

Tea From China

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Wallace**

Illustrated by

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TEA FROM CHINA

A Story of a Racing Bluenose Clipper in the Days of Wooden
Ships and Iron Men and of a Sailor's Wife Who
Was Good Iron and Pure Gold

By FREDERICK WILLIAM WALLACE

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES R. PATTERSON

A wonderful old lady was my grandmother Ruth Abigail Ellis. Ten years of her married life were spent travelling around the world on the seas thereof and she knew Honolulu and St. Helena, Singapore and San Francisco, London and Rio almost as well as the paths of the pretty St. John River valley where she was born. Her Loyalist soul thrilled at the memories of the regal air and royal splendor of Queen Victoria and Empress Eugenie whom she had seen in their respective capitals, but her loyalty did not prevent her from holding decided opinions as to the right of the Mother Country to adjudicate colonial affairs with other nations. The Maine boundary, I can recall, was a subject which roused her ire whenever it was mentioned. She was very much a New Brunswicker.

I was her favorite grand-child, albeit I worried her greatly in my young days with my desire for knowledge on all subjects. My recollections are that she was very old and very wise—a little, rosy-cheeked, blue-eyed lady, who wore voluminous black silk dresses and covered her thin, silvery hair with white lace caps. She was very religious and read the scriptures a great deal and I know we youngsters used to be rather bored by the Psalms and chapters which she made us learn for Sunday recital, but this was offset by the stories of her voyages which she would read from the many diaries which she kept while voyaging. And they were wonderful diaries—little volumes stuffed with inspiring romance and tingling adventure which kept us mouse-quiet and thrilled during a reading therefrom.

Her records of thoughts events and happenings read like a book and after such a recital I would lie in bed of a night and dream of being a sailor, and clipper ship captain like my Grandpa Ellis. I would brave typhoons in the Gulf of Martaban and drive my ship around the Horn to 'Frisco in ninety-four days like he had done. I would dine with Eastern sultans and see the wonders of strange lands. . . Alas, I read law instead and have seen nothing of blue ocean but what can be viewed from the shore and the crowded decks of an Army Transport, but the sea fever runs in my Bluenose blood and had our great fleet

of wooden sailing ships survived the steel and steam of my day, who knows but what I would have become a sailor too?

The characteristic which made of me a legal man, and, if I may be permitted to boast, somewhat of an adept at searching out discrepancies and flaws, was inherent at an early age. I can recall making the discovery of a considerable gap in the sequence of Grandma's diaries. This was immediately after she had married Warren Ellis, and made her first voyage with him to San Francisco in fifty-five. There was no diary, to my knowledge, of the homeward voyage in the ship *Sea Wind* and the only information I was able to ferret out for a long time was that the vessel went from California to China and from China to England.

"Tell you something about the China voyage, dear?" she would repeat in a very soft, low voice with an odd note in it. "No, no, child, I can't. I did not like China. Your grandfather was ill there."

"What made him ill, Grandma?" came my insidious questioning.

The knitting needles would seem to work incredibly fast in her fingers when I asked this and she would begin to count the stitches as if she hadn't heard me. Then, if I persisted, she would drop the knitting into the lap of her silk dress and say, "Hand me the Good Book, child, and leave me. Grandma wishes to read." I would do as she asked and go away for I knew that the subject was closed as far as she was concerned.

Memory vividly recalls the time when, as a callow youth of eighteen, full of masculine conceit and the sophistry of the college freshman, I was back in my New Brunswick home and lording it over the family during my first vacation. It was a Saturday afternoon and I was tired of the quiet and lack of excitement around our rural domicile, and for want of something better to do, I engaged in somewhat lofty argument with my eldest sister upon the subject of women suffrage. Sis was excited and I was sneeringly contemptful while Grandma Ellis sat in her accustomed corner by the window engaged in her interminable knitting.

"You women want to have all the privileges of men," I said in the superior manner of eighteen, "but you are not able to do man's work. You want to vote, to become members of parliament, to make laws and poke your nose into a whole lot of things that don't concern you, yet you aren't able to fight for your country in time of war. You can't build railroads or bridges or join the Mounted Police or go to sea and sail ships. You cannot. . . ." Here I went into a whole string of occupations in which women did not feature, at that time, and it was all very foolish and irresponsible talk which did little but make my sister furious at my bigoted stupidity.

Grandma Ellis suddenly laid her knitting down and looked across at us over her spectacles. She was smiling and we both ceased wrangling for it was evident that she had something to say. We had such a tremendous respect for the old lady and her knowledge of things, that Sis and I instinctively felt that she would deliver an opinion which would settle the matter as far as we two were concerned. Conceited and all as I was, I admitted Grandma's wide knowledge of the world overshadowed my own.

With a quizzical expression on her rosy face, she wagged a reproofing finger at me and said, "I've heard you two children arguing and I want to tell you, John, not to be so sure that women can't play men's parts if they have to. Milly here is almost a woman now, and you, John, will soon be a man. I think it may do you both good if I do something I have never done before. John may learn a lesson from it. I will get my diary and read you the story of my China voyage."

Wondering, for I had forgotten my childhood desire to hear of this hidden chapter in my grandmother's life, and a trifle expectant of something strange, I brought in the oddly carved camphor-wood chest from her bed-room and assisted the old lady in opening it and searching for the diary. Carefully and reverently, she handed out little things of memory and sentiment which she had collected and stored away—carved teak-wood boxes from Burma, Chinese silks and fans, inlay work and such-like, besides daguerrotypes of people she had known, skippers and their wives and shore friends. We knew the name of every person photographed and all about them. They were our friends also.

At the very bottom of the chest, she lifted out a package tied up in ribbon. Putting this to one side, the contents of the chest were carefully placed back and the ornate cover closed and locked. Then, while Sis and I hung over her chair, Grandma Ellis slowly opened the package and disclosed a cloth-covered diary wrapped inside of two large maps such as seamen use for navigating purposes. These portrayed the waters of the South China Sea and the Eastern Hemisphere and upon their soiled and yellowed surfaces were traced irregular lines of pencil and ink. A caption in Grandma's writing upon the blank spaces of the charts made their significance plain—"Track of the St. John ship *Sea Wind* from Foo-Chow, China, towards London, Eng., June 10th-September 28th, 1856."

It is a good many years now since that Saturday afternoon when Grandma Ellis, with the diary in her lap and the sea-stained charts spread out on the carpet, related to us the story of her China voyage. I am attempting to give here the story as she told it, but I cannot adequately portray for you the picture of this dear old lady repeating vocally what she had set down in writing nigh fifty years before. Our present surroundings seemed to fade and I felt as if I could smell salt winds and tar and the clinging odor of spices and rattan matting and Grandma Ellis, the bowed and silver-haired, was the lithe and pretty little New

Brunswick schoolteacher of twenty-four that had but recently wedded big and dashing Warren Ellis from across the Bay in Nova Scotia, sailorman *par excellence* and master of clipper ships. She was very much of a Puritan, my grandmother, when measured by present-day standards, but her courage, skill and devotion might well serve as an inspiration to the women of these times.

Now, I am going to take the liberty of relating, in my own way, something of a summary of events that Grandma Ellis recorded prior to the actual happenings of the China voyage. The *Sea Wind* was a clipper, a St. John-built ship launched around the time when the New Brunswick shipyards were turning out some smart packets for the Australian trade. Captain Warren Ellis took command of her soon after launching, and, with my grandmother as a bride, he drove the ship from New York to San Francisco in ninety-four days. In her diary, my grandmother says: “Warren’s fast passage from New York has brought him much favor from the brokers and shipping people in San Francisco and to-night he is to be the guest of honor at a banquet in the Niantic Hotel. It is restricted to gentlemen only and I am disappointed somewhat, as I would have so much liked to see my dear husband honored for his skill and courage as a British North American sea captain. However, I must console myself by hearing the account from Warren’s own lips—an account which, I am sure, will be very meagre.”

Like a good many young brides, Ruth Ellis fancied that her darling husband had always trod the straight and narrow path of rectitude, but from accounts Grandpa Warren was “one of the boys” when he got fraternizing with his kind. His return from the banquet is recorded by Grandma as follows: “I am so upset that I scarce feel like writing, though it is possible that I am unduly alarmed. Warren came aboard long after midnight and I was grievously shocked to hear him using profane and blasphemous language to someone on deck. He burst into our cabin with his face flushed and the oddness of his manner convinced me that he was under the influence of liquor, and when I rushed up to him enquiring what was the matter, he replied, in a tone and words I had never known him to use in my presence before, that the watchman had forgotten to place a lighted lamp at the gang-way and that he had almost fallen into the water when coming aboard. His words horrified me into dumbness and he must have noticed the look on my face for he said roughly, ‘Well, what’s to do, you little goose? Why are you staring at me like that?’ ”

His rude manner of speaking and his intoxication gave my grandmother a terrible shock and after she had got her husband to bed she laid down on a sofa, fully dressed, and remained awake all night, “crying like a silly girl and much disturbed in mind.”

California in the 'fifties was a somewhat hectic place and Captain Warren Ellis found the allurements of the shore stronger than the company of his young wife. The convivial society of brother ship-masters and merchants, the roistering drinking parties, gambling games and sporting events, drew him away from his four months' bride early in the day and he returned to her nightly somewhat the worse for his potations. After two or three weeks of this sort of thing, Grandma Ellis was in despair. In her diary she wrote: "I feel that I have been deceived in Warren. I hate a drunkard and am horrified at the thought that I have given my love to a husband who prefers the company of his wine-bibbing friends to that of his wife. To God I commend him that He might show him the error of his ways."

Under date of March 1, 1856, appears the following entry in her diary;—At breakfast this morning, Warren told me that we would sail in ballast for China to pick up a cargo of tea for New York or London. I was glad to see an end to our California sojourn, and, when we had finished the meal and had retired to our private cabin, I took heart and stepped up to Warren and looked into his eyes.

"Don't you love me any more?" I asked him quietly.

His face flushed and a flash of resentment appeared in his expression.

"Why do you ask me that?" he said, sullenly, I thought.

"Your conduct of late has been such as to raise the doubt in my mind, Warren," I answered, calmly.

He looked away from me and murmured, "Of course I love you, but—" He paused as if afraid to give utterance to what was in his mind.

"But what?" I urged.

"I want to be my own master just as I am master of my ship!" The words came from him in a tone of brusque defiance.

"I have never reproached you, Warren," I said.

