

into the streets and left stranded. Along the water-front boats were capsized, and in the water men were seen in all directions, swimming for their lives.

At last the water in the bay subsided into a sort of whirlpool, and so soon as we could with any propriety man our boats, they were sent to the rescue of the drowning men. Several were picked up—one already dead. The *De Soto* was now adrift, whirling about the harbor, her pumps going, and getting up her steam. As rapidly as possible I went on board of her, and found she could keep herself free, and with her steam-pump and two kedges down, she would remain in safety for the night. Constant shocks of earthquake occurred every ten or fifteen minutes, and so continued with more or less severity through the night, and as I am now writing this is still going on.

The damage on shore has been far more ruinous to the merchants than that occasioned by the late hurricane. The first heavy roller went up into the town, swamping the stores, which were mostly on the Bay Point, floating out and finally stranding their goods in unheard-of directions. The panic that seized the inhabitants was painful—rushing up the hillside, crying for mercy and listening to no attempt to pacify them. As I went ashore in the evening, I found all the stone dwellings were abandoned, their owners in the streets or in the wooden buildings of their friends, the alarm being still kept up by the constant shocks that were still occurring. This morning the shocks are less frequent, and the bay perfectly quiet.

The English mail steamer which had lately arrived, and was coaling in the bay on the other side of the harbor, was as near being lost as possible. Her passengers speak of having felt the shock as we did, and looking behind them saw a small islet in their rear cleft in twain, and flame and smoke issuing from the fissure. Shortly afterward the sea arose and came well nigh carrying them down; their cables had parted, but they were thrown, most fortunately, under a lee which placed them in comparative safety. The passengers, all but three females who were lost in the surf, reached the shore.

Just now a vessel has arrived from Santa Cruz, bringing an officer of the *Monongahela*, who brought me a verbal message from Commodore BISSELL, saying the shock of the earthquake had been most violent at that island. That the sea had risen and thrown his vessel high and dry on the beach, and three of his men who were in the boats alongside were drowned. I leave this evening to see what assistance I can render him. The damage sustained by this ship is not material.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,
(Signed) JOS. S. PALMER,
Rear-Admiral Commanding N. A. Squadron.

Hon. GIDEON WELLES, Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.

ST. THOMAS.

The Recent Earthquake—Report of Admiral Palmer.

WASHINGTON, Thursday, Dec. 19.

The Navy Department received this morning the following report of the recent disaster at St. Thomas, written by the late Rear Admiral PALMER:

FLAGSHIP *SUSQUEHANNA*, }
St. THOMAS, Nov. 19, 1867. }

SIR: I beg to inform the Department of an extraordinary occurrence, producing much disaster, which took place in this harbor yesterday afternoon. The weather was clear, though extremely hot—barometer, 30. While writing in my cabin, about 2:30 P. M., my attention was called by a sudden tremor seizing the ship, increasing in intensity, accompanied by a sound resembling the grinding of a vessel upon a rough bottom, then gradually subsiding until it ceased; the whole lasting about two minutes. I recognized it immediately as an earthquake, and looking toward the town saw from the dust and confusion there had been destruction among its buildings. Concluding it was now over, I resumed my occupation, and had been seated about ten minutes, when the report was brought to me that the sea outside of the harbor had risen and was coming in a huge volume as if to engulf us all. I went on deck, and here the extraordinary spectacle of a heavy wall of sea, some twenty feet in height, apparently distant about three miles, was coming toward the harbor with terrible power. The second anchor was immediately dropped and men sent to the helm, which was all that we could do, and then we stood to meet it as it advanced, with a skirmish line of tumultuous rollers in front. I saw, with some comfort, that it came from about south southwest, and would consequently strike the entrance of the harbor in an oblique direction. What a feeling of awe, we awaited its arrival. It came rushing on, tumbling over the rocks that formed the entrance, carrying everything before it. A small steamer and sailing vessel that were trying to get in were at once engulfed and never again seen, and the vessels at anchor near the entrance were lifted from their mooring and carried on the rocks to leeward. Receiving this check the heavy rollers swept into the harbor.

The *De Soto* which was anchored outside of us and was lying rather broadside to, was carried from her moorings, both chains snapping, and she was thrown upon the iron piles of a new wharf lately constructed. The next roller swept her off into deep water again, and soon she made signals that she was leaking.

In the meanwhile, however, we had risen from the rollers which we met nearly stern on, encountering three in succession, the anchors and chains holding on bravely. The sea was now rushing in and receding with great violence. The sunken wrecks were rising; the shipping in the harbor swept from their moorings, were coming into us every few minutes, and the small craft in shore were lifted up and thrown