

Miscellaneous.

THE EARTHQUAKE IN SOUTH AMERICA.

The central point of the recent great earthquake is said to be the sea-port town of Arica, a place of 30,000 inhabitants in the lower part of Peru; Long. 70° W., Lat. 18° S. From this point the shock seems to have been felt as far north as Quito, and as far south as the central portions of Chili, thus extending over nearly the whole western coast of the continent. The earthquake at Arica is thus described by an eyewitness of August 13th:

About 5 o'clock in the afternoon, in the most mountainous part of the country back of Arica, a sensation was experienced like the collision of two heavy masses. Three undulations of the earth followed this unseemly convulsion of nature, and each undulation was accompanied by a tidal wave—the second of greater lateral extent than the first, and the third greater than the second.

The hour was that when by custom most of the inhabitants had just closed their daily labors and were at their homes. The instant the startling indications of an earthquake were felt there was a general rush for uncovered spaces, which were reached by many uninjured; but not by all. The streets became a scene of terror. All the houses in the city trembled like a person affected with the ague. Then they surged, and some of them fell to pieces with crash after crash. At this juncture, when the undulations were active, the earth opened in several places in long and almost regular lines. The fissures were from one to three inches in width. The sensation was distinct as though something was rolling underneath. From every fissure there belched forth dry earth like dust, which was followed by a stifling gas. Owing to the demolition of buildings and the general destruction of all kinds of property, and the dust belched forth, as well as that set in motion by the general tumult, a dense cloud was formed over the city and obscured the light. Beneath the cloud was the gas, which severely oppressed every living creature, and would have suffocated all these if it had lingered longer stationary than it did, which was only about 90 seconds. The undulations were three in number. Each succeeding one was of greater magnitude than the former. When the undulations ceased, the cloud of dust ascended and dispersed, and light was restored. Then quakes at short intervals succeeded, as though subterranean explosions or collisions were taking place. At this time, people from all parts of the city fled to the hills, amid falling stones and timbers, which descended from swaying walls and broadly-ruled buildings, just on the eve of crumbling into perfect ruin. Some were struck down dead by the falling materials, and others were maimed, while all were made to stagger from side to side like people in a state of intoxication. Many of both sexes carried children in their arms, and those who had not these carried articles of value. The aversion of some was stronger than fear, even amid this terrible confusion, and hence there were those who dallied to collect valuables, many of whom suffered for their temerity, either by the sacrifice of their lives or otherwise. The water in the harbor was now receding from the shore, bearing with it all the shipping at a rapid speed. Then the current changed, and before an almost overhanging, tremendous wave, the vessels came back, tossed one way and then another, or whirled about as though they were only floating logs, and on the very summit of this immense volume of water rode the United States steamer Wateree. The huge wave dashed against the stone mole or pier, and shattered it all to pieces, then swept from its path what was standing of the Custom House, and almost every vestige of the ruins of other buildings. It rolled over the already destroyed houses of the city, and set a myriad of articles afloat, which added in every direction, while at the same time the vessels and floating materials were forced ahead of the wave's (at this time) curling and foaming summit. Everything which it encountered in its course was swept away in an instant. Even great masses of stone were rolled over and over. When the force of the wave was spent, it retired, and in a short time the equilibrium of the water was restored, and then it occupied about the same line, and presented nearly the same appearance as it did before the earthquake. The vessels carried inland were a terrible sight. The most of them were bottom up. Their masts had been snapped like sticks. All this dreadful picture the refugees on the hills were now beholding. The Wateree was a ground inland at a quarter of a mile from the beach, on the line of a railroad. As far as heard from only one life was lost on board. Near the Wateree, a Peruvian war vessel was also grounded, and so gently that none of its rigging nor any of its timbers were impaired. On board the Peruvian war-steamers America, which is a total wreck, 80 lives were reported to have been lost. The United States store-ship Fredonia was upset, and all her crew except three drowned, according to reports. Those who escaped were the captain, surgeon, and a paymaster, who were on shore when the earthquake occurred, and sought refuge on the hills. A British vessel, called the Chanarillo, lost many of her crew, who were tumbled overboard. A United States brig, name unknown, was foundered with all on board. The vessel, it is reported, was laden with guano. The rest of the shipping destroyed were South American coasters. The fatal casualties in the city were about 50, and the other casualties about 100. The total loss on shipboard was about 300, principally fatal. The refugees remained on the hills for two days, during which time they suffered greatly for food; and at the same time the quakes continued as before, at intervals. In time their sufferings became so intense that the men had to go to the city in search of food, a limited quantity of which they found in a damaged condition, and with this they sustained their families. The second morning after the earthquake, a light draught coasting vessel entered the harbor, but did not remain long at anchor. As soon as the captain became aware of what had happened, he took on board a number of people, and left with them for Callao; thence one of the parties got to Panama. The losses here are set down at \$12,000,000.