"No," he answered sullenly, "but I wish you had and then we could have settled things. I could read your thoughts; I could see unspoken reproach in your attitude and I could fathom what was passing in your Puritanical little mind. I knew you would resent my little fling ashore and I drank so you'd raise a row and have done with it. But you haven't."

"Did you really want me to raise a row—as you term it?"

"Yes, I did," he answered boldly. "Then I could let you know that you could not claim me altogether. I want a certain amount of freedom over my tastes and

actions. I do not want to be tied to a woman's apron-strings and have men say, 'Ellis runs his ship but the wife runs Ellis'. I've always been master."

I nodded. "Yes, Warren," I replied, "I suppose you have, and you want to command my love, body and soul, without giving up anything of your tastes and desires in return. That's hardly fair, Warren."

"It's my particular brand of philosophy," he said brazenly. "Man is top dog in my reckoning. Woman was created for his comfort and she has no right to interfere with his actions unless they affect her in certain matters which we all recognize. I am not philandering with other women. I have no woman but you and I love you in my particular way. I will clothe, shelter, feed and protect you and give you as much of my company as I desire, but I won't be dictated to. If I hanker for the fellowship of my kind after months at sea, I am going to indulge in that hankering without let or hindrance. You have my companionship almost every hour for months on end. You should be content."

"Yours is a very wicked and selfish philosophy," I replied without heat, "and not according to the marriage vows you made in God's Holy Name."

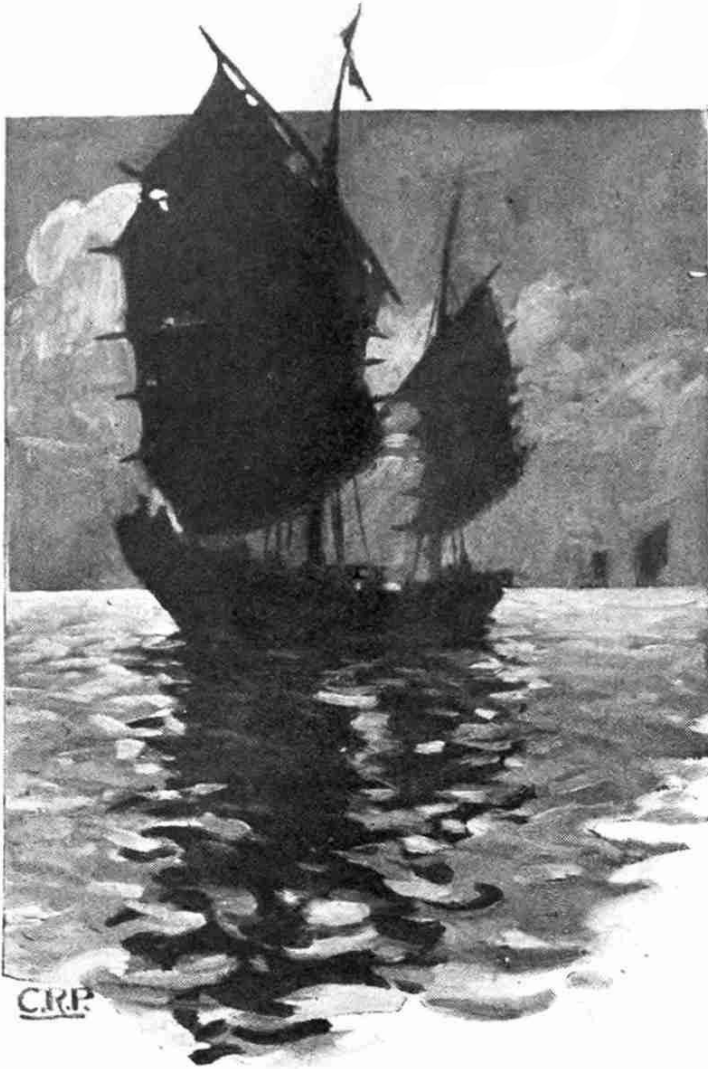
He laughed harshly. "You're like all women," he said. "You imagine when you marry a man that he is your dog for life and that he must run and cringe at your whistle. I'm no woman's dog, Ruth, and I can't be whistled up. When you can do the things that I can do, then you can make me your slave. Shove this hooker south-about in ninety-four days and I'll go second in command. Now you have it all, Ruth, my dear, and there's no hard feelings."

He stood and regarded me challengingly and, angry, mortified and heart-sick as I was, I could not but admire the capable masculinity of his stalwart body and strong handsome face. I made no answer but turned away and try as I might I could not restrain the tears from flowing.

Then I felt his arms around me and his cheek against mine. "I'm sorry, my little hundred-weight of sweetness," he said softly. "Let's forget all this. I'll knock under this time to my little Puritan and I won't drink or gamble or be absent from you of a night from now until we up-hook for China."

"I *think* I have won him back," was the diary entry here. "My Warren is one of those headstrong men who can be led but not driven. With God's help I will lead him away from the path of error into which he is treading."

Grandma and her husband were reconciled and the *Sea Wind* duly sailed for China—arriving in Foo-Chow after a fine passage across the Pacific. I will now bow myself off the stage and permit Grandma Ellis to relate the story of her China voyage in her own way.



“It was an entrancing scene, my children, when we came to an anchor among the tea clippers off Pagoda Rock. Around us were the beautiful tea ships and plying up and down the river were countless sampans and lorcha boats and clumsy junks with eyes painted upon their bows, ‘to see with,’ as John Chinaman believes. The banks of the swift-running Min rise steeply in verdure-clad hills terraced with gardens and cultivated plots to their very summits. So sheer are these hills that I used to wonder how the gardens could be managed.

When we first arrived off the mouth of the river, a Chinese pilot came aboard and produced papers from Consuls and ship-masters stating that he could be trusted. 'I'll trust you until you hit something,' said Warren grimly to the smiling Celestial, and he ostentatiously produced a loaded pistol and added, 'Take her in safe, John, and you'll get your pay; pile her up and you'll get a bullet in your skull the moment she scrapes.' John Chinaman never altered his bland expression when my husband made this awful threat, and he, and the other Chinese pilot that followed him, saw us safely to our anchorage at Pagoda Rock—a few miles below the city of Foo-Chow.

"For the first week, I had a wonderful time in China. Warren was most attentive and we visited the captains of the British and American ships—and many of whom had their wives with them—and we had many happy little tea parties and luncheons on the ships. I also visited the shore and went through the *hongs* or warehouses of the European merchants and dined with them at their clubs. The captain of the British ship *Min Ho* was a Scotsman and a good Christian gentleman and he used to hold services on his ship on Sundays at which I used to attend with Warren at first.

"I say 'at first,' my children, because about ten days after our arrival in China, Warren asserted his independence again and I endured a repetition of the California experience. My third Sunday there found me going off in the gig alone to attend the service on the *Min Ho* with my husband excusing himself by some remark that he didn't hold with 'Bible-thumping Britishers.' I was chagrined at this and felt worse when I returned to the *Sea Wind* to find the cabin full of male visitors drinking, smoking and playing cards on God's Sabbath. To this outbreak he offered neither excuse nor comment and, until we sailed, I saw but little of my husband.

"A few days after this Sunday orgy, he came aboard one night slightly tipsy and I overheard him telling the mate that he had 'blanketed the Johnny Bulls' and had secured an extra two pounds sterling per ton freight on the new season's teas and a quick despatch for London. 'I got it,' he said, 'by making a bet of a thousand dollars each with the shippers and skippers of the *Min Ho* and *Roderick Dhu* that I'd be the first ship to dock in London River, and they've taken me up.' Then followed some orders to Mr. Palmer about the making of extra sails and spars. 'I'm planning to crack on or drive her to hell!' he added, while I shuddered at his boast.

I became singularly distraught and heart-sick at Warren's conduct as I felt that he had permitted his drinking to overcome his good sense. The British ships were very fast and their captains had long experience in the China trade and understood the intricacies of the China Seas. Warren had never commanded a

ship on this particular passage and if he lost his wagers, he would be rated as a drunken braggart of a Bluenose and the money would have to be paid from our own little funds.

“Then came a day when Warren went ashore early in the morning and returned late in the afternoon with an ill-favored Portuguese—a Mr. Da Runha—who was some kind of a merchant ashore. Warren had been drinking and when he entered the cabin he introduced this man to me with a curt, ‘My wife, Mr. Da Runha.’ And to me he said, ‘You might be good enough to leave us, Ruth. Mr. Da Runha and I have some business to talk over.’

“I went into our private cabin and sat there endeavouring to sew, while Warren called the steward to bring glasses and biscuits. The foreigner seemed to be making some proposition to Warren and there was much conversation in a low tone. I did not try to hear what was being said, as I think eavesdropping is a sin to be deplored, but it ended with them both leaving the cabin and I heard Warren calling for the gig’s crew to lay aft. To my dismay, he went ashore in company with that foreigner who I was sure was *not* a good man.

“Well, my children, during the early June days, junk and lorcha-boats were coming down the river and we were over-run by Chinese stevedores loading the matted chests of new teas, which they brought down, into our holds. The boxes were stowed into place by the use of mallets and the work went on day and night. How odd the junks did look with their mat sails, square bows ornamented with dragons and huge eyes, their clumsy rudders and wooden anchors! Compared with our beautiful New Brunswick clipper, they served to illustrate the backwardness of that heathen country.

“Then, just before we finished loading, the Nova Scotia ship *Spray Bell* arrived up from Hong Kong in charge of the mate. Her captain died at sea on the passage and our mate, Mr. Palmer—a most trustworthy and upright gentleman—was appointed to command her. Warren was sorry to lose him but would not stand in the way of his promotion. In his place, however, my husband shipped a dissolute-looking fellow—an Englishman who claimed to have been master of British vessels and who boasted that he knew every fathom of the China Seas. George, our colored steward, told me that he was a ‘beach-comber’ and no good. To me, this Mr. Montague was studiously polite. He had all the manners of a gentleman, but I did not like him. Warren asked me what I thought of the new officer and I told him frankly that I didn’t like the man. ‘Oh well,’ said Warren, ‘you don’t have to cultivate his society and I’ll see that he doesn’t eat with us until you can abide his company. If he does his duty, he’ll suit me and that’s the main thing.’ And with this I was forced to be content.

uring our last days in Foo-Chow, your grandfather seemed to have adopted a sneering manner, which hurt me dreadfully. For example, he asked my opinion of the Europeans in China and I replied, and truthfully too, that they drank and gambled too much and their morality was not of the best as many had Chinese women living with them. To this he answered sneeringly, 'And, of course, as they fail to measure up to the yard-stick of the holy-joes and devil-dodgers you were raised among back home, you consider them grievous sinners and destined for Eternal Damnation. I wonder, Ruth, when your outlook will expand beyond the limitations of Holy Writ? You are next door to a Quaker, my dear, and thee art consequently short of sight.' And, with an unkind laugh, he left me abruptly and went ashore.

