

## Edward Dorking, Ship Wreck Survivor, Appears at Star Theatre

### ***Bureau County Republican***

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PICKED UP BY THE CARPATHIA

Young Englishman Relates Experiences in Greatest Maritime disaster in World's History.

Seven hundred persons, who packed the Star theatre to its capacity at three performances Tuesday night, heard the tragic story of the Titanic disaster from the lips of Edward Dorking, an English working lad, who was one of the 600 survivors picked up from the wreck by the steamer Carpathia. Still suffering from a severe cold brought on by exposure and a ducking in the frigid waters of the North Atlantic, the youth, who is scarcely nineteen years of age, gave a simple recital of his experiences on board the ill-fated vessel, the wreck of which resulted in the greatest loss of life in the world's history of maritime catastrophes. In the telling he avoided many of the horrible details which have been deeply impressed upon his memory as a distressing nightmare. The crowds, eager to learn at first hand all the information possible about the sinking of the great vessel, plied the young survivor with questions, at the conclusion of his talk, and he answered them all promptly and courteously. He spoke with a broad English accent, which to many of his hearers was difficult to understand, but the important facts were made plain and all who went to hear and see him, left the theatre with a feeling of satisfaction.

### Stevens Enterprising

Mr. Dorking was born at Liss, Hampshire, England, where he has a father and mother and several brothers and sisters. He sailed from Southampton aboard the Titanic on the 10th of April to come to America to seek his fortune. Having an uncle, Fred Cooke, residing at Oglesby, a cement manufacturing town about five miles south of LaSalle, he was expecting to come to Oglesby and make his home with his uncle. When the news of the ship disaster was flashed over the world, the relatives of the young man here and in England gave him up for lost, but after several days elapsed they received word that he had been saved and was ill in a New York hospital. W.O. Stevens, manager of the Star theatre, hearing of the expected arrival of Dorking, wrote at once to Mr. Cooke, the young man's uncle and offered him an engagement at the Princeton theatre. The offer was received before Dorking landed and as soon as it was presented to him Saturday, he accepted. His appearance at the Star show-house Tuesday night was his first stage experience, but since then a number of offers have been made to him and he will be kept busy for several weeks in play-houses throughout Illinois. The lecture of the Titanic survivor Tuesday night, was illustrated with views of the wrecked steamer, made by the Dunham studio, from magazine pictures.

### Titanic a Miniature City

Describing the size of the Titanic, Mr. Dorking likened it to a small city in which all sorts of amusements were provided for the passengers. Being a poor boy possessed of only the necessary passage money and enough property to get by the immigration officers, he came over in the third cabin. He had difficulty getting aboard, he said, because the medical inspectors thought he was diseased on account of the blood-shot condition of his eyes resulting from an all-night ride from his home to Southampton to catch the boat. He managed to slip in when the baggage was being loaded and remained out of sight until the

boat started. "When our boat left the dock, there were thousands of people at the pier," he said, "all of them waving good-bye and wishing the Titanic Godspeed on its first voyage. In all that crowd on the pier and on board, there was not one, I believe, who had any premonition of the fate the proud ship was to meet in its race across the Atlantic. Not even the near-collision with the New York, which was sucked from its moorings and swung across the path of the Titanic, as the immense propellers of the liner began to churn the waters, produced any uneasiness on board, there being perfect confidence that such a boat as the Titanic could not sink under any circumstances. "During the first days out of Southampton we had a delightful voyage. Everything worked smoothly and we were covering the miles at a record pace the weather was fair and a great deal of the time was spent on deck by the passengers. Some found pleasure in the music room, playing cards and various indoor sports.

#### Strike Berg at Midnight

"It was at ten minutes to midnight on the 14th that we struck the iceberg. I was in the music room playing cards with several companions. When the boat collided with the berg, we were thrown from the bench on which we were sitting. The shock was accompanied by a grinding noise, which we took to be the result of an accident to the machinery that suddenly halted the ship. "I went on deck to see what had happened and saw several persons running to the forward part of the ship. I followed and found that the port side was strewn with particles of ice. Someone said we had struck an iceberg and that a huge hole had been torn in the port side below the waterline. "I obtained a good glimpse of the iceberg as it floated by. It was off some distance then, but in the clear night, I could see it rising out of the water like a great white spectre, towering above the funnels of the ship. To me it seemed that the iceberg was at least four or five times as large as the Titanic.

