Edgefield Advertiser.

Oldest Newspaper In South Carolina

VOL. 79. EDGEFIELD, S. C., WEDNESDAY, JULY 8, 1914 NO. 13.

COLLISION AT SEA.

Interesting Personal Experiences. A Near Disaster on The Pretoria. Land in Sight.

When I decided to go to Europe the dangers attendant upon an ocean voyage were the most dreaded of all the ills and inconveniences of travel. The memories of the awful fate of the Titanic had not faded from my mind when I read a few weeks ago of the great loss of life and the sinking of the Empress of Ireland. But being reminded by an old colored person of the old saying that lightning never strikes in the same place we accepted that homely philosophy along with many other assurance of safety and sailed on the eleventh of June from South Brooklyn. At the pier were hundreds of people waving farewell to the Pretoria as she started on her journey. Some were laughing and waving tiny United States flags and bouquets of flowers while others were sad and weeping as the ship faded from their sight. Some were so anxious for the last glimpse of loved ones that they ran along the platform to the extreme end and remained there until we passed from their view. A little girl about five years old cried during the entire time before our departure in bidding good-bye to some one, probably an aunt or cousin. It appeared unwise to me to subject a child to such suffering, for it seemed as if her heart would break as she clung to the lady with her little arms around her neck. In that vast crowd there was not a familiar face to us but the parting of the lady and child brought tears to our eyes and we were really glad that we did not have to pass through such an ordeal.

After witnessing such a scene and the order, "All ashore" was given severing all connection with the homeland a feeling of sadness came over us for we realized fully then that we were leaving behind us all that was dearest in the world. We could not rid ourselves of these gloomy forebodings that seemed to warn us of some approaching danger.

But we tried to divert the mind by becoming acquainted with our new surroundings, locating our stateroom, steamer chairs, rugs, dining room tickets and various other little items. There are about 350 passengers besides the steerage and crew and for some time after starting there was great confusion on board before everything was adjusted and settled for the journey.

The Wicker party had steamer chairs on the promenade deck on the north side of the vessel, each one marked with the owner's name and supplied with a steamer rug. We were quite willing to remain in these chairs for the first afternoon on board looking out at the smooth calm waters and the clear sky that was so soon to become cloudy and bring us into terrible danger. The first night passed quietly and the timid ones were somewhat re-assured for the days that were to come. The captain's chair is near our and the second afternoon out he seemed worried and had little to say, finally giving orders for the fog horn to be blown.

The atmosphere became very heavy and damp, and the fog was so thick that the water could scarcely be seen from the railing. The loud blasts of the fog horn continued after bed-time but our party retired at the usual time with a fair degree of composure and most of them were able to sleep according to later accounts.

The collision between our boat and the New York occurred about 3 o'clock Saturday morning. The stewards ran through the halls crying, "Collision. Everybody on deck," but I did not hear them nor did I feel the shock that many experienced. I don't know what awakened us but suppose it was the noise around me. I ran out and asked what was the matter, but as this is a German vessel all of the crew speak German and I could not understand them but I knew that something terrible had happened for people were running around in their night clothes in the wildest excitement. I went back to my state room and put on my skirt and coat. Helen awoke and was so frightened she could scarcely find any of her clothes. But I threw something around her and was rushed upstairs on deck. At first we didn't see any of our party and could get no satisfactory information as to the trouble. So we stood there, cold speechless with fear, expecting any moment that the worst would happen. We heard the order for the life boats to be lowered and expected to be in them in a short while. About that time we saw Mr. and Mrs. Dill, our good friends from Gaffney who explained the cause of the disaster and expressed the opinion that the danger was not so great as it first appeared. Others came up then and we learned more of the details and felt somewhat comforted. As we were on the opposite side we did not see the steamer New York that was visible to so many others.

I enclose experiences from some of the passengers who saw the other ship. One account is from a very intelligent German lady from Portland, Oregon, Mrs. Backrodt and there are others who had different experiences from mine which may be interesting.

We sat on deck until morning as sleep was impossible and listened to the various stories of the catastrophe. We all wore life preservers and as we were grouped on deck one of our party got a snap shot of us as a melancholy reminder of the night. The stewards served us coffee about four o'clock in the morning to restore our drooping spirits. After it was all over we began to see the humorous side as we recalled the appearances of some of the terror-stricken passengers. One was attired in a heavy bathrobe with a vest over that and others were not encumbered with abundance of clothing. I left everything in our state room, purse, suit cases, everything except an Ingersoll watch that we held tightly clasped in our hand. One gloomy passenger announced to us when we were recovering a little from the shock that we were slowly sinking, but contradictory testimony kept us from despair. Some say that they were not frightened but the majority agree that it was one of the most terrible moments of their lives.