"My love for Warren underwent a severe test. I thought at the time that he was possessed of a devil. I put it down to the drink, as, when he was away from its influence, he was not the same man. When he was drinking, he acted as though he merely tolerated me and said the most cruel and biting things.

"The day before sailing, he gave a dinner aboard the ship to several captains and merchants at which there was much drinking. I retired early as the fumes of wine and cigar smoke sickened me and some of the talk was a trifle rough and rude for a lady to listen to. Warren went ashore with his guests and spent the night at a club, gambling. He came off to the ship the following noon and I noticed that his face was flushed and his eyes feverishly bright. I, too, was feeling wretched, having failed to sleep all night and almost crying my eyes out. Even God's Word had failed to comfort me in my misery and I felt friendless and deserted and far, far from home.

"My husband made no excuses for his conduct and neglect of me but acted as though nothing had happened. My love for him was such that I could readily have forgiven him, had he confessed and admitted his unnatural treatment of me, but he seemed to think he had nothing to be sorry for. I began to think that he did not honestly love me to act as he did while in foreign ports and his wicked philosophy was not compatible with the true affection that should exist between husband and wife. I was so deeply wounded, my children, that I made up my mind, should he repeat his obnoxious behaviour in London, I would leave him and go home even though it would break my heart to do so.

So little did I know of my husband that it was only in China I came to discover that he was irreligious and a scoffer at matters divine. We had numerous opportunities to attend divine service in California and China together but he seldom would accompany me. At the dinner he gave on the ship prior to sailing from Foo-Chow, I heard him boasting that his passage out to San Francisco had 'opened the eyes of 'Frisco and the Merchant's Exchange,'

but his passage home from China would ‘open the eyes of God Himself.’ Such blasphemy made me shudder at the brazen wickedness of it, and, unfortunately, I could not attribute his irreligious attitude to the irresponsible talk of strong drink as I knew that he said such things in sober speech.

“Warren did not go ashore again but I noticed him passing his hands over his eyes several times while he was in our cabin, and I asked him if he were not feeling well. ‘Oh, I’ve a bit of a head-ache, Ruth,’ he answered. ‘Too much wine last night and not enough sleep. I lost five hundred dollars at cards this morning. A terrible husband you’ve got—drinking and gambling. But, never mind,’ he added with a laugh. ‘I’ll take two thousand dollars away from those Johnny Bull Lime-juicers and I’ll make a few dollars on some other little deals.’ While he was speaking I saw Mr. Montague’s bilious face at the skylight and I was sure he was eavesdropping. When I looked up at the man he quickly withdrew.

“On June 10, 1856, we hove up our anchor early in the morning and proceeded down the River Min with flags flying and amidst a salvo of cheers and bell-ringing from the other ships at the Pagoda Anchorage. The *Min Ho* had sailed on June 8, and had a full two days’ start on us. The *Roderick Dhu* would sail the day after us. Both these vessels were lovely, yacht-like tea-clippers, commanded by daring and skilful Scotsmen and with well-trained crews. My husband, however, seemed quite confident that our big New Brunswick ship would outsail the Britishers.

“Of course I was intensely interested in the race and forgot my wrongs while poring over the Sailing Directions and charts of the China Seas, with Warren. Having acquired the science of navigation during nine months’ seafaring with my husband, which science to an intelligent person presents no great complexities, I was able to appreciate the difficulties of the passage down the reef and island studded waters in the teeth of the South-west Monsoon which was then the prevailing wind. Your grandfather was a stranger to Chinese waters but he was relying on the pilot knowledge of Mr. Montague for all the short cuts.

“It rained while we were towing out to sea—weather which suited the mood I was in—and I remained below trying to acquire cheerfulness by admiring the lovely silks, Chinese porcelains, ivory and ebony carvings and such-like, that had been presented to me by the Foo-Chow merchants. Engrossed thus, I whiled away the time until we passed Sharp Rock and the Min River pilot left us. I then went on deck and remained there until noon when we came up with the outer Knoll and the paddle-wheeled steamer cast off the hawser and our crew began to set sail. Warren walked up and down, silent, and though the weather was warm he wore a heavy deck-coat as though it was cold. I could see that he wasn’t well but in his silent paces he was watching Mr. Montague like

a hawk. The new mate had a sleek and wily look and I didn't like him but he seemed to know his work and made a smart job of spreading our snowy canvas.

"Now, my children, I have started on my voyage home from China and I can do no better than read you the story from my diary as I wrote it up from time to time during the passage. I was very young then, children, and very unhappy, and in my diary I recorded my thoughts and feelings as a species of solace to my state of mind.

June 11th. Warren remained on deck all night, and early this morning I heard the men at the main-braces hauling the yards aback. This caused me to look through my window and I viewed a large junk alongside and burning a red flare. A boat came from the junk to our ship and men carried something into the cabin. I heard Warren telling them to set it down carefully. Of course, woman-like, I had to have a peep and saw a large square-shaped chest, bound in matting and hide thongs, resting on the floor. I am wondering if this has anything to do with Warren's business with that sly-looking Mr. Da Runha.

"It has been dull and wet all day and I have remained below sewing and reading. Warren's head-ache still continues and he has been moody and silent, lying down and dozing and keeping the deck at short intervals.

"*June 12th.* I am worried about Warren. He is not a well man and has spells of fever and chills and a severe head-ache. His face shows that he is sick; his eyes are fevered-looking, he eats nothing, but drinks copiously of tea and coffee. He laughs at my importunities for him to rest. 'This is no place to lay up,' he protests. 'I have a tough passage ahead of me and two slippery lime-juicers to beat—a task which will call for all the skill I possess.'

"'Why not let your mate take charge a bit more?' I suggested. 'He seems a smart sailor and knows these waters well.'

"'Aye,' returned Warren, significantly. 'Too well, maybe.'

"A little later I slyly motioned towards the mat-bound chest. 'Where in the world did that come from, Warren,' I said, 'and what is it?'

"He strode over to it and adjusted a lashing. 'This,' he said—patting the case, 'is my sheet anchor to wind'ard if those Britishers trim me. Two thousand dollars will be paid me on delivering this box to certain people in London—which same money may save our little fortune.'

"'Two thousand dollars was a lot to wager,' I ventured.

"'Yes,' he said half-humorously, 'but it behooves a Bluenose ship-master to hold his end up. I got extra freight money through it.'

“I have a great secret to tell Warren some day. If he were not such a great simpleton, he would notice that my sewing is not altogether confined to our clothing. But he never sees anything but ship matters. If it were a small roving missing from the head-rope of the main-skysail he would note it quick enough.

“The S. W. Monsoon is very light and has flickered away into a calm tonight. It is very dark and quiet and the ship is in the vicinity of the Lamock Islands. Numerous junks were around at sunset and Warren eyed them anxiously. He told Mr. Starbuck, the second mate, to see that our two brass cannons were ready for use and that cutlasses and muskets were handy. ‘There’s more fishermen-pirates around here than I care to be in company with,’ he remarked, ‘and they wouldn’t think twice of rushing us if they got the chance.’ All the cabin windows were screened and all lights are hidden. It is quite thrilling.

June 15th. It is three days since my last entry and since then I have been hurled by Fate into the most momentous period of my young life. I am terribly afraid that I won’t be equal to the task. Warren is very ill and I have him in his bed burning with fever and delirious. The mate, Montague, is confined in the sail-room, a prisoner in irons, and with a bullet wound in his leg, and I am in command of the ship with young Mr. Starbuck, the second mate, as my assistant.

“At midnight on the thirteenth, Warren came below when Montague relieved the starboard watch. My husband was feeling very sick and he lay down on the sofa after I gave him some medicine and soothed his aching head with cooling cloths. At one o’clock I stole up our private companion-way on the poop to get a breath of fresh air when I saw someone waving a lantern over the quarter-rail. Knowing that the ship was becalmed and with junks in close proximity, I was mystified, and, turning to the man at the wheel—a trusted English sailor—I asked, ‘Who is that, and what is he doing?’

“The sailor appeared to be as puzzled as I was. ‘It’s the mate, ma’am,’ he answered, ‘and he’s been showing that glim, off and on, for a while now.’

“I slipped quietly below wondering what I should do and Warren saw the expression on my face and asked, ‘What’s up, Ruth?’ I told him briefly what I had seen, but before I could finish, he was off the sofa and on his feet with a terrible oath. ‘The bloody traitor,’ he cried as he rushed up the companion. ‘I’ll settle the beach-combing dog!’

“Knowing Warren’s condition and auguring that Montague would fight desperately, I snatched a loaded pistol from off a shelf and, following my husband, I reached the deck in time to see the treacherous mate hurl the lamp at

him. It caught Warren on the chest, and, smashing, bespattered him with flaming oil, which burned his neck and hands severely and arrested his advance on the mutinous officer. At this juncture, I raised my pistol and fired at the fellow. My bullet went through the fleshy part of his thigh and caused him to drop to the deck and when Mr. Starbuck and the watch came running up, I ordered them to place Montague in irons and confine him.

“Warren was standing by the cabin-trunk in a dazed condition and holding his burnt hands. I don’t think he realized what had happened and he suffered me to lead him below like a frightened child. I got him to his bed with the help of the colored steward, undressed him, and bandaged his burnt hands and neck with lint saturated in Carron oil. I could see that his fever was raging violently and that he was bereft of his senses thereby. I became terribly afraid that he had contracted some Asiatic plague which I am unable to combat.

“I had just left my husband in charge of George, to check the ship’s position on the chart—for I am the only navigator on the ship—when Mr. Starbuck ran below.

“‘I think these junks are closing in on us, ma’am,’ he said. ‘I can hear the splashing of their sweeps. What d’ye think we’d better do?’

“‘I don’t know,’ I replied in consternation. ‘What do you suggest?’

“‘If you leave it to me, ma’am,’ he said in his calm Downeast drawl, ‘why, I’d jest plank a couple of shots in ’em to let ’em sheer off.’ Womanlike I demurred at the horrid thought of taking human life.

