

**Report from the Canton Register  
(Vol. 8 No. 15), Tuesday, April 14,  
1835)**

We extract the following notices, concerning the SYLPH [...] in the China sea, from the Singapore chronicle and supplement of the 21st and 23rd of february.'

During the week a meeting of the agents for Branches of Calcutta Insurance offices established at Singapore was convened and held at the request of Captain Wallace commander of the bark *Sylph* to take into consideration what was best to be done with the wreck. We understand that it has been determined that the wreck should be kept possession of on account of the underwriters being likely to be more beneficial for their interests than disposing of the vessel under current circumstances. Captain Wallace is of opinion that when the southerly monsoon sets in, and the sea becomes smooth, there will be no insurmountable difficulty in floating the *Sylph* back to Singapore at a moderate expense, and should the expectations now entertained of her then being in a state fit to repair not be realized, it is thought she would still make a good break up from the copper on her bottom and the large quantity of copper fastenings in her, and that a sum of three to four thousand dollars might be obtained. This appears to be a

very advantageous arrangement for the underwriters, the more so as the government both of this place and Rhio, so long as the wreck continues the property of the underwriters are disposed to grant protection to the hull, the one by sea and the other by land, but which would most probably be withdrawn on its becoming the property of private individuals. We learn also that the subject of salvage was submitted by Captain Wallace, and that the meeting had expressed an opinion that one eighth of the value of all property saved should be tendered in full satisfaction of all claims for services rendered by the *Clive*, leaving captain Wallace to make such further equitable arrangements for the adjustment of all other claims in the best manner he could, in order that the Opium may be reshipped for China without delay. The meeting in approbation of captain Wallace's conduct throughout the trying circumstances in which he has been lately placed, and as some compensation for the losses sustained by him has recommended the whole of the Opium to be placed under his disposal remitting the proceeds to the bank of Bengal for the benefit of those concerned. We are pleased to observe so commendable disposition on the part of the mercantile gentlemen who composed this meeting to endeavour to lighten the burdens of

adversity, and although we ourselves are not personally acquainted with captain Wallace, we have materials sufficient in our possession to appreciate his cool, honourable, and intrepid bearing through the disastrous exigency of the wreck of the *Sylph*. On the question of salvage it is stated that captain Hawkins of the *Clive* claims *one third* of the amount of all property saved, and refuses the tender of *one eighth* as being an inadequate compensation. The final settlement of the claim has been deferred by captain Hawkins, with his accustomed liberality, until the Opium arrives in China, is sold there, and the returns made to Calcutta. This conduct is certainly very handsome, and the advantages are doubtlessly on the side of the underwriters, as we all know the possession of the property need not have been given up until a proper remuneration had been made after the nature of the services performed had been taken into due consideration, and which, in our humble opinion, might have been arranged at once on the spot by arbitrators according to the equity of the occasion and more to the general satisfaction of the salvors than the present reference to Calcutta agreed upon. Besides, where could an inquiry as to the *labour* and *peril* of the salvors, the *promptitude* and *alacrity* manifested by them, the *value* of the ship and

cargo, and the *degree* of danger incurred, be so properly instituted as at the place where the respective parties as well as property are, and where all the above material points could be ascertained by the evidence of competent witnesses. The hardship falls of course upon the officers and crew of the *Clive*, for unless the underwriters in Calcutta prove liberal and so end the matter, the rate of salvage will have to abide the event of a suit at law determinable no one can tell when, with the additional risk necessarily attached to the issue of all inquiries made and entered into at places so far distant (as Calcutta is) from the scene of their occurrence, that in the event of the rat offered by captain Wallace being considered sufficient by the court, the Salvors would in all probability be liable not only to their own costs but to the costs of the other party:—When the state the *Sylph* was in at the time of the arrival of the *Clive* to her relief, is considered, it will not be denied that her opportune arrival prevented a total abandonment of the vessel. We are informed, that all on board were ready, immediately before the appearance of the *Clive*, to quit the *Sylph* and to trust their chances of reaching, or of being drifted on shore upon a raft which had been prepared for that purpose. Had a little further time elapsed without assistance being rendered, the vessel

would have been abandoned, and her cargo indubitably have become the prey of pirates and the inhabitants of the Islands in the neighbourhood of the wreck. The peril of the Salvors, as well as of those who were rescued, may be conceived from the wreck having taken place upon a lee shore in the height of the north east monsoon completed exposed to the violence of the wind and sea, the *Sylph* forged in shore of the outer rollers apparently bilged and laying on one side with the sea breaking over her poop. In such circumstances to have performed what was done in the first few days during the prevalence of bad weather and heavy seas nothing but the energy and spirit of European seamen would have encountered and overcome with such pre-eminent success, having saved and shipped on board the *Clive* nearly 700 chests of Opium and the ship's stores, and to make room for all of which the men yielded up their accommodations—*One fourth* in place of *one eighth* would in our humble estimation of the merits of the case, not have exceeded the bounds of liberality.