

Brave Musicians of Ship Meet Fate Trying To Drown Cries of the Perishing Passengers

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New York, April 19.-Of all the heroes who went to their death when the Titanic dived to its ocean grave, none, in the opinion of Miss. Hilda Slater, a passenger in the last boat to pull off, deserved greater credit than the members of the vessel's orchestra. According to Miss. Slater, the orchestra played until the last. When the vessel took its final plunge the strains of a lively air, mingled gruesomely with the cries of those who realized that they were face to face with death.

"It was terrible," said Miss. Slater, who had come from her home in England to visit a brother, an architect in this city. "From the moment the vessel struck, or as soon as the members of the orchestra could be collected, there was a steady round of lively airs. It did much to keep up the spirits of everyone and probably served as much as the efforts of the officers trying to prevent panic."

When the ship struck the iceberg, Miss Slater went on deck. She was ordered to go back to bed, which she did on being assured there was no danger. A half-hour later she heard confusion on deck and heard someone cry, "Order everyone to don life belts."

After dressing again, Miss. Slater returned to the deck and was ordered to the boat deck aloft.

"When I got there," she said, "I found an indescribable scene. A number of the steerage men passengers had attempted to seize one of the boats and there was a brisk revolver fire: many men fell under it. The prompt, and drastic action of the officers restored order."

"There were many touching scenes as the boats put off. I saw Col. John Jacob Astor hand his young wife into a boat tenderly and then asked an officer whether he might also go. When permission was refused he stepped back and coolly took out his cigarette case. "Good-bye, dearie" he called gaily, as he lighted a cigarette and leaned over the rail. "I'll join you later." Another man, a Frenchman, I think, approached one of the boats about to be lowered. He had with him two little boys. An officer waved him back sternly. "Bless you" he said "I don't want to go, but for God's sake take the boys. Their mother is waiting for them in New York." The boys were taken aboard."

Miss. Slater dwelt at length on the large percentage of the crew saved. On the boat that carried her away from the sinking ship were nine other women and more than 40 men stokers.

Courtesy of Julie Downen

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