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## THE WRECK OF THE TITANIC.

THE greatest marine disaster on record occurred when the White Star steamer Titanic went down with about sixteen hundred and thirteen souls on board at 2.20 a.m. on Monday. The suddenness, no less than the extent of the disaster came as a paralyzing shock to the whole civilized world. Of the 2,318 passengers and crew only seven hundred and five were saved, and among the lost were many who have played great and valuable parts in the drama of human life in Great Britain, the United States and Canada. Montreal's loss is very great, and the keenest sympathy is expressed on every hand for the families bereaved. It is part of the cant of the day to say that no man is indispensable, but this is one of those misleading truisms which carry little consolation to the day and generation bereft. Take, for instance, the case of Mr. Hays, a man who has performed and was still performing a gigantic work, not only for the Grand Trunk and Grand Trunk Pacific shareholders, but for all Canada. Never was a greater work undertaken and absolutely controlled by a one-man power.

If it were possible to imagine anything wanting to add to the horror of the event itself, it has been abundantly supplied by some of the gentlemen of the New York press. With ghoulish "enterprise" they have inflicted tortures upon and provoked the fierce resentment of thousands to whom they have served up their false news and their deliberately "faked" dispatches. They have alternated reports of the Titanic being towed into Halifax, while all the passengers were safely on board other ships, with graphic descriptions of scenes of horror on the deck of the sinking steamer during her last moments above the waves—scenes as unlike the actual reality could possibly have been, and descriptions which certainly never could have been sent ashore from anywhere. A tissue of rubbish as imaginary as the officially confirmed pathetic details of the dying moments of His Holiness the Pope, published as yellow journalism's tribute of sympathy with the faithful.

Now they have taken a fresh bent, and the papers which would have slopped over with admiration and congratulation if the Titanic had arrived at her wharf safely, are now savagely denouncing everybody connected with the steamer and proudly demonstrating their own profound ignorance of naval construction and navigation.

According to them safety was sacrificed wholly to luxury. There were not enough compartments; there were too many compartments; the bulkheads were not strong enough; they were too strong, or they were left open. Another indictment is that the Titanic

did not carry enough life boats, and in the same breath, that there was not enough room to launch all she did carry. One architect points out that if the modern steamer carried enough boats to hold all her passengers and carried them in a position for launching, there would be no room for officers and passengers.

The most reasonable criticism made so far, is that the accident demonstrates the possibility of building transatlantic steamers upon too big a scale. This has an air of probability about it because unquestionably the difficulty of controlling these big ships is proportionate to their size. What does not appear to be sufficiently appreciated is that momentum involves the idea of quantity as well as rapidity of motion just the same as heat involves quantity of heat as well as temperature. A small boat speeding swiftly towards the shore can be stopped in its own length. A huge floating mass travelling over the same distance with a motion that is scarcely perceptible, cannot be stopped and strikes the wharf with a slow but heavy impact which makes every timber in the wharf and the ship groan. A steamer the size of the Titanic has more steam power available than a smaller vessel, but it has an immensely greater inertia to overcome, and it is a question for the engineering experts to say where the line of safety lies.

It has been suggested that the use of a micro-thermometer would give timely warning of the approach to floating ice; but would it materially help a ship surrounded by ice and unable to overcome its own momentum within a couple of miles? Some of the New York journalistic experts think a good look-out is enough even on a dark night and one of them has discovered that at least one-third of the berg that destroyed the Titanic was under water. Other experts say that only one ninth of the mass of an iceberg is seen above water, but they labour under the disadvantage of not being yellow journalists. One thing that seems to be established is that the Titanic knew of the presence of enormous ice fields and warned at least one other ship before the accident occurred and there is reason to fear that she was tearing through the ice fields at reckless speed, in order to make a record.

The disaster, however, is of such appalling magnitude that it is no wonder that the air should be full of criticisms and suggestions; but fair play seems to demand that popular judgment should be suspended at least for a few days. The survivors of the wreck have already thrown light upon it. The whole truth may never be known, but at least we must know much that at present is only guess work and almost certainly wrong in many particulars.