

Dear Father and Mother;-

I have been wanting to write you for a long time, but have not seemed well enough to do so, and I have been trying to get Tom to write telling you the exact facts about our wonderful rescue, but I cannot seem to get him at it.

In the first place, I want to say how disappointed I feel at not getting to see you all, especially Ma, as I have been so building upon it, but it was through no fault of ours and we shall just have to wait. Of course, I do not ever expect to come to see you. It must be you all coming to see me next.

Well, words fail to describe the awful experience which we all passed thro. The few of us who are left, I suppose, can tell to a certain extent just the experience those who are gone passed thro, at any rate what they experienced on the decks that awful morning.

I was lying on the lower berth, awake, and thought how smoothly the 'Empress' was moving. (but now I know that it was not moving at all.) Just then I heard three whistles, and it seemed only a second when the awful grinding and tearing took place. My first thought was that the Empress had run upon a rock, and her bottom was being torn off. The impact was so great that it knocked me against the back of the berth. I immediately got out on the side of the berth and called Tom. He would not get down at first and I called him sharply and said "Come quick now Tom, let's go up on deck something awful has happened". Tom got down very slowly and said "Don't be nervous Dear, it is only a little ice-berg and we shall be all right" but I said "No, come on now", and the ship then began to list so much that Tom had to put his hand against the side of the cabin

to hold himself. I got so nervous that I ran out myself and met Captain Dodd, and He said "Its only a fire" and I said "No its not a fire, Dodd". I then heard the men giving orders on the deck. I rushed back to the cabin and said "Tom, come quickly" and he said "all right", and at that I started to run along the corridor, but instead of going to the second-class stairs and the stairs just near us, I ran almost half the length of the ship to the first-class stairs. Of course, I heard someone following me whom I thought was Tom. I got on the stairs but the list was so great I lost my hold and fell, rolling back against the corridor. I struggled to my feet, as the water was just rushing down the corridor, and with a mighty pull I got to the deck. Just as I got to the deck, ( and only about five or six minutes had elapsed from the time of the impact until I got to the deck) the lights went out, and of course knowing that Tom had not followed me I concluded that he had thought that there was no danger and delayed too long to get something on, and was drowned down in the ship before she sank, and then my sorrow began. It did not seem to worry me that I was going to die, my whole thought was on Tom. As I stood on the deck, Guido Whatmore came along and I was crying because I had lost Tom, and Guido comforted me and said" that we awere in Gods' hand, and whatever was best He would do". Then Captain Spooner came and comforted me, and went and got a lifebelt and put it on me, but I lost him on the deck after awhile. While he was standing with me he let me stand on his feet, and he held me into him, and put a rug around us both. The ship listed so quickly and to such an angle, that I had to climb thro the railing on to the side of her, and Bandsman Bigland helped me thro. (He is gone) Then as I stood there a second or two I knew we had come to the end. The 'Storstead' was lying about a mile from us, but no help was forthcoming.

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Then the crowd on the side of the ship cried for help, and about five minutes before we went into the water I saw life-boats being launched from the Storstead, but it was then too late. As I stood there, I with my arms round Bandsman Ernie Aldridge's neck, an explosion occurred right at my side, and we all went into the water, and the Empress disappeared. I tell you it was awful to hear the wails and moans, and the calling for God to have mercy. I lost my grip of Aldridge, and just went down, down, down, the water was filling me, and I was turning my wedding ring on my finger and thinking I had only been married a week. Then the message you sent to be read at our wedding was going thro my mind and I kept repeating "Ten thousand welcomes to the new daughter". Then I was smothering and I just put my hands to my sides and asked Jesus to help me die easy, and I never knew anything more. When I opened my eyes I could not imagine where I was or what had happened, and then I lifted my head and saw a deck-chair under me, and all around me were dead bodies floating, and then a man on an up-turned boat handed me a long pole and he drew me thro the bodies and wreckage to the boat and pulled me on. I had no feeling from my waist down and no feeling in my arms. Just my lungs seemed to be paining me. There was a Swede on the up-turned boat and he stood me up and then the water began to come out of my mouth, eyes, and ears. The swede opened his coat and buttoned me inside of it, and it was then I began to feel a little life. The warmth from his body revived me a bit. About a hour after I was taken on the Storstead and there they gave me stimulants and brought me back partially to life. On that ship Bert came to me, but no Tom, and of course I did not expect to ever see him alive and I cannot tell you the agony of my spirit. They then, I am told, transferred me with the rest to the 'Lady Evelyn' and took us to Rimouski, then from the 'Evelyn' laid me in a shed with the dead and

dying, and from there to the little French Hotel where at eleven o'clock my own Husband ( your Son ) found me. You can imagine this joy. Bless him! He never ever look quite so sweet to me. His hair was all in little curls and his face as white as death, but he was our buy just the same. I think I shall have to write a little book and call it "Wedded, parted, and re-united". When I was taken to the Storstead they said vit was just five o'clock, so from the time of the accident to the time I was rescued was nearly three hours, so how I am alive is a mystery which we cannot solve, but thank God we are here, and doingwel. I of course was scalded on the arm, awfully bruised, and cut across the back of the ankle, and have been a little lame but it is getting better. Of course we both still feel the effects of the shock and I suppose will be a long time in getting over it.

Now, when I woke Tom he did not think it sericus and says now that if I had not just urged him he would have been in the ship yet. He stopped to get my raincoat, then went and shut the port-hole, and then got to the deck by the proper second class stairs. He passed the Commissioner and his family standing just at the foot of the stairs, and the Commissioner was asking them to stand there while he went to see what was going on. You see, we had the advantage of so many because I was awake when the impact came and we got on deck sooner than most. When Tom got to the deck he sought for me but could not find me. He then gave my coats to Mrs Ahj Green, & Jessie. The Adjutant and Tom were standing against the library, then by stretching himself full length on the listed deck, Tom could just reach the railing of the ship and pulled himself thro on to the side. Seeing we were lost, and thinking I had been drowned, he still clung to the ship as she started to sink at the bow, and the wter came sweeping up to him, and then an explosion

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occurred and he thinks he was shot clear of everything and when he came up he grasped the top of a round table and it turned and he turned with it three times and then a raft from the Empress picked him up. Hex was so shocked that he could not speak and he does not seem to remember much. He was among the first to be taken to Rimouski, then a couple of hours after, this second with Bert and I arrived. Ernie Pugmire and Bert were brought to the same house as Tom, and they told Tom I was saved. Capt Spooner, who put the lifebelt on me, was among the first rescued and he told Tom he had put the belt on me. As soon as Tom and Spooner and Pugmire got clothing they started to search for me and went to nearly every house in the village and finally at eleven o'clock in the morning discovered me at the little French hotel 'La St Germaine'. I was pretty far gone, but when I saw my boy (whom I never expected to see again in this world) you can imagine our feelings. After being taken to the hotel two doctors attended me injecting strychnine and stimulants into my arms to keep up my strength. I was not on my feet for over two weeks after the accident, as I had a bad cut across the ankle and was badly bruised. I am now recovering very rapidly and hope soon to be quite myself. We certainly had a wonderful escape.

We seemed to have abundance of sympathy and kindness shown us. When we got on the special train that afternoon for Quebec, a gentleman whose sister was rescued from the wreck, had his private car attached to the special and they took Tom and I in there, and gave us every attention. Then the C.P.R. officials on the train from Quebec to Montreal were extremely kind to us, and the steamship manager who was on the train went ahead to have an invalid's chair at the station when we would arrive, in fact everyone seemed so good to us and did everything for our comfort, and our friends Mrs and Mr Douglas entertained us for two weeks at

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at their home.

At my own home they all suffered dreadfully from the shock, as they did not know any of us were alive until Saturday morning. Tom sent a wire at twelve a.m. on the Friday but they did not get it until the next morning. Mother would not believe I was rescued, as the papers had me among the lost, and my photo in the paper. Then it was reported that I died after being rescued, but when I wrote a little note in my own hand-writing, they believed I was alive. They have not been up to see us yet, but I think in the fall some of them will be coming up.

I hope I have not wearied you with the long letter. As you will see I started it on the 14th and it is now the 26th.

We are now in our own little home, and Bert is with us, and I am trying to look after him well.

When are you coming to see us? I hope it will be soon. Tell Eva that Jessie Green had a sweet Maple leaf sterling silver pen, with Salvation Army engraved on it, which she was bringing to her. She was showing it to me on the train.

We are all getting on well, and hope you all had a good time at the Congress.

With much love to all, from all,

Yours affectionately,

(Signed) Margaret.

*Suzanne  
Jon's wife*

P.S.

Kenneth McIntyre says Muriel is certainly a sweet girlie.

\*\*\* For Muriel.