

MURDER RUNS RIOT ON THE DECK OF A SINKING SHIP

COLLISION WRECKS LA BOURGOGNE AND SIX HUNDRED PERISH

Frenzied Seamen Slay Men, Women and Children in a Fight for Possession of the Boats.

NEW YORK, July 6.—The French line steamship La Bourgogne was sunk in collision with the British iron ship Cromartyshire early on the morning of July 4, sixty miles south of Sable Island. Of 725 souls on board 535 were drowned, including 207 first and second class cabin passengers. All the first cabin passengers were lost, and of 300 women passengers on the ill-fated vessel only one was saved.

That concisely tells the story of a tragedy that is stained with dishonor. Passengers and crew were alike in the awful struggle for self that turned the deck of the liner into a shambles and made the ocean a scene of deliberate murder of helpless women and men, and by the very ones to whom they had intrusted their lives.

The crash came at 5 o'clock in the morning, when, in a dense fog, the ocean greyhound struck the Cromartyshire and passed on in the gray light to plunge to the bottom, drawing down its helpless victims in the whirling surge that marked the spot where she had floated.

In the few minutes that elapsed between the shock and the disappearance the greater horror of the disaster was enacted. In an instant the quiet deck of the liner was transformed into an inferno. Women who obstructed the way of strong men to the boats were struck down with knives. The steerage had contained many Italians, and it seemed as though in the face of death

a thirst for blood came upon them. Right and left their weapons flashed and trampled bodies marked their course.

The officers, who died as brave men, were powerless to control their mad passengers and madder crew. The second officer of La Bourgogne did the work of a dozen heroes. But his efforts were almost immediately set at naught by the cowardice of his frenzied crew.

One raft on which forty women were placed had been made fast to the ship's side. It was dragged down by the ship and all on it perished. Not one man would pause to cut the lines and give them life.

When the ship had gone down the few boats that floated were surrounded by the perishing. Some women caught the lines of one cockleshell, not endangering the occupants and merely keeping their heads above water. In pure fiendishness the men of the crew cut the ropes and became murderers.

In other cases men who struggled to keep themselves above water by clutching the gun-wales were beaten back to death with oars and boat-hooks.

The British ship that had been in collision stood near by and for hours kept up the work of rescue. Then she was towed into Halifax.

Marvelous was the endurance displayed by those who had been in the water for hours. The officers of the Bourgogne to a man went down with the ship. One came to the surface and was saved.

WOMEN SLAIN LIKE SHEEP IN SHAMBLES

HALIFAX, N. S., July 6.—In one of the thick fogs which at this time of the year hang like a pall over the Grand Banks and Sable Island in the North Atlantic, occurred, on the early morning of July 4, one of the most appalling ocean disasters in the annals of transatlantic commerce, and, in fact, in the history of steam sailing of the world. Without a moment's warning, almost, the great French liner La Bourgogne, with 725 souls on board, was run down by the iron sailing ship Cromartyshire and sank within a half hour, carrying with her to the ocean's bottom over 500 of her passengers and crew, while the balance, who were not drawn down by the fearful suction, struggled and fought for life until one hundred and sixty-three were at length rescued by the crew of the Cromartyshire, which ship survived the collision.

The story of the fearful disaster from the few officers and members of the crew who were saved is yet to be told, but if the words of the passengers who were dragged aboard the Cromartyshire and later brought into this port by the steamer Grecian, are to be believed, the last few minutes on board the La Bourgogne witnessed some of the most terrible scenes of horror and cruelty that have blotted the history of a civilized race.

Instead of heroic discipline which so often has been the one bright feature of such awful moments the crew of the steamer fought like demons for the few life boats and rafts, battering the helpless passengers away from their only means of salvation, with the result that the strong overcame the weak, for the list of 163 saved contains the name of but one woman. The disaster occurred at 5 o'clock in the morning on Monday, July 4, about sixty miles south of Sable Island, which lies nearly a hundred miles off this port.

The Bourgogne had left New York bound for Havre the previous Satur-

day, while the Cromartyshire was on her way over from Glasgow with a crew of twenty-one men. Although the transatlantic steamships have a definite course the Bourgogne was, by all accounts, forty miles or more to the north of these lines.

