

The *Lusitania* duly left New York at scheduled time, and the advertisement was ignored and forgotten.

On May 7 a thrill of horror was passed through the civilised world by a message flashed across the seas that the great ship had been torpedoed by a submarine and had sunk off the Old Head of Kinsale.

It was a clear and sunny afternoon that found the *Lusitania* off the coast of Ireland almost at the end of a voyage which hitherto had been entirely without incident. Captain Turner, in command, had slowed down, however, in response to wireless instructions from the Admiralty. He now knew there was a possibility of the presence of enemy submarines, and accordingly a sharp look-out was being kept. But suddenly, without sight of submarine and without any warning whatever, a torpedo struck the vessel on her starboard side, the wake of the torpedo having been clearly seen, however, in its swift progress towards

its prey. The sight was too late. At the very moment the officer cried out, "Here's a torpedo!" the shock and explosion were felt, followed by another explosion, possibly internal. Orders were given for the lowering of boats, and for the ship to be stopped, but the latter could not be executed, as the engines were out of commission, and it was therefore dangerous for the former to be carried out. The ship, in fact, never stopped, there being a perceptible headway on her up to the time she went down, only twenty minutes after. Immediately the first torpedo struck her she listed to starboard, and a second torpedo completed her destruction.

There were 1,906 persons on board, helpless, and apparently doomed to certain death. But the enemy, having thus completed his fell and cowardly work, disappeared as quietly and unseen as he had arrived. There was no provision for, or even thought on his part, of assistance to his innocent and helpless victims. So, of the whole number of passengers and crew, 1,125 were either killed or drowned, many of the survivors being wounded and injured.

One of the survivors, Mr. Ernest Cowper, a Toronto journalist, was able, before the ship foundered, to save a little girl, named Helen Smith, who came appealingly to him. He sent to the press an account, supremely dramatic in all its tragic realism, of the last terrible scenes on board the ship.

At exactly one o'clock I was standing on the starboard side with Mr. Rogers, of Toronto, when the vessel listed, as she swung violently round in answer to the helm. We both went to the port side, and there beheld, quite a long way off, the conning tower of a submarine close in to the shore. A sharp look-out was being kept. From the time we headed further south there was absolutely nothing to attract attention. The weather was magnificent, with not a breath of wind and a glassy sea.

At two o'clock I saw the white wake of the torpedo coming toward us at a great clip. There was a tremendous thud. The vessel staggered and rolled a little to port and then back to starboard, but she did not right herself. The air was filled with wreckage, splinters of wood and metal. It seemed to take about eight seconds for it all to drop back to the deck. Before the report was out of the air a second torpedo raced at an exact right angle toward us, hitting us about 120 feet abaft the first one. A fireman told me the first had struck right into No. 1 stokehold. A number of women came running toward me, asking what they should do. The first uniformed member of the crew who came by was, I believe, the doctor.

"Will she sink, do you think?" I asked him. He replied, "I think you had better get ready to leave. That submarine is still watching us, and if he sees he has not damaged us badly enough to sink her, he will fire another torpedo." Within two minutes from the time we were first struck the vessel had taken a very bad list to starboard, so bad indeed that I saw a man with a lifebelt round him on the main deck sliding down the deck on all fours.

Then a little child, Helen Smith, ran towards me with an imploring look on her face, saying, "Oh, please, Mister, won't you take me off with you? Oh, please, please do. I'll be your little girl if you will only take me away." She was terribly frightened. After reassuring her, I told her to stand in a corner of a second-cabin promenade deck, and that I would get her a lifebelt. I got down two decks, and the lights went out. Every one was rushing to the top deck. Little Helen I found standing just where I left her, looking perfectly composed. "You came back to me, didn't you, just like you said you would?" she said, smiling.

No sooner had I picked her up in my arms and turned to go forward than I saw a horrible sight. One of the first lifeboats, right up at the forward end of the boat-deck, had been filled

with women and children and a sufficient number of men to man it, when the ropes from which the stern of the boat was upheld gave way, and the boat hung perpendicularly from the ropes of the bow. Its occupants fell into the water, a tumbling, jumbled mass. The vessel was still going along, and in a few seconds the struggling forms in the water were abreast of me. I dropped the little girl, and threw overboard a number of deck-chairs and other spare gear that might help them.

I picked the little girl up, and carried her to the lifeboat, which was then hanging so far from the side of the ship that I had to throw her. One survivor in an interview has said there was an absolute lack of discipline. That is not the right word. There was a lack of organization. Every man worked as a unit, doing what he thought best, and doing it coolly and well. As I passed along the boat-deck with the little girl I saw, lying in the bottom of a wicker chair in the verandah café, a very tiny baby, kicking up its little bare feet and legs in great glee, all unconscious of the tremendous tragedy which was being enacted about it.

A surprising number of people, especially women, had made for the high side of the vessel on the port side, and these must have all been lost, as it was impossible to launch the lifeboats, which had swung back by their own weight to the deck. Many now began to leap for their lives, fearful that they would be on board when she took the final plunge and be taken under by the suction.

I got back to the boat where Helen Smith was, and assisted a woman with a very small baby to get into it. The *Lusitania* now began to sink very quickly. Nothing more could be done, for one could not climb along the deck. I leapt into the boat. John Davies, the boatswain, was lowering away on the boat behind us, along with two young fellows, both smiling. I think they were two of the purser's assistants. They worked nobly. It seemed an interminable wait before any one came to lower our boat, but eventually John Davies got to work with the two young fellows, and we were lowered. Davies was puffing at his pipe the while, and working with as much unconcern as if it was a daily occurrence. At last we touched the water, only to be confronted with a new horror. We could not separate the block and tackle from the boat. At last a knife was produced, and we cut through the lashing. The vessel was then leaning over us. The wireless was smashed, and was dangling down the mast. We released an oar with great difficulty, and placing one end of it to the side of the sinking leviathan, pushed with all our might to get her away from the side.

No sooner had we released ourselves than the boat ahead of us capsized, and the bodies of two elderly women came floating by. One had a lifebelt, the other had not. We pulled them aboard, along with two American gentlemen. What a spectacle these two women were! The last of the two was very old, and her whitened hair fell like a mantle about her shoulders. The other lady told me that at the moment we grabbed her she was praying God to either save her quickly or hasten the end.

By now the stern of the *Lusitania* was thrown high in the air, all her propellers being in sight, as well as a long stretch of the keel. The sight of the vessel as she was poised in this position beggars description. Its horror was intensified when we saw men taking the terrible leap of fully 120 feet to the water, anxious to go before the final plunge. From all sides now could be seen leaping people, while another came down a rope so fast that his hands were literally burned off in the long and hurried descent. It now became a matter of moments. She was going down in an almost perpendicular position at a terrible rate. I watched her to the last moment, and saw the tailrail and the poop mast disappear.

At that moment a lifeboat was thrown end up several feet into the air. The sea took on a glassy, oily appearance, just the shape of the ship, some wreckage was belched up, and the *Lusitania* was no more.

Two American business gentlemen whom we had pulled out of the water were with us. They were men of substance, and men who, I would say, should represent the best American thoughts and ideals. It was a dramatic moment when, within a few minutes of the *Lusitania's* disappearance, they both rose, clasped hands, and solemnly swore that unless the United States "is into the thing before seven days elapse we will renounce our United States citizenship, and never again owe allegiance to a nation that 'waitingly,' 'watchfully,' stands by and sees such wholesale slaughter of innocent women and babies and non-combatants."

They later repeated their decision to me, and said that application for citizenship in some country that was fighting Germany would follow unless the United States made an effort to avenge the lives of the babies they had seen sacrificed.

After pulling for a couple of hours we were picked up by the motor fishing boat *Ellisbeth*, of Arklow. Her skipper, Edward White, told me that the Germans had torpedoed a fishing-boat the previous day, and, what was more remarkable still, that he knew for a fact that the submarine had put into an adjacent cove the day previously, that the men had gone ashore, and were actually exercising themselves up and down the beach, when they hurriedly joined their vessel on the approach of a large stramer.

At Queenstown I met Miss Grace French, of Glasgow, with whom I had often conversed during the trip. She told me that while she was clinging to some floating wreckage, she

noticed, a short distance from her, what she thought was an upturned boat, with several men standing on it. But, as she put it herself, "I could not understand what they were cheering about. Judge my surprise when, on drifting a little closer, I saw it was the conning-tower of the submarine. A moment later the German flag was hoisted, and a voice in splendid English shouted, 'Let's hear you sing Tipperary now!'"

In my humble opinion the outstanding figure of the wreck was John Davies, the boat-swain. Every one behaved magnificently. There was no panic, though, perhaps, there was a little confusion among those struggling to get up the companion-ways from the dining-saloon. If Germany thought that she was securing a military advantage by the sinking of the *Lusitania* she most emphatically served the noble souls who have gone with an opportunity of again showing with what grace Britons can die.

Here again Germany—with barbarous indifference—had ignored completed the distinction between the right of a belligerent to destroy an enemy merchant vessel and the right to destroy the lives of unoffending non-combatant enemy subjects and neutrals which it might have on board. The former, subject to certain conditions—which Germany now persistently disregarded—was lawful; but the latter, under no circumstances whatever, was or could be lawful. And the only *apologia* of Germany, if so it might be dignified, was contained in a statement of Dr. Dernburg furnished to the Press shortly after the sinking of the ill-fated ship:

It has been the custom heretofore [said Dr. Dernburg] to take off passengers and crew and tow the ship into port. But a submarine, say 150 feet long, cannot do it. It has no accommodation for their passengers or crew. The submarine is a frail craft and may easily be rammed, and a speedy ship is capable of running away from it.

And one high official of the German Government argued that this custom and these good old rules of sea warfare admitted of further "development" in view of new inventions and new conditions. "Development," indeed! This procedure of Germany was, on the contrary, a repudiation of the rules of war in order to permit methods which could not otherwise be legally employed.