

WRECK OF THE KAPUNDA.

Information has been received from Bahia to the effect that the Kapunda, from London for Australia, had been run down and sunk by the Ada Melmore (British barque), from Coquimbo to England, and over 200 lives have been lost. The Kapunda left London on December 11 bound for Fremantle, Western Australia. She was an iron ship, of 1,146 gross tons, built at Dumbarton in 1875, classed 100 A1, and owned by Messrs. Trinder, Anderson & Co., London. The Ada Melmore was an iron barque of 591 tons, built at Glasgow in 1877, and owned by Messrs. W. Porter & Sons, Belfast. The Kapunda had on board four cabin passengers, 268 steerage passengers, Dr. Bentham (the surgeon in charge), and a crew of 40. She was commanded by Captain John Masson, who had been a number of years in the service of the owners. The vessel had about 600 tons of general goods on board, and 300 tons of stone ballast. She was lightly loaded, drawing only 15 feet 2 inches when she left the dock. She sailed under the Passenger Act, and was subject to the regulations of the Board of Trade. She has several times before carried passengers to Australia. Calculating from the time of the arrival of the Ulysses at Bahia, it is conjectured that the catastrophe must have occurred shortly after the Kapunda crossed the Equator, off the coast of Brazil. She was navigated by one of the ablest skippers and most experienced officers in Messrs. Trinder, Anderson & Company's service, the captain and first officer having been in the employ of the firm for some years. She was one of the few vessels built specially for the firm, and was in all respects a well-found and thoroughly-equipped vessel. In fact, she carried one man in excess of the number required by the Board of Trade regulations to navigate the vessel. It is remarkable that she only carried on this voyage one family in the cabin, that of a Mr. Field, who was on his way out to the Colony with his wife and children. The vessel, however, did not usually carry many cabin passengers, her accommodation for them being somewhat limited. All the remaining two hundred and sixty emigrants were steerage passengers, mostly of the poorer classes, including a number of Scotch and Irish peasants, who were going out to Western Australia in the hope of bettering their fortunes. The greater number of these embarked at Plymouth.

There will probably be no details of the shipwreck of any length received until the arrival of some of the survivors of either the Ada Melmore or the Kapunda, in England, or until the receipt of the next mail from Brazil, which is not expected for about three weeks. The telegrams last received leave no doubt that 298 passengers and seamen, including the captain of the Kapunda, have been drowned, and that the 16 men whose names have been published are all that survive. It is supposed they

are all that survive. It is supposed they were picked up immediately after the collision by the Ada Melmore, and that 14 of them were afterwards transferred to the French barque Ulysses, which landed them at Bahia, and that the remaining two stayed on board the Ada Melmore until she sank, when they joined the crew of that vessel in taking to the boats, and so reached Maceio. The position of the vessels at the time of the collision is now approximately fixed at a latitude a little to the south of Maceio, and within a comparatively short distance of the coast. The Crown Agents in London, who shipped most of the emigrants, have received no independent intelligence as yet, but have requested the owners to furnish them with all the information received for communication to the emigrants' friends.

Most of the emigrants, it is stated, had taken passage under what is known as the nomination system, which has almost entirely superseded the granting of free passages to the Australian Colonies. By this system persons living in the Colonies may nominate their friends at home, who, if in good health and otherwise qualified, are granted passages at greatly reduced rates. Some 80 of the emigrants were proceeding to the Colony under the auspices of the West Australian Land Company, which was recently formed to work the concession to construct a railway from Beverley to Albany (King George's Sound), over 200 miles in length. By the terms of their concession the company are bound to settle a certain number of emigrants in return for large grants of land. Mr. A. Hordern, the promoter of the company, only recently died on the voyage out to the Colony. The Kapunda's passengers were drawn from all parts of the kingdom, but chiefly from the agricultural districts in England and Scotland.

Some remarkable escapes of would-be passengers in the unfortunate vessel are recorded. One of the steerage passengers who had booked a place broke his arm on the day before the vessel sailed, and consequently lost his passage, though probably saving his life. Another passenger, the mother of several children, had her offspring fall ill with scarlet fever, or some similar infantile ailment, and she and they were thus prevented from sailing in the Kapunda. On the other hand, a poor woman who had intended to sail in another ship of the same firm a month previously was unexpectedly confined on the day before that of sailing. She consequently missed that vessel, and when she recovered she was able to sail in the Kapunda.

Mary Village Homes, Addlestone, Surrey : — "The recent disaster with the Kapunda has been a great and sudden blow to emigration work. To send out our children in faith and hope to a distant land, and in a few weeks hear of their being engulfed in the world of waters—sunk in their sleep—is a trial that can only be estimated by

is a trial that can only be estimated by those who have to seek homes abroad for their young people. Four well-trained girls left Princess Mary Village Homes in the ill-fated vessel, and we are thankful to say were of the number of our inmates who gave promise of useful Christian lives. The catastrophe of their loss will seriously affect others about to go abroad, and, of course, we ourselves cannot but be deeply troubled at such a loss of those whom we have loved and worked for. Is there not a grave evil revealed somewhere in the terrible fact that not a woman or child was saved from the awful wreck? Forgive me if, in this moment of unfeigned sorrow, I venture to ventilate a complaint that no boats were launched—no efforts, apparently, made to save the women and children. In common with many, I am much moved at the calamity, and to be silent under the visitation may be misunderstood. There are relations of the girls to be reckoned with, and we shall be glad to be able to help them to bear their loss."—*European Mail*, Feb. 4