcraft (lamp trimmer), and two firemen.

Noon.

The Cheviot is now a total wreck, only portions of her mast and stern being visible. The latest news is that forty persons have been drowned. Her cargo is now being washed ashore. The following is a list of the passengers: Saloon—Mr. and Mrs. Marriott, Mr. and Mrs. Ball, Mr. and Mrs. Apperly, Miss Edwards, Miss Wilson, Mrs. O'Brien, Mr. Ryan; steerage—Miss Baker, Miss Davis, Miss Peters, Mr. Clayton, Mr. Jeffrey, Mr. Kell, Mr. Morris, Mr. Godiff, Mr. Forster, Mr. Hunt, and Mr. Farland.

3 p.m.

The steamer Cheviot passed through the Heads shortly after 8 o'clock last night, and just after clearing the rip she pitched forward and as her screw came out of the water it raced, and all the blades of the propeller were stripped off. An attempt was then made to keep the vessel underway by means of the sails; but she could not make any headway against the terrific gale, and in twenty minutes she drifted on to the rocks.

Latest.

The Cheviot went ashore on or near the Blow-holes, about a mile from Point Nepean. The Queenscliff lifeboat crew, under Mr. Dickson, on the alarm being given, went over to Portsea with the rocket apparatus, it being madness to attempt to get outside the Heads. Mr. Cordell, the lighthouse superintendent, with five men of the artillery at Queenscliffe who, although unused to boating, in spite of the terrific night, bravely went across. The third engineer of the Cheviot made his way to them, and said he was the only one saved. The lifeboat men and the soldiers then, with much difficulty, carried the rocket apparatus across the hills through the scrub in the dark, and with extraordinary exertions by 3 o'clock had

with extraordinary exertions by 3 o'clock had saved eighteen persons, three others having been washed ashore alive.

All the officers but the captain are lost. Great coolness was shown by those on board, the captain acting very bravely, being the last to leave. The passengers were also courageous. All the first who came ashore were ladies. J. Standard, a steward, and Charles Gruar, an A.B., are amongst the saved.

Amongst the dead bodies recovered, which number five altogether, are Mrs. Peters, a steerage passenger, and Alexander Tick, an A.B. About fifty lives are lost altogether. The bodies of the dead and the survivors are to be taken to Melbourne by the Government steamer Lady Loch.

The Cheviot had a crew of thirty-five hands, all told, besides the captain, when she left Sydney on Saturday last, as follows:—Captain T. B. Richardson; first mate, W. V. Quayles, 51 years; second mate, W. C. Bristow, 21 years; third mate, R. S. Watts, 30 years; lamps, E. Calcraft, 23 years, Australian; B. J. Kelly, 38 years, Dublin; J. Martin, 25, Inverness; F. Hemble, 31, Cornwall; H. Pick, 24, Montrose; A. Turner, 27, Manchester; C. Gruar, 27, Scotland; R. Saunders, 31, Plymouth; C. Tockey, 28, London; first engineer, J. J. Dooner, 35 years, Manchester; second engineer, M. Taylor, 35, Paisley; third engineer, C. J. Laing, 25, Sydney; donkeyman, J. Campbell, 28, Glasgow; firemen—M. Laurensen, 20, Aberdeen;

W. Lauberty, 52, Glasgow; T. W. Harper, 27, Newcastle; C. Ore, 29, Glasgow; T. Muir, 43, Ayr; Michael Welsh, 31, Ireland; trimmers—H. M'Callum, 29, Glasgow; D. Cameron, 28, Greenock; J. M. King, 23, Albany; first steward, A. Choyler, 29, Southampton; second steward, J. Standerwick, 23, London; forecabin steward, D. Laurens, 35, Aberdeen; bedroom steward, E. Combe, 31, Kent; pantryman, C. Escott, 26, London; cook, G. Andreatt, 34, Arbroath; second cook, R. King, 20, Melbourne; third cook, G. Miller, 46, London; messroom steward, J. H. Bailey, 33, England; stewardess, Emily Ralph, 53, Tasmania.

The Cheviot passed the Heads about 8 o'clock last night in the face of a heavy south-west gale, which detained the Wairarapa and Southern Cross from leaving an hour afterwards.

Her propeller was carried away by the sea or dropped off, and the vessel lay helpless on a

or dropped off, and the vessel lay helpless on a lee shore, with so heavy a gale blowing that her anchors, which were let go to try and save her, were dragged. An attempt to handle the vessel under sail also failed, and she was tossed about helpless on the water. In about an hour the steamer was stranded, and soon parted amidships. The fore part broke up, and all the steerage passengers and most of the officers and crew who were upon it perished. The men who managed to reach the shore were much cut and bruised by the rocks. The stern half of the vessel remained fast on the rock until daylight, when the Queenscliffe lifeboat crew, assisted by some artillerymen at Point Nepean and some men who were employed at the forts, effected the rescue of the saloon passengers and the captain by means of the life-saving apparatus brought from the lighthouse at Point Nepean. A rocket which was fired took the line aboard, then a hawser was fixed, and with the boatswain's chair the ladies first and the men afterwards were brought ashore. The captain was the last man to leave the ship. Thirty-five lives, chiefly those of sailors, firemen, engineers, and steerage passengers were lost. Twenty-four have been saved—nineteen by the efforts of the rescue party. The shore is strewn with wreckage and cargo, principally produce.

