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Monongahela Valley Republican (Monongahela, Pennsylvania) · 20 Jan 1854, Fri · Page 3

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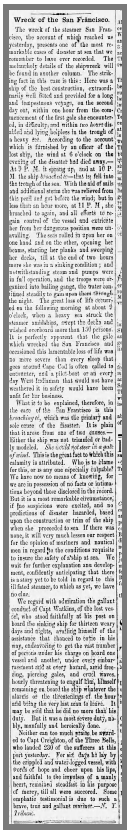

Wreck of the San Francisco.

The wreck of the steamer San Francisco, the account of which reached us yesterday, presents one of the most remarkable cases of disaster at sea that we remember to have ever recorded. The unlucky details of the shipwreck will be found in another column. The striking fact in this case is this: Here was a ship of the best construction, extraordinarily well fitted and provided for a long and hazardous voyage, on the second day out, within one hour from the commencement of the first gale she encountered, in difficulty, and within two hours disabled and lying helpless in the trough of a heavy sea. According to the account which is furnished by an officer of the lost ship, the wind at 6 o'clock on the evening of the disaster had died away—at 9 P. M. it sprung up, and at 10 P. M. the ship found herself—that in full into the trough of the sea. With the aid of sails and additional steam she was relieved from this peril and got before the wind; but in less than an hour more, at 11 P. M., she branched to again, and all efforts to regain control of the vessel and extricate her from her dangerous position were unavailing. The sea rolled in upon her on one hand and on the other, opening her beams, starting her planks and sweeping her decks, till at the end of two hours more she was in a sinking condition; and notwithstanding steam and pumps were in full operation, and the troops were organized into bailing gangs, the water continued steadily to gain upon them through the night. The great loss of life occurred on the following morning at about 9 o'clock, when a heavy sea struck the steamer amidships, except the decks and wheel-enclosed more than 150 persons. It is perfectly apparent that the gale which wrecked the San Francisco and occasioned this lamentable loss of life was no more severe than every sloop that goes around Cape Cod is often called to encounter, and a pilot boat or an every day West Indiaman that would not have weathered it in safety would have been safe for her business.

What is to be explained, therefore, in the case of the San Francisco is this broadsiding, which was the primary and sole cause of the disaster. It is plain that it arose from one of two causes—either the ship was not trimmed or badly modeled. *Ne vivid vestiaire* is a gale of wind. This is the great fact to which this calamity is attributed. Who is to blame for this, or is any one especially culpable? We have now no means of knowing, for we are in possession of no facts or intimations beyond those disclosed in the record. But it is a most remarkable circumstance, if the suspicions were excited, and no predictions of disaster launched, based upon the construction or trim of the ship when she proceeded to sea. If there was none, it will very much lessen our respect for the opinion of mariners and nautical men in regard to the conditions requisite to insure the safety of a ship at sea. We wait for further explanation and development, confidently anticipating that there is a story yet to be told in regard to this ill-fated steamer, to which as yet, we have no clue.

We regard with admiration the gallant conduct of Capt Watkins, of the lost vessel, who stood faithfully at his post on board the sinking ship for thirteen weary days and nights, swelling himself of the assistance that chanced to cattle in his way, endeavoring to get the rest number of persons under his charge on board one vessel and another, under every embarrassment and at every hazard, amid freezing, piercing gales, and cruel waves, hourly threatening to engulf the, himself remaining on board the ship whatever the slaves or the threatenings of the hour said being the very last man to leave. It may be said that he did no more than his duty. But it was a most severe duty, and he, manfully and heroically done.

Neither can too much praise be accorded to Capt Creighton, of the Three Sells, who landed 250 of the sufferers at this port yesterday. For six days he lay by the crippled and water-logged vessel, with words of hope and cheer upon his lips, and faithful to the impulses of a manly heart, remained steadfast in his purpose of mercy, till all were succeed. Some emphatic testimonial is due to such a brave, true and gallant mariner.—*N. Y. Tribune.*

Can't steer the San Francisco in a gale - NY Tribune

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Fri, Sep 2, 2022

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