

DREADFUL ACCIDENT AT SEA.

Burning of the Steamship Connaught.

PASSENGERS, CREW AND MAILS ALL SAVED.

Gallant Conduct of Capt. John Wilson, of the Brig Minnie Schiffer.

STATEMENT OF CAPT. LEITCH.

Interesting Particulars Furnished by a Person on Board.

List of Passengers.

In our Afternoon Edition of yesterday we published brief dispatches announcing the burning of the steamship *Connaught*, the new vessel of the Galway line, running between Galway and New-York and Boston, alternately, via St. Johns, Newfoundland. On her present trip the *Connaught* left Galway on Tuesday, the 25th ult., and arrived at St. Johns last Wednesday morning. She left St. Johns the same day for Boston. She sprung a leak on Saturday, and on Sunday morning, when about 140 miles from Boston, she was discovered to be on fire, and it was soon ascertained to be impossible to save her. Measures were immediately taken by Capt. Leitch to insure the safety of the passengers as far as possible, but a great proportion of them must inevitably have perished had it not been for the assistance of the brig *Minnie Schiffer*, Capt. Wilson, which received the entire number on board. All the particulars which have yet reached us relative to the disaster, will be found in the following dispatch:

THE CAPTAIN'S STATEMENT.

Boston, Tuesday, Oct. 9.

Capt. Leitch and Mr. Cox, a cabin passenger, landed at Scituate, this morning, in a boat belonging to the brig, and reached this city this morning. The captain reports that on Saturday, the 6th inst., at 8 P. M., 150 miles east of Boston, the *Connaught* sprung a leak in the engine room. Succeeded in keeping it below the fires until 1 o'clock Sunday morning when it commenced to gain rapidly, and finally extinguished the fires. At 9½ o'clock discovered smoke from the aft smokehole. Notwithstanding the utmost exertions to prevent it, the fire gained rapidly, and very soon drove the cabin passengers on deck. As the water and fire gained so fast the boats were got ready to save the passengers. There was a heavy sea running and the first boat that was lowered was stove. Six other boats were then launched successfully, and all of them filled with passengers. About 12 o'clock the brig *Minnie Schiffer* saw our signals of distress and bore down to us. At 7 P. M. commenced the task of embarking the passengers on board the brig, that vessel having attached a hawser to the steamer. At this time the starboard side of the steamer was very hot. By 9:30 P. M. all the passengers were placed safely on board of the brig.

The mails of the *Connaught* were all saved.

Capt. Leitch was the last person to leave the wreck.

The weather was pleasant after leaving St. Johns from Wednesday at 2 P. M. until Saturday, when it blew a very heavy gale from the southwest.

The last seen of the steamer was at 2 A. M. on Monday, when she was one mass of flame.

The following are the cabin passengers:

Mr. Hurry and 2 daughters,	Jno. Raymond,
John Percy,	Jas. O'Neil,
Jos. Schweton and lady,	Rev. D. Kelly,
T. Brennan, lady and son,	Miss Rose Delan,
Rev. P. King,	Miss W. Graham,
Rev. N. Gallagher,	Mrs. E. Stephenson,
Hugh C. McKay,	Miss M. Graham,
W. H. Butler,	H. Whittell,
H. A. Huntington,	Miss R. Farral,
Mrs. C. Hughes,	Rev. J. Brady,
Miss Blake,	P. McGrath,
H. Mills,	E. Walsh,
T. McCandish,	A. Divine,
Jas. Farrell, lady and daughter,	W. Byrne,
Mrs. W. Johnson,	P. Farrell,
A. E. Harding,	J. Farrell,
P. Mahon,	S. A. Smith,
Rev. Father Mitchell,	Elizabeth Lyons,
Mary Murphy,	J. C. Lewis,
Rev. W. Sutter,	Mahew Kane,
	And 423 in the steerage.

CABIN PASSENGERS FROM ST. JOHNS.

Mrs. E. J. Tobin and son,	Capt. Meagher,
Wm. H. Newman,	Mr. Foster,
Wm. Donnelly,	M. P. Dalton,
Miss Donnell,	Mr. Emerson,
John Fox,	Mr. Martin.

The *Connaught* had 30 cabin and 417 steerage passengers, and a crew of 124. All were saved.

The passengers saved nothing except the clothes in which they stood.

Three hundred of the passengers went to New-York to-night by the Fall River route; the remainder are taken care of here by their friends.

The *Connaught* had £10,000 in gold on board, Government money, taken at St. Johns, which was lost with the ship.

It is supposed that the fire had been smouldering for a long time from the rapid progress the flames made after it was discovered.