“‘Fire two shots in their direction,’ I suggested, ‘but do not aim to destroy unless they attack us.’

A minute or two after he left me the ship trembled to the discharge of cannon, and following the explosion came an outburst of fiendish yelling and other discordancies across the calm water which made me shudder. I ran up on deck and saw several junks on both sides of us with torches, colored flares and paper lanterns aglow and much yelling, and sounds of horns, rattles, bells and drums, coming from the people aboard of them. Sighting Mr. Starbuck coming aft I asked, ‘Did you fire into them?’

“‘No,’ he answered calmly, ‘but I reckon we’d better. They’re getting ready to attack. That’s their method of scaring us—that hullabaloo.’

“‘I’ll put you in charge to repel these pirates,’ I said, ‘and I will stand by here and tend to the ship.’



Knowing how to steer, I relieved the man at the idle wheel and told him to report to the second mate for orders.

“Knowing how to steer, I relieved the man at the idle wheel and told him to report to the second mate for orders. Mr. Starbuck had all hands armed; the cook had his kettles filled with boiling water and stood ready to ladle it over any pirates attempting to board, while two rifle-men were posted in the fore and mizzen tops for the purpose of bringing down the Chinese commanders or helmsmen. The sky was inky black and there wasn’t a breath of wind.

“As the junks approached us under oars, our two cannons, loaded with nails, bolts and scraps of iron, were fired into the leading craft. As long as I live, I shall never forget the screaming and shrieking that ensued. It made me sick and faint and I had to clutch hard on the wheel-spokes to keep from falling. The junks wavered in their attack and pulled out of range.

“‘They’ll come at us with a rush next time,’ said Mr. Starbuck, who seemed to be in his element. ‘More junks and boats are showing up. There must be twenty or thirty craft around us by now.’

“It began to rain at this juncture, and the falling barometer, the brooding skies and the sultry atmosphere brought to mind the distich which Warren often

quoted . . .

*When the rain's before the wind,
Topsail sheets and halliards mind!*

Wind was all that could save us now and I prayed fervently to God that it might come and prevent the slaughter which was about to take place.

“At three in the morning the junks closed in again and a rush towards us was made by a number of smaller boats crowded with men. Our cannons were discharged many times, but soon the boats were alongside and flaming balls of bitumen and pots containing fluids which gave off a vile stench, began to fall on our decks. Our men fired their muskets and pistols and hove ballast rocks down on the Chinamen swarming up the ship's sides, but a number of pirates gained our fore-rigging and thrust at our sailors with pikes and swords.

In the smoke and horrid reek befogging the decks. I could not tell what was happening, and in a state of terrible excitement I stood at the wheel endeavouring to remain calm and collected and praying to God meanwhile. Then watching the sluggish swinging of the compass needle, a cold draught fanned my loosened hair over my face and I heard the sails slatting aloft. Frenziedly rolling the wheel over to put the ship before it, I screamed as loud as I could to be heard above the din of fighting. ‘Square the cross-jack yard! Square the cross-jack yard!’

“Mr. Starbuck came racing up with a pistol in one hand and a cutlass in the other, and he must have thought by my excited screaming that I was being attacked.

“‘Square the yards!’ I screeched at him. ‘The wind's come.’ He whirled around and soon his powerful voice was booming in the canvas. ‘Square the cross-jack yard! Port watch to the mizzen braces! Starboard watch to the main! Round 'em in, my sons!’

“The wind came in a heavy squall which burst the main-royal as if it had been made of cotton sheeting and the *Sea Wind* rapidly gathered headway. The junks and boats to port and starboard slipped astern in the gloom as we raced off before the squall and the air was full of rain, while the hissing of the wind along the water muffled the shouts of the pirates as we drove past. A great craft ahead of us was struck by our projecting anchors and I saw her mast and sails crash down. Then came a staggering shock; the *Sea Wind* seemed to hesitate in her stride, and then she stormed on into the night while shrieks sounded in the blackness and mingled with the whine of the wind in our rigging. Starbuck ran aft and peered over the taff-rail. ‘We've run over one of them boats and stove

'em down,' he shouted. 'I can see the beggars coming up under her counter.' I shuddered and was glad when a sailor relieved me at the wheel.

"So here I am now with my husband dreadfully ill and this big dipper in my charge. Starbuck is no navigator, but he is an experienced seaman and can handle the ship insofar as the sails are concerned and I have made up my mind to navigate her to London. There is too much at stake to do anything else. We must keep on if only for the honor of the ship. I am placing my faith and trust in God.

"We made the Paracels at noon to-day and I held to the westward of them that we might keep the Cochin China coast close aboard and work south in the land breezes which come off them after sun-down. The Monsoon is very fickle but we are making the best of it.

June 16th. Warren's temperature rose again this morning and he became violently delirious and attempted to get out of his bed. It took the combined strength of George and me to prevent him, and when the fit passed, Warren collapsed. I am trying to diagnose his case but a study of the Shipmaster's Medical Guide fails to enlighten me very much. I do not know what is wrong with him, but I am doing the best I know how. After the attack of delirium, I prayed to God on my knees beside Warren's bed, and the poor steward remarked, 'Dat's right. Mis' Cap'en. I reckon yo's done wise to ax de Good Lawd fo' help an' guidance. I reckon He'll do a pow'ful lot fo' a good missy like yo' 'n I reckon I'll jest go in mah pantry an' make a li'l prayer maself.' Even the humble and despised son of Ham recognizes the power of supplication to the Almighty, yet strong, self-willed men like my dear husband scoff at these things in the pride of their health and strength. Alas! my heart aches for him now.

"The man Montague asked to see me this afternoon and accompanied by Mr. Starbuck I went to where he was confined. He told me that he regretted his actions and would not deny that he was signalling to the junks. I asked him why he did so. Surely, he, a white man, was not in league with Chinese pirates to loot a British Colonial ship?

"He replied that he wasn't, but, while we were loading in Foo-Chow, a Chinese merchant, with whom he was acquainted, interviewed him and enlisted his aid to recover a number of valuable and ancient manuscripts and silks which had been stolen from a temple up-country and which were being smuggled off to London in the *Sea Wind*. The ship was to be tracked by junks and mandarin-boats and he was to do what he could to prevent the relics from getting out of China. The fellow confessed brazenly that he had tried to put the ship ashore on

certain uncharted rocks when coming out of the Min River, but Captain Ellis was too watchful.

“‘And you would permit this ship to be looted and all of us murdered for the reward you might secure? You—a white man?’ I exclaimed indignantly.

“He smiled cynically. ‘As to being murdered—I do not think *you* would have run that danger,’ he replied coolly. ‘Looting the ship, however, would have been but a *quid pro quo* for the manner in which Europeans have been looting and thieving the sacred relics and histories from the temples of these people since the Chinese opened their country to foreign intercourse. I know the Chinese and they have my sympathy.’

“I confess the man had me puzzled for there was reason and truth in what he said. ‘What do you want now?’ I asked—somewhat meekly, for I felt that Warren had been engaged in a nefarious contract with that Da Runha fellow.

“I can’t do anything about that box of stuff now,’ he said, ‘so we’ll permit it to go. However, you’ll need my services to pilot the ship down the South China Sea so why not release me and forget it?’

“Young Mr. Starbuck forgot himself at this cool suggestion and vowed he would see Montague hanging from the gallows for a villainous pirate. ‘I believe you p’izened the Old Man, you hound,’ accused the second mate. ‘What did you do to him?’

“The suggestion struck me all of a heap for I hadn’t thought of this possibility. I scanned Montague’s face for a sign of guilt but his face was as impassive as a Chinaman’s and a sardonic smile flickered in mouth and eyes. Starbuck became angry and turned to me. ‘If you’ll leave this joker in my hands, ma’am, I’ll get the truth out of him. He’ll be ready to talk after a spell of being triced up by the thumbs to a shear-pole in the weather-rigging.

“‘No,’ I said firmly, ‘but if Captain Ellis dies, this man will die also.’ I meant every word that I spoke though I had no notion of how I would carry out such an appalling act of revenge. It was most un-Christian, but then, I love my husband.

“The man lounged on the sails in the locker and grinned at my threat. ‘If you don’t enlist my aid, ma’am,’ he said significantly, ‘this ship will never pass through Sunda Straits.’

“My determination was aroused. ‘She’ll pass through,’ I said grimly, ‘and without your help.’ And I left him lolling in his manacles.

“The wind is very light and baffling. Raised the Annam Coast this afternoon and stood in to pick up the land draught after sun-down. There seems to be a strong current running which sets the ship to the eastward. I am

confident of my navigational abilities but I'm very shaky on calculating the set and rate of tides and currents. The Sailing Directions give one but little information on this point and I do not know what to allow when setting a course to be steered. I notice the ship is not making her courses good. It must be this unknown current.

“Warren seems easier to-night and his temperature has gone down a little. I have been considering running in to Canton or Singapore and securing medical aid, but to-night Warren is sleeping more restfully and my determination to keep on is encouraged. I wonder if Montague really poisoned him?”

“*June 22nd.* I find it difficult to keep up a daily entry in my diary. I have so much to do now that I have but little time to myself. Warren must be attended to, day and night. I must wind the chronometers. Observations of the sun for longitude and latitude must be taken daily and the ship's position calculated thereby, and sometimes I take a star sight for latitude in the early morning. Bearings of rocks and islands must be secured and plotted on the chart when sighted. I have a lead's-man always in the channels ready to take a cast whenever necessary. The log-book must be written up daily and all courses have to be corrected from the various errors which affect the compass. This last task is something which worries me considerably. The ship does not make her courses good and I am considerably exercised thereby. To be beating about against head winds in a badly-charted sea sprinkled over with horrid reefs and islands in thousands, with unknown currents twisting the ship from her course, is a very trying experience.

“I give Mr. Starbuck or Mr. McKinnon the carpenter whom I have appointed as second mate a course to steer which I know, if the wind holds, will require possibly six or eight hours to run. I go below, attend to Warren, and then lay me down for some sorely needed sleep. For an hour or two, maybe, I am in deep slumber when I am aroused by either of the officers with the word that the wind has gone ahead and the ship is two or three points off the course I set. I rub the sleep out of my eyes and stagger to the chart to find that a wretched cluster of reefs will await our coming if we hold on our present direction.

“So I go to work and lay off a new course to suit the direction of the wind blowing. Scarce am I composed in sleep and I am once more called. ‘The wind is veering aft, ma'am. What's the course, ma'am?’”

