

(No. 918.)

“LANCASTRIA.”

JUDGMENT of a Court of Inquiry held at Cape Town, into the circumstances attending the wreck of the “LANCASTRIA,” on the 31st December 1880.

After a careful re-examination of the evidence adduced *in re* the loss of the barque “Lancastria,” of Liverpool, official No. 15,397, we find as follows:—

That the vessel arrived in Table Bay at 3 p.m. on the 30th December 1880, during a strong south-east wind, amounting to half a gale; that she was anchored with 60 fathoms of starboard chain, and 30 on port, at a distance of about a mile and a half N.E. of the Break-water; that the starboard chain parted, and the stream anchor was let go with tow-line bent on, which also parted; that from the time the sails were furled and chain given on the port anchor for the last time, nothing was done until noon of the following day to get the ship to sea, or endeavour made to place her in a safe position, but the vessel was allowed to drift at the mercy of the elements from 3 p.m. till (according to the master's statement) 6 a.m. on the morning of the 31st, when the vessel had drifted a distance of from 13 to 14 miles; that had ordinary precaution been taken, and any exertion made, the cable might have been slipped, fore and aft sail made, and the ship got under control. There was nothing to prevent the master getting his ship safely clear of the land for the night and returning with a light N.W. wind that blew on the morning of the 31st; the excuse offered, that he was waiting for a steam-tug, does not exonerate him, as no master should allow his vessel to get in a dangerous position when, by any exertion of himself and crew, that danger could be avoided. The final act of running the vessel on shore to save life (when no other alternative presented itself) was right; but the fact that the vessel had to be sacrificed to do so, we hold was entirely owing to the master's default in not having taken the necessary steps when in his power to do so, *i.e.*, when he had the sea room and wind to work his ship.

Under all these circumstances, we are of opinion that the barque “Lancastria,” of Liverpool, was lost by default of the master, James M'Intosh, and we adjudge his certificate be suspended for twelve months from date hereof.

(Signed) JOHN CAMPBELL,
Resident Magistrate.
M. PENFOLD, J.P.,
Nautical Assessor.

Confirmed.

(Signed) HERCULES ROBINSON,
Governor.