

SYRIAN WOMAN'S THRILLING NARRATIVE

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Ship's Officers Fired into Steerage: Panic Amid Rush for Lifeboats Mariana Assaff says Ten People on Doomed Ship were Bound for Ottawa but Two survive. ...How Mrs. Assaf views the Horror and Catastrophe of Her Rescue.

"Mariana Assaf arrived in Ottawa from New York at 7:15 last night. She was still ill from the effects of the exposure that had followed her rescue, and the memory of the awful news of the occurrence has left its impact in a disorganized nervous fashion. When she stepped from the Grand Trunk Train which brought her into the capital she gave a cry and sank fainting into the arms of her nephew's wife. Both women were so deeply affected by the reunion that they had to take to their beds and Mrs. Assaf was under a doctor's care when she was seen last night. A woman of 45 years and in appearance a typical Syrian, she bears the marks of that dreadful experience with a haggard air and a voice weak and nervous. At times the wounding memories of the awful events of which she had participated on narration, broke out afresh in her mind, her voice becoming hoarse with sobs."

This is her story told through an interpreter:

"I was with others of my relations and friends for many of us Syrians on board were known to me and we had all gone to bed when the ship struck. Although it did not seem to be much at first and we did not feel very much except a jar, some of us wanted to go on deck to see what happened. We were told that everything was all right, and we did not think there was a danger. But the ship did not go on then some of us began to think they were not telling us the truth and that we might be sinking. I think somebody must have said the boat was going to go down for suddenly there was great confusion and everybody tried to rush the deck. There were many in steerage who tried to rush the boats and at those some of the officers fired revolvers and some of them were shot dead. The rest were driven back. They were not given a chance to escape. As for me, when I thought the ship might sink, I forgot everything and rushed away from steerage and up to the deck where the first class passengers are. I could not think of anything. I never saw any of my relations so I do not know what became of them. The last I saw of them was when we were all in the steerage.

When I ran up to First Class, I saw that the ship must be going to sink and I lost my head. But a man, I think he was one of the sailors, when he saw that I was there, he pushed me into one of the boats where there were already many women and a few men. The boat was lowered into the water and then the men rowed it away for they were afraid that when a big ship went down it would take them with it. Some said the band was playing, but I did not hear it. I was so out of my mind. It was an hour and a half after the boat struck before I was put into a small

boat. Then Titanic sank and we drifted about all night. It was terribly cold, and I could never forget my relations and my friends whom I would never see again. When I thought of them I felt that I was going to go crazy. Six hours after we left Titanic somebody said "there's a steamer," We were saved and we were taken aboard Carpathia. When we got on board the Carpathia everyone was very kind and gave me clothes to wear. But I don't remember very much, I could hardly think.

In New York they took me to a Jewish Hospital and I got a little better there.

Then the United Syrian Society took me and sent me to Ottawa for I told them that is where I was going. Of those who were coming to Ottawa nearly all were my cousins. When I left Syria to come here again my two sons wanted to come with me, but I would not let them. Thank God I did not, for if I had they would have been drowned...they will still be coming out here later with my husband."

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