The fog was very dense and the Cromartyshire was sailing along with reduced canvas and blowing the fog horn. Suddenly out of the fog rushed a great steamer and in a moment there was a fearful crash, the iron prow of the ship plunging into the port side of the steamer just under the bridge.

The shock was terrific and tore a tremendous hole in the steamer while the entire bow of the ship was demolished. The steamer plunged on through the fog, her whistle crying for help and her rockets signaling her distress.

The Cromartyshire was rounded to, and her master, Captain Henderson, was considerably relieved in finding that she was in no danger of sinking. Off to the eastward could be heard the hoarse call of the steamer, and as the fog began to lift all the boats on the ship were launched. Half an hour after the collision the misty curtain went up, giving a clear view for miles, and then it was that those on the Cromartyshire realized the fearful struggle for life on board the Bourgogne. The collision had come so suddenly and at such a time in the morning that few besides her crew were on deck, but the shock aroused nearly every one, and within a few minutes the decks were crowded.

At first it seemed as if there was some attempt at discipline. A few of the boats were swung off and some of the passengers allowed to get into them. But as the steamer began to settle and list to port the officers lost control of the crew and a panic ensued.

Passengers and crew fought for the boats and life rafts. The strong battered down the weak, the women and children being pushed far away from any hope of rescue. Pistols, oars and even knives were used by some of the demons to keep their places. The officers seemed to have been powerless over their own men and only four were saved.

The fight for life on the decks of the steamer did not last long, for in a little more than a half hour she gave a long lurch to port and went down.

As the ship sank beneath the surface the vortex of the waters sucked down everything on the surface within a certain radius. When the suction ceased those still alive saw about 200 bodies come out of the water with a rush, as if the sea were giving up the dead after having swallowed the ship. But the struggle for life still continued after the ship went down. Hundreds still floated about, grasping for rafts, boats and wreckage in frantic endeavor to keep above water. Even then many of those in the boats, if the stories told are to be believed, showed their brutality by beating off those who attempted to climb aboard.

By this time the small boats of the Cromartyshire had come up and the work of rescue began. The crew of the ship worked heroically and saved every one who had managed to keep above water, but even then scores fell away from boats, rafts and wreckage, exhausted, and were drowned. It was all over in an hour, although for some time great pieces of wreckage came shooting up from the bottom, marking the spot where the great liner had gone down. But little attempt was made to recover the bodies of any of the ill-fated passengers or crew, and the battered hulk at the bottom of the ocean will probably be their tomb.

In the afternoon the steamer Grecian was sighted, coming from the westward, and a few hours afterward the Cromartyshire was in tow and arrived here this morning.

Strangely enough, Mr. La Casse is the only man of the saloon and cabin passengers who survived, while his wife is the only woman of 300, not only of the first saloon cabin, but of the whole ship, who escaped. Mrs. La Casse was roused from her berth by her husband, who was on deck at the time of the collision. When she reached the deck of the listing steamer she saw the captain of the steamer on the bridge and some of the officers at other points endeavoring to direct the efforts of the crew to launch the boats. There was little response to the orders of the officers. The crew seemed paralyzed. Matters were quiet and there was no panic at first, though the decks were becoming more and more crowded with frightened people.

The steamer was listing and settling and then a wild fear seized on the strong and the people lost their reason.

Mrs. La Casse was separated from her husband in the scramble, and the steamer listed so badly that she slid down the declivity of the deck and into the water. She had taken the precaution, at her husband's direction, to put on a life belt before leaving her stateroom, and shortly after being thrown into the sea she was seized by the arm and drawn upon the life raft. Her savior was her husband. A moment later the ill-fated steamer disappeared

and a whirlpool encircled the spot where the noble craft had been. Everybody around the vortex was drawn into it. The water rushed around, faster and faster, and the unfortunates disappeared with despairing cries.

Mrs. La Casse had been on the edge of the maelstrom, but something threw her outside of the whirlpool, and the next she knew she was on the life raft. A boat containing forty women was capsized and all went down in the whirlpool. There was not one man in this boat, and it was left fast to the davits. Some of the women were trying to cut the ropes when the steamer careened and capsized the boat.

