

## NO ALARM FELT WHEN STEAMER FIRST STRUCK

by MISS CAROLINE BONNELL

### *Washington Times*

Friday 19 April 1912

Passengers Came on Deck to Get View of Big Berg

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TERRIBLE SUFFERING IN THE LIFEBOATS

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Carpathia Gave Tenderest Care To the Rescued---Four Buried At Sea

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BY MISS CAROLINE BONNELL

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NEW YORK, April 19---"Well, thank goodness, Nathalie, we are going to see our iceberg at last."

That---that single, foolish little sentence---was the one thing, of all things, that I said to my cousin as the great, beautiful Titanic was shivering beneath her death blow.

And yet it was the most natural remark in the world for me to make that Sunday midnight at the very minute when the hand of death began pulling down its terrible cargo of souls. For though, the world has not come to realize it, that was a hidden hand---a hand so hidden that none of us suspected, for an instant, how strong and how cruel it was until less than two hours afterward, it gave a quick, final jerk, and the titan of vessel sank beneath the swells.

### Blow Is Terrific

My cousin, Nathalie Wick, and I, were lying in our berths half asleep when the blow came. It was terrific. For a second the whole boat just stood stock still in its swift tracks and then it gave a great shiver all through.

After that, everything was death quiet for a minute.

Then---

"Oh, she's hit an iceberg," came ringing through the window in a woman's shrill voice.

For ten minutes after the blow, Nathalie and I lay in bed and discussed whether are not we would get up to view the berg. Nathalie was pretty sleepy, but I had been up to fill a hot-water bottle, and was wide awake enough for anything. Finally we decided to "go up" as we had been wanting to see an iceberg all the way over, but had been told that it was probably too late in the season.

### Went On Deck

We just slipped on our shoes and stockings and put on some heavy outside wraps and went up. When we got out onto the deck everything was as calm as an August afternoon. The sea was as smooth as glass; there was not a berg nor an ice floe in sight, and the sky was just thick with stars. I never saw so

many stars in the heavens in my life as there were that night. The water itself was glittered blue with their glow.

We had just decided to go back to bed when an officer came up to us and to another group of people who had gotten up to find out what was the matter.

"Go below and put on your life belts," he said. "You may need them later."

We went down at once and told my aunt and uncle, Mr. and Mrs. George Wick, what we had been told. Uncle George just laughed at us. "Why, that's nonsense, girls," he said. "This boat is all right. She's going along finely. She just got a glancing blow, I guess."

That's the way every one seemed to think, and we went into our state room, but in a minute or so an officer knocked at the door and told us to go up on the "A" deck. He said there was really no danger, and that it was just a precautionary measure. We got a few clothes on and went up. I picked up my eyeglasses in my excitement and left my watch lying on the dresser, Nathalie hung her watch around her neck. We both wore two or three coats; it was so cold outside.

When we got on deck uncle and aunt were there and I went down again to another part of the steamer and got my Aunt Elizabeth. When I got back with her, there were crowds of people standing all around. No one seemed very excited, every one was talking and it seemed to be the general idea that we would soon be ordered back to bed.

Just then an officer came up to us and said we should go up to the next deck---the boat deck. By that time nearly every one was up. Mrs. John Jacob Astor was there; sitting in a steamer chair. Her husband, Colonel Astor, was beside her and her maid was helping her to finish dressing.

There was no confusion here even then, although we noticed that the boat was beginning to list to the starboard considerably. The men who had been in the smoking room at the time the ship struck said that they had seen the berg as it passed and that most of it was under water. Whatever damage was done the vessel was done beneath the water line, we knew, for above she was in perfect condition. She had hit the berg alongside, we found out, and not in front.

#### Told to Get Ready

After we had been on the top deck for a while, considerably more than an hour, I should say, the women were told to stand in a group by themselves and to be ready to get into the lifeboats. The men drew back and the women stood at the railing.

This was the condition which prevailed on our side of the boat. On the other side the men and women were not told to separate, and that accounts for the men who were saved. Mr. Ismay, director of the line, was on that side of the boat, and so, of course, got in one of the lifeboats with the other men.

There was very little discipline. In fact, there was practically none. People had to be begged to get into the lifeboats. No one thought the Titanic was going to sink, and passengers did not feel like trusting themselves to tiny open rowboats when they were aboard the biggest liner in the world. At least, they so argued with the officers.

As soon as the men withdrew, the women were told to get into the lifeboats. Most of them that did so were urged to it by their men relatives, the officers taking little part in it. We never once saw the captain.

The boat we were in was the second to let down over the side, but the first to strike the water. In it,

though it would have held more, were but twenty women, two sailors, and a steward. The latter were to do the rowing. As we took to the oars the officer shouted to us to row over to a distant light and to land there, sending the boat back for others.

We watched the other boats being lowered as we got under way. And then, in a few minutes, we noticed that the Titanic began to list more heavily. After a while, when we were considerable distance away, a whole deck of lights, the lowest deck, was suddenly snuffed out. At the same time the mast lights dropped a little farther down in the star-pointed sky.

After this the tragedy moved with a relentless swiftness. Deck by deck we watched the lights go out, as the boat dropped lower and lower into the sea. At last but four rows of lights were left. Then the water reached the port holes, and as it rushed in here, there was one great explosion, and another, and then the ship left the horizon unbroken. And those that were in the lifeboats which were close to the vessel say that the orchestra played till the very last, and that the men went down into the sea singing "Nearer, My God, To Thee."

