

N^o 27

Lloyd's Surveyor's Office-

N^o 12 Hastings Street.

The 1st ^{October} ~~September~~ 1875

Bernard Weymouth Esq^r

Secretary to Lloyd's Register of British and Foreign Shipping-

Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt by the last mail, but one of the circulars, addressed to the Managing Director of the Merchant Steam Tug Coy Ltd., which has been duly forwarded to Messrs Schoone Hillman & Co^y, of this City, the Agents of the Company;—
Barge Magnolia, N^o 117 on the Register.— I regret to say that I have had some trouble and correspondence with the Master of this Vessel, Mr. Cator, the circumstances being set forth:— Shortly after the "Magnolia's" arrival, and, during her discharge, in going up the river, I noticed that a large quantity of the zinc sheathing was off both bows of the vessel, and, that the more she lightened, the greater the deficiency appeared.— I twice boarded the vessel and pointed out the defect to the Master, who was trying to patch the zinc by lashing her deck the vessel, as she appeared to me to require caulking, from what I observed of the seams, which, the displacement of the zinc, had left bare.— Captain Cator did not at all approve of my recommendation at the time, saying that he knew what to do without any dictation.— But he appears either to have acted on it or on that of some other persons; for, some days after, I saw the "Magnolia" anchored abreast of the Caledonia Dock.— I then wrote to Captain Cator telling him that I had heard he was about putting his vessel into the Caledonia Dock, and that as there was no European Foreman in that dock, his work would be left to Native Supervision (advising him at the same time that Native Supervision was as good as none) and for which— reasons I recommended any other dock in preference, all the other docks having a European Foreman under the Superintendent, to this letter I got no reply.— The next day I went on board the "Magnolia" and again pointed out the deficiency of the dock staff in the Caledonia Dock, when Captain Cator told me in a most offensive manner to mind my own business, and that it was time enough

for me, to offer advice when asked, that it was the cheapest dock and that having made his engagements he should not alter them for me (at this time I did not know that the Superintendent of the dock was a fast friend of Captain Cator, which I have since learnt) - Seeing remonstrance was useless, only provoking further insult I left the vessel telling Captain Cator that he need not look for my services, as independently of his insulting language I could not countenance a dock, which persistently refused to employ a European Foreman, as the example was most pernicious and would, without doubt, be followed by the other docks. Nevertheless, made him fully understand that, if the work was inspected by a European Foreman I would attend the vessel, notwithstanding what had passed - The "Magnolia" was docked in the Caledonia Dock, and no European assistant employed to superintend the work. I went, feeling quite sure whether I had acted right in refusing to visit the ship on two occasions whilst the repairs were being effected (Caulking, sheathing & re-stalling) inspected the work and found that apparently things were being well done - These visits on account of the situation of this dock and the strength of the freshets (having regard to other work to be done lower down on the river the same morning) were made by me (as is the case here) at 5.30. A.M. on three occasions, and on neither occasion did I see either Captain or a single officer belonging to the vessel, altho' I went from stern to stern of the ship, including the Cabin - This I did not wonder at, as it is constantly the custom here, when a vessel is in dry dock, for the Captain to sleep out of her (which I believe to have been the case in this instance) and it is a well known fact that both officers and men, where there is no discipline, will do the same - At all events this vessel had on those two occasions full charge of herself, and as work does not begin in the docks until 8 o'clock, there is little chance of finding any of the dock people active at that early hour, unless specially requested to be in attendance - Having finished my inspection on both occasions of the work that was being effected, & being satisfied with its general appearance I left the dock without reference to any person - This has given rise to the gross error in Mr. Cator's acct. of the transaction which I presume has been forwarded to you, in which he says that I never inspected

vessel, and I hereby emphatically deny the statement above referred to an inspection took place, and that on the 1st of September I attended on board the "Magnolia" and took from the Master a detailed account of all that had been done to the vessel, giving her a final inspection - The survey fees having been paid by Messrs Finlay Munro & Co, the Agents, out of their own pocket (as the Captain would not pay) which will, I think, sufficiently prove the error of Captain Cator's account, should he have addressed you on the subject, and, for further confirmation of the truth of my assertion, I would refer you to a correspondence which has taken place on the subject between Messrs Gladstone Wyllie & Co of this City (Agents to Shipyards) and Mr. J. A. Wyllie & Co, of London - Since the floating of the "Magnolia" out of Dock I regret to say that her inattention to her Camber or thro' some defect in block her metal has become so much warped and wrinkled on both sides, so much so that I am somewhat dissatisfied. I gave the Captain his Certificate I must beg of you to consider the same cancelled. I wrote for a return of the Certificate, but the Master of the "Magnolia" in reply stated that it was his intention to forward the same to the Committee with his own endorsement. Whilst I am on this somewhat unpleasant theme I would beg of you to instruct me with all dispatch as to what my duty really is or should be in the event of a like occurrence, where a shipmaster gratuitously and knowingly places his vessel in a dock where there is no European staff assistant - With ships other than those on the Register I know how to act, but with vessels clasped in the Register the case is different - I need scarcely point out to you that (native supervision in ship building or repairing) can in no way be relied on, specially as it is all piece work - I have but to mention the case of the "Lady Egidia" amongst others, docked some time since in the same dock (the Caledonia) without a European assistant - This vessel with a weight of 400 tons of stone ballast had every ledge shoe removed from under her by the natives, during the temporary absence of the Superintendent of the dock, the consequence being that a six inch Oak false keel was entirely ruined, besides other damage to the vessel - The greater mischief being that in the event of the want of European supervision being overlooked in this dock, all the other docks will in a short time follow suit to

expressing an wish

See when asked, that it

Regrett

Instructions on the point, I have the honor to remain

answering for the work done my under
Ereps should have occurred and as the Super

Sir,

Your most Obedt Servt

W Stewart

Surveyor to Sloops Register

Dividing the above I find that Captain Cator has addressed a letter to the Chamber of Commerce here, which it appears he has published his letter to them and the enclosed - I also forward my reply published by the same paper, for your visits on account. I am sure I need not point out to you for the tone of the Correspondence will have been a most malicious attack on me as Surveyor to the Register, neither does Captain Cator so much to blame in the matter as he appears to me to be at fault. He has been edged on to do that which he has done by two of the Surveyors of this port who are highly jealous of the Sloops Appointment here, and whose names I will give up should the Committee require it, as they find that to a great extent it takes work out of their hands, and have been assisted in the matter of the American Dock master into whose dock I recommended Captain Cator not to put his vessel on account of the insufficiency of staff - This clique having with an idea, if possible, of getting me into trouble, hoping that a change might be made in which they may in some manner be benefited, the Principals, however, take care in the back ground and have made the balls for Captain Cator to fire - I would, however, that the Committee should make full enquiries of the Correspondence which is at present going on between Gladstone & Co of this City, and the Committee for Managing the affairs of Sloops - I shall be great pleasure in forwarding documents by the next mail which will go far to prove that Captain Cator's charges and affidavit are thoroughly false -

1878
Calcutta

Capt Stewart

44
M

P.S.

on the

Dividing the above

Nat, lower

Don't know
stalling inspect

visits on acc

work to

see it

for

who

should

author

recommended

havin

be

care

to

between

of

shall

to

prove

that

thoroughly

Lloyd's Register
Foundation