“I have had this kind of thing continuously for the past seven days and I am fearful that my health will break down, I shall be thankful to see Java Head astern and an end to this anxious navigation, but I would sooner endure than accept the services of the treacherous fellow confined in the sail-room.

“Starbuck and McKinnon are driving the ship in excellent fashion. Their vigilance and zeal could not be excelled and they never lose an opportunity to

pile on canvas.

June 27th. I have been too fatigued and excited to write up my diary for the past five days and it is only now that I feel calm enough to record coherently some of the nerve-racking happenings of this week. The Sailing Directions have defined some of the currents in this region with positive accuracy and have assured navigators that they can be depended upon to act as recorded by survey. I have made compass corrections according to this information and would lay a course to pass a reef or island at, say, five miles off. Invariably, I would find the ship too close or too far off when the place was reached—in spite of the most careful steering and the strictest attention to leeway, tidal and current set. This strange behaviour made me nervous and I could see that Mr. Starbuck and the seamen were becoming dubious as to my ability to navigate.

“The climax came last night when Starbuck reported breakers dead ahead. It was black dark, the wind was blowing fresh and the ship was sailing close-hauled on the port tack. I jumped up in alarm, hastily scanned the chart and surmised that we were running down on the Lemay Reefs which the ship should have been well clear of had she made her course as given by me.

“Starbuck was in the companion-way awaiting orders and I could see he was considerably exercised. ‘What’ll I do, ma’am?’ he was shouting while I was poring over the chart. ‘I’m agoin’ to swing her off! I’m agoin’ to swing her off!’

“‘No! no!’ I almost shrieked. ‘There’s reefs to leeward——’

“‘Well, we can’t weather them prongs ahead—’

“‘Then bring her up and let go the anchors,’ I shouted, ‘Stop her! Do something! We’re ringed with reefs.’

“Sick, frightened and dismayed I ran to Warren’s bed and knelt beside him with his limp hands in mine and waiting for the shock which I felt was coming. I was too confident. I wasn’t competent for the task and my skill was not good enough. I clutched my husband’s hand and breathed a prayer to Him who stilled Galilee and while I prayed, Starbuck was roaring great oaths and thunderous commands and the ship was coming up into the wind with her canvas flogging from the lowered yards. Then I heard the rumble of the anchor chains through the hawse-pipes and the jerking on the windlass-barrels and I realized that my place was on deck.

“In the darkness of the sea around I could discern the white flashes of breaking foam stretching around the ship in a semi-circle. We had just fetched

up in time!

“The crew stripped the canvas off the ship and Mr. Starbuck came to me. ‘What are we going to do now?’ he said—almost sullenly, I thought, for I think he had doubts of my ability.

“‘Let her remain here until day-light,’ I said. The anchors were holding and the wind was flickering light. For the time being we were secure.

“I went below and studied the chart and my courses but could find nothing to account for our error except that it was due to an unknown current setting the ship off to the eastward.

“About an hour later Mr. Starbuck burst unceremoniously into my cabin and his face was glowing with the joy of discovery. ‘Begging your pardon, ma’am,’ he ejaculated, ‘but I’ve found out why the old hooker won’t steer a good course. And here’s the reason.’ He laid an iron bolt before me on the table.

“Puzzled, I picked it up and looked at him dazedly. ‘I’ve just been in to have a yarn with that pirate Montygoon,’ he said grimly and blowing significantly on skinned knuckles, ‘n after I rolled him around some, askin’ for an explanation of why a perfectly good compass sh’d act so crazy in these here parts, he tells me to overhaul our compass. I does, ma’am, and this here is what I finds in the binnacle.’

“I was astounded at the man’s villainy, but in the joyful relief of knowing that my navigation was not at fault, I firmly rejected Mr. Starbuck’s awful suggestions that he be permitted to hang Montague at the mainyard-arm or cast him overboard. No wonder he could prophesy the ship would never pass the Sunda Straits!

“We worked out from our position this morning and my confidence is restored though my nerves are considerably upset. Warren’s fever has abated but he lies in a sort of coma. He recognizes no one but sleeps and dozes all the time without movement. I spoon-feed him with light and strengthening liquids which I have to prepare myself.

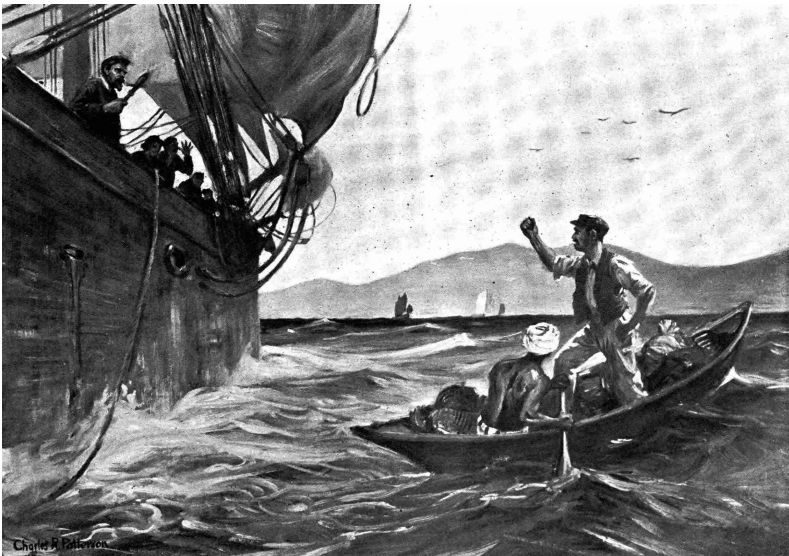
June 30th. We are south of the Natunas and standing off and on the Borneo coast amidst a terrific maze of reefs and islands. I have endured seventeen days of constant strain and am wondering if I will ever get the ship out of this labyrinth. Our compass is all right now and the ship steers her courses as she should. Warren’s condition is unchanged.

“*July 5th.* The continual strain of navigating this ship and attending to Warren is wearing me out. I am losing weight and my face is a fright with pale

cheeks and sunken eyes. I have had but little sleep and have not undressed save to take a bath and change my clothing. I am running up and down the companion until my limbs ache. The sea here-about is a maze of islands and rock-strewn channels with a host of reefs marked 'position doubtful.' The weather is a daily succession of calms under scorching suns with violent squalls and drenching rains careering down from all points of the compass, and there are all manner of currents fighting me which are not defined in the sailing directions. I know that God must be aiding this poor inexperienced woman, for without His aid I could not carry on.

"Warren's condition is unchanged. I wish I knew what to do for him. My determination weakens every now and again and I think of putting into port, but the thought of our contest with the Britishers impels me to keep going.

"*July 10th.* It is with heartfelt thanks to God and feelings of intense relief that I begin this entry in my journal. I should be a very proud woman to have accomplished what I have done so far, but, somehow or other, my jaded brain and body respond to no sense of elation. I brought the *Sea Wind* down the Borneo coast and through the myriad channels successfully—sparing neither myself or the lead's-men. We threaded Gaspar and Sunda Straits without mishap and finally arrived off Anjer Point this morning at 10 o'clock after a run of thirty days from Foo-chow against the Monsoon—which is, as Mr. Starbuck tells me, not at all bad.



He went overside without a word, but when we filled away on our course again, he shouted: "Your husband's got *sudi* poisoning."

“Warren shows some improvement. He has no fever, his pulse and heartbeats are regular, but he lies strangely silent and immobile. The improvement, if such it can be called, impels me to keep going. At Anjer some native boats came out to barter fruit, chickens and eggs. I purchased a number of scraggy-looking fowls to make broths for Warren, also a considerable quantity of eggs which I will have to risk for freshness. When through with our trading, I commanded Mr. Starbuck to bring the man Montague out and ordered him into the boat alongside. I gave the fellow ten dollars that he might not be destitute and bade him depart. He went overside without a word, but when we filled away on our course again, he shouted: ‘Your husband’s got *sudi* poisoning. Time and good nursing will cure him. It’ll have to work out of his system. Don’t worry, madam—you’re a little Bluenose brick, by Jove, but take a tip from this waster and drop that box overboard!’ He favored me with a most elaborate bow and slumped to the bottom of the sampan as a well-aimed belaying-pin, hurled by the quick-tempered Mr. Starbuck, smashed him in the face. I was annoyed at my officer for this display of brutal temper, but said nothing in the tremendous relief I felt at the cause of Warren’s illness.

I knew nothing of the poison which Montague mentioned, but McKinnon, who is a remarkably well-read person, stated that it was a somewhat common Eastern drug which had the effect of causing an intermittent and violent fever. The poison pervaded the system and if given in large doses often rendered its victim either blind or mindless. ‘The Chinese call it the poison that kills the brain,’ he concluded.

“‘Good Heavens!’ I cried in horror. ‘Will my husband be affected that way for life?’

“McKinnon shook his head dubiously. ‘Ah don’t ken, ma’am,’ he said in his slow Scots manner, ‘but ye heard what yon fella said—“Time an’ nursin’ will cure him.” Ah’ve nae doot but what he spoke truth fur he’ll ken a’ about *sudi*. Ah’ve nae doot he ga’ed t’ tae the Captun.’

“If careful attention will save him, Warren shall have it. As for throwing the box overboard, I was about to do so, but after giving the subject careful thought, I determined that Warren should carry out his bargain. After all, the perusal of these heathen writings may be a means of redemption to the Chinese and may aid our missionaries to refute the idolatrous beliefs of these people and lead them to respect and accept the only true Gospel.

“They told us at Anjer that the *Min Ho* had passed out five days previous which gives her a good lead on us but not as much as I expected. The *Roderick Dhu* has not passed out so far though it is possible she may take the Eastern Passage.

“Mr. Starbuck has got the ship’s gear in fine shape for a tremendous drive across the Indian Ocean to the Cape of Good Hope and we are now booming away with the Trade Winds strong and the high land of Java astern.

“*July 14th.* Warren is lamentably weak and wasted, and worst of all, his whole body seems paralysed. He lies in bed without speaking and his eyes are dull and devoid of intelligence. He does not recognize me and I have to feed and attend to him as if he were a baby. It is most pitiful to see him—my big, strong sailor-lover—now a feeble, helpless frame of a man, lacking even the fires of intelligence. It is terrible to know this and I cannot refrain from crying when I permit myself to think about his condition. I am also distraught about the wisdom of continuing the voyage as I have. Possibly, I should have put in to some port and got Warren ashore to hospital. I don’t know but the interest of the owners must be thought of. Warren has undertaken certain conditions on their behalf. He has undertaken to land his cargo in London in a certain time and secured the confidence of the shippers. He has made staggering personal wagers . . . and there is the honor of our ship to be reckoned. I do not want to see Warren Ellis characterized as a ‘Bluenose blow-hard’ and I know that his illness will not be taken as an excuse for failure. ‘Drinking too much,’ will be the verdict and it makes me resolute and determined to win.