#### Foreigners Get Excited

"At that time there was no sign of panic. The passengers and crew seemed to feel assured that the collision was not serious and that there was no grave danger to the ship. I returned to the music room and resumed our card game. After a while some of the foreigners in the steerage became excited and the women began to weep and before long there was a stream of them pouring out of the steerage dragging their luggage with them. They were driven out by the water which was rushing into the hold in a huge stream, in spite of the pumps which were working furiously. In a little while longer, the nose of the boat began to dip forward. As the ship began to list the excitement of the lower decks increased and there was a scramble for the life boats. Men and women, stricken with fright, huddled around the crew, shouting and crying and sending up prayers to heaven for aid. I was on deck when the first boat was lowered away. It contained but fifteen or sixteen persons. The next boat had thirty or forty and the rest were loaded to their full capacity, which is fifty-five or sixty. The women and children were taken off first. An officer stood beside the life-boats as they were being manned and with a pistol in hand, threatened to kill the first man who got into a boat without orders.

#### Escape in Women's Clothes

"The rule of 'women first' was rigidly enforced. Two stewards hustled into a lifeboat that was being launched. They were commanded to get out by the officers and on refusing to obey the command, were shot down and thrown into the sea. A Chinaman was also shot for the same cause. Afterwards, aboard the Carpathia, I saw six Chinamen who had escaped in the life-boats, disguised as women. "There were about sixteen life-boats lowered away, that being all that were on board the Titanic. As the last boat has to[?departed] I turned to go below to get my life-belt, which was under my bunk. As I passed the engine room, I saw Captain Smith, standing in the doorway, giving orders to the crew. The perspiration was pouring down his face in streams, but he was calm and collected, and as I recollect him now, he appeared like a marble statue after a rain. "I never reached the life-preserver. The water by that time was above my bunk and I had to retreat on deck. All the time the foreward part of the boat, where the side had

been jammed by the iceberg, was dropping lower and lower into the water, until it became necessary for those remaining on board to grasp something stationary to keep erect.

#### Jumps from the Ship

"How long it was after the last boat left the ship until the Titanic went down, I have no distinct recollection. It seemed like an age to me. As I clung to the ship rail, turning the situation over in my mind, I finally concluded that I would take a chance of jumping into the water and risk being picked up by some of the boats. It seemed certain doom to remain. I sat down on the deck and removing my shoes and outer garments, I plunged over the rail and shot into the water forty feet below. "As I struck the chilly water, I received a shock that took my breath away, but as soon as I rose to the surface, I struck out from the ship, with no idea in mind except to get beyond the suction line when the Titanic should go down. I was perhaps twenty yards off when the grand big liner, suddenly tipped up on its nose, the rear end lifted out of the water exposing the propeller blades, and slid gently forward to its watery grave. The sinking of the ship caused scarcely a ripple on the ocean's surface.

#### Fight for Life in Water

"It seemed to me that a half hour elapsed from the time I left the ship until an upturned life-boat with about thirty men and one woman on it, passed the spot where I was swimming. There were many others in the same predicament as myself and it was a constant fight to prevent those whose strength was almost spent from grasping me about the neck or by the limbs in a desperate effort to keep from drowning. "I was fortunate enough to grasp the side of the upturned life-boat as it floated past me. I clung on with both hands, at the same time warding off two men who had given up their hold on the life-boat and had grasped me by the legs. When my strength was about giving out, the men on the raft gave me assistance and dragged me over the side to a place of safety. "We drifted about during the remainder of the night, suffering intensely from cold and exposure. Three of our number died and were thrown overboard and two others slipped off and failed to get back again.

#### Picked up at Daybreak

"It was just about daybreak that our sinking spirits were cheered by the sight of a rocket, which announced that succor was near. An hour later, as the morning light was dawning, we were picked up by a rescue-boat. I guess I must have become unconscious then, for when I woke up, my companions were feebly cheering at sight of the Carpathia, standing off about a mile distant.

#### Tells of Warnings

"One of my companions at the hospital was a lookout, who had been saved from the Titanic. He told me that before the ship struck the iceberg, he had been warning three times of the impending danger. The first time, he said, no attention was paid to the warning, the second time, the result was the same, and the third warning came too late." Mr. Dorking was discharged from the hospital last Wednesday and came direct to LaSalle by way of Chicago, arriving at the home of his uncle on Saturday. He was given a complete outfit of clothing and twenty-five dollars to pay his transportation to LaSalle. Mr. Dorking says that when he went to purchase his ticket in New York, he discovered that twenty dollars of the money had been stolen from him. Through the generosity of New Yorkers, he was enabled to reach his destination.

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