

# Single-Handed

## A TRUE STORY OF A HEROIC RESCUE

C. H. CLAUDY

NE hundred and twenty miles an hour actually recorded—then the instruments went out of commission and no one knows whether the tearing air reached a greater speed thereafter. The United States weather bureau pronounced this particular West Indian hurricane "the most severe in the history of Hatteras."

But whatever the speed may have been, it was enough to beat the sea into submission, to raise it in the air and carry it completely over the narrow neck of barren sand which separates Pamlico sound from the Atlantic ocean, and ample enough to sweep the barkentine Priscilla, out of Baltimore for Rio, with a general cargo, far out of the gulf stream, into the "saw teeth" of Hatteras and toward the inhospitable shore.

### A Helpless Bit of Wood.

On the 16th of August, 1899, the gale, not yet at its height, became so violent that Captain Springsteen furling his spanker and upper topsail. But this was of little avail. The foresail was hauled up and furling, two reefs put with infinite difficulty in the mainsail and the lower topsail clewed up, only to be torn bodily from its spars. Next the mainsail ripped away, a flying blotch of dirty white in a deadly smother of grayish spume; a few minutes later and the mainstaysail followed suit.

Then the Priscilla hove to under bare poles, helpless and strengthless, unable to put forth the smallest rag which might lend steerage-way sufficient to clear Cape Hatteras, jutting out there to the west and south, unseen, but terribly well known and feared.

Thursday, the 17th, came. It could not be said to dawn, for the increase in the light was small. Sky there was none, clouds there were none, sea there was none to the eye. A dreadful dirty gray encompassed all. Where air left off and water began was not to be told by looking, and so full was the air of spray and spume and froth and water that breathing itself was difficult.

But now and then a hole, torn in the flying spindrift by an eddy in the blast, showed water—water discolored, a sickly green with yellow blotches of stirred up sand. Instead of the deep emerald black of the ocean, telling the master, the eleven men of his crew, and even his wife and little son, that they were out of the gulf stream and over the shoals which make the "graveyard of the Atlantic," the spot where more ships have gone to their last resting-place than on any other three.

The lead was cast at one hour intervals. Thirty fathoms at five in the morning, twenty-five fathoms at six, twenty fathoms at eight—so it went all day until at eight bells twenty fathoms showed.

"Then," said the master, "I did not sound any more. I knew we were going forward for all hands to prepare to go each man for himself."

It was but a little later that the Priscilla struck, bounded off, tossed a little while on seas mountain high, climbing, a dead weight, one minute to coast down a terrible slide the next—then struck again with a terrific impact, breaking all glass ports and flooding the cabin. The port rigging was cut away to let the masts go. They fell instantly with a crash, heard even above the roar of the hundred-mile gale. Instantly the seas began to sweep the doomed vessel, breaking twenty, thirty feet above the stumps of her masts.

Mrs. Springsteen was swept overboard first, her cry cut short by a breaking wave. The little boy went next—literally torn from his father's arms. By one of those freaks of the sea which are beyond explaining, he was swept far overboard and back again the next minute, and into the cabin, from whence his lifeless body later came ashore. The ship's boy was the next and last to go. The men, with their greater strength, were able to hold on or tie themselves down, and the writhing sea had to resort to other means to get the rest of its victims.

Nor had the despairing sailors long to wait. No structure of wood, be it ever so staunch, could long resist the heavy bombardment of tons of water and being picked up and dashed down on the sandy shoals beneath. Less than half an hour later the hull broke in two, the bow to disintegrate and disappear almost instantly, the after half, on which the ten survivors were congregated, to dash on toward the unseen shore. For more than five hours this situation continued, the captain, grief-stricken at his loss, and the crew, resigned to their fate, clinging to the wreck.

At last the wreck struck for the last time, the grinding and the smashing stopped, and those on board knew that somewhere ahead of them, could they but see it, was the shore.