“The ship is emerging from a tussle with a series of violent S.E. squalls. Split main-top-gallantsail and blew main-spencer out of the bolt-ropes. Ship logged 300 miles this 24 hours.

July 17th. Strong winds and fine weather. Ship is racing along like a greyhound and made the best run of the passage at noon to-day—logging 340 miles. Mr. McKinnon is combining the duties of second mate and carpenter as we have broken so many studding-sail booms and yards of late that it is necessary for him to make more out of the rough pine poles we secured at Foo-Chow. Warren’s condition is unchanged. He has not shown the least symptom of returning intelligence. I wonder if his brain has been ‘killed’ beyond possibility of recovery. I am fearful.

“*July 20th.* Crossed the meridian of Mauritius to-day—ten days from Anjer—which pleases us. I am wondering what the *Min Ho* and *Roderick Dhu* are doing? I can’t help fretting over poor Warren’s rash wagers. If we lose, it means that his reputation and two thousand dollars of our little nest egg will be gone, and I feel that we can ill afford to pay it in view of my husband’s condition, and, incidentally, that of my own. The *Sea Wind* must reach England before the thirtieth day of September *at the latest.*

“I know the British ships are fast in moderate weather but I think we will gain on them in strong winds as we have greater beam and length and greater

power to carry sail in heavy weather. We are not sparing the ship and she has been reeling off some splendid days' runs. It is a delight to calculate her position each day.

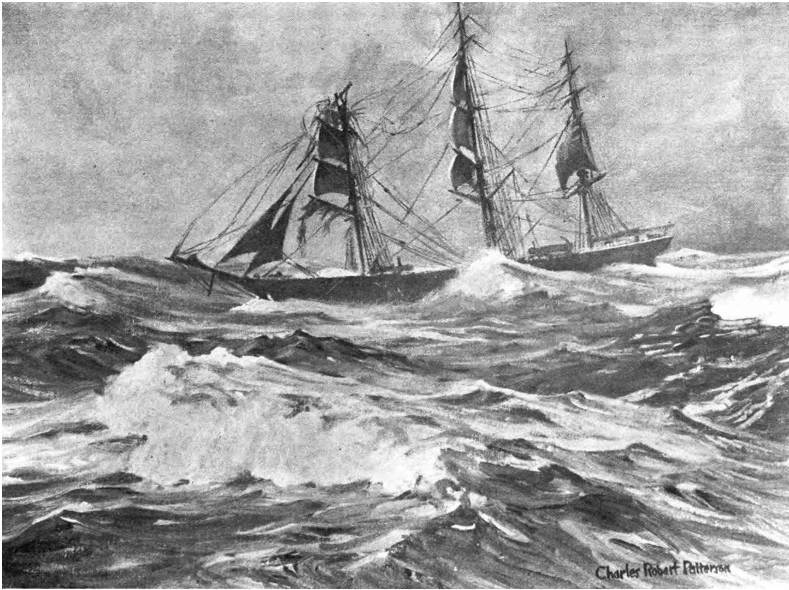
“Warren is much the same. I am beginning to wonder if the change for the better will ever come? In a short time we will be into the stormy latitudes of the Cape of Good Hope and I fear the motion of the ship will be extremely hard upon his weak body.

“*July 23rd.* I have invented a species of hammock-bedstead for Warren. This is in the shape of a swinging cot suspended at the corners from hooks in the beams above. I am having McKinnon rig it up in the large after cabin where there is more room, and to prevent it from swinging too violently with the ship's rolling, I am having him attach springs to ease the motion. The after cabin is very airy having a sky-light and window and I think the change will be beneficial.

“*July 27th.* My swinging-bed has been prepared and we carried Warren into it. George remarked, almost tearfully, ‘dat de poor Cap'en was no heavier dan one dem Anjer chickens.’ My darling is fearfully emaciated and a terrible change from the big powerful fellow who tipped the balance at one hundred and eighty pounds. His eyes scarce showed a sign of interest at the change in beds and it would seem that he has lost all power of feeling. Neither hunger, thirst, nor pain seem to affect his state of coma and he has to be fed and cared for just as if he were an inanimate creature bereft of reason. In feeding him, we have to force his mouth open and pour the food down his throat. He scarce knows how to swallow and all muscle movement seems suspended. He lies like a log with everything dead but his breathing and heart-beats.

“My heart aches when I see him thus and my only consolation is communion with God in prayer and reading of the Holy Word. The fourteenth chapter of John with its comforting message, cheers me and helps to combat the feeling of melancholy and dread of the future which obsesses me at times.

“The ship is galloping West like a blooded horse—her lofty spaces of canvas full with wind which pulls her through the blue rollers of the Indian Ocean with much groaning of timbers and a great wake of foaming water astern. She is sailing most grandly and cannot help but be gaining upon our rivals.



Fearful was encountered rounding the Cape of Good Hope, the wind shifted to the South in violent squalls and the fore-topgallant-mast snapped off at the cap.

August 3rd. I have not been able to write in my diary for several days as we have been experiencing some fearful weather while in the vicinity of the Cape of Good Hope. On the afternoon of August 1, the wind, which had been blowing fresh North-westerly, suddenly shifted to the South in violent squalls. The ship was caught aback and the fore-topgallant-mast snapped off at the cap and came crashing down, while the big foresail split and soon thrashed itself into ribbons of canvas. Mr. Starbuck wore ship and got her off before the wind but the lack of canvas on the foremast failed to keep her ahead of the seas and a great billow tumbled down on the poop—bursting the doors, windows and skylights of the cabin house, smashing the pilot-house door on the starboard side, and breaking the beams of the quarter-boat skids and heaving the boat itself down on the main-deck where it was dashed to pieces.

“I was lying down at the time, resting, and I was rudely awakened by the noise and the water pouring down in to the cabin. My first thought was for Warren and I jumped up in the gloom into water which reached my waist when the ship rolled. Fearful for my husband, I struggled to his swinging-bed, to find that the Chinese chest had broken loose, and, with pieces of plank from the smashed doors, it was charging down on him in the wash of the invading sea and buffeting his prone body.

“Terrified, I threw myself between him and the menacing box and it came at me in the lurches and dealt me several severe blows. The thing seemed to be

imbued with life and it circled around in the swirling water as if trying to evade me and drive at poor Warren, lying helpless on his sodden mattress. The devilish power which appeared to animate the chest, frightened me so that I screamed as I fended its rushes. George and McKinnon came to my rescue and secured the box and they hoisted Warren's cot clear of the water and helped me to change his wet clothing and bedding. During all this terrible time, he lay like a log, inanimate, and I was afraid the shock, and the blows he had received, would kill him.

“As soon as he was made comfortable, I drew a heavy deck-coat over my wet clothes and went up to find it blowing tremendously hard, with a fearful rough sea running and the ship plunging and rolling in it, with much water flooding her decks. While the men were repairing the damage, Mr. Starbuck suggested heaving-to as without foresail we were in constant danger of being pooped by seas breaking over the stern. But I saw that the direction in which the wind was now blowing would give us a splendid opportunity to get past the Cape of Good Hope and I therefore asked Mr. Starbuck if it would be possible to bend another foresail immediately and keep the ship going to the westward. He gave a wry smile as if ashamed of making his former suggestion and said, ‘ma’am, if you want that foresail bent now, it *shall* be bent.’

He had scarce spoken before there was a sharp crack above our heads and we looked up to see the mizzen topsail split. In less than a minute the whole sail was flogging out of the bolt-ropes and threads of canvas were festooning the stays and ropes.

“‘It’s blowing, ma’am,’ remarked Mr. Starbuck calmly.

“‘But in the right direction,’ I added, with a smile. I don’t know what the man thought of me but I felt no fear, and the rushing wind, the gloomy skies, and the wild and angry sea did not dismay me. I crooned my old Sunday School hymn—‘I shall not fear the battle, when Thou art by my side’—and I knew that Almighty God was as near to me in the turbulent wastes of the Agulhas as in our little church at home.

“That it was blowing hard, may be adjudged by the fact that it took thirty-two men about four hours to fasten a new, double-clothed foresail to the yard, and during this period the ship wallowed in the confused seas and took heavy water over both rails which did much damage.

“When the sail was set, the ship leaped to its impulse and fled before the gale ‘like a scared dog,’ and Mr. Starbuck came to me. ‘The hands are pretty well done up, ma’am,’ he said awkwardly. ‘I don’t know how you feel about it,

ma'am, but—er—ah—I think a little somethin' 'ud brace 'em up for heavy weather, ma'am.'

“I knew what he was hinting at, and while I have decided ideas upon the uses of strong drink, yet I realized that it had certain stimulating properties which were invaluable at certain times. I told him to tell George to serve all hands with a glass of rum.

“I would have been wiser to have superintended this matter myself but I trusted my officers. These two, however, saw to it that the men had a harmless ration, but they themselves took an undue allowance. I found this out on coming up to the pilot-house shortly before midnight. Mr. Starbuck, whose watch it was, I came upon lying down on the settee in a state of intoxication and the ship taking care of herself. I was horror-struck and dismayed that my chief aide should have succumbed to temptation at a time when I needed his skill and seamanship.

Blowing my whistle, I sent a seaman to call McKinnon and the man came back with the intelligence that he could not rouse him. Both officers drunk! The ship racing before a gale of wind, in the most treacherous seas in the world and no one but me to guide her wild plungings forward.

“I dragged myself to the poop-break and stood there, clutching the rail with both hands to maintain myself on my feet in that fury of wind and the violent lurching of the vessel. I was exceedingly bitter at the two officers. Whatever Warren's failings were in the matter of drink, he never touched spirits at sea. I am losing all faith in man and developing a pardonable conceit in the ability of woman. With all my worries and frailties, I hadn't succumbed thus far.

“Hour after hour passed with the ship storming tremendously into the night and I stood at the rail, or by the weather mizzen backstays, or in the lee doorway of the pilot-house, watching the straining topsails aloft, and the sky, and compass. Two sailors strained at the lee and weather spokes of the wheel, while the seas crashed over the main-deck bulwarks with thunderous foamings and rendered the deck a whirling maelstrom of water.

