

morning before, and had not tasted food all that time. Though weakened and exhausted, he kept his position by the side of Captain Schoonmaker and Lieutenant Wilson, the navigation officer, and encouraged everyone around him. The *Vandalia* was now fast bearing down upon the reef, alongside the wreckage of the *Eber*, and hundreds of people on shore expected every minute to see her strike. She was soon seen, however, to move away from the reef and make slight headway towards the point where the *Nipsic* lay. Captain Schoonmaker and Lieutenant Carlin saw it was useless to make a further attempt to save the ship, and as the engines were not powerful enough to steam out to sea, as the *Calliope* had done, they determined to beach the vessel. Two of her anchors were slipped and a full head of steam put on. She came on until her bows struck the soft sand about forty yards from the stern of the *Nipsic*. The *Vandalia* swung around broadside to the leach and it was seen that her officers and crew were in great danger. In half an hour the vessel was seen to be filling with water and settling down. Lying as she did almost broadside, too, the seas broke over her furiously and the water poured down the hatches. By noon the wheel gun deck was under water, and from that time on the condition of the men was most pitiable; the torrents of water that swept over the rail knocked them from their feet and threw them violently against the slides, several being severely injured. Most of the men sought refuge in the rigging, but a few of the officers remained upon the poop-deck. Nearly every one on board had lost most of his clothing, and some were entirely naked. A few provided themselves with life-preservers, but these could not be obtained for all, so rapidly did the vessel fill. The men on shore were powerless to render assistance. No boat could have lived a moment in the surf, and it was impossible to carry a line across to the steamer, as there was no firing apparatus on the shore. Lieutenant Sherman and Ensigns Purcell and Jones attached a small cord to a hawser and three natives ventured in the surf in an attempt to reach the *Vandalia*. They entered the water a quarter of a mile above the spot where the steamer lay, waded out as far as they could, then struck out in the current with the cord tied to their bodies. Expert swimmers as they were, they were unable to overcome the force of the current, which rushed down like a cataract between the *Vandalia* and the shore, and the men were thrown upon the beach without being able to get within 50 yards of the *Vandalia*. Their chief urged them to try again. Several other attempts were made, but with the same result. Finding it was impossible to reach the vessel, there was nothing to do but remain near the shore and wait for an opportunity to render any assistance that might be possible. It was evident many of the men would not be able to stand the force of the waves much longer,

and many natives waded into the water and stood on the edge of the current waiting to grasp any one who should float near them. The seas continued to break over the vessel and it was not long before several men were swept over the side. As soon as they touched the water they swam for the *Nipsic*, which was the nearest object. Most of them reached the *Nipsic*, where they grasped the ropes hanging over the slides and attempted to draw themselves upon deck. A number succeeded in doing this, but the others were so weak that after hanging to the ropes a few minutes their grasp was broken by the awful seas which crashed against the sides of the vessel and they fell back into the current. The first man to come ashore was Chief Engineer Greene. He was the first washed off the poop-deck of the *Vandalia*, and after a terrible struggle was caught by the natives and brought to the shore. The next was Naval Cadet Wiley, who was very brave. The natives caught him just as he was sinking and he was carried to the American Consulate insensible. It was not long after Greene and Wiley were washed over that four officers were drowned, being swept from the deck. Captain Schoonmaker was clinging to the rail on the poop-deck. Lieutenant Carlin was doing his utmost for him, as the captain was becoming weaker every minute. No one knew it better than himself, and he remarked to those around that he would have to go soon. At last a great wave struck the *Vandalia* on the port-quarter and submerged her deck. Captain Schoonmaker held on to the rail with all his remaining force, but the torrent of water was so strong that a machine gun near by was washed from its fastenings and sent whirling across the deck. Captain Schoonmaker was struck on the head by the gun and either killed outright or knocked senseless, as he was swept off the deck immediately and seen no more. Paymaster Arms and Pay Clerk Roche were swept off together and soon sank. Marine Lieutenant Sutton died in much the same way. During the remainder of the afternoon there followed a succession of awful scenes of death and suffering. The storm had not abated in the least, and the waves that seemed like mountains of water rolled in from the ocean and broke over the ill-fated vessel. The sheets of water which fell from the clouds and the sand beaten up from the shore struck against the houses like hail, while the men and even the natives were frequently obliged to run to shelter. The *Vandalia* continued to settle and the few men who had not already taken to the rigging stood upon the poop-deck or fore-castle, as the vessel was almost entirely under water amidships. So many had crowded into the mizzen rigging that there was no more room there, and a number of officers and men rushed across the gun-deck to take refuge in the main and fore-castles. Owing to the water pouring over the wreck, this was a most perilous undertaking.

Almost twenty-four hours had elapsed since any man aboard had tasted food, and all were weak and faint from hunger and exposure. The men were now being swept from the decks and the rigging half a dozen at a time, and a few who felt too weak to hold on longer jumped into the water in a last effort for salvation. Nearly every man who jumped was washed into the water and succeeded in reaching the *Nipsic*, and most of them got upon her deck. None of those who were swept into the current came near enough to be reached by the natives, and such were carried out and drowned. The brave Samoans were urged on by their chief, Redouina, to renew their efforts to rescue the drowning men, and as a consequence two of the natives who got too far out were carried away, perishing within sight of all the men whom they were trying to save. At this time the only part of the *Vandalia* which stood out of the water was the after part of poop-deck and the forward part of the fore-castle. Lieutenant Culver, Dr. Harvey, Dr. Loaders and Engineer Webster were in the fore-top. In the maintop were Lieutenants Watson and Heath and Ensigns Gibbons and Ripley. Lieutenant Carline, who was the last man to leave the deck, climbed into the maintop, where he sank down, utterly exhausted. More than one man who was climbing the rigging gave way under the terrible strain and fell to the deck, only to be washed over and drowned. Several persons on shore succeeded in making a hawser fast from the *Nipsic* to the beach and the *Vandalia*'s men who had reached the *Nipsic* escaped in that way. The stem of the *Nipsic* had by this time swung out straight from shore, so that the distance between the two vessels was not more than twenty yards. A white man named Bickering went aboard the *Nipsic* from the shore and threw a small line to the *Vandalia*. A sailor caught it and a small rope was made fast from the fore-most of the *Vandalia* to the stern of the *Nipsic*. A few men escaped that way, but before all on the fore-mast could be taken off the line parted. The *Nipsic*'s stern swung back to the shore, and it was impossible to get across. The terrible scenes attending the sinking of the *Vandalia* distracted attention from the other two men-of-war which still remained afloat. About four o'clock in the afternoon the *Trenton* and *Olga* were seen to be dragging back. The *Olga*'s bowsprit and figure head were carried away, and the heavy timbers on the *Trenton*'s quarter were shattered. Several boats were torn from their davits, and the American flag which had floated from the *Trenton* was carried away, and fell to the deck of the *Olga*. Fortunately the vessels drifted apart after the collision, and the *Olga* steamed ahead towards the mud flats in the eastern part of the harbor. Captain Von Erhardt had determined to run her aground. The engines were worked to their fullest capacity, and it was only a moment before the *Olga*'s prow struck and the steamer lay imbedded