The Cheviot was valued by her owners at from £20,000 to £25,000, and was only insured for £10,000, the owners themselves taking a large portion of the risk, and their loss is considerable. The insurance is almost equally divided among the Australian Alliance, Commercial Union, Colonial Mutual, Southern, Derwent, Tamar, Melbourne Lloyd's, and Australian Lloyd's. The value of the cargo is about £8000, and is believed to be almost entirely covered by insurance. The cargo included a portion of the cargo of the Koonoowarra from Adelaide, which was for New South Wales and Queensland, and comprised a large quantity of merchandise and miscellaneous articles.

The vessel met with a casualty while proceeding to Adelaide on 5th September. A severe breakage of machinery then occurred, and an inspector of the Marine Board of Adelaide reported in such condemnatory terms that the certificate of the vessel was temporarily suspended. On her return to Melbourne she was completely overhauled. The disaster appears to be primarily due to the breakage of the blades of the propeller. It is therefore noteworthy that when the vessel was overhauled a new steel shaft and cast-iron propeller, with new bushes and everything complete, were provided. The new propeller was con-

were provided. The new propeller was considered to be much stronger than that removed. She was passed and re-classed A1 at Lloyd's.

The ship was pounded by the breakers on a jagged reef, and quickly split in two. Preparatory to going to pieces the vessel was in two parts, and the company on the fore part were separated from those on the stern by a great gulf amidships. Both portions were kept above water by resting on the reef; but the ship, after stranding broadside, drifted round with her head to sea, so that the fore-castle, which received the full force of the water, soon began to break up. The sailors and the steerage passengers were locked in the deck-house and unable to venture on deck, as they would have been swept overboard. The fore part was gradually ground to fragments, and the inevitable result was fully foreseen, and it extorted no unmanly cry from the little party. There were more than enough lifebelts, but the passengers and sailors did not seek to obtain them. While waiting for the end, the sailors were smoking quietly and discussing the chances of getting ashore alive. One woman asked J. Campbell, the donkeyman, "if she was sure to die?" "I told her," says he, "while there was life there was hope; but my heart sank within me as I spoke." The poor woman's body was found at highwater mark to-day. She had no life-belt on, but the body of a sailor beside her had on a lifebelt. At last, after a lingering agony, those in the fore-cabin knew the worst, and most of them were sacrificed, while their shipmates in the stern were reserved for further suspense and ultimate salvation. At last the final catastrophe came as the battered wreck lifted up and listed over. Before it disappeared there was a rush to open the door of the fore-cabin, in which the steerage passengers had taken shelter. The sailors leaped out and attempted to reach the land; some succeeded, whilst others were cruelly beaten to death almost within reach of land. The passengers went down in the fore-cabin. Calcraft was the first to land, and he made his way to Port Nepean, and the artillerymen were soon groping their way down to the beach.

The following telegram was received yesterday afternoon from Messrs. Wm. Howard Smith and Sons' Melbourne office:—"Cheviot lost. Twenty-four people saved. Thirty-five missing. Not any Queensland passengers were booked." At 5.20 p.m. yesterday Messrs. Wm. Howard Smith and Sons received the following brief telegram from their office in Melbourne in answer to one sent by them:—"Twenty lives saved. Vessel total loss for ..."

Melbourne in answer to one sent by them :—  
“ Twenty lives saved. Vessel total loss far as ascertained.”

The steamer Cheviot, of Messrs. Wm. Howard Smith and Sons' fleet, was under the command of Captain T. B. Richardson when the disaster occurred. She had been under the command of Captain Strickland for a number of years, but that officer was succeeded by Captain Richardson, who had only commanded her during one voyage previous to leaving Melbourne on Wednesday last. The Cheviot had been engaged solely in the trade between Sydney and Melbourne for many years, and latterly she had made Adelaide a port of call. She was a great favourite with the travelling public, being a good sea-going vessel, and possessing roomy and comfortable accommodation for passengers. The Cheviot, which was constructed of iron, was launched from the yards of C. Mitchell and Co., of Newcastle, in July of 1870, and measured 230·2ft. in length by 32·2ft. beam, and 17·5ft. depth of hold. This gave her a net registered tonnage of 764 tons, 1226 tons gross, and 988 tons under deck. She had only one deck, which was of iron, two tiers of beams, and was subdivided into five water-tight compartments by four air-tight bulkheads. Her machinery was manufactured and fitted by T. Clark and Co., of Newcastle. Her engines were of 120 nominal horse power, and were capable of developing a fairly high rate of speed. She had an elegant and roomy saloon aft fitted with every convenience. Here there were fourteen state-rooms, some containing berths for two, and others with four berths, the total number of berths being fifty while there was room in the steerage for about sixty-five passengers.

Quite recently Mr. Ormond Smith, manager in Brisbane for Messrs. Wm. Howard Smith and Sons, received a letter from his brother, Edmund E. Smith, Melbourne, dated 15th October, in which he stated that the Cheviot had just come out of dock, where she had been thoroughly overhauled, and was then in splendid order. She was at that time fitted with a new propeller. It may also be mentioned that the Cheviot at that time passed a strict examination by the shipping inspector and engineer surveyor, and was found to be perfectly sound and seaworthy in every particular.

The third officer of the Cheviot when she met with this terrible disaster was Mr. Bristow, son of Captain Bristow, who was so well known as an old servant of the firm, but who is not now in their service.

The Cheviot was insured, but for what amount is not known in Brisbane.