Capt. Leitch is unable to account for the leak which filled the vessel so rapidly against all the efforts of the pumps, &c.

STATEMENT OF MR. H. WHITTELL.

Boston, Tuesday, Oct. 9—P. M.

The brig *Minnie Schiffer* arrived at 1 o'clock. She is about 300 tons burthen, and the standing room on her was completely covered by the rescued passengers of the *Connaught*.

Mr. H. Whittell, of New-York, a passenger in the *Connaught*, furnishes the following statement as to the loss of that fine steamship.

Passing the circumstances of the voyage from Galway, which port we left at 5 P. M. of the 25th ult., until about 8 P. M. of Saturday the 6th inst., he says: While heading westwardly, the wind blowing a northerly gale, the ship began to roll to the larboard with a singular motion, going far down, and keeping that way a long time, which caused some alarm. Meantime, the Captain was heard giving orders about steering, manning the pumps, &c. Firemen under the lee of the paddle-box were observed whispering, and there were other manifestations that something was not right. Considerable water was observed through the grating. The engine soon after stopped for a while. After strenuous exertions by Capt. Leitch and crew, the ship righted, and the wheels commenced moving, when the passengers became more composed. The sea was rough, the wind blowing what sailors call an ordinary full gale. Most of the passengers turned in, but passed a restless night.

Sunday, 8 A. M.—The ship began to roll again with that staggering motion similar to the evening previous. The Captain and crew could neither tack nor wear the ship. Soon after the engine stopped and steam could not be raised in the boilers. The ship rolled frightfully to the starboard and the pumps were manned, and gangs of men commenced bailing with buckets. At 10 o'clock it was reported that the water was not gaining, but on the contrary that the pumps and bailers were gaining on the leak, and if the wind would stiffen we would reach Boston that night; but these hopes were soon changed to extreme terror when the word was passed around in low terms, "The ship is on fire!" accompanied by the smell of burning wood. The fire appeared between the decks. Gangs were immediately formed, with

pumps and buckets to extinguish the flames, taking the water from the sea, and passing it in buckets. As the fire gained, the bailers began to slacken work; all eyes staring around the horizon in hopes to see some means of safety. Several false reports of a vessel in sight were made, but at last we discovered a sail to the northward, and soon after another to the westward—both very low down; but it became plain at 1 o'clock that both were nearing us, and the vessel steering north had three masts, and the one west only two. We soon found out that the latter was passing, while the other still neared without showing any sign that she noticed us, which kept us in extreme anxiety and doubt until she bore directly for us, evidently showing that she observed the steamer's flags of distress, which had been hoisted since midday. We then commenced to steer away and launch boats, which was a very difficult job, the ship lying almost on her side in a trough of the sea. By this time the fire had cut off all communication with the saloons. The first quarter boat lowered was struck by the counter and lost, which caused hesitation about launching the others. But the worst of our fears was that supposing the boats should ride the sea which then showed signs of moderating, and that we could safely launch and fill them with passengers. There was no chance of remaining but a short time on board, the fire making such progress. The flames were momentarily expected to burst out and sweep the decks, the fire gangs having given up all hopes of extinguishing them, but continuing to apply wet blankets, &c. The side of the ship was then so hot that when she rolled it would hiss and make steam of the sea water.

The gallant little Yankee brig sailed alongside, and hove to, seeing our deplorable condition, and showing every sign of anxiety for us, but we began to think it would be impossible to stow all our numbers on board, she looked so small. We have since ascertained that she was only 198 tons burden. Capt. Leitch made all haste to get us into the boats, which was extremely difficult, being lowered one by one with ropes. Capt. Leitch stood by all the time, commencing with the women and children, but, with all the exertions that could be made, when the sun went down only about 200 had been got on board the brig. Capt. Wilson, of the brig, said: "This is a horrible affair, to see the sun going down, and so many people yet on board; the wreck settling down and burning up. I will do all in my power to save them." Several of the boat's crew, on reaching the brig, refused to return, when Capt. Wilson said: "I will go almost alongside, and take a hawser from on board, and then you will be in little or no danger. I must get every one from the wreck." This he did, which had the effect of giving confidence, and by great exertions all were got on board by 11 o'clock P. M. Capt. Leitch and his first officer remained on board until almost surrounded with flames, and until every soul was saved. Capt. Wilson then sent alongside to beg him to come away. The flames were shooting up the masts, throwing a strong and melancholy light over the sea. Capt. Leitch reached the brig just at midnight. Scarcely a parcel of baggage was saved, the trunks and even money of the cabin passengers being left below during the confusion, and the alarm which called them on deck in the morning; after which communication was cut off by the water and flames.

