Extract 1

English Schoolmaster Lawrence Beesley:

'' As I dressed, I heard the order shouted, ' All passengers on deck with life belts on.' We all walked up slowly with the life belts tied over our clothing, but even then, we presumed that this was merely a wise precaution the captain was taking. The ship was absolutely still, and except for the gentle, almost unnoticeable, tilt downwards, there were no visible signs of the approaching disaster. But, in a few moments, we saw the covers being lifted from the boats and the crews allotted to them standing by and uncoiling the ropes, which were to lower them. We then began to realise that it was a more serious matter than we had at first supposed. Presently, we heard the order, 'All men stand back and all ladies retire to the deck below.' The men stood away and waited in absolute silence, some leaning against the railings of the deck, others pacing slowly up and down. The women got into the boats quietly, with the exception of some, who refused to leave their husbands. In some cases, they were torn from them and pushed into boats, but in many instances, they were allowed to remain, since there was no-one to insist that they should go.

Extract 2

Colonel Archibald Gracie (jumped from the top deck and was sucked down with her):

'After sinking with the ship, it appeared to me as if I was propelled by some great force through the water. This might have been occasioned by explosions under the water, and I remembered fearful stories of people being boiled to death. Again and again, I prayed for deliverance, although I felt sure that the end had come. I had the greatest difficulty in holding my breath until I came to the surface. I knew that once I inhaled, the water would suffocate me. When I got under water, I struck out with all my strength for the surface. I got to air again after a time, which seemed to me to be unending. There was nothing in sight save the ocean, dotted with ice and strewn with large masses of wreckage. Dying men and women all about me were groaning and crying piteously. By moving from one piece of wreckage to another, at last I reached a cork raft. Soon, it became so full that it seemed she would sink if more came on board her. The crew for self-preservation had therefore to refuse to permit any others to climb aboard. This was the most pathetic and horrible scene of all. The piteous cries of those around us still ring in my ears, and I will remember them to my dying day.