

The Loss of the Titanic

The great ship, Titanic, sailed for New York from Southampton on April 10th, 1912. She was carrying 1,316 passengers and a crew of 891. Even by modern standards, the 66,000 ton Titanic was a colossal ship. At the time, however, she was not only the largest ship that had ever been built, but was regarded as unsinkable, for she had sixteen watertight compartments. Even if two of these were flooded, she would still be able to float. The tragic sinking of this great liner will always be remembered, for she went down on her first voyage with heavy loss of life. Four days after setting out, while the Titanic was sailing across the icy water of the North Atlantic, a huge iceberg was suddenly spotted by a lookout. After the alarm had been given, the great ship turned sharply to avoid a direct collision. The Titanic turned just in time, narrowly missing the immense wall of ice which rose over 100 feet out of the water beside her. Suddenly, there was a slight trembling sound from below, and the captain went down to see what had happened. The noise had been so faint that no one thought that the ship had been damaged. Below, the captain realized to his horror that the Titanic was sinking rapidly, for five of her sixteen watertight compartments had already been flooded! The order to abandon ship was given and hundreds of people plunged into the icy water. As there were not enough lifeboats for everybody, 1500 lives were lost.