“The tricky habits of the winds in these parts called for incessant vigilance and kept me at my post throughout the bitter hours of storm, until one or other of the officers could be trusted to take charge. In a daze of weariness and cold, I became sensible of a slatting in the port leaches of the topsails and grew instantly alert. I blew my whistle and when the watch came aloft along the flooded main-deck, I ordered them to the starboard braces. And just in time! They had no sooner belayed the braces when the wind chopped ahead and began blowing in savage squalls from the S.W. Had I not perceived the coming

shift of wind and trimmed sail, the ship would have been caught aback and dismasted.

“I remained on deck until the grey dawn revealed the tumbling waste of foam-crested ocean and our sea-drenched, sodden fabric of ship. I was chilled, fatigued and utterly exhausted and could stand it no longer. I dropped to the wet planks and a quarter-master picked me up and carried me into the pilot-house, where I laid on the settee opposite from Starbuck and remained there in the stupor of weariness until poor George came to me with a cup of hot coffee. ‘Oh, Missy,’ he was saying plaintively, ‘don’t yo’ go an’ give out. Dis yere niggah suah jump ovah de side ef yo’ done give up an’ die.’

The mate had sobered up meanwhile and was out on deck. After feeling revived by the coffee, I told the steward to send him to see me. I shall never forget Starbuck’s face when he came to the chart-room. It was so abject and pitiful—just like a dog about to be whipped—that I almost lost my resolution to reprimand him.

“‘Mr. Starbuck,’ I said severely, ‘you have been guilty of the greatest crime on shipboard in being drunk and incapable while in charge of the ship. You failed me at a time when I needed you most; you endangered the ship and the lives of every person aboard of her. I can enter this fact in the log-book and such an entry will mean an end to your career as an officer in any British North American ship.’ I paused and awaited his answer.

“Hanging his head, he said tremblingly, ‘Madam, I deserve it. I have failed you and should be punished. I ask for no mercy. You can log me, but that will not prevent me from doing my duty to the best of my ability until the ship is safe in port. I am a mean hound, and I know it.’ His words were so sincere and he seemed so sorry that my heart was softened.

“‘The matter of making an entry against you in the log will stand over for the present,’ I answered, ‘and will depend entirely on your future conduct. Let this be a lesson to you.’

“This great hulking seaman, who seemed devoid of tender emotions, was so affected that he dropped to his knees, and grasping my hand in his great fists, he kissed it. Then rising hastily to his feet he went out into the storm. A minute later I heard his thunderous voice bawling to the watch with a snap that augured well for the future. I am sure I will have no more faithful officer than Mr. Starbuck after this. To McKinnon, I said nothing. He is a carpenter—not an officer.

“*August 6th.* We have rounded the Cape of Good Hope and we are now forging along in the glorious South-East Trade Winds with all the canvas spread

and studding-sails and all possible wind-catchers set. The *Sea Wind* is a veritable moving cloud of sail.

“We had a very rough passage of the Cape and the ship received a furious battering in the cross seas of the Agulhas current. Much destruction was done to her sails and fittings and McKinnon is practically a carpenter once more, in repairing the damage. Mr. Starbuck is inhabiting the pilot-house—sleeping in snatches during the day and keeping the deck at night in response to my desire to lose no opportunity to urge the ship ahead.

“I am very proud of my swinging-bed and I know that it saved Warren much discomfort in the bad weather down South. The violent rolling of the ship would have hurled him out of his standing bed-place in his present helpless state. He seems slightly improved in health. George says he is coming around wonderfully, but, alas, I do not note much improvement.

“The ship is making splendid progress and I should be heartened thereby. But I feel very low-spirited at times and am often seized with sickness and head-aches. These, however, do not last long—for which I am thankful.

August 10th. Warren *is* improving in health. A glimmer of intelligence is beginning to show in his eyes and he can now swallow the liquid foods I am giving him. He can also move his legs and arms slightly. I made a vow that I would not write in my diary until he showed *real* improvement. I am so happy.

“*August 17th.* Sighted Ascension Island this morning—distant ten miles. I had a notion of running in to procure fresh vegetables and things for Warren but am fearful of losing time. A new incentive, above all others, decrees that I must not waste an hour. The ship must be got to port before the end of September. The S.E. Trades are flickering out and we are not making much progress in the light airs.

“*August 22nd.* We crossed the Equator last night and I feel oddly happy to be in North latitude once more and nearing home. Passed several ships of late. We can outsail them all. I wonder where our rivals are! Warren is improving daily, but while I am not so concerned about him now I am more concerned for myself.

“*August 25th.* We carried Warren up on deck to-day and placed him on a bamboo deck-chair under an awning. He made an attempt to speak to-night, but could barely articulate. He held my hand and, by the look in his eyes, I feel that he knows me.

“August 26th. I seem to have but little desire to write up my diary. I feel horribly depressed and tired, even though I have every reason to be happy. Warren is beginning to take solid foods and can move his limbs a little. The glimmer of reason is returning into his eyes and he makes attempts to speak. The ship is moving along in the faint airs, but there are many hours of stagnant calm. I am praying for gale-winds to speed this tardily swimming fabric and also endeavouring to find them by exhaustively studying the wind and current theories of Mr. Maury—whose new sailing directions are now being recognized by ship-masters as being trustworthy and valuable.

“August 27th. The Chinese chest is gone! I am still shaking with the fright and Warren underwent a terrible experience to-day.

“Shortly after noon the cabin was untenanted as I was on deck taking latitude sights and George was forward in the galley. When working up the reckoning, I bethought me that I’d left the Nautical Almanac in the after cabin. On going down the companion to get it, I was surprised to see the room full of smoke and flames and the bottom of Warren’s swinging-bed afire!

“Screaming for help, I rushed to his bed and tore the burning sheet from his body and dragged him off the mattress and on to the floor. Mr. Starbuck leaped down into the cabin with a bucket of water and threw it on to the blaze, and when the smoke and steam subsided, we found that the Chinese chest, which was lashed to the floor at the foot of the swinging cot, was burnt through and the contents—papers, sheep-skins and embroidered silks—were smouldering. ‘The fire started in that there box,’ said Mr. Starbuck.

Recalling that the sinister Chinese chest was responsible for Warren’s illness and that it almost killed him off the Cape, I shouted unthinkingly ‘Get it out of here!’ And while I was attending to my husband, I heard a splash overside and knew that Starbuck had thrown it overboard. I did not intend that he should do that and I ran up on deck and said to him hurriedly, ‘Don’t throw it away! Get it again!’ I ran to the rail in time to see the whitish bulk of the thing slowly sinking down into the blue depths. Mr. Starbuck, with a boat-hook in his hand, looked dismayed and somewhat astonished. ‘I’m sorry I was so hasty, ma’am,’ he said humbly, ‘but I never cal’lated the blame’ thing ’ud sink like that after floating around the cabin off the Cape.’

“It was odd, to say the least, but everything about that box was queer. What made it go on fire? Spontaneous combustion? It may be. I’m wondering if Montague was forewarned of such happenings when he advised me to cast it overside! I did not chide the mate for his hastiness, for, after all, I’m not sorry the heathenish thing is gone.

“Warren was slightly burnt about the feet, but had I not come upon him when I did, he might have died. As it is, I am fearful that the experience of lying helpless amidst the smoke and flame may affect him. I pray God it won’t.

“*August 28th.* I received a joyful surprise this morning when coming down to attend to Warren. He called me by name—‘Ruth’ and when I rushed to him, overjoyed, he made a feeble grasp at my hand. I bent down and kissed him, with such fervent thankfulness and immediately bethought myself that thanks were due to the Master of all. Beside Warren’s bed, I dropped on my knees and acknowledged God’s mercy to us both.

“We picked up the first breath of the North-East Trades this morning and Mr. Starbuck has the ship dressed in all the canvas possible. I think my study of Mr. Maury’s theories have been of some account, though I know that Warren never made use of them. Mr. Starbuck says I have made a quick drift over the doldrums. I am so anxious to get to port that I’m willing to try any possible expedient for hastening the progress of the ship,

“*August 29th.* The N.E. Trades are fitful and Mr. Starbuck must think I am a terrible nuisance. I am on deck, off and on, day and night, and questioning the why and wherefore of the canvas spread or not spread.

“Warren is coming around splendidly. The color is showing in his wan cheeks and he is filling out a little. He can mutter a few words now, but there are blanks in his mind which show that the poison is still in control.

“I am feeling a little better but am obsessed by a desire to get to London. I pray God to send us strong Trade Winds that we might speed on our way.

September 6th. The Trades have been blowing grandly and I have spent much time on deck watching the ship race through the water to their impulse. Many studding-sail booms have carried away, but luckily we have plenty of spare ones—though, at the rate we are breaking them, there soon won’t be any left. I have imbued the officers and men with my desire for speed and nothing can exceed their zeal. There is no growling from our large crew, at the continual round of trimming yards, sweating on halliards and sheets, and shifting studding-sails over—work which keeps them busy night and day—and often in their watches below. There are some rough characters among the men—fellows whose nature it is to rebel at authority but I find these to be my best seamen and the most willing.

“Warren is regaining command of all his faculties very slowly. He does not speak but while I sit with him, he reaches for my hand, and strokes it feebly. I asked him to-day if he would like me to read to him. He nodded, and when I

brought him up a selection of books to choose from, he waved them away and traced the word 'Bible' on the blanket covering him.

"I brought the Good Book on deck and read aloud the twenty-third Psalm and other heartening chapters and when I looked up I saw the tears running down his cheeks. And I must needs cry with him with a heart at once happy and anxious. Happy in the thought that my dear husband is recovering and showing evidences of a new disposition, and anxious for my own condition. I pray that our brave winds will hold.

"*September 26th.* I have not written in my diary for weeks as I have been too unsettled in mind to do so. We have been carrying sail to the limit and urging the ship on like a spurred horse. And I must admit she has responded nobly for we are now up in the stormy North Atlantic and standing in for the British Channel. A cast of the lead an hour ago gave me seventy fathoms with sand and shell bottom and the Lizard Light should be in sight some time to-night.

"My navigational anxieties are returning with the coming of the ship into narrow waters and I must keep the deck a great deal. Warren's eyes express his anxiety when I visit him, and I know he fully realizes what I am doing. He understands all things perfectly now, but he seems unable to recover his powers of speech. He often writes his thoughts and desires on paper and when I told him of our position in Channel, he wrote; 'Get ship into Falmouth and take a pilot. You can't stand it.' I have a notion to do as he suggests as I hardly feel equal to the task of taking the ship up Channel.