Mr. Whittell speaks in the highest terms, as do all the passengers, of the energy and kindness of Capt. John Wilson, of the brig *Minnie Schiffer*. He was from Malaga, bound for Boston, with a cargo of fruit.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CONNAUGHT.

The *Connaught* was built wholly of iron, at Jarrow, near Newcastle-on-Tyne, by Messrs. Palmer Bros. & Co., and was launched, with engines and fittings on board, April 21, 1860. Finished apparently in the first style of workmanship, and of a beautiful model, she was one of the most magnificent steamers which has ever visited our waters. Her length was 378 feet over all; 360 feet between perpendiculars. She had 40 feet breadth of beam, (71 feet over the paddle-boxes,) and 32 feet depth of hold. She was built with three decks, was 2,980 tons builders' (British) measurement, or 4,400 tons register. She was constructed with five water-tight compartments. Her engines were 800 nominal horse-power, but could be worked up to 3,500, and she could make 14 knots under favorable circumstances. She had side-wheels, double engines, and two chimneys.

The *Connaught's* engines were of superior general design, however indifferently they may have been constructed. She had three oscillating cylinders of eighty inches diameter and seven feet stroke. Her air pumps were worked by an auxiliary engine, to which also the feed-pumps and bilge-pumps were attached. It is probable that to this auxiliary engine was due the prolonged safety of the vessel—that she would have foundered before the brig came alongside had the ordinary style of pumping been employed. She had eight tubular boilers and five furnaces, with 2,000 feet of heating surface in each boiler. Galloway & Beardmore's superheating apparatus was applied. The paddle-wheels were fitted up with Morgan's feathering floats, the diameter of the wheels being 33 feet and the dimensions of floats 12 feet by 4 feet 9 inches. On her first trial trip she carried 35 lbs of steam and made 18 revolutions. She was guaranteed to run 20 miles an hour, and her builder expected her to run 22 miles. Her highest speed, on a trial trip, has been, it is stated, 17¼ miles an hour. On her first trip her greatest run was 331 miles in one day, or less than 14 miles. Her ends were very long and sharp, with concave water lines forward, and her stern was ornamented with quarter galleries, which set her off to fine advantage aft. An iron rail and network protected her entirely around the upper deck, which was flush fore-and-aft, and afforded a beautiful, clear space for promenading in pleasant weather. She was valued at £120,000, and was fully insured in England. Her accommodations for both first and second-class passengers were admirably arranged, and upon a grand scale for comfort and convenience. The after saloon, for first-class passengers, was a splendid apartment, 116 feet long, neatly furnished, and well lighted and ventilated. Her second and third saloons were also arranged with special regard to the comfort and health of the steerage passengers. She had two masts, and was fore and aft rigged, but without bowsprit, and her topmasts were light, and intended only to finish off her tapering masts. She had a jib and fore-staysail set inside of her stern. Her sails were designed more for steadying her when running with the wind ahead, than for aiding her progress through the water. Her internal appointments were upon the most approved, luxurious and expensive scale, and rendered her one of the most desirable passenger steamers afloat. She had accommodations for about five hundred passengers.

THE CONNAUGHT'S LIST OF PASSENGERS.

There was, of course, no list of her passengers on this side. As soon as the disaster became known, the office of the agents in this City (Messrs. Howland & Aspinwall, in South-street,) was besieged by those having friends on board, to learn the particulars of the calamity, and to ascertain the fate of the passengers. They all manifested the greatest joy on learning that the passengers were all saved, that they had actually arrived in Boston on board of the brig *Minnie*, and that they would arrive in this City probably on Thursday morning. To escape from such a calamity with life could well reconcile them to the loss of all their worldly effects.

THE BRIG MINNIE SCHIFFER.

The brig *Minnie Schiffer*, the fortunate vessel which rescued the passengers and crew of the *Connaught*, is a small vessel of only 192 tons register, belongs to Schiffer & Brothers of this City, and is commanded by Capt. Wilson. Every inch of standing room upon her decks and in her cabin, was crowded by the rescued passengers, some of them being obliged to seek a resting-place in her tops, and even upon the fore-peak and bowsprit. The boats of the *Connaught* were also taken in tow, and these were also filled with passengers who could not find standing room inside of the brig's bulwarks. The ladies and children were placed in the cabin, until this part of the vessel was fitted, and then provision was made for them as far as possible upon the quarter-deck, awnings being erected to shelter them. In this crowded state of the vessel it was with the greatest difficulty that the crew could and the necessary room to work the ship, and it may be considered almost miraculous that she was enabled to make the port of Boston in safety.