

(No. 4796.)

"CHASCA."

FINDING and Order of a Naval Court held at the British Consulate, Rio Grande do Sul, on the 29th and 30th days of August 1893, to investigate the circumstances attending the stranding and wreck of the British sailing ship "CHASCA," of the port of Liverpool, official number 58,988, off the coast of Brazil, in lat. 33° 18' S., long. 52° 45' W., when on a voyage from Santos to Buenos Aires, and the cause of such wreck, and to inquire into the conduct of the master, certificated mate, and crew of the said vessel.

The "Chasca" was an iron vessel, barque rigged, of 638 tons net registered tonnage, official number 58,988, built at Liverpool in 1869, and belonging to the port of Liverpool.

It appears from the evidence given before this Court, that she sailed from Santos on or about the 23rd of June last past, bound for Buenos Aires in ballast, with a crew of thirteen hands all told; that she sailed from Santos, and during the first day or two encountered fine, clear weather with baffling winds, but at midnight on 28th June wind drew to north-eastward and gradually increased, sky becoming overcast with showers, and not clear enough to take reliable observations. However, on July 1st were able to take an a.m. sight for chronometer, and at noon obtained a reliable Meridian Altitude, and this, together with the a.m. sight, placed the vessel, according to the position marked by the master on the chart, in lat. S. 33° 49' and long. W. 49° 47', this being a distance of about 142 miles off the nearest land, and approximately about 70 miles outside of soundings. At this time, viz., noon, Saturday, the first day of June, the wind at the time being S.S.W., the ship was put on the port tack heading about W. by N., and so continued until 4 p.m., when she came up and headed on a mean approximate course by compass of west until 1 a.m. on the 2nd of July, when the mate, who had the watch on deck, was in the act of taking in the main-top-gallant sail, heard the man at the wheel call out, and on going to inquire what was the matter, the man at the wheel said "that looks like land under the lee;" the mate looked, and thinking it looked like it, he ran forward to have a better look, and finding it to be land, gave orders to call all hands, and immediately ran aft to call the captain.

Immediately the master came on deck all efforts were made to put the ship about, but finding she would not back under such short canvas in such a heavy sea, decided to hard up and wear round, and while in the act of doing so she struck, and although all efforts were made to back her off they did not succeed; the star-board boat was then got out, and all hands proceeded on shore. After daylight, finding it would be impossible to get the ship off the beach for want of facilities, as the country at that part was entirely uninhabited, it was decided to abandon her, and when the sea permitted, they went on board in the boat and removed their effects together with fuel and provisions.

The Court, having regard to the circumstances above stated and to the evidence given before the Court, finds,—

That the master, David Jones, was guilty of a wrongful default, contributing to the loss of his vessel, in not taking casts with the deep sea lead to verify his position, and in trusting implicitly to the position obtained by chronometer; that the evidence does not prove that he was incapable of navigating through drink; and that he seemed in every other way to be attentive to his duties as master.

That no blame attaches to the mate as regards the stranding, but that he should be censured for not having the deep sea lead and line on deck, and for not having an able seaman on the look-out; and that no blame attaches to the rest of the crew for the loss of the vessel.

The Court, in pursuance of the powers vested in it by section 23 of 25 & 26 Vict. c. 63, therefore orders,—

That a copy of the report or a statement of the case upon which the investigation was ordered having been furnished to David Jones before the commencement of the investigation, his certificate of competency as master, No. 26,430, issued by the Board of Trade, and dated the 13th day of September 1866, be, for the wrongful default aforesaid, suspended for the period of six months.

The expenses of this Court, fixed at twelve pounds ten shillings, are approved.

Dated at Rio Grande do Sul this thirtieth day of August 1893.

(Signed) WALTER R. HEARN, President of
the Court, H.M. Consul.
NEEL MCKELLAR, Master.
S. M. VAMOOSE.
B. A. HARRIS, Master British
barque "Eliza."

British Consulate, Rio Grande do Sul.