September 27th. It came away thick and rainy and we did not sight the Lizard, but a fisherman, at eight this morning, gave us the position of the Lizard Light as bearing W.N.W. distant fourteen miles. It is blowing fresh from the S.W. and the *Sea Wind* is plunging and roaring through the wetness and the short Channel seas, with royal studding-sails set and everything swelling. The log has given us hourly speeds of sixteen knots at times. I have decided to hold on to Dungeness and not to bother about Falmouth.

"Much traffic in Channel and I am amused at some of the ships we are passing being snugged down to topsails, while we are carrying almost everything. Of course, we carry away gear and canvas quite often but we have a big enough crew to repair damages quickly and this helps in carrying sail. The anchors are over the bows and the towing hawsers are ready. Sighted the lights on the Isle of Wight to-night and fixed our position nicely by four point and cross bearings. Must get ashore to-morrow at all costs and I have told Mr. Starbuck to drive the ship for all she is worth. The lookouts are doubled and all hands are ordered to stand-by. I think Starbuck understands, for nothing can

exceed his zeal. He is on deck day and night. I will make no entry in the log against him. He is young and will have learnt his lesson. I wonder if the *Min Ho* and *Roderick Dhu* are ahead of us? I am too excited and nervous to think about them. I wish poor Warren hadn't made that foolish wager. I can't write more as I cannot think coherently.

“*September 28th.* We passed ahead of a ship at three this morning which was reducing sail to pick up the Dungeness pilot. Starbuck says it was the *Min Ho* and he called me from the chart-house to look at her. Our men were aloft preparing to haul the studding-sails down, that we might be able to pick up the pilot. ‘Keep the sail on her, Mr. Starbuck,’ I said, in a fever of excitement. ‘We must get the pilot first. Can you do that?’

“He nodded grimly. ‘Leave it to me, ma’am,’ he said. ‘I’ll get the pilot aboard with all the kites flying.’

“Burning blue lights and firing rockets, we rushed towards the little Pilot Cutter which was answering our signals and bore down on her like a pillar of cloud swooping out of the dawn. Then, by some marvellous manoeuvring, Mr. Starbuck took the way off the ship and the pilot came over the rail to the accompaniment of flogging and slatting sails and sheer pandemonium aloft. He stood by the rail amazed and fully expecting to see the masts crashing down, but Mr. Starbuck soon reduced order out of chaos and the light of the dawn revealed our seamen straining at the braces and sheets and mast-heading the royal and topgallant-yards to rousing shouts and chanteys. Studding-sails were trailing over the stays and thundering in the fresh breeze—some flogging into rags—but men soon scampered aloft to clear them and replace the broken yards and booms with the last of our spare spars. In fact, for studding-sail yards, we had to use long boat oars. In a few minutes we were booming up Channel again with the braces strung and the gear coiled down.

The pilot—a stout, rubicund Englishman—stepped up to Mr. Starbuck and expressed his astonishment and admiration, with a blasphemous oath. ‘By ——, Cap’en, that’s Bluenose fashion all right. Ain’t one man in a thousand could do that and get her underway again, without having his three t’gellent-m’sts about his ears. Smart work. I calls it. Where you from?’

“‘Foo-Chow, Mister, and we’re in a hurry,’ answered Starbuck. ‘Any tea ships in from China yet?’

“I hovered towards the pilot and my heart was in my mouth awaiting his reply. Had I made a good passage? I listened with bated breath. The man chewed irritatingly on a quid of tobacco and he seemed still dazed with

astonishment. At last he spoke. ‘You’re the fust, so far, Cap’en. No China tea ships passed in yet.’

“Oh, joy! I could have thrown my arms around that homely old fellow’s neck and kissed him. The first ship from China! We had beaten the fleet and the wager would be ours! I was almost carried away in the ecstasy of victory!

“The pilot took charge of the *Sea Wind* then and kept her away for the Downs, and he was talking to Mr. Starbuck when I approached.

“‘Your wife, Cap’en?’ he asked the mate, at the same time lifting his cap and bowing to me.

“‘No, sir,’ replied Starbuck. ‘This is Mrs. Ellis, the captain’s wife, and the *real* master of the ship. I am the acting mate; the captain is ill, and Mrs. Ellis has navigated the ship from China to here.’

“The Englishman smothered an oath of surprise. ‘Well, by—beggin’ your pardon, ma’am, but that’s astonishin’—most astonishin’! Sailed her from China and licked the fleet—*Min Ho*, *Tea Taster*, *Roderick Dhu* and the rest of the crack packets? Well, I be—beg your pardon, ma’am, but that’s most astonishin’! I’m thinkin’ if the ladies take to sailin’ the Bluenose clippers, us Englishmen’ll be nowheres!’

“I smiled an acknowledgment of his compliment and glanced anxiously to the westward, where the *Min Ho* was coming along. ‘There’s one of our rivals, Pilot,’ I said. ‘There’s a hundred dollars for you if you get us docked ahead of her. What about signalling for a tug?’

“The promise of a reward got the pilot all excited. He looked over the side and aloft at the sails and said, ‘By the way this clipper moves through the water, steam ain’t goin’ to help us any. She’ll run down any tug around here.’

“However we hoisted a signal and a paddle-wheel tug came splashing towards us. I told the pilot to engage him and ordered the steamer to follow us until we were ready to be towed. For a long time she was just able to keep pace with us—so fast did we slip along.

“When the North Foreland showed up ahead, we could see ships becalmed and we knew the wind was dropping. The *Min Ho*, about two miles astern, was in tow of a large and powerful steamer and her crew were quickly stripping the sail off her. This made me fearfully anxious, as the Britisher was a small, light vessel and would tow very easily, whereas our big ship would make poor headway, in charge of the small steamer we had engaged. ‘Signal another tug for us,’ I told the pilot.

He nodded. 'Yes, ma'am, I been thinkin' that we'll need it and I'm going to t
Hto pickin' up the *Titan* to the west'ard a bit. She's a big new steamer—
most powerful tug in the Thames—and she gen'ly lies west of the
Foreland. If we get her, she'll whip this big clipper up to Lunnon in no time,
ma'am.'

“As we trudged in the wake of the little paddle-boat, the *Min Ho* gradually
diminished the distance between us and there was no sign of the pilot's tug, or
any other tug for that matter. I was on pins and needles and could hardly stand
still with excitement.



Soon the *Min Ho* crept up until she was a cable's length astern of us. . . . I was so mortified and so suspicious of the motives of our pilot.

“Soon the *Min Ho* crept up until she was a cable's length astern of us. Then she loomed up on our starboard quarter, and ten minutes after she pulled past us, so close that we could discern the faces of her officers and crew and hear their cries and shouts of derision. I was so mortified and so suspicious of the motives of our pilot—who I fancied was purposely favoring his countrymen—that I dared not trust myself to remain on deck any longer lest I break down and cry, so I ran down to Warren.

“My chagrin was instantly overcome when his voice was heard calling my name. I flew to him in excessive pleasure and joy. ‘How is everything going, dear?’ he asked—the first time he had spoken since we left the China Seas, so very, very long ago. I sat down beside him and my pleasure showed in my face, while the tears streamed out of my eyes. I was very, very happy, and forgetful of our defeat, and oh, so tired and weary besides. The reaction was coming and I laid my head on Warren’s breast and cried and sobbed, while he patted my hands and kissed my wet face and soothed me with loving words, just as if I were a child.

“The trial I had endured faded away and I seemed to be conscious of nothing but the fact that I was in my husband’s arms and that he was himself again and loving me with gentle caresses and soft words. For how long I remained thus, I cannot tell, but I came back to realities again with Mr. Starbuck’s voice booming down the cabin companion. ‘The *Titan*’s got our hawser, ma’am, and we’re coming up on the *Min Ho* hand over fist. . . .’

“Then came the pilot’s voice: ‘We’ll be in the Blackwall Dock before long, ma’am, and I’ll be pleased to win that little somethin’ you mentioned, ma’am. The *Min Ho* is out of it now, ma’am.’

“At this intelligence, both Warren and I laughed, and I think we both laughed tearfully, and I know we were kissing and talking silly nothings to one another, when Mr. Starbuck again came to the companion bawling in his bull voice: ‘The *Min Ho*’s well astern, ma’am, and we’re the clipper of the China fleet. I’m agoin’ to h’ist the big ensign an’ dress her in flags from truck to scupper with your permission, ma’am!’

When he went away, Warren smoothed my hair and murmured softly; ‘Dear, wonderful little woman! Your husband can only atone by serving you for the rest of his life. You’re too wonderful for words, and you’ve excelled anything I have ever done. I can only humble myself before you and ask your forgiveness.’

“For answer I kissed him happily and stroked his thin, bearded face—colored now with the flush of returning health.

“‘You’ve gone through a terrible ordeal, sweetheart—a terrible ordeal. . . .’ he continued.

“‘It was nothing, dear,’ I said quietly, but my real ordeal—but a happy one—is now to come. I must leave you as soon as the ship docks. . . .’

“He stared at me in blank amaze and gradually an expression of fear and pain showed in his face. ‘Are you going to abandon me, Ruth?’ he asked

tremblingly.

“I smiled my reassurance and patted his hair. ‘For a little while, darling, and then. . .’

“‘And then?’ Puzzled and half-fearful, he seemed to await my answer. —‘There will be two of us to take care of you,’ I murmured and buried my head on his shoulder.

“For a full minute he did not utter a word or make a motion and then I felt his arms slipping around me in a feeble embrace and his voice murmuring, ‘My darling!’”

Grandma raised her eyes from the old record and gazed pensively out of the window. For some time none of us spoke or even moved. My sister’s eyes were misty and I felt that I was going to blubber like a baby. I felt very mean and small. Then the old lady adjusted her glasses and glanced at the final entry in her diary ere closing the book. “We docked at eight that evening, after a passage of one hundred and ten days from Foo-Chow, and at four next morning, your father, Warren Babcock Ellis, was born at the Bromley Private Hospital, London.”

THE END

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Mis-spelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

Illustrations have been relocated due to using a non-page layout.

When nested quoting was encountered, nested double quotes were changed to single quotes.

A cover was created for this ebook which is placed in the public domain.

[The end of *Tea From China* by Frederick William Wallace]