

home literature, for it includes some of the best books ever written; while the worth of our inspired books is inestimable.—Wm. O. Lee, in the Nineteenth Ward Y. M. M. I. Association Competitor.

THE APIA DISASTER.

Admiral Kimberly's official report to the Secretary of the Navy is dated Apia, March 19th. It says:

It becomes my painful duty to report to the department the disastrous injury and loss sustained by the vessels under my command in the harbor of Apia during the hurricane which swept these waters on March 15th and 16th. When the gale commenced there were in the harbor the following men-of-war: The United States ships *Trenton*, *Vandalia* and *Nipsic*; H. B. M. S. *Calliope*, and H. I. G. M. ships *Adler*, *Olga* and *Eber*, also a few merchant vessels and small craft. The *Nipsic* had the inner berth and the *Trenton*, the last one to arrive, the outer berth. Indications of bad weather appeared during the forenoon of Friday, March 15th, and at 1 o'clock I commenced preparations to meet the gale by sending down the lower yards and hoisting the topmasts. Fires were lighted and steam raised. By 3 o'clock the gale had developed. It blew hard during the evening, and about 8 p.m. we parted our port bow cable. During the night it blew with great violence, but with the aid of steam the vessel was kept in shape until morning. At daylight we had hoped for a moderation of the wind, but were disappointed. The gale set in with renewed fury, and early in the forenoon it was evident some of the inner ships were ashore and those nearer to us riding unceasingly. The flagship lost her wheel about this time. It was carried away with a crash and seriously injured some of the helmsmen. Relieving tackles and the spare tiller were applied promptly, but it was discovered the rudder was broken and was soon entirely useless. The wind by this time was blowing with hurricane force and the seas were very heavy. The ship had begun to make water during the early morning, and the hand pumps were manned and all the bilge pumps in the engine room put on. The water gained and threatened to put out the fires, the greater part of it seeming to come in through the hawse pipes, which are situated on the berth deck. Every effort was made to stop the flow of water at this point by jamming in bedding and by putting mouldings on the chains and by veering into the hawse pipes. It could be checked in this way, but not stopped, for the violence of the sea was so great that it would force everything opposed to it. All hands were set to bailing, and by nine o'clock the fires had been put out and the men were up from the fire room. The work on the hand pumps and with buckets continued from this time throughout the gale, with a

hope of being able to relight the fires and keep the ship afloat. A little before noon the *Calliope* was seen to be uneasy at her moorings and soon steamed toward us, having slipped her cables, and was making an effort to get out of the harbor. She came near colliding with us and the steamer in the face of the hurricane. In the afternoon, the wind having lulled a little, the flagship was more unsteady at her moorings and parted two chains soon after. We then drifted over toward the reef, escaping the wreck of a merchant vessel by the mere chance of her dragging as we approached her. We drifted until our stern was almost against her.

Destruction seemed imminent, as the vessel was within a few feet of the reef for a long while and pitching heavily. We drifted in this position along the reef for a considerable distance, until we came to where it turned more toward the eastward. Here we found smoother water, and our remaining anchor seemed to hold quite well for a time. This position, however, put us directly on the hawse of the *Olga*, which had one of the smoothest berths in the harbor at this time. She was riding well, and had control of her engines. Efforts were at once made to heave over the 8-inch Stiefel gun from the foremast to assist in holding, but it could not be done in time. We slowly drifted upon her and she avoided us twice by the skillful use of her helm and engines, but soon after cut into our quarters, first on one side and then on the other, carrying away boats, rigging and quarter galleys, but not essentially injuring our hull. During all this time the officers of the flagship made every effort to manage her by storm sails and putting men in the rigging, and we drifted by the portside of the *Olga* and across the western reef, dragging our anchor and toiling now on the western reef as we had done before. Some of the wrecked vessels were now in plain sight. The *Nipsic* was well ashore on a good bottom, with her stern to seas. The *Vandalia* sunk against the reef. The masts are standing and the tops of the rigging are filled with men. The mastheads of the *Eber* are now here to be seen. The *Adler* was on her side high on the reef. The *Olga* had turned for shore, and going ahead under steam and sail was beached on a good bottom and in a good position to the sea. All this time the gale was blowing with unabated fury. About 6 o'clock we were expecting to strike the reef momentarily. It was directly under our stern, but an eastern side undertow current seemed to carry us along the reef and kept us just clear of striking, thus we came to the *Vandalia* and it was evident our stern must soon strike her port side. As we approached her, rockets were fired carrying lines, with the hope of reaching the people on her masts. This proved very successful and the men from the main and mizzen masts were rescued first. Soon after we struck the *Vandalia* with violence and her main and mizzen masts went by the board. We then

swung gradually and settled into a position alongside her, just touching the bottom and our stern raising a small wreck on the reef. The men were rescued from the foremast of the *Vandalia*, and thence on during the night we continued to beat our bottom against the *Vandalia* with great force. The wind during this (Saturday) night blew with hurricane force, squall following squall with hardly an appreciable interval. The seas, however, were not so high as they were further out and we got through the night without additional serious misfortune. Just before daylight the flagship was visited by two boats manned entirely by natives, who carried lines to the shore. This was dangerous work, owing to the darkness and sea current, the wreckage and to the difficulty of approaching the *Trenton* on account of the *Vandalia*'s wreck. Men were kept at the pumps and buckets without cessation, with a view to hauling off the ship, if possible, and keeping her afloat when the gale abated. In the morning the wind moderated. I then ascertained that the propeller had settled hard on the bottom and the water could not be reduced, as it was up to the engine room platform and rising. Under these circumstances and in the absence of docking facilities or marine railway appliances and powerful pumps, an abandonment of the ship became necessary. The stores were gotten up as rapidly as possible, and the people got their effects ashore. Immediately thereafter the crew set to work getting out and saving everything possible.

On Monday the water was up to her gun deck, and she had settled a little on her port side. On Tuesday she had settled more to port and was still lower in the water. The vessel was completely submerged and only her foremast and head were showing above the water. The *Nipsic* was lying in about seven feet of water at low tide, with a rise and fall of four feet. She would probably have to be hauled astern some 500 feet to float her at high tide. She has lost her smokestack, also her rudder, and her propeller is badly damaged. Her crew remain on board and she keeps her bilges free of water by her steam pump. I have ordered a board to investigate at once the possibility of saving the *Nipsic* and further investigate and report upon all the circumstances connected with the loss and damage of our vessels by the gale. The report of the board will be forwarded by the first opportunity after its receipt by me. The crews of the *Vandalia* and *Trenton* are in harbor on shore. The *Calliope* steamed into the harbor this morning with signs of having experienced heavy weather. She goes to Sydney as soon as possible for repairs, and through the kindness of Captain Kane, her diving outfit has been turned over to us, and it will be of the greatest assistance in saving the stores. I commend his services to the department, and trust they will be regarded as worthy of recognition. Lieut. Wilson goes to Auckland to