We went down the next morning and saw the hole in the ship about six feet long made by tearing one anchor away. As this was 25 feet above water line there is no danger but if it had been nearer water we would have had a similar catastrophe to that of the Empress of Ireland. We can't say where the blame should be placed. Our captain is always very careful and we think he managed well.

The Pretoria is 17 years old and is now on its 118th trip and this is the first collision.

We have regained our composure now and having escaped sea-sickness hope to have a pleasant journey the remainder of the trip. We can't get any mail so the only communication that we have with the outside world is by wireless telegraphy, which gives very meagre accounts of the disaster and other current events. We are thankful that we are all safe, not a single person being injured on either vessel. This letter will be mailed at Boulogne, France, the first stopping place en route to Hamburg. Our steamer letters have been read and re-read and have been worth their weight in gold.

Mamie N. Tillman.

At 3:30 of the early morning watch I was awakened by a sudden jarring of the vessel. I sat up and listened to hear if anything was wrong. At once a ship-servant cried out along the hall, "Collision, all out on deck." Hurriedly dressing, my wife and I ran to the part of the deck occupied by our party. It was a time of intense excitement. It was reported that in collision with the New York both ships were injured. Wild confusion was on the New York and women and men screaming. I drew out a couple of chairs and told Mrs. Dill we had best sit quietly and reserve our strength in case we had to leave the ship. We bowed in prayer together for God's protecting care for us all. Soon the Captain came by and spoke a word in German. I called to him to speak in English. He said, "There is no danger at all." The hole in our ship was high above the water line and all was well. A few hours later I had a talk with the Captain. He told me that the New York was over 30 miles out of her sailing track. In the collision his prow struck the New York, and cut an ugly gash 30 feet long and 3 feet wide, about 10 feet above her water line. He held his vessel in against the New York until her Captain called out to draw out, as the damage was above his water line. In the collision the anchor on the left of our prow was torn away and carried off by the other vessel, leaving a hole 3 by 6 feet, but 25 feet above our water line. There was no danger at all, and we could easily continue our voyage.

Rev. J. T. Dill,
Gaffney, S. C.

I am requested to express my feelings experienced from the moment of the collision of our steamer up to the time when we had been assured by The Officials that we were safe. Having faced the death several times in my life I am considerably insured from feeling of fear or panic. For nobody but my dear parents for whom I am going now were my first and last thoughts during this torturing hour. I cannot say very much more, because to analyze my feelings more it would be necessary to sink Pretoria by head, or at least to call "S. O. S."

Prof. Alex V. Skilinskye
Moscow, Russia.

Friday evening was the first time that I had really noticed the foghorn. It had blown in its melancholy way but once until I decided to retire and so I did under some peculiar feeling, which I am unable to describe. When I felt the clash about 3 a. m. Saturday between the "New York" and our "Pretoria" there was a throb in my mind, which precision in thought and words is alike unattainable. But as I looked through the port-hole and saw the steamer, there were three preeminent and predominant thoughts that passed through my mind; namely: First; It is a good thing it's morning. Second; The answer I gave to a question put to me about a year ago (i. e.) In times of difficulty and danger, in whom do you put your trust?" Third; a short piece of poetry,

"Behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadows.
Keeping watch above His own."

Rev. Paul B. Clark,
Covington, Ky.

I felt a shock and jumped out of bed and someone turned on the light. I had my bed lowered and looked out of the port-hole and said: "We have company at night. There is a collision." There was a steamer all lighted up against the railing of our ship, with passengers running to and fro screaming in great excitement. There was one woman perfectly nude with a baby in her arms. I went into hall barefooted. I saw people coming out of cabins. Then signal was given to lower life boats. Each one was trying to calm the other. One lady told me to put on life preserver. I said no, it will do no good. If we have to go down I prefer to go as I am. Then First Officer came in and had coffee served to all and we sat quietly and waited for our fate.

Mrs. A. G. Bachrodt
Portland, Oregon.

I felt the shock when the two boats collided, and upon rising from my berth and looking through the port hole I saw a vessel very near us. I could see men and women running to and fro and seeming very much excited. I heard much noise, and upon reaching the upper deck was told by some of the officers that there had been a collision between our vessel and the Steamer New York, but that the danger was past and that the New York had proceeded on her way. This kept me from feeling afraid, and it was not until several hours later that I learned that our vessel had lost an anchor, and that there was quite a hole torn in her above the water line and that we had had a very narrow escape.

Mrs. D. A. Covington,
Monroe, N. C.

