



The Late Earthquake at St. Thomas

We have before given some account and illustrations of the effects of the late earthquake and tornados which lately visited the West Indies. Among other illustrations was one showing the effect of the great tidal wave which accompanied the earthquake upon the United States steamer the *Monongahela*. It will be remembered that the vessel was washed out of the ocean, over the warehouses of the town of St. Croix to the market-place, and again carried back over the same warehouses, and landed high and dry on a coral bank on the edge of town. We give below an illustration showing this same disastrous tidal wave at the moment it struck the English steamer *La Plata* while lying at Water Island, three miles from St. Thomas. This tidal wave is described by those who saw it as “a monster breaker, or rather a sea-wall variously estimated at thirty to sixty feet high, and flowing at a rate of at least fifty miles an hour.”

The *La Plata* had a very narrow escape. She had commenced coaling and taking cargo onboard from three large hulks alongside, 100 or 200 Negroes being employed upon the work, with their usual clatter and noise. When the earthquake occurred, it was felt quite as strongly on ship as on shore. Some thought the boiler had burst; some that the ship had been struck by whales. But the excitement was great, and the Negroes were as wild with panic as on shore. The alarm had scarcely subsided when there was a cry of “its coming; its coming!” The Negroes swarmed on deck, the sailors rushed up the rigging, and the great wave was seen sweeping along in unchecked fury and stretching the whole width of the horizon. There was a roar like thunder. Captain Revett seized the wheel and endeavored to present the stern of the ship to the advancing wall; but it struck her on the starboard quarter. Though she reeled, groaned and staggered with the blow, the wave passed her with no more serious injury than a shattered bulwark and a few tons of seawater on her decks. The passengers were landed for safety at Water Island, and sent round to St. Thomas, where the *La Plata* subsequently had to proceed for repairs and coal. A complimentary address was subsequently presented to Captain Revett by the passengers, for his conduct and that of his crew under the trying circumstances they were placed in. It will be remembered that over eighty vessels were lost by the earthquake and tsunamis at St. Thomas.