A curious circumstance occurred at this place, which is worthy of note. The atmosphere immediately after the first shock of earthquake was so charged with the electric fluid that in passing the hand through the hair or shaking one's clothes, sparks, as if from burning tow, would escape in great abundance. This phenomena lasted for some time and produced much alarm.

Northward, in Tacna, there were 64 different shocks, continuing to the 16th inst. The towns of Sama and Laomba are nearly destroyed. The earth opened in many places and vomited forth hot water. The valley of Ileta is desolated. At Cañeta at about 5 o'clock P. M., the shock was so severe as to cause the earth to roll from side to side, so that the bells of the churches were set in motion and chimed forth doleful peals; the houses rocked from side to side, the earth rose and fell, and all the motions of a steamer in rough weather was experienced. The port of Cerro Azul was destroyed by the inundation. The loss is estimated at \$500,000. At Yslay the first shock lasted seven or eight minutes. During the night forty minor shocks were felt, and the earth continued in motion up to the 17th. Shortly after the first shock the sea retired with a great velocity, and returned five times in succession, until an hour and a half later it rose to over forty feet above its usual level. Yslay is built on an eminence of about 100 feet above the level of the sea, and hence no damage was done to the town; but in the days all the boats and launches were destroyed. The beautiful city of Arequipa is completely destroyed—not a church has been left standing nor a house habitable. The houses being very solidly built, and only one story high, resisted for a few minutes, affording time for many of the inhabitants to get into the streets, so that the mortality, although great, is not so considerable as it might have been. But at least 2,000 persons perished. The convicts in the public prisons and the sick in the hospitals were all crushed to death. The shrieks of men, women and children frantic with fright, the crash of falling masonry, the upheaving of the earth, and the clouds of burning and suffocating dust, altogether constituted a scene which baffles description. The earth continued in motion for 18 hours, and slight shocks are still felt. The volcano is not in a state of eruption, and hence it is feared the danger is not yet over.

Chala, another sea-port, is a heap of ruins. The earthquake occurred here on the 16th, and the havoc continued 45 minutes. The steamship Santiago, which was in port, parted her cable, but rode the awful wave, fifty feet high, without loss, although it swept into the town one thousand feet, and caused a loss of \$80,000. The inhabitants saved themselves by running to the mountains. The town of Tambo is also washed away, and it is reported that over 500 persons perished. The towns of Tiobaja, Vitar, Molledo, and Mejia, and all the villages for over 150 miles around were completely destroyed. In the two latter places the materials for building the Arequipa Railroad were deposited, all of which were swept away. Mejillones (in Peru) has also been completely destroyed, so is Pisagua, Ilo, Junin, and Moquegua, in fact the whole coast south of Callao, as far as Iquique, is one mass of ruins.

South of Arica, the important City of Iniquique, in Peru, was destroyed. The shock was felt on the 13th at the same hour with Arica. The shock was tremendous, and shook to their foundations on the rock, the most solid buildings. Immediately on the passing of the principal shock, the sea raised, a wave to the height of thirty feet, completing the work of destruction begun by the earthquake. Nothing more appalling can be conceived than the double influence brought to complete a catastrophe, which has no parallel in the annals of this coast since the destruction of Callao in 1746. Not a mercantile establishment has escaped, nor does a vestige remain of the once opulent and handsome section of the town. The massive buildings belonging to the Nitrate Merchants, mostly constructed of stone and lime, have entirely disappeared, and not even the remains of their whereabouts exist. That section of the town known by the name of the Pantalla has been entirely destroyed, leaving nothing but the debris and wreck of innumerable houses; not even the place where any individual house once stood can be distinguished. The loss may be put down at over \$2,000,000. The establishment of the Tarapaca Nitrate Company, at Mollle (situated eight miles to the south), has entirely disappeared. Universal distress pervades every grade of society here; very many respectable merchants and other inhabitants have been totally ruined. The archives of all the consulates have been lost, the same has occurred in the judiciary and official departments, the Custom-House and its dependencies having been totally washed away.

In the far North, 1,500 miles north-east of Arica, as the crow flies, the oft-visited City of Quito, the Capital of Ecuador, the Niobe of the Western nations, was again nearly destroyed. Here the shocks, nine in number, were felt on the 16th, commencing at 1:20 A. M. All the churches, convents, and a large number of houses, are in a state of complete ruin. The undulation was from North to South. The people of the capital have all deserted their homes, and have fled to the open country for safety. The destruction extended in a greater or less degree over the whole northern part of the Republic. The loss of life is frightful; it is estimated that nearly 30,000 persons have perished, and many more have been maimed or crippled for life. The towns of Ibarra, Olavalo, San Antonio, and Pinicho, and numberless farms are wiped from the face of the earth. Of the town of Ibarra there remains nothing but shapeless ruins, and but one-sixth of the population survive. Of those who remain alive, the greater portion are maimed and injured for life. All the towns in the vicinity have likewise been destroyed. The shocks continued up to the latest accounts, being repeated nearly every hour.

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