

20TH JANUARY 1923.

**SITTINGBOURNE BARGE
DISASTERS.**

TWO SUNK IN FOUR DAYS.

On Saturday night last, the barge "Maria," Captain Richard Dorrington, belonging to Mr. H. E. Andrews, was run into and sunk by the Norwegian steamship "Mercator," in Erith Lower Rands. The "Maria" was on a voyage from Murston to Blackfriars with 130 tons of cement, and the crew had a narrow escape, for the steamer suddenly altered her course, those in charge of her afterwards stating that they could not steer her, and the barge sank in about two minutes. She was raised on Sunday night by the Port of London Authority, and placed ashore on the flats off the Kentish shore of the river below Erith.

On Tuesday night last the barge "Elsie," owned by Smeed, Dean, and Co., Limited (Captain Haisman) was proceeding up the Thames in St. Clement's Reach, Northfleet, on a voyage from Murston to Hammersmith, with a cargo of bricks, when she collided with the s.s. "Sheldrake," as a result of which she sank in about midstream. Fortunately both of the crew escaped in their boat.

The barge will be raised by the Port of London Authority, and after being discharged, will probably be brought back to Murston for repairs. Messrs. Smeed, Dean, and Co., Ltd. are not covered by insurance of any of their floating property.