But they never hoped to reach it.

For the breakers lay between them and the safety they could not see, and the night of terror and struggle had sapped their strength. Three were so badly cut and bruised with flying wreckage that they could not stand; the rest, all but naked, were cold and weak. Boats they had none, ropes they had but few; to make a raft was as impossible as to fly. They could but wait the end.

### The Queries of Rasmus Midgett.

Meanwhile the life-savers on shore were having a time of great anxiety over the amount of territory they must cover and the difficulty in covering any at all. To make headway up or down a heavy beach in a wind is hard at all times, but when the shrieking air carries most of the beach with it, and the sea breaks waist high over the sand, it is almost impossible.

Rasmus S. Midgett, of the Gull Shoal station, started on his patrol south, on horseback, at three in the morning. He had to trust to his horse for direction, for the darkness of the night was impenetrable, and the feeble glow of his lantern would have revealed nothing but the violent water through which his animal struggled, could he have kept it lit. But as he made his slow progress enough light filtered through the clouds to let him discover boxes and barrels and wreckage coming ashore. He knew that meant a wreck somewhere in the neighborhood. The question "Where?" could be solved only by pushing ahead.

It was two miles farther on, after an hour and a half's struggle on the part of his horse, that he finally caught the sound of voices, borne in to him by the wind. He could see nothing of the wreck.

A little later he managed to make out the outline of the half of the hull and saw some black dots moving on it. A hundred yards from the bank of sand on which he stood, water-swept and insecure, the piece of a hull loomed shadowy and indistinct. And Rasmus Midgett had to face alone an opportunity and a question, such as are given to few men to solve.

Should he try to save those black dots alone, and run the risk of losing his life and all chance that they might be saved? Or should he return to the station, call on the rest of the crew and do what would then be easy with Lyle gun and breeches buoy—easy if the wind would let a shot carry?

The final outcome is proof enough that it was no selfish fear of his own life that caused him to hesitate—rather was it a nice balancing of possibilities. If he lost his own life in trying to aid single-handed and alone, he lost also all chance of the life crew's knowing of the wreck in time. If he returned to the station to bring help, it must be three hours before an attempt at rescue could be made—and—would the wreck last three hours?

A problem, truly, and one to be solved with all the force of the worst storm on record breaking and smashing about him, with those choked-off cries for aid in his ears, and only the small and pitiful chance of one man's strength against the strength of the sea and wind before his eyes.

But Rasmus Midgett was not a member of the Gull Shoal station—one of the famous crews of a famous service—for nothing. It took him but a few minutes to realize that there was not one hour of life, let alone three, left in that swiftly dismantling hull. Even as he looked, twenty feet of it disappeared, and another cry of despair told him there was no time to waste.

### One at a Time Through a Hurricane.

He stripped half his clothes from him to be unimpeded. Then, watching his chance, he followed a breaker to its home, shouting as he ran.

"Next time—one man—jump! I'll take care of you!" he shrieked his powerful voice into the teeth of the gale.

"One man—one only!" he cautioned. Then he turned and ran for it with all his strength, for if the breaker caught him it would be the end of his chances and theirs. Regaining the wave-swept beach and standing in the breaking water, he waited for his opportunity. And on the heels of a bigger breaker than the rest, Midgett ran down into the hell of water near the vessel, keeping his feet by a miracle, to catch and support the hurtling form of a naked man, his clothes long since taken by the wind which plucked them strip by strip from his shivering body.

Somehow, some way, he outfought the wave which caught him half-way to safety. Somehow, some way, the two—helpless victim and strong, resolute life-saver fighting a grim and single-handed battle alone with all the

force of loyalty to his salt which the government and sixty dollars a month and the wonderful personality of Superintendent Kimball has bred in these men—somehow they gained the bank.

