

DODGED THE RUSSIANS AND GOT JAPANESE GOLD

The Sagami in from the Far East
with a Yarn to Spin.

THREE SUICIDES ON THE TRIP

Chinese Crew Thought the Steamer
Unlucky, but Capt. Littlehales's
Tale Is All of Good Fortune.

With Capt. Fred Littlehales on the bridge, the Oriental steamship Sagami, which fooled all the Russian scout ships and successfully landed a full cargo of contraband to the Japanese agents at Chemulpho and afterward got away for New York with a full cargo and a Chinese crew of sailors and firemen, steamed around Sandy Hook early yesterday morning and anchored off the Statue of Liberty.

Capt. Littlehales reported the loss of three Chinamen by suicide and another Chinaman as a result of an engine-room accident. In their places when the reporters boarded the big Far Easter there was on deck a quartet of swarthy Arabs, fulfilling their religious obligations by taking a bath.

For twenty-five years Capt. Littlehales has been running between New York and the Far East, and yesterday he said that for the first time in his long career he had to report the death of three Orientals by suicide on a vessel of which he had command.

One of the thirty-five Chinamen still on the Sagami sent the Captain word just before he arrived in Quarantine that unless he had less work to do he, too, would kill himself. This Chinaman, whose name is Ching Chow, was only bluffing, however, and yesterday afternoon he was working harder than ever, trying to make the decks of the Sagami shine.

The only reason that Capt. Littlehales could assign for the suicide of his three Chinese firemen was that, like others of their race, they were extremely superstitious, and then the skipper reluctantly admitted that his ship—"and she's as safe a craft as sails the sea," he said—was known among the Chinese sailors as a vessel that was liable to get into trouble any time. "The only trouble she ever had," explained the skipper, "was when she struck rough weather on her maiden trip and took a notion to get on her beam ends."

The Sagami left Singapore June 24, and it was between that time and her arrival at Suez, July 22, that the three firemen jumped into the sea. The first of the three to go was Leong Chow of Shanghai. He dived off the railing between midnight and sunrise of June 28. The Captain heard about it just before breakfast, when Hoo Wing, another fireman, told him Leong was no more.

"Hoo grinned like an ape, and didn't seem to care a snap," said Capt. Littlehales yesterday.

After this all went well until July 7, when the fireroom was deprived of another Chinaman. Chow Lee was lost, but not by suicide. The crew were taking the ashes from under the boilers, and the big ash bucket fell on Chow's head. He was buried at sea.

On July 14—a very hot day—Tye Kok and Sing Ski decided to walk back home or something. Tye jumped into the sea just before sunrise, and it was again a full hour before a smiling Oriental calmly announced to the commander that he was short still another fireman.

About 10 o'clock Sing Ski dived over the rail. The skipper saw him go and made a desperate attempt to get him back. The Sagami stopped and two lifeboats were lowered, but they failed to find Sing Ski.

After this the skipper and his English officers kept a keen watch on all of the crew, and there were no more deaths from suicide or other causes.

When she touched at Suez, the Sagami shipped the four Arabs to take the places of the Chinamen. Capt. Littlehales says one Arab can do as much work as two Chinamen.

After he finished telling about his Chinamen Capt. Littlehales spun a yarn about his voyage to Chemulpho.

"I touched at Shanghai, a neutral port," he said, "having on board a cargo of bridge and railroad steel, for the Japanese at Chemulpho. Of course I was going to Chemulpho anyhow, and had only touched at Shanghai, as is the custom with all vessels in the Oriental trade. Imagine my surprise when, soon after I anchored in Shanghai Harbor, I was boarded by a trim-looking little Japanese gentleman who informed me that he was Mr. Katsura, one of the Mikado's agents.

He asked me if I was going to Chemulpho, and of course I quickly caught on that something was in the air and nonchalantly answered 'Certainly not.' Then the affable Mr. Katsura informed me that if I would change my mind he'd give me \$1,000 and pay my wife's hotel expenses at Shanghai while I was gone.

"Naturally, I told him I'd make the trip under those conditions even knowing that another Britisher—the Knight Commander—loaded with a cargo exactly like mine, had been sunk by the Russians only a few weeks before. We struck a bargain, and I went to my cabin to tell Mrs. Littlehales of the good luck that had come our way. And what do you think? Instead of congratulating me, she looked at me and said, 'Why didn't you charge him two thousand? He'd have paid it just as quickly.'

"The next day I sailed for Chemulpho, and just before I was sighted off that port I ran alongside the British warship Bramble. The Bramble had a chip on her shoulder, and, learning my mission, her commander told me to fall in behind. Then, with the Bramble leading, the old Sagami entered the port, discharged her cargo, then skinned out again, and soon after that sailed for New York, and here we are."

While Capt. Littlehales was telling of his voyage fifteen imperial Japanese poodles were scampering about in his cabin. One of them has been with the Sagami several years, and has been in New York twice before. The other fourteen are to be on exhibition all this week at Pier 33, at the foot of Market Street. There would have been sixteen, but two of them followed the example of the Chinamen and committed suicide while the Sagami was plowing her way through the Mediterranean.