

THE RESCUED : BY AN EYE-WITNESS ON THE CARPATHIA

Outlook

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The Cunard steamship Carpathia was on its way from New York to Europe when it was arrested in its course by the wireless calls for help from the Titanic. The story of how it abandoned its trip and returned at full speed to rescue the survivors from the Titanic is now known to the world. One of the passengers on the Carpathia bound for London was Dr. Stanton Coit. A graduate of Amherst College in the class of 1879, he pursued his studies in philosophy at Columbia University in New York, and at the University of Berlin in Germany. He was one of the first head workers in the New York University Settlement, but has for many years lived in England, engaged in ethical and settlement work. He is now President of the West London Ethical Society, and is the author of several well-known books on ethical and humanitarian subjects. Before he resailed for Europe on the Carpathia at four o'clock on last Friday afternoon Dr. Coit wrote for The Outlook the following statement of the profound impression which he had received from a personal association of four days with the survivors of the tragedy. It is, as he says, an impression, but those who read it will, we are sure, agree with us that it conveys the most important lesson which this tragedy has for the world, the lesson that the divine element in human nature is capable of rising, and does rise, superior to the most fearful shock of material things --THE EDITORS

At 5:30 Monday morning last our bedroom steward reported that the ship had stopped to rescue the passengers from the Titanic, which had sunk the night before. I hurried on deck, saw great icebergs about, and looking over the railing, saw some fifteen rowboats approaching us, full chiefly of women. These were drawn up on board and passed us by, most of them so stiff with cold and wet that they could not walk without being supported. Soon the tragic news spread among us that some fifteen hundred people had been drowned, and for the most part only women had been saved. My first and lasting impression was the inward calm and self poise--not self-control, for there was no effort or self-consciousness--on the part of those who had been saved. I said to one woman, whose dress, but not her face, betrayed that she was one of those who had undergone tragic experiences: "You were on the Titanic?" She answered, "Yes, and I saw my husband go down." The only hysteria displayed was after the physicians had administered brandy to the half-frozen sufferers. The people struck me not as being stunned and crushed, but as lifted into an atmosphere of vision where self-centered suffering merges into some mystic meaning. Every one reported a magnificent self-possession of the husbands when parted from their wives. Many related the cases of women who had to be forced from their husbands. Touching beyond words was the gratitude toward those of us who gave clothes and our staterooms. More magnificent was the calm of the clear dawn was the unconsciousness of any personal horror, or need to pity, on the part of those who related how they had met their fate. One youth of seventeen told, as if it had been an incident of every-day life, that he was hurled from the deck and that as he found himself sinking he took a deep breath. When he came up and found that he was again to be drawn under, he thought it would be well again to breathe deep. Upon rising the second time, he said, he saw the upturned bottom of a canvas boat. To this he clung until he was rescued. One woman in one boat insisted that they should row back and rescue eight men clinging to wreckage, although the oarsmen feared the suction of the great steamer might endanger their lives and the eight were thus rescued. My feeling is that in the midst of all this horror human nature never manifested itself as greater or tenderer. We were all one, not only with one another, but with the cosmic being that for all time had seemed so cruel. On board the Carpathia

there was much discussion as to the possible culpability of the captain of the Titanic, but there was no judgement offered, and the feeling, I believe, grew upon us that only wrongs were the insufficient number of lifeboats and the full speed of the Titanic, and that even this great sacrifice of innocent life and happiness would have been counted by each sufferer worth making if it would help to put an end in the future to the sacrifice to commercial interests of the infinitely precious life of those we love. But I return again to what I say was my first and abiding impression--the self-poise that is so because the human soul is not self-centered. One young woman with whom I talked was so calm and full of stories of the heroism and the suffering of others that I said: "How fortunate that you lost no friend!" Then for the first time her face change, and, with tears streaming down her cheeks, she said: "My brother, who was my only living relative, went down before my eyes. He scorned to disobey the discipline, so now I am alone." My faith in the deeper meaning of things has been greatly strengthened by this wonderful experience

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