

WRECK OF THE SCREW STEAMER
STAR OF THE EVENING.

(From the *Hawkes' Bay Times*, 27th Feb.)

The favorite schooner Donald McLean, Captain Baker, arrived in port early on Saturday morning last, from Poverty Bay, which place she left on Thursday last, having had fine weather down. She brings to Napier the captain, mate, and six of the crew of the steamer Star of the Evening, which was totally wrecked on the East Coast on the morning of Wednesday, 13th February, on her voyage from Napier to Auckland. Such of the particulars of this melancholy disaster—attended as it was with the loss of six human lives—as we have been able to gather will be found below:—

The s.s. Star of the Evening, Captain A. G. Turner, left Napier on Tuesday, 12th February, bound for Auckland, with a cargo of 1300 sheep, and three passengers—Messrs Smith, Sleifstein, and Warrell. Experienced moderate south-easterly weather until abreast of Portland Island,—at that time (8 p.m.) making a N.E. $\frac{1}{2}$ E. course, in order to clear the Bull Rock. Kept on the same course until the southern extremity of the Mahia Peninsula bore W. by S. $\frac{1}{2}$ S.; then kept the vessel away N., being half a point easterly deviation, which course would take the vessel mid-channel between the Ariel Rocks and Gable End foreland. About midnight the weather came on very thick, with rain, and the wind freshened from the S.E. At 2.20 a.m. the vessel struck on a rock on the port bilge forward. Had the helm put hard-a-port, but found that the vessel would not answer to it. Had fore and aft canvas taken in, but finding the vessel among the breakers, and not answering to her helm, thought it prudent to keep the square sails set, and beach the vessel,—that being considered the only chance of saving life. About half-an-hour after striking, she broke in two just before the engine room, all hands having previously been warned to go forward. When she parted, the fore part got further in towards shore, and within a cable's length of the inner reef. Was unable to do anything until daylight from being ignorant of the direction taken by the reefs, and also waiting for low water. At daybreak got out all the available spare lines; and one of the fore hands, named Hammond undertook to reach the shore with the life buoy and line attached. He succeeded in getting ashore safely, but no sooner did the party begin hauling upon the line than it parted; and finding that there was no possibility of getting a second line on shore—the whole of the line having been washed away—orders were given that whoever could swim should strike out for the shore; and to such as could not, to jump overboard and lay hold of the hatches and such other pieces of wreck as were floating in towards the shore. The first person drowned was a seaman, Walter Hooper by name, who when nearly ashore turned on his back and sunk. Captain Turner, seeing that the tide was rising very fast, told the remainder that they would have to hasten, or all hope would be lost by that tide, and as both wind and sea were increasing, the chance of sticking to the wreck would be but small. The cook and steward then jumped overboard, but they soon met with a watery grave. The captain and three or four others also jumped over the side and swam ashore in safety. Messrs Warrell and Sleifstein were the next to attempt the dangerous passage, but neither reached the shore alive. The remainder of those on board (except the carpenter and Mr Smith, who were hanging on the fore-stay), were up aloft—the foremast and yards being still standing. Mr Smith, after holding on until exhausted, dropped into the water and was quickly drowned. A line was then dropped down to the carpenter, who was still on the fore-stay, and he was with great difficulty drawn up to the foreward. The tide having by this time risen over the reef, put an end to all hope of receiving assistance from shore until next time of low water. The survivors still on board were then as follows:—D. Robinson, engineer, A. Johnson, carpenter; McDermott, fireman; and Morgan and Woods, seamen. On Wednesday a message was despatched to Turanganui for assistance. About four o'clock that afternoon, Mr Gilmour arrived with line, &c., and two natives; and afterwards Mr Campbell, R.M., Dr. Brown, and several other Turanganui gentlemen came to render what assistance might be in their power. The tide having fallen, all proceeded to the outer reef, from which a native swam to the wreck with a line. He reached the wreck, but a strong southerly current carried the bight of the line on some detached rocks, so that it was quite useless to those on board; and the native was too much exhausted to make another attempt. The sea being still very high, nothing more could be done that night for the poor fellows still on board. Next (Thursday) morning the sea was very high, so much so as to prevent any communication with the wreck. Tried again during the afternoon tide, but the sea was still too high. At midnight the weather moderated, and gave them some hope of rendering assistance at daylight. Day having broke, the party proceeded to the beach, and, as the tide would permit, gained the outer reef with life buoys and lines. Found the sea gone down very much, and W. Hammond and Weaver volunteered to swim to the wreck,—Hammond leading with the end of the line, and Weaver following with the bight. These having reached the vessel in safety, the party bent on to the middle of the line one of the boat's life buoys, so that it could be drawn to and fro between the wreck and the reef. By means of this arrangement the five persons on board were safely landed one after another, but in greatly exhausted condition, and having their limbs much swollen through exposure on the wreck for 53 hours to a heavy S.E. gale, and such rain as had not been experienced on that coast for many years. After a little rest and the partial recovery of the rescued men, all proceeded to Turanganui.

A meeting of the inhabitants of Turanganui was held at Captain Reid's store, on Thursday last, 21st February, Captain Biggs in the chair, for the purpose of determining what should be done with a sum of money which had been contributed by the people of the district for the relief of the sufferers by the wreck.

Captain Turner, on behalf of himself, officers, and crew (such as have providentially escaped with their lives), of the ill-fated steamer Star of the Evening, begs to return his thanks to those persons who have acted so kindly to them during their adversity, especially to Mr Gilmour, who remained with them the whole time at the wreck, and acted as interpreter; also, to Captain Reid for his kindness in placing his two vessels (Tawera and Donald McLean) at the disposal of the shipwrecked persons to take the party to Napier and Auckland, as well as for food and clothing supplied, and many other kindnesses which, though not recorded here, will ever be remembered with feelings of heartfelt gratitude.

LIST OF THE SURVIVORS.

A. C. Turner, master; — Deighton, mate; J. Sutton, second mate; D. Robinson and D. Barker, engineers; A. Johnston, carpenter; D. Woods, N. Morgan, W. Weaver and W. Hammond, able seamen; J. Williams, second class seaman; C. Philpott, cabin boy; J. Hunt, — McDermott and — Dawson, firemen.

LIST OF THE DROWNED.

Mr Smith, Mr Sleifstein, Mr Warrell, passengers; J. Eltham, steward; J. Wedgewood; Walter Hooper, A.B.