

BRIDGWATER VESSEL LOST.

FOUNDERS OFF THE WELSH COAST.

HEROIC MATE WASHED OVERBOARD AND DROWNED.

During the terrible storm which raged at the beginning of the week the well-known Bridgwater ketch "Good Templar" foundered off the Welsh coast, and with the loss of the vessel was involved the drowning, under sad circumstances, of the mate of the ship. The "Good Templar," which was an Irish-built vessel, was owned by Messrs. Sully and Hurman, Mr. Maidment, and the ship's master (Captain George Creemer), and for some time past has been trading between Bridgwater and Liverpool. On the occasion of its fateful voyage the ketch was laden with coal for the Bridgwater Gas Company, and from Liverpool to Holyhead severe weather was experienced. Indeed, so strong was the gale that Captain Creemer, who resides on the Bristol-road, Bridgwater, and who is one of the most experienced mariners of the port, deemed it expedient to shelter at Holyhead. Some indication of the severity of the conditions under which the "Good Templar" voyaged is forthcoming in the fact that between Liverpool and Holyhead Captain Creemer was caught by a huge wave and washed overboard. Luckily the vessel's mate, Jack Champion, who a few days later lost his life, was standing near at hand, and with much presence of mind swung over the side of the vessel, grasped the captain's legs, and pulled him back to safety. It was an act that was attended with a good deal of risk to Champion, who is a young man, and who was only married two months ago, his wife residing in Bridgwater, but Champion is recognised as being a very fearless sailor. The force of the gale having somewhat abated on Sunday, Captain Creemer decided to continue his voyage. The south-westerly wind, however, increased in violence, and terrific seas were encountered, and when off the North Bishop the "Good Templar" was in distress. It was at about 11.30 at night, and the captain and Champion were at the wheel. The two other members of the crew—Henry Thomas, an able seaman, and Cornish, the cook, both living at Bridgwater—were below. For a while the vessel rode the storm well, but at length a mountainous sea struck the wheelhouse with fearful force. The wheel was carried away, and with it went Champion into the angry sea. Captain Creemer managed to hold on to the bulwark, and thus saved himself from being thrown into the water along with his mate. The water rushed below, and it was with extreme difficulty that Cornish and Thomas made their way on deck. The cries of Champion could be heard, but the night was so dark that his whereabouts could not be located, whilst to have launched a boat in such a sea would have meant instant capsizing of so frail a craft. Being bereft of its steering gear, the "Good Templar" was at the mercy of the sea, and signals of distress were hoisted. Buffeted by the waves, the vessel's fate appeared sealed, and especially

was this the case when with a crash the vessel's bulwark was torn away and the ship's boat smashed to fragments. Captain Creemer tried to make for the shelter of Fishguard Harbour, but all chance of achieving this object was gone when the mizzen sail was blown to ribbons. The crew had practically abandoned all hope, when in response to the signals of distress the lights of an approaching craft were discerned. These proved to be those of a steam trawler belonging to Fleetwood. The trawler was manoeuvred with great skill by her skipper, and when within comfortable distance of the doomed "Good Templar" a boat was lowered from the trawler, and after a very hazardous experience Captain Creemer and his two men were taken off. On board the trawler the shipwrecked mariners were treated with that kindly hospitality so characteristic of sea life. The trawler stood by the "Good Templar" for a short while, and those on board saw the old craft settle down stern first. The trawler made for St. Tidwell's Roads, near Port Madoc, where Captain Creemer and Thomas and Cornish were landed. Their escape from death had been very narrow, and the shipwrecked sailors were loud in praise of the splendid conduct of the trawler's crew in effecting their rescue. The captain and crew, who lost all their belongings, returned to Bridgwater on Wednesday morning.

With the object of obtaining an account of the captain's thrilling experience, our representative called at his residence—No. 34, Bristol-road—but was informed that he was too unwell to see any one at present, not yet having recovered from the effects of the wreck. Cornish—the ship's cook—who lives on the Bath-road, has left Bridgwater for Cardiff to obtain a berth on a bigger craft. He also has suffered considerably from the severe buffeting he received while on the "Good Templar," and told his father that he "would not go through such an experience again for something!" "Our boat," he said, "was entirely at the mercy of the waves, and everything on deck was washed overboard. The pump and wheel were smashed to pieces, and terrific waves broke over the ship." Cornish was one of those who assisted to pull Captain Creemer on board after his narrow escape, but he stated that not one of the crew actually saw the unfortunate mate washed overboard.