

Terrific struggle with big typhoon 1902:

Alice A Leigh arrived last evening from Orient in battered and badly damaged condition.

A thrilling story of a struggle with the elements after leaving Shanghai for the Royal roads is told by Capt. Davison, of the British four mastered ship Alice A Leigh, which arrived last evening.

Between one hundred and fifty and two hundred miles off Yokohama the ship was struck by a typhoon, which almost completely disabled her and left her wallowing in a high sea with her rigging, tackle, yards and broken spars swinging to and fro in such a manner that for about 24 hours her crew had to stand by and await eventualities, unable to do a thing on deck. In the meanwhile the water which had poured into the No. 2 hatches mud ballast and with every roll of the ship was tossing about in the hold. The ship began to list, and for three hours kept going over on her side. The crew could see her gradually careen over, but could do nothing to stay her. But the sea became calmer, and as it did the danger lessened. The ship hung at an angle of about thirty degrees, until about the second day after the big blow, when the crew began to right her. Captain Davison says that the typhoon was encountered on the 3rd of last month. He saw it approach, and he made no attempt to run clear of it. On the contrary, he had everything made fast aboard, hoisted the storm sails and prepared for the worst. The wind arose at 8 p.m., and an hour later it was raining torrents, and the wind had increased in fury. But this storm subsided some-what, and the wind shifted from a southerly quarter to the northeast. At 7 o'clock next morning the ship was struggling with a terrific typhoon. The storm sails were blown to atoms, and things were flying about on deck, the captain remarks, "as though we were celebrating the fourth in a most riotous manner". The centre of the storm soon passed, but by this time the ships rigging was in a deplorable condition. The wind blew with unabated force for four hours. The main royal mast, mizzen top gallant mast, mizzen mast head, the top gallant masts, the jib top gallant masts, the spanker boom, gaff and numerous other parts of the upper works were flying in all directions, hanging on in instances by a stray rope or stay. Some of the timbers were so heavy that they damaged almost everything with which they came in contact. The deck was badly battered in consequence and the captain is of the opinion that it was in this way that No. 2 hatch was stove in. The decks were full of water almost continuously during the severest of the typhoon. Sea after sea of tremendous dimensions broke over the vessel and wonder it is that she ever reached part.

It was on a Thursday evening that the wind first came on, and it was Saturday before the crew could do anything towards trimming the vessel, and then it took ten days before the ship could even be got in condition to make head-way. The full extent of the damages the captain is unable to estimate at present but they will probably be surveyed before the ship leaves port.

The Alice A Leigh is a steel vessel of 2817 tons register. She brings as passengers Mrs Davison the wife of the skipper and his two little boys.