And without waiting even for a breath, Midgett plunged back again to the wreck. Twice he lost his footing and was swept head over heels. Twice he came up spluttering and choking with sand and water, but he struggled on until near enough to catch and hold the second man who took what was left of his life and with it jumped into the smother of dirty water. And once more the fight was taken up and once more Midgett and his prize won through to victory. Once more! Aye, once more, and again once more, and again and again and again, until seven men were taken from the jaws of death, from the wry pit and rim of Hell, and clustered, huddled, exhausted in mind and body, in the shallows on the spit.

### Three More Trips.

But there were still three left. And these three could not do as had their mates—they could neither jump to Midgett's arms nor help him with even feeble strength in the fight for life. For these were the wounded three—the captain with a jagged hole in his chest where a splintered spar had struck, two others so bruised, cut and exhausted they could but wave shivering hands to him, as if begging that they be not forgotten.

But Midgett had no intention of forgetting them. He was blind with unreasoning rage now, furious with the sea and wind. His blood was up, and not the worst sea that ever broke, nor all the winds that ever blew, could have kept him from doing the utterly foolhardy, crazily daring thing he did, not once, but three times!

Down he went right to the vessel, caught a rope and swung himself aboard what was left, grasped a figure in his arms, then plunged himself overboard on the back of a breaker and took his chance of glory or the grave as many another man has done.

But never another man in the annals of the service did it three times and won out! For that is what Midgett did. Battled with by mountainous waves, crippled by boards and boxes and spars which beat and tore at him in both the water and the driving air, harried by a wind that was like a wall against him, and exhausted by his seven previous trips, Midgett nevertheless won through, and when he finished, saw ten wrecks of what once were men, standing and lying in the semi-darkness on the wind and wave-swept beach.

Even as he turned, perhaps in numb wonder at what he had done, the half of the Priscilla groaned, crashed once or twice—and was gone.

### "For Extraordinary Heroism."

The keeper of the station would hardly believe his tale when Midgett rode his horse back to the station for help. It did not seem believable. But there were the rescued to tell the amazing story over again, when, after a day and night of tender nursing at the station, once more clothed, fed and warmed, they were able to speak. The life-saving service report of the following year contains this succinct mention in the "Medals Awarded" column:

"To Rasmus S. Midgett, Surfman, Gull Shoal Station. For extraordinary heroism in rescuing, single-handed, ten men from the wreck of the barkentine Priscilla, three miles south of Gull Shoal station, August 18, 1899, Gold Medal. The rescue was effected at night and during the height of a disastrous storm which inundated the whole coast in that vicinity."

The records of the life-saving service will parallel the records of any army or navy with deeds of daring and heroism, of bravery and courage and willingness to die for the sake of the duty that lies before its crews. But in all its annals of forty-one years of existence, during which time 152,038 persons have been saved from 22,711 wrecks, it has nothing to compare with this rescue. It has plenty of deeds as daring and as courageous to keep alive in its reports, but no other instance where one man, single-handed and alone, defied such a storm as this, and rescued ten men without other means than the strength of his body and the fine courage of his heart.

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### SEE THAT THE FRUIT IS RIPE

Bananas and Apples Especially Are Unfit to Eat if They Have Least Suspicion of Greenness.

A fact of special interest at this time of year is that some of the commonest fruits contain starch instead of sugar until they have fully ripened. Raw starch is very indigestible, which explains the frequent necessity for "green-apple medicine."

Most conspicuous in respect to their starch content are bananas and apples. Reports from the National Bureau of Chemistry show that Baldwin apples examined contained more than 4 per cent. of starch while green, less than one-quarter of 1 per cent. when ripe, and none at all when overripe. The percentage of sugar, on the other hand, had increased more than four times, showing that all the starch had been converted into sugar during the ripening process. Bananas show similar changes as they ripen.

These facts teach us that only thoroughly ripe fruits are most suitable for eating raw; that scarcely ripened apples and bananas, like gooseberries and currants, are best adapted to cooking; and that all