Mrs. La Casse says that a moment after the steamer was engulfed men, women and children arose on every side of the whirlpool, and the sight of the faces and the arms and the sound of shrieks was so terrible that she will remember them to her dying day.

Mrs. La Casse says that when the panic first seized the crew even the sailors for positions in the boats like raving maniacs. Women were forced back from the boats and trampled on by men, who made self-preservation their first object. The sight of them were a large number of the lower class of Italians and foreigners, who in their frenzy stopped at nothing that promised safety for themselves.

So desperate was the situation that an Italian passenger drew his knife and made direct at one who, like himself, was endeavoring to reach the boats. Immediately his action was imitated in every direction. Christopher Brunon, a sailor belonging to La Bourgogne strike a passenger over the head with a bar and kill him. The body dropped into the water. The passenger grabbed the boat in which the sailor was and attempted to get on board.

Matte O. Zurich, a Norwegian, said it did not appear to be anybody's duty to look after the launching of the boats. Those on the port side were the best by the crew. People climbed into them, waiting for the boats to be launched, but in a short time the steamer listed so rapidly it was impossible to do so. Zurich declares that two of the life rafts upon which people were saved were cut adrift by him. He was unable to move them, but they tumbled overboard when the steamer careened and proved useful. The steamer slowly settled down by the stern and starboard side and the water advancing gradually drove the people forward. Finally men, women and children were walking about on the port bow. The stern was deep in the water and the bow in the air. The ship gave a great plunge and hundreds of people were in the water, grabbing at broken oars, bits of canvas, etc., and struggling. Zurich went over the starboard side and caught a raft, on which he climbed. He thinks that had the boat been launched as soon as the steamer struck several hundred who perished would have been saved. Only one of the port boats, a small one, was launched. That was the boat the second passenger escaped in. Zurich saw one boat leave the Bourgogne with only a few people on it.

Fred Niffler, a Swede, lost his sweetheart through the boats not being cut away. The girl had on a life belt, but the suction of the sinking ship was too powerful.

He and the young woman got into a boat with many others, waiting for the sailors to launch it. The boat was finally capsized and the girl was lost. Niffler climbed on a life raft, which upset, and five were drowned, for there were many crowded on it. The others climbed upon the raft.

