

CANADIAN PACIFIC



May 28th 1923

Dear Dr. Gray.

You have as we hope, received our wire from Trepasie telling of our being shipwrecked. (At present we are en route for Antwerp. By the St. Johns newspaper you have seen the details but we wish to add something of a more personal character.) Before anything else I have to ask you a favor. Will you please be so kind as to have a notice in the Spirit of Missions, Church at Work and Churchman to inform the friends of our mission, that owing to the loss of my addressbook, I am unable to write to several parties who shortly before our departure from P.M. had sent clothing etc for the N.W. I had intended to write them, but which I intended to write during the voyage. I would not like people to think that we are indifferent. It may be well to give also our address


in Holland or maybe still better) ask the letters for us be sent to the Missions House so that we may find same upon our return.

We were in St. John's Newfoundland from May 23rd until May 26th. The Rev. J. Brinton, vicar of the Cathedral in St. John's was very kind to us. May 25th he had a special celebration for the survivors of the "Marwale" and on Friday evening he gave us an excellent address, which inspired us with confidence and trust. The Lord who had granted us such a miraculous escape. It is the first time in the history of shipwrecks on that particular reef, that all lives were saved. Rev. Brinton said that we could not realize what we had escaped, only those who had lived there all their lives can. It is named "the Graveyard of the Atlantic." The man & wife house we were lodged, was wrecked on that same place and 94 perished. Of a Norwegian boat that went down there some years ago only 3 survived. Although we lost all but the clothes we wore when we struck the reef we all feel very thankful for our deliverance. I have at present a bad bronchitis but the doctor is looking after me and I have no symptoms yet which might lead to pneumonia. Bring a good sail on. I keep on deck in the open air as much as possible and hope to be over my trip by the time we reach Antwerp.

What I regret most of all our losses

is the loss of my Kodak and all my films and pictures and of my camera scrapbook dress. (May be you have still some films and pictures on hand.)

The weather is good and at present the sea is calm, so we are looking forward to an uneventful voyage from St. John's to Antwerp. In Southampton we may stay for a few hours to buy clothes for arriving in Holland. Dosh Juan does not even own a hat, he got away with the cap he was wearing. I had my oldest clothes on and had my best clothes either hanging in our cabin or in the Steamertrunk. My watch did not very well keep time and I had left it below. It is gone too.

The lifeboat in which I was, was almost upset. While it was being lowered near the ropes was so swollen that it did not slide through, at the same time with the other so that we were hanging like this  I was at the place indicated by the x and had indeed to hold on for dear life but the heroic work of the officers and crew of the Marwall averted disaster and we arrived all safely at St. John's. We passed the night sleeping on the floor of fisherman's cottages and I did not get my shoes off for 63 hours, but all is well that ends well. Trust

in God, supplemented by some humor helped us over the worst. One gentleman, a layman, and a born leader, who started some kind of mission and social service work on his own account in a place in the north West of Canada, did all he could to make us all forget our troubles while we had to wait as homeless tramps for a whole day in Trepassie for our transportation to St. John's. The people everywhere have been very kind to us (except the passengers of the Melita - with some exceptions). They seem to blame us for being wrecked and for intruding on their privacy. One lady of the Marwall who was assigned to the cabin of a Melita passenger who had a 4 berth cabin all to her self was told to get out and not before the purser told her to admit the Marwall lady did she grumbly consent. (But this is an exception). The sisters of a convent in St. John's Trepassie were most kind. They gave us tea and bread and butter and one lady passenger who was taking her siesta at the time we struck the reef and who escaped with only a coat over her negligee they gave a skirt as well as food.

(As you may understand we do not feel like writing all these details in every letter to our friends, may I ask you therefore to extract from this letter an account of our shipwreck for the Spirit of Mission, so that all its readers who are interested in us may know of our thrilling experience and with us thank the Lord for our deliverance)

Yours sincerely
Mary Droste.