

# HESTER GIRL, ONE OF LAST TO LEAVE SHIP

## Miss Lillian Bentham, of Rochester, One of Last to Leave Doomed Ship, Tells Thrilling Story of Experience

NEW YORK, April 19.—One of the most thrilling stories of survivors was that told by Miss Lillian Bentham, of 11 Kay Terrace, Rochester, who was one of the last to leave the sinking ship, Miss Bentham said:

### Was Retiring.

"I was just retiring when the ship struck the iceberg," she said, "and the shock threw me from the side of the bed clear across the stateroom. My companion in the stateroom was an old lady. She was in bed, too, and was thrown out. I heard someone run by the door and I opened it to ask what had happened. It was one of the boys of the steward's force, and he answered:

"We struck a fishing boat. It's nothing serious. We knocked it all to pieces. You can go back to bed."

### Not Seriously Alarmed.

"A minute or two later I heard someone say that we had struck an iceberg and that the big thing could be seen for five minutes after the ship had passed it. My roommate dressed and went out to see if she could see the iceberg, but I lay down again and went to sleep. I don't know how long I slept. Probably it was half an hour, though it may have been less. Then I was awakened by more noises outside the door, and heard men and women running and shouting. I heard some words about 'life boats' and I got up and dressed and went on deck.

### Scenes on Deck.

"When I got on deck, the scene was an awful one. I shall never forget it as long as I live. I can see it now, and cannot forget it, and what came afterward, out of my mind.

"The women and children were crowded together on both sides of the ship and were being put over the sides into the lifeboats. There were some men among them, mostly helping the women along, bidding them a good-bye and cheering them up. The rest of the men were crowded together, some kneeling down and praying, others standing like statues.

### Officers With Pistols.

"The ship's officers and some men of the crew had pistols in their hands and ordered the men to stand back and let the women and children go first.

"Some men, mostly foreigners, I think, tried to jump over the sides into the boats. Every time any one did, this he was shot. I think that as many as a dozen were shot, maybe more.

water trying to keep afloat by life preservers and bits of wreckage. The water was icy, cold and they suffered terribly. They swam up to the boats and begged to be taken in. Some of them only cried and prayed, while others seized hold of the boats and tried to climb in.

### Picking People from Water.

"Every boat took in all that it could carry. Our boat picked up over forty. All the boats took all the women they could find, and some took in a few men. But only a small part of those that were in the water could be taken in. The ship's man who was in our boat had to knock several men over the head with an oar to keep them from climbing on and sinking the boat. The same thing was done in the other boats. A great many were killed in the water in this way. It was a cruel sight, one that won't go out of my eyes. I have dreamed it all over again every night since it happened.

### Calm Night.

"It was a calm, still night, with stars bright overhead. How there could have been a collision, I don't know, for you could see everything plain enough, I thought, but it was very fortunate that it was so still. If it hadn't been, our boats would not have been able to pick up many of the swimmers, and the boats would have been scattered or sunk. Our boat was one of the five that were tied together under the order of the ship's man who was in command. This was to make a larger showing on the water, so that we could be seen by a passing vessel.

### Morning and No Ship in Sight.

"When morning came, and we could see no ship, we felt very much discouraged, for we thought help would surely come. But in a little while we saw the steamer's smoke, and then after what seemed to be a long time, the Carpathia came near, and took us up. They treated us like hospital patients on board the Carpathia, giving up their rooms to us, giving us hot drinks, brandy and such food as we could stand after being rubbed down thoroughly. Many of the survivors were in a shattered condition and some died on their way in.

### Say Captain Was Responsible.

"Everyone blamed the captain for the accident. He was trying to break the record for speed. From Saturday noon until Sunday noon the ship had made 546 miles. Before the accident I heard him say to one of the men,

collected, there was a steady round of lively airs.

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." Running on deck after dressing again, Miss Slater 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 Colonel John Jacob Astor hand his young wife into a boat tenderly and then ask 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 beautiful little boys. '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."

## STORIES TOLD BY STEERAGE PASSENGERS

NEW YORK, April 19.—Several steerage passengers told stories of incidents of the wreck.

Miss Ellen Shine, aged 20, of Ireland, said:

### Four Men Shot by Officer.

"Those who were able to get out of bed rushed to the upper decks where they were met by the members of the crew who endeavored to keep them in the steerage quarters. The women, however, rushed by these men, knocking them down and finally reached the upper deck. When informed that the boat was sinking most of them fell to their knees and began to pray.

"I saw one of the lifeboats and made for it. In it were four men from the steerage. They were ordered out by an officer and refused to leave. Then one of the officers jumped into the boat and dragged them out."

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