

Just as we were on the point of leaving, intelligence reached the port of an English vessel (of about 1600 tons) being in need of assistance. Instructions were given from the Consulate, and on the morning of March 23rd we steamed in search of the derelict. After a short time the vessel was discovered at anchor, taken in tow, and brought into harbour. It proved to be an iron ship, named the *Varuna*, of Liverpool. We learnt she left New York in January last, and through falling in with very stormy weather had lost her main and mizen masts, and nearly all her sails, before she was abandoned to her fate.

Eventually it appears she was boarded by another vessel, a prize-crew sent on board, who jury-rigged her, and thus she reached within 15 miles of St. Thomas, where we discovered her.

On the morning of March 24th, we left the anchorage under sail; with the light prevailing winds we made but little progress, and the next day sounded and dredged in shallow water (390 fathoms) off the north coast of Culebra Island (near St. Thomas). During the operation of heaving in the dredge a fatal accident occurred, by the parting of a rope span used for securing the iron leading block for the dredge-rope, which in its flight across the deck struck a seaman, named William Stokes, so severely on the head as to produce concussion of the brain, from which he died in a few hours.