

ALPHA IS GOING TO PIECES

Steamer's Back Was Broken in Three Places and Coast is Strewn With Wreckage.

FIREMAN'S STORY OF THE WRECK

Owing to Storm the Helm Would Not Answer—Capt. York and Mr. Barber Were on Bridge When First Crash Came.

(Special to the Times.)

Vancouver, Dec. 18.—Steamer Coquitlam arrived this morning from Union with further particulars of the disaster to the Alpha.

Capt. Goss says the Alpha is a total wreck and fast going to pieces, even the tops of her masts being under water at low tide. The vessel's back was broken in three places and parts of her house and portions of her cargo are strewn along the rocky coast for three miles.

A fireman told a thrilling story of the disaster to Capt. Goss. He was in the stock hole and clambered out as the vessel was going down. He dropped his jacket as he clambered out, and was swept by the suction of a heavy wave. He was carried against the rocks, where his feet caught. By a supreme effort of his own and the assistance of a wave he pulled free and left both boots in the rock crevice. He was dashed repeatedly against the rocks, and his legs were frightfully lacerated before he finally was able to obtain a footing. All his clothes had been torn off except a remnant of a shirt.

He said that at the time of the disaster the helm refused to answer, so great was the force of wind and wave. Then the engines could not be quickly reversed and delay followed. The captain and Barber were on the bridge at the time of the first crash.

Capt. Goss says the night was the most terrible he ever saw in ten years' navigation of the Gulf. Other steamers were lying in coves for shelter.

There was no insurance either on vessel or cargo. The total loss is placed at \$300,000.

The third engineer's name was Moore, not Murray, as at first reported, and he was a former resident of Westminster avenue, in this city.

Mr. Gennell, part owner of the Alpha, had two unsigned life insurance policies of \$10,000 each in his favor drawn by the Barbers, but were not completed in the hurry of the last moment.

TO BRING DOWN SURVIVORS.

D. G. S. Quadra, Captain Walbran, leaves at daybreak for the scene of the disaster to the unfortunate Alpha to render assistance to the living, and do all possible to recover the bodies of the unfortunate who lost their lives.

The plan was the one decided on by Capt. Gaudin, the local agent of marine and fisheries, who, with commendable promptness, wired to the representative owner, J. Gennell, proffering the steamer's services. In reply he received the following self-explanatory telegram:

"Chief officer and survivors of Alpha reported at Union. Can get no port here. Can you proceed to scene of disaster and bring bodies here? Will greatly oblige. Answer, J. Gennell."

In answer to the above Capt. Gaudin wired back to Mr. Gennell that the steamer will be dispatched to-morrow morning as stated.

Scene of Disaster.

Speaking of the disaster to the Alpha this afternoon, Capt. Walbran said:

"Yellow rock where the disaster to the Alpha has occurred is a small precipitous island about 1,000 feet from the eastern end of Denman Island. There is no safe passage between the rock and Denman Island. At low water this channel is nearly dry. On Yellow rock there are situated two lights, one showing a brilliant light all round the horizon, and the western one in conjunction with the first named is so placed as to guide vessels up the Sound, the direct route to Comox. In a strong southeast gale the sea beats heavily against Yellow rock and the adjacent shores."

News was received in the city last evening of the total loss of the steamer Alpha, together with nine members of her crew. She struck Yellow Island, it is said, at the base of the lighthouse

ago after long service between Halifax and the West Indies, and shortly after arrival was sold by Messrs. Pickford & Black to Captain J. D. Warren and others. Later she passed into the hands of Mr. Gennell and other Vancouverites, and the present would have been her first trip in the trans-Pacific trade. Since being brought out to this coast, the steamer has been engaged principally in the Northern trade, being first employed in the Skagway trade and afterwards in the Nome trade. She was, it will be remembered, among the first vessels to reach Nome last year, when scores of craft were striving for the honor. With Captain Otto Buckholz in command she forged her way through the ice, which encompasses Nome in certain times of the year, and was the second vessel to make port. She landed cargo, and because of this, without proper compliance with the customs regulations, as alleged, she brought about legal proceedings instituted in Seattle against her, and which are now occupying the attention of court there.

TOPEKA ALSO WRECKED.

Familiar Alaskan Liner Runs Ashore on Sullivan Island and in Bad Position.