### Started to Row

As soon as the ship sank we started to row in good and earnest. All night long we made those three men keep to the oars. They wanted to stop, but we told them we had been told to get to that light, and that we were going to do so, but the light never seemed to come nearer. As the dawn crept out over the silent, cold sea the light seemed only a very little larger than it had when we started for it.

In the lifeboats it was terrible. Some of the women had scarcely any clothes on at all, and they suffered greatly with the cold. One woman had white satin slippers and an evening dress on. I don't know whether she had that attire on when we struck or whether in her excitement she put it on by mistake.

We were provided with the most miserable little oil lamp I have ever seen. I guess it didn't have any kerosene in it, for it kept going out as fast as we could light it with the matches which the steward happened to bring along. We couldn't have seen at all nor signaled had it not been for the fact that one woman had a cane that had a little electric light in the end of it.

As far as I know there was no food nor water in the craft, but I will not complain of that, for we were the luckiest, I guess, of all the survivors. The other boats all leaked, and the women told us afterward that the water was up to their knees. And that water was below freezing point.

For nearly eight hours, these sixteen boat loads of hysterical, cold, wet, hungry women and men were at the mercy of the elements. During the darkness it was bad enough, but the dawn brought a fresh danger. It disclosed the fact that we were beset by vast fields of ice and icebergs. Those looming mountains of glassy ice were everywhere. We were almost afraid to move and to add to our distress a stiff breeze was springing up, churning the sea into a nasty choppiness. Still we kept on rowing toward the light. The men were exhausted so we women took a hand. But those oars---they were the heaviest ones I have ever seen. I am a good oarswoman, but with the [sic] aid of another woman, I could scarcely swing one of them. There were three sets of them and they all had to be used to make any progress.

Toward 6 o'clock we gave up hope of ever reaching that light. It had got a trifle larger, it seemed, but it was absolutely no nearer and we had no food, very little clothing, no heat and nearly every life-boat was shipping water to an alarming extent.

And on top of all that these women didn't know whether they were ever to see their husbands and their sons again in this world or not. It was terrible and to say that they were most wonderful women to keep their minds in the balance is putting it too mildly by far.

And then somebody looked back, and there---there was a big searchlight burning on the prow of a great liner. That light was the most beautiful sight I shall ever see. Distress was turned to hope as we put directly about and rowed hard for an hour toward the vessel. At the end of that time we were alongside of the Carpathia. It wasn't long before they let down a little wooden seat about two feet long and a foot wide. Men on the deck held the ends of the cables to which this seat was attached. The lifeboat was bobbing up and down on the waves and it was pretty hard to stand up in it long enough to climb out to the seat, but you can wager we all did it.

As soon as we got on deck, we were rolled in blankets and given brandy and water. And nothing have I ever tasted was quite so good as that brandy and water.

By 10 o'clock the Carpathia had picked up all the sixteen lifeboats containing the survivors. In addition to the people who had got into the lifeboats in the first place there were several others in them. These men had been picked up as they were swimming. They were very weakened from the exposure, and four of them died on the Carpathia.

These men were W. H. White and Abraham Hornner, passengers, and S. C. Sievert, steward, and T. Lyons, sailor. They were wrapped in the Stars and Stripes and buried off the Carpathia Monday, returning to the sea from which they had been so vainly rescued.

After we had picked up all the lifeboats we steamed again about the scene of the disaster. In among the glassy, towering peaks of ice we threaded our way, seeing a bit of wreckage here and a baby's bonnet or a man's glove there. But no more boats, and at noon we turned toward Ambrose lightship---and home.

Aboard the Carpathia everything was confusion. Women were torn with grief, the worst kind of grief---the grief of uncertainty.

"Oh, if I only knew whether my husband has been saved or not," was the all-night cry of more than one sorrow-stricken wife. Often times they fell upon their knees and prayed for the safe recovery of their loved ones. And it was only the hope that they would finally find them here on land when they arrived that kept most of the women as sane as they are.

What they will do, now that they know that as they themselves watched the Titanic's life being blotted out, they watched also the life of their own loved ones being snuffed out by the same hard sea.

#### Got Every Concession

The distress of the Titanic survivors obtained for them every concession from the passengers of the Carpathia. Women and men alike gave up their staterooms to us and slept on the floors of the library and smoking room. Mrs. John Jacob Astor was given one of the best rooms in the cabin, and she never emerged from it during the trip. It is said she was very ill from grief and exposure.

Everyone on the Carpathia was kindness itself. Captain Rostron, the surgeon, the stewards, everyone could not do enough for us.

The final shock was given us all Thursday night, as we came up the bay. It was then that we learned how very near we all came to not being rescued at all.

The wireless operator on the Carpathia, Harold Bride, [sic] told us during the evening that he had closed his instruments Sunday night and had started to go to bed when something came over him, telling him to

open it up again. The minute he did, he gathered in the cry for help with which the Titanic was rending the air, and of course the Carpathia began her rush to our side. And she made that sixty intervening miles, her captain told me with his own lips, in faster time than she made on her speed breaking voyage, through ice fields, too.

"And it is a great wonder to me," Captain Rostron said, "that we ourselves didn't split on one of them---those most treacherous, most deadly enemies of those who go down to the sea in ships."

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