It was shortly after ten o'clock when I first heard that the captain had gone above because of a heavy fog. About this time the fog horn sounded first and from that time until I fell asleep we heard it every three minutes. I do not know what waked me, but at three-thirty (or a little before) I heard voices and sounds of feet on the deck above. Looking out of my Port hole, I beheld a ship fully lighted and passing us at full speed. On her deck were women and children in great excitement running to and fro. By this time I felt our ship stop with a sudden lurch, and with a feeling of great anxiety I hurriedly dressed and rushed on deck, where I found most of our party, some wearing life preservers, others carrying them. Some even had small hand bags containing valuables.

It was light enough for us to see everything perfectly, and the ships corps were clearing and uncovering the life boats From the officials no one could get a word of information except that "It is nothing." Here in the middle of the Sea, with every wheel of machinery stopped, it is little wonder, when one remembered the security felt by the passengers on the Titanic, and the great disaster of the Empress of Ireland, that all faces were blanched with terror and that wild rumors were afloat.

The captain assured us over and over that there was nothing. "Go below ladies, there is nothing wrong" he would say, but the ladies (and gentlemen) refused to move.

At last with smiling faces the deck stewards came around announcing "coffee is served in the dining room." I believe this was the first time that every one felt reassured and the timid comforted. Later we learned that the New York had collided with the Pretoria carried away her anchor and left her wounded but not crippled.

The perfect discipline of the crew of the Pretoria is to be much praised, and after this experience we feel much safer in the hands of our good Captain, who held his vessel in the rent of the other until he had talked with the other captain and was assured that all was well. Then to be doubly sure he held his vessel still until he had heard from the New York twice by wireless, that she was unharmed and was proceeding on her way to New York.

If such precaution had been observed by the captain who wounded the Empress of Ireland her history might have been written differently.

Mrs. Annie G. Massey,
Hot Springs, Ark.

Of course it was on Friday night but on Saturday morning at 3:15 our S. S. Pretoria, plunged her anchor into the S. S. City of New-York. We were going East, our anchor fastened on North side of bow, but the New York had great trouble in pulling to the South side of S. S. Pretoria before breaking anchor loose and after tearing a great hole about ten feet above water line in Our Pretoria S. S., Our Anchor was lost in the S. S. City of N. Y. tearing a great hole about 35 ft. by 6 ft. just above Water Line, but the Captain of N. Y. told Capt. M. Dugge of Pretoria to back away as there was no danger. To be certain our Captain naturally thought of the recent disaster of the Empress of Ireland. So Captain Dugge held his bow to the City of N. Y. until there was no danger, but the people were wild on N. Y., screaming to the top of their voices, begging and pleading for help. And of course we were all scared to death. Some coming out almost naked, some asleep, others wild to know where the others of their loved ones were. One poor Italian was a steerage passenger and when the anchor pulled out just over his head he made a successful run to top Deck, even by the Captain's Deck and got into one of the life boats and there curled up and hid himself. After no danger was assured by the Captain he pleaded for all to go back to their rooms but not a one would go. In a few minutes the Chief Surgeon who had his witts said, "Coffee now being served in dining room." So nearly all went in and partook of the coffee to settle our excitement. This was a collision that none of us want the experience over. I asked the Captain if S. S. ever exchanged mail in Mid Ocean and he said never, that he got too close to S. S. last night to feel good. This description can never be told accurately for both the Captains of Pretoria and of S. S. New York are far different in their views, neither of them telling the same story. And you can't find out head nor tail. None of the crew will tell you anything. And in all it is an experience never to be forgotton.

W. E. Massey,
Hot Springs, Arkansas.

Pretoria, June 22, 1914

It seems that two weeks on board a vessel would give ample time for writing but there is never a quiet moment when one can collect thoughts. So I have concluded to select a very noisy spot where a band concert is in progress and everybody talking in the halls outside

It is the general opinion that it is fatal to concentrate the mind either on reading or writing, for it will lead quickly to mal-de-mer. Until within a few days ago we have spent most of the time on deck, but now it is too cold and windy, and we are all in the salon.

Just before dinner tonight we passed the Vaterland off the coast of Ireland and everybody jumped up from the table and ran out to see it. As we get near land, we see many vessels going in both directions. The passengers are beginning to brighten up and get ready for landing on Wednesday. There are 704 people on ship, including steerage and crew.

Wednesday morning June 23.

We are in the North sea near Hamburg, where we hope to land tonight if we reach there before the custom house closes at 8 o'clock. Later than that will cause us to remain on steamer over night, making fourteen days on water.

The English channel was perfectly smooth, and not at all boisterous as we expected. Generally it is quiet going lengthwise of it, but exceedingly rough in crossing from Dover to Calais against the current.

