

ON BOARD THE CARPATHIA

The Times

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HOW THE PASSENGERS WERE RECEIVED

A passenger on board the *Carpathia* made the following statement:- I was awakened at 12.30 in the morning by a commotion on the decks which seemed unusual. There was no excitement, however, as the ship was still moving. I paid but little attention to the disturbance and went to sleep again. About 3 o'clock, I was again awakened and I noticed that the *Carpathia* had stopped. I went up on to the deck and found that our vessel had changed her course. The lifeboats had been sighted and began to arrive one by one. There were 16 of them in all.

The transfer of the passengers was soon being carried out. It was a pitiable sight. Ropes were tied round the waists of the adults to help them in climbing up the rope ladders. The little children and babies were hoisted on to our deck in bags. Some of the boats were crowded, but a few were not half full. This I could not understand. Some of the people were in evening dress, while others were in their night clothes or wrapped in blankets. They were all hurried into the saloon at once for hot breakfast, of which they were in great need, as they had been in open boats for four or five hours in the most biting air I have ever experienced.

There were husbands without their wives, wives without their husbands, parents without their children, and children without their parents, but there was no demonstration and not a sob was heard. They spoke scarcely a word and seemed to be stunned by the shock of their experiences. One of the women and three of the others taken from the lifeboats died soon after reaching our deck and their bodies were lowered into the sea at 5 o'clock in the afternoon. The rescued had no clothing other than that they were wearing and a relief committee was formed; our passengers contributing enough to meet their immediate needs.

The survivors were so close to the sinking steamer that they feared that the lifeboats would be sucked down into the vortex. On our way back to New York we steamed along the edge of the ice-field which stretched as far as the eye could see. To the north there was no blue water to be seen at all. At one time I counted 13 icebergs.

One of the *Carpathia's* stewards in an account of how the first boatload of passengers was rescued said:- Just as it was about half day we came upon a boat with 18 men in it but no women. It was not more than a third filled. All the men were able to climb up a Jacob's ladder which we threw over the port side. Between 8.15 and 8.30 we got the last two boats, crowded to the gunwales, almost all the occupants of which were women. After we had got the last load on board the *Californian* came alongside. The captains announced that we should make straight for New York, while the *Californian* looked around for more boats. We circled round and round and saw all kinds of wreckage. While we were pulling in the boatloads the women were quiet enough, but, when it seemed sure that we should not find any more persons alive, then bedlam came. I hope never to go through it again. The way those women took on for the folk they had lost was awful. We could not do anything to quiet them until they cried themselves out.

The refusal of the operators on board the *Californian* to answer questions concerning the disaster is now explained. It was due to the physical exhaustion of both the men. They sent a large number of personal messages

from survivors to friends ashore and received replies from the latter. This work was deemed to be more important than the answering of questions from the shore.

John Kuhl, of Nebraska, said:- It was almost 4 o'clock in the morning, dawn was just breaking, when the *Carpathia's* passengers were awakened by the excitement occasioned by coming upon a fleet of life-saving boats. At that hour the whole sea was one mass of whitened ice. The work of getting the passengers over the side of the *Carpathia* was attended by the most heart-rending scenes. The babies were crying. Many of the women were hysterical, while the men were stolid and speechless. Some of the women were barefooted and without any headgear. The impression of those saved was that the ship had run across the projecting shelf of the iceberg, which was probably buried in the water, and that the entire bottom of the ship had been torn off. Shortly afterwards, she doubled up in the middle and went down. Most of the passengers did not believe that the boat was going to sink. According to their stories, it was fully half an hour before a lifeboat was launched from the vessel. In fact, some of the passengers keenly questioned the wisdom of Captain Smith's orders that they should leave the big ship.

Dr J. F. Kemp, the *Carpathia's* physician, says that their wireless operator happened by chance to have delayed turning in Sunday night for ten minutes. Thus it was that he was at his post and got the *Titanic's* call for help. Had he gone to rest as usual there would have been no survivors. Dr Kemp describes the iceberg which sank the *Titanic* as being 400 ft long and 90 ft high. The *Carpathia*

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