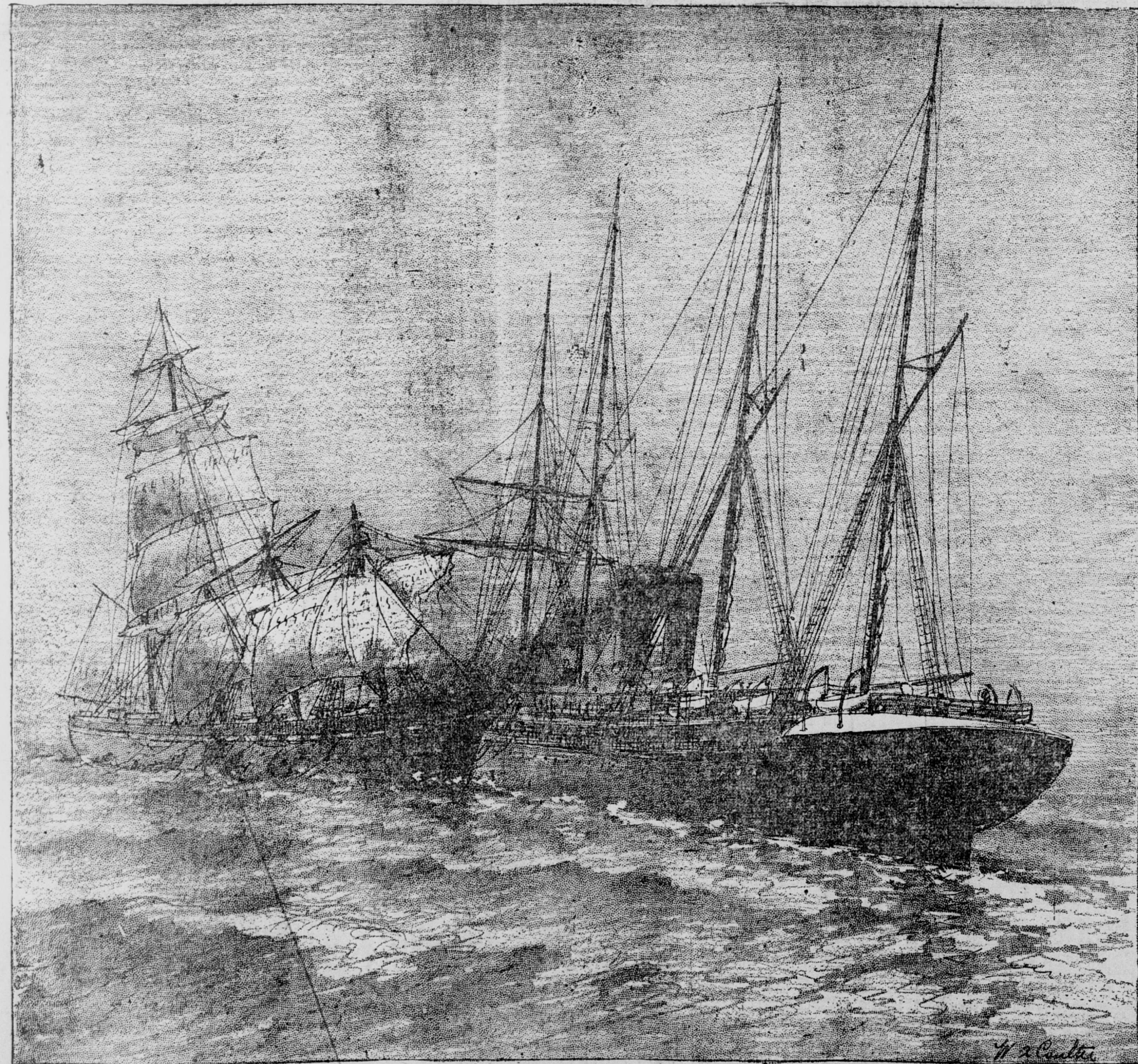
Among the survivors are nine Assyrians and Armenians. There were 75 Assyrians in the party when it left New York. All but eight perished. One of the eight lost his wife and two brothers and other relatives. Another lost two daughters. Only one of thirteen Armenians survives. The Assyrians were bound to their homes near Damascus, and every one had from one to two hundred dollars saved. They lost it all, barely escaping in their trousers and shirts. On board the steamer Grecian, which towed the Cromartyshire with the survivors to Halifax, the Assyrians wept like children and could not be comforted. The one surviving Armenian tells a sorrowful tale of the drowning of an Armenian priest and his family, who had got in a boat with some thirty other people. When the end came and the boat was abandoned to its fate by the crew, who made no effort to launch it, the priest stood up and with upturned hands prayed aloud. Several French priests stood on the deck during the sinking of the steamer without making an effort to save themselves and gave absolution to a large crowd of passengers.

August Pyrgi was eager to give the correspondent an account of his experience. He was in the water about half an hour and attempted to get into a boat. He was seized when he managed to get half in and thrown back into the water. Again he tried to enter the boat, but the savages who manned it were determined to keep him out. He managed at last to get in and to stay in. Clinging to the life line of a boat not far away he saw his mother, and as if his trials were not enough he was forced to watch a man shove her into the ocean with an oar. She never rose. He said the man was saved and was almost sure he could recognize him.

Fred Niffler, a Swiss, was the most jovial and contented of all the unfortunate passengers. He lost all his money and clothes, with the exception of a pair of trousers and a shirt, but he laughed and now and then cursed the frenzied sailors with passionate earnestness.

Niffler got into a lifeboat with some others and remained there until he reached the water, when he thought it was time to leave. None of the sailors ever attempted to let the boat loose. He swam for a long time before he was picked up. He saw an Englishman attempt to get into a boat, but the men in the boat, who were sailors of La Bourgogne, hit him over the head with the butt end of an oar. He fell back and sank.

Christopher Brunon, a passenger, was thrown into the water and swam for two hours before he found a boat. He clung to this as his last hope. After some time a man got hold of the same



THE COLLISION BETWEEN THE CROMARTYSHIRE AND LA BOURGOGNE.