The first sight of land at Scilly Islands was refreshing on Monday. We can appreciate in a small degree the happiness that such a sight gave Columbus. Since then we are constantly in sight of land, but it is too cold on deck to watch the changing scenes, and rather misty and fogey to get a clear view. Yesterday we stopped at Boulogue, France for passengers going to Paris and other points. It was an exciting event as we reached the shore and the smaller boat came up for those leaving us. Some of them were pleasant acquaintances made during the voyage and we were sorry to say good-bye. Among them were Mrs. Parker and daughter of Macon, Ga. She is the state regent of D. A. R., and her daughter is going to Paris to study voice for a year, but Mrs. Parker will return in August, after seeing that her daughter is comfortably situated. As our vessel approached, our band played in honor of the departing passengers. There is a formidable looking fortress at Boulogue which is an entrance to France.

We got a glimpse of land at Lizard Point on English coast, and the farm lands as seen through field glasses are beautiful. The land is laid off in large squares, and each section is thoroughly cultivated with different crops, presenting a vari-colored picture. In one section seemed to be mustard with yellow blossoms, and in others around it were grains of all shades of green, with a brown spot of freshly harrowed earth intermingled. They say that every available space is cultivated in England, and they make a speciality of intensive farming.

At Boulogue we had news for the first time in eight days. Our wireless has been out of commission, so we were entirely cut off from the outside world. There were several German newspapers, but only one English paper on board which we eagerly scanned as it was passed around among our party.

Last night being the night before landing, the customary captain's dinner was given, which is the custom on every trip. The dining room was decorated with flags of every size and every nation, and on each table were tiny flags and caps as souvenirs for guests. A special menu card was prepared, and one was presented to each person. The dinner was more elaborate than usual, consisting of several courses. It is always easy to distinguish a German meal, for however grand, some dish will betray their national taste. Along with turkey, asparagus, fish etc., was served, boiled cabbage stuffed with ground meat highly seasoned with onion and pepper. After the last course, all the mottoes were read and everybody donned the colored paper caps.

My steamer letters have been a continual joy to me, and have been read and re-read with infinite pleasure. I am grateful to every one who was kind enough to remember me and for their prayers and good wishes. One lady in our party, Mrs. Massey of Arkansas said she believed we were saved on the night of the collision by the prayers of friends in the Homeland.

The Deestrict Skule letters were very entertaining, inspiring and encouraging. I will never forget my dear skule mates.

Dresden, Germany, June 26.

We have just reached here and found letters from home. We had a delightful day in Berlin today.

Mamie N. Tillman

Interesting Letter From Mt. Zion.

The Advertiser for last week was especially interesting on account of the letter from "Uncle Iv." His writing reminds one of Bill Arp. He pictures his community so attractively that it would not be surprising if our Edgefield colony should follow him, and doubtless some from the rocky clay sections could do so to advantage. But if they will come down this way they may have the same advantage without the trouble of crossing the river. In this locality we have a fine sandy soil, much of it underlaid by a good clay sub-soil; and if some good citizens from the upper part of the county will move down here I think it would be beneficial both to them and to our neighborhood. When we get our clayed road we will be well situated, and these incomers could help us to get it. Aiken county has finished claying the road up to our county line, and we can greatly appreciate the difference now in a trip to Augusta. We hear favorable reports, also, from our committee as to collecting funds for finishing the upper part of the road; so we are beaming with hope.

We have had fine rains recently and our farmers are now stretching every nerve to recover as nearly as possible the loss from the drought.

Recently Messrs. Walter Carpenter and Willie Murphy sustained considerable loss from the burning of a barn, which contained guano, farming implements, and other personal property belonging to them.

Mr. Farrell Padgett is at home again, after having spent more than a year in the U. S. army.

Mrs. Mary Miller spent last week with Miss Fanny Sullivan. In honor of her visit Mr. and Mrs. Sam Garner, and Mr. William Garner, spent last Sabbath day in this pleasant home.

Mrs. W. A. Pardue, as is her custom, celebrated the 4th by holding a family reunion, on this occasion entertaining about thirty guests.

Dr. and Mrs. Girand Whitlock took advantage of our national holiday to visit the parents of the former, our neighbors, Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Whitlock.

Speaking of neighbors, we find that we are in a community where there are real neighbors—those who have sympathy for another's need and will help one out in time of trouble. This is better than style, and beats assumed aristocracy out of sight.

Miss Marie Padgett, is down from Greenville visiting relatives in this county. She will be this week with her aunt, Mrs. W J. Gaines. Miss Padgett spent last session in the Greenville Female College, where she made a good record, being one of six on the honor roll. She represented the college Y. W. C. A. at Kansas City and also at Black Mountain.

Protracted meeting will begin at Mt. Zion church on the 4th Sunday in this month. B. G.

Mt. Zion, July 6th.