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HEROES AND HEROINES OF THE TITANIC

THE disaster to the *Titanic* is of such awfulness and magnitude as to haunt interminably both sea and land. No memory of conflagration, or of earthquake, or of war itself, will linger more poignantly than the immense and cruel fate of the vast company of human beings on that leviathan of steamships, which might have been, like Milton's

fatal and perfidious bark,
Built in th' eclipse and rigg'd with curses dark.

For more than a lifetime to come the last scene will bring a shudder not only to the ocean-voyager, to whom the very breaking of the wave at a steamer's side will henceforth speak of tears, but to anxious relatives and friends beside many a comfortable hearthstone. The prayer for those going to sea has taken on new solemnity and significance. And the pity of it all!—that, with a little more human foresight, a little more imagination, a little more prudence, it need never have been!

Doubtless before these lines shall have reached the reader's eye all the distressing facts will have had official determination, the blame will have been duly apportioned, and the world will have become, through this horror, wiser as well as sadder. Provision will have been made not only for adequate, but—what is desirable—*more than adequate* checks and safeguards against the recurrence of such a calamity. Travel by sea will have become immeasurably safer.

There can be no compensation for such a calamity, but what an alleviation is furnished by the heroism that attended it, and that will be imperishably associated with it! What a revelation, on the whole, of the fundamental soundness and unselfishness of human nature! Before the resources of courage and devotion shown by these men and women on the threshold of death, who can doubt the ability of the race to cope with any ill that surrounds it!

Coming at a time of too ready cynicism regarding human nature and the agencies for holding it to its course, there is reason for optimism not only in the nobility exhibited on this dire occasion, but in the pride and appreciation with which it has everywhere been greeted. The public mind has not only thrilled in response to the brave deeds reported, it has been hungrily expectant of more. Men are at heart what they admire, and this spontaneous sympathy, cutting across all lines of caste or class or race, means that the world has risen to a higher realization of its better self. Having inspired such a feeling, the dead of the *Titanic* have not died in vain. This is the chief consolation to be offered to the bereaved who survive them.

The terrible event reads like an epic of a night, or like a Greek tragedy on a colossal scale; more, it is a revelation of the power of God in man.