

**THE LAW OF STORMS: THE TRUE
PRINCIPLE OF THE LAW
OF STORMS PRACTICALLY
ARRANGED FOR BOTH
HEMISPHERES**

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The Law of Storms: The True Principle of the Law of Storms Practically Arranged for Both Hemispheres by James Sedgwick

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JAMES SEDGWICK

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THE TRUE PRINCIPLE
OF
THE LAW OF STORMS,

PRACTICALLY

ARRANGED FOR BOTH HEMISPHERES

BY JAMES SEDGWICK,

FORMERLY OF THE HON. EAST INDIA COMPANY'S SERVICE, AND MANY YEARS
MASTER OF SHIPS IN THE INDIA TRADE.

"He maketh the Storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still."

Eighth Edition.

[ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.]

LONDON:

J. D. POTTER, 31, POULTRY, AND 11, KING STREET, TOWER HILL,
SOLE AGENT FOR THE SALE OF ADMIRALTY CHARTS.

1878.

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3, GEORGE'S HALL COURT, E.C.

PREFACE TO THE FIFTH EDITION.

My Treatise on the Law of Storms has now reached a FIFTH EDITION; and so great a success on the part of my little work seems to call for a few remarks from me.

For more than fourteen years the theory of the Law of Storms, as a theory, was favourably received by intelligent nautical men; but, in the course of their practical experience, they discovered that, by assuming a given track in certain latitudes for the progressive motion of the entire meteor, they frequently became involved in a dangerous centre. It was this consideration, stimulated by circumstances which I have mentioned in the introduction to the First Edition, that induced me to study the subject more fully and attentively, and to frame a set of rules, suitable to all occasions, and calculated to prove useful even to the man who might not thoroughly understand the theory.

I am happy to say that my brother seamen have paid me a high compliment by the manner in which they have received my book; and many of them have told me personally that they completely agree with the directions which I have given for avoiding the vortex of a storm. I feel grateful for this encouragement; and I have carefully

revised the present edition of the work, and added a few more pages of matter, which I trust may be found useful and interesting.

Of course, I could not expect universal concurrence. It was only natural that my treatise should excite some difference of opinion. Of this I am far from complaining. I only repeat, that I entertain the most perfect confidence myself as to the accuracy of my views, and of the simple rules which I have laid down; that I am quite content to leave them to the unerring test of experience and time; and that I am only too happy to receive so much support and corroboration from my nautical brethren who speak from their practical knowledge. One of my critics, however, Mr. Piddington, of Calcutta, a theoretical speculator upon the Law of Storms, and who is the author of eighteen publications on the subject, led away by the excess of the zeal with which he appears to have become animated against my book, has insinuated that, on the occasion of the terrible hurricane in which the *Earl of Balcarras* was involved in the Mozambique Channel, in the spring of last year ('54), the ship got into difficulty on account of her commander having had the misfortune to have had my book on board, and to have followed my directions; but I am sure it will amuse my readers when I apprise them that I have a letter from Captain Morris, late commanding the *Earl of Balcarras*, informing me that he had not my book on board at all on that occasion, but that the book which he had was that of Mr. Piddington, my candid and *courteous* critic himself—a fact which I commend to Mr. Piddington's reflections. Captain Morris is good enough to add an expression of his

approval of my little treatise, with which he had since become acquainted.

I have the gratification of being informed by some, who at the outset opposed my theory, that they have since seen reason to change their opinion, and to concur in my views. Many scientific gentlemen of eminence have conveyed to me their approval of the work. I have also to thank several of the public journals for the kind manner in which they have spoken of it. And, in addition to the support which I have received from my nautical brethren generally, I am happy to state that the *Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company* have done me the honour to stamp my book with their favourable notice.

In the autumn of 1852, Mr. R. D. Guthrie, the Nautical Superintendent of the Company, reported on my work, at the request of the Nautical Directors, and the result of that report was, that thirty copies were ordered by the Board to be distributed amongst the Company's Ships. Subsequently, in December, 1853, I had the pleasure of receiving the following communication from Mr. Guthrie:—

*Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company's Office,
122, Leadenhall-street, London, Dec. 14, 1853.*

“DEAR SIR,—The Nautical Committee having had under their consideration Captain Purchase's letter, dated the 22nd of May last, have desired me to forward you the following extract from it:—

(Extract from Captain Purchase's letter.)

“It is my opinion that we were on the N.W. verge of a severe Typhoon, but by acting according to Captain James Sedgwick's “Law of Storms,” I feel satisfied we have escaped much damage.

“I am, &c., &c.,

“(Signed) R. D. GUTHRIE.”

In addition to the distribution of the work amongst their vessels by the *Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company*, I have to state that the *Honourable East India Company*, also, did me the honour to order thirty copies for the use of their ships in India.

I feel that it would be superfluous to add anything to testimony of so valuable and unexceptionable a character. Approval from such quarters, and the fact that my little treatise has now reached a fifth edition, are of course very gratifying to me personally. But, far above any personal sentiments of that kind, is the hope which I entertain, that the result will be to diffuse more widely throughout the profession what I am convinced to be the correct theory of the Law of Storms, and to afford ship-masters a sure and simple guide in escaping the disastrous effects of hurricanes.

JAMES SEDGWICK.

London, September, 1855.

TO THE
ROYAL NAVY & MERCANTILE MARINE
OF
GREAT BRITAIN.

INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST AND
SUBSEQUENT EDITIONS.

THE idea of what I now consider to be the true principle of "The Law of Storms," first presented itself to my mind, in the light of conviction, on my homeward passage from the Mauritius in the latter part of 1851 and the beginning of 1852. During my short detention at the Mauritius in December, 1851, about twenty vessels put in, more or less dismasted. The quantity of damaged cargo landed was immense, in addition to the sacrifice which had been already made of silk, indigo, shell-lac, &c., thrown overboard, in order to make way for getting at the weightier portion of the cargo in the hurricane that prevailed. These ships were all, I believe, first-class; and if the severe shaking which they received was an accurate criterion as to the violence of the storm, Heaven only knows what became of our second-class vessels.

On this, as on similar occasions, I heard many theories, (various, ingenious, and plausible,) advanced on the Law of Storms, but none that in any way satisfied me as correctly defining the true principle. The general opinion seemed to be that the hurricane had caught the ships on its *recurve*, but