

**DUTCH COURAGE  
AND  
OTHER STORIES**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649123537

Dutch courage and other stories by Jack London

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

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**JACK LONDON**

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TO THE  
MAGAZINE



JACK LONDON, SAILOR

## PREFACE

"I've never written a line that I'd be ashamed for my young daughters to read, and I never shall write such a line!"

Thus Jack London, well along in his career. And thus almost any collection of his adventure stories is acceptable to young readers as well as to their elders. So, in sorting over the few manuscripts still unpublished in book form, while most of them were written primarily for boys and girls, I do not hesitate to include as appropriate a tale such as "Whose Business Is to Live."

Number two of the present group, "Typhoon Off the Coast of Japan," is the first story ever written by Jack London for publication. At the age of seventeen he had returned from his deep-water voyage in the sealing schooner *Sophie Sutherland*, and was working thirteen hours a day for forty dollars a month in an

Oakland, California, jute mill. The *San Francisco Call* offered a prize of twenty-five dollars for the best written descriptive article. Jack's mother, Flora London, remembering that he had excelled in his school "compositions," urged him to enter the contest by recalling some happening of his travels. Grammar school, years earlier, had been his sole disciplined education. But his wide reading, worldly experience, and extraordinary powers of observation and correlation, enabled him to command first prize. It is notable that the second and third awards went to students at California and Stanford universities.

Jack never took the trouble to hunt up that old *San Francisco Call* of November 12, 1893; but when I came to write his biography, "The Book of Jack London," I unearthed the issue, and the tale appears intact in my English edition, published in 1921. And now, gathering material for what will be the final Jack London collections, I cannot but think that his first printed story will have unusual interest for his readers of all ages.

The boy Jack's unexpected success in that



virgin venture naturally spurred him to further effort. It was, for one thing, the pleasantest way he had ever earned so much money, even if it lacked the element of physical prowess and danger that had marked those purple days with the oyster pirates, and, later, equally exciting passages with the Fish Patrol. He only waited to catch up on sleep lost while hammering out "Typhoon Off the Coast of Japan," before applying himself to new fiction. That was what was the matter with it: it was sheer fiction in place of the white-hot realism of the "true story" that had brought him distinction. This second venture he afterward termed "gush." It was promptly rejected by the editor of the *Call*. Lacking experience in such matters, Jack could not know why. And it did not occur to him to submit his manuscript elsewhere. His fire was dampened; he gave over writing and continued with the jute mill and innocent social diversion in company with Louis Shattuck and his friends, who had superseded Jack's wilder comrades and hazards of bay- and sea-faring. This period, following the publication of "Typhoon Off the

Coast of Japan," is touched upon in his book "John Barleycorn."

The next that one hears of attempts at writing is when, during his tramping episode, he showed some stories to his aunt, Mrs. Everhard, in St. Joseph, Michigan. And in the ensuing months of that year, 1894, she received other romances mailed at his stopping places along the eastward route, alone or with Kelly's Industrial Army. As yet it had not sunk into his consciousness that his unyouthful knowledge of life in the raw would be the means of success in literature; therefore he discoursed of imaginary things and persons, lords and ladies, days of chivalry and what not—anything but out of his priceless first-hand lore. At the same time, however, he kept a small diary which, in the days when he had found himself, helped in visualizing his tramp life, in "The Road."

The only out and out "juvenile" in the Jack London list prior to his death is "The Cruise of the Dazzler," published in 1902. At that it is a good and authentic maritime study of its kind, and not lacking in honest thrills.

“Tales of the Fish Patrol” comes next as a book for boys; but the happenings told therein are perilous enough to interest many an older reader.

I am often asked which of his books have made the strongest appeal to youth. The impulse is to answer that it depends upon the particular type of youth. As example, there lies before me a letter from a friend: “Ruth (she is eleven) has been reading every book of your husband’s that she can get hold of. She is crazy over the stories. I have bought nearly all of them, but cannot find ‘The Son of the Wolf,’ ‘Moon Face,’ and ‘Michael Brother of Jerry.’ Will you tell me where I can order these?” I have not yet learned Ruth’s favorites; but I smile to myself at thought of the re-reading she may have to do when her mind has more fully developed.

The youth of every country who read Jack London naturally turn to his adventure stories—particularly “The Call of the Wild” and its companion “White Fang,” “The Sea Wolf,” “The Cruise of the Snark,” and my own journal, “The Log of the Snark,” and