

LYTTELTON.

On Saturday morning considerable consternation was caused in Lyttelton, by the strange appearance which the harbour presented. The water which even at low tide is at least six feet in depth at the point of the Government jetty, was observed by Mr Webb, about four o'clock, to have all disappeared. Half-an-hour afterwards a strange sound coming up the harbour attracted his attention, and thinking it was a steamer coming in, he ran in the direction of the wharf, and then discovered that the sound proceeded from a huge wave, fully twenty feet in height which was coming up the harbour with terrific force. It struck the vessels riding at the wharf, knocking them about violently, and doing considerably damage. It broke clean over the breakwater, and raised the water inside suddenly to six feet, bumping the *Jane* violently against the wharf. In the rebound she slewed off a considerable distance, fouling the *John Knox*, and carrying away the *Jane's* bowsprit. The force of the wave was so great that it sent adrift the p.o. *Novelty* and the schooner *Jeanie Duncan*, which were moored at the railway wharf. The latter had her bows stove in and bulwarks smashed. The ketch *Margaret*, which was close inshore at the Government wharf, suffered severely, losing her mainmast and bowsprit.

The huge wave almost immediately receded, leaving the barque *John Knox* high and dry at the end of the Government jetty. The barque was thrown on her beam ends, her yards resting on the wharf. At one time the bottom of the harbour was visible from the point of the breakwater across to the buoy moored in a southerly direction off the Government jetty. The water then returned, gradually rising and falling at intervals, but still increasing at each influx up to eleven o'clock.

About ten o'clock a roller of considerable size again came up the harbour, and again caught the *John Knox*, parting her warps and swinging her clean round. The range of the water on this occasion, from careful observations taken, was eighteen feet.

Many indications were visible of how violently the sea was agitated. The large buoy moored off Officers Point was carried into Dampier Bay, although the anchor holding it was four cwt. During the forenoon a man and his son coming up in a dingy, found the greatest difficulty in keeping clear of the rocks, owing to the force of the current. The schooner *Dove*, coming up the harbour about 10.30 under sail, was whirled along by its force at a terrific rate, far faster than she could sail under a very heavy breeze. The various vessels in the harbour lying at anchor had their heads slewed in all directions, indicating that the currents were not all flowing one way.

A large quantity of fish are reported as floating on the surface of the water, supposed to have been killed by the muddy water, and several dead ling were picked up.

Captain Gibson says he tried to take some observations in the fluctuations of the tide on Sunday, but was unable to do so owing to the irregularity of the influx and efflux; but the tide was ebbing and flowing to a greater or less extent all day. There was a slight wash on the town side of the harbor, caused by a S.W. breeze, which rendered any observations unreliable. The flood tide was higher than usual.

At the Lighthouse, on Sunday, the sea was in a very disturbed state, the water rushing about in whirlpools and eddies, and very muddy.

On Monday the sea ebbled and flowed twice in one tide. It should have been high water at a quarter past two, when there was sixteen feet of water at the Government wharf, and two hours after that time the tide stood at fifteen feet six inches. At high water springs there is about fifteen feet at Government wharf. The water is still much discoloured.