The bad weather which has prevailed for the last week or so all along the coast is proving disastrous to shipping. Simultaneously with the receipt of the news of the total loss of the Alpha, comes word of disaster overtaking the veteran Alaskan passenger and freight ship City of Topeka, which has for years called regularly at the outer wharf on her way to and from the North. The information is received in the following dispatch from Seattle: "The Pacific coast steamer City of Topeka, Captain Olsen, was wrecked on December 8th while on her way down Skagway. She was lightly loaded, and a terrible gale was running. She struck on the southern end of Sullivan Island and what seemed to be a table rock. All the passengers were taken safely ashore, and 22 of them, with the purser and freight clerk, came down on the Dolphin. She has two large holes stove in her through which the sea washed in and out. Her chances of being saved depend entirely on the weather. If the calm weather lasted through the week she could have been safely got off and taken to Juneau. No lives were lost."

The Topeka was built at Chester, Penn., in 1844, for a Boston firm, who sold her to the Atchafon, Topeka & Saco P. & N. Co. She was wrecked on Sullivan Island in 1896, and was bought by the Coast Steamship Co. She was placed in the Alaskan business. Her dimensions are: Length, 198 feet; beam, 35 feet; and depth of hold, 12 feet.

TOPEKA PASSENGER'S STORY.

(Associated Press.)

Tacoma, Dec. 18.—Among the passengers of the City of Topeka, which was wrecked in Lynn canal on December 8th, was Mrs. A. J. Clark, of Tacoma, who has arrived here and tells a thrilling story of the wreck. Mrs. Clark says:

"About 3 o'clock on Saturday afternoon it grew dark as night, the wind blew a perfect hurricane and it was bitter cold. The waves dashed eight and ten feet high over the steamer's broad rail and nothing could have lived in those waters. They attempted to run into some harbor or retreat until the storm subsided. The terror of that storm were beyond description. The steamer lost her bearings and I think something was broken about the engines. We were sitting at a table in the saloon when the steamer struck on a reef with a terrible shock, closely followed by another more severe, and a panic was created and excited passengers rushed to the lifeboats. Many threw their baggage overboard."

"After the second shock the steamer keeled over on her side. Some of the men got to land and built fires and began carrying things ashore. The women waited until the tide fell, and then we reached shore by stepping on the rocks."

"It snowed all Saturday night and was very cold, and continued so until Sunday night, when it moderated. One of the men walked three miles through the storm to an Indian village, or encampment, and got a tent for the women. Then we found that it leaked. The weather changed and it began to rain."

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Mr. Kruger, in reply, said: "In 1884 we obtained our independence, but that memorable action has been obliterated. The invaders are ten against one, but we await the day when God will make known His will. We rely on His help more than on emperors and princes. I have not come as a fugitive, but by order of my government with the object of terminating a war in which the British employ women and children against us."

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THE VOTE OF TREATY.

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Boer Plans Well Laid

Gen. Clements's Whole Force Had a Narrow Escape From Capture.

Determined Rushes of the Enemy Were Stemmed by Artillery Fire.

(Associated Press.)

Johannesburg, Dec. 17.—Details of the defeat of the British at Noitgedacht indicate that Gen. Clements's entire force had a narrow escape from capture.

The Boer plans were splendidly laid. If the main British column had tarried a little longer there would have been complete success for the Boers, who exposed themselves undauntedly, yelling and waving their arms. Their rushes were only stemmed by artillery.

After the British retreat the Boers held a prayer meeting. Their hymns could be heard by the retiring soldiers.

All accounts indicate a heavy Boer loss.

Col. Legge exhibited splendid bravery. He shot five Boers with his revolver before he fell with three bullets in his body.

Wounded Doing Well.

London, Dec. 18.—Lord Kitchener, in a dispatch from Pretoria, dated December 17th, reports that all the British wounded in the engagement at Noitgedacht have arrived there and are doing well.

Boers in Cape Colony.

Capetown, Dec. 18.—The Boers who crossed the Orange River into Cape Colony, west of Allival North, on Saturday, encountered the Cape Rifles and Brabant's force, who retired with loss.

Salisbury on the War.

London, Dec. 18.—At the annual conference of the National Union of Conservative Association to-day, Lord Salisbury, alluding to the war, said that if they wished to sustain the Empire and maintain the glory of England, it was their duty to see that the war was not a mere struggle for the sake of the moment, but that the great enterprise had been carried out, for on the issue thereof depended the glory and perpetuity of the Empire. It might require a strenuous effort and great self-sacrifice. The present was a time of some anxiety.

"We," said the premier, "do not know exactly what has taken place. We earnestly hope the issue may be better than the beginning. But we have to push it through. Maybe there were matters which have not been explained, and when explained they may be the subject of scrutiny as to the steps whereby the present results have been reached. But we must spare no effort whereby the glory and the maintenance of our Empire may be achieved."

Hutton's Thanks.

Ottawa, Dec. 18.—Col. Lessard, commanding the Canadian Mounted Rifles, sends a letter to the militia department, which he received from Gen. Hutton on October 15th, prior to the departure of that general to England. Gen. Hutton says he thinks Canada has good reason to be proud of the manner in which the regiment has upheld the reputation of Canadian troops. The general says it was a source of constant pleasure to him to note how excellently the regiment had profited by its opportunities, and he congratulates and thanks the men for the good work they have performed.

Judicial Appointment.

London, Ont., Dec. 18.—Capt. Stuart, of this city, who went to South Africa with the first contingent, has received a judicial appointment in South Africa for \$3,000 a year, with a residence and other perquisites, the district to be located when the war is over.

London, Dec. 17.—A dispatch from General Kitchener confirms the Associated Press message from Allival North, Cape Colony, announcing the capture of a detachment of Brabant's Horse on December 13th, near Bastoon, Orange River Colony, and says 107 men were made prisoners on that occasion.

The colonial office in announcing that Sir Alfred Milner succeeds Lord Roberts as administrator of the conquered territory in South Africa, says his taking up his residence at Johannesburg on account of his health must not be regarded as a settlement of the capital question.

Moving South.

Capetown, Dec. 17.—Seven hundred Boers have crossed from Orange River Colony into Cape Colony, near Allival North, and have reached Knappaal.

Sentenced for Looting.

Ottawa, Dec. 17.—Reports from South Africa were received at the militia department to-day. Colonel Evans gives an interesting account of the engagement on November 2nd near Balfrest, in which Lieut. Chalmers was killed and Major Sanders wounded. He pays a high tribute to the gallantry of Chalmers, who was formerly inspector of mounted police.

Major Hurdman, reporting doings of "D" Battery, mentions four non-coms and men, all from Ottawa, were degraded and sentenced to 84 days' imprisonment for breaking into and stealing military stores.

Preparing for Soldiers.

St. John, Dec. 17.—A large number of prominent citizens met to-day at the

Washington, Dec. 17.—Representative Day, of New York, to-day introduced a bill for the suppression of train robbery in the territories of the United States and elsewhere. It provides the death penalty for those guilty of a "hold-up" in the death of any person on the train, or in case no one is killed, the penalty is hard labor from 20 to 30 years.

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LOSS OF TRAINING FRIGATE.

Twenty-Five Persons Were Drowned and a Hundred Injured.

Madrid, Dec. 18.—An official dispatch from the prefect of Malaga shows the loss of life by the foundering, on Sunday, of the German training frigate Grossesur, of Malaga, to have been less than reported. According to this dispatch 25 fatalities resulted from the accident, and 100 persons were injured.

THE VOTE OF TREATY.

Washington, Dec. 17.—The Senate has reached an agreement to vote on the Hay-Randolph treaty next Thursday, beginning with votes on the amendments at 5 o'clock in the afternoon.

After the second shock the steamer keeled over on her side. Some of the men got to land and built fires and began carrying things ashore. The women waited until the tide fell, and then we reached shore by stepping on the rocks."

"It snowed all Saturday night and was very cold, and continued so until Sunday night, when it moderated. One of the men walked three miles through the storm to an Indian village, or encampment, and got a tent for the women. Then we found that it leaked. The weather changed and it began to rain."

"We stayed on the island until Tuesday about 11 o'clock the little steamer Alert came by and found us. It transported some of us to Juneau and sent another steamer back after the rest. They expected the Topeka would break her back at low tide."

Since the Alpha met her doom a great deal of comment is heard along the waterfront in regard to the deep manner in which the ship had been loaded, leaving little of her, as one pilot remarked this morning, to offer resistance to a heavy sea. Then again, it is said, that had the steamer had a pilot about the accident might not have happened. One of the men would not have attempted to land on the island until the tide was out. Not having stopped at Navasino until the wind subsided a pilot, it is claimed, would have undoubtedly been kept out in open water.

In his official report of the accident W. B. Wilkinson, chief officer of the Alpha, who is among the survivors at Union, says:

"This fearful disaster will surprise you. The good SS. Alpha went on shore at Yellow rock, at 6:45 p. m. on Saturday night, during that heavy S. E. gale nine men are drowned, including Captain York, Mr. S. Barber, Mr. J. Barber, purser, the three engineers, two A. B.'s and one stowaway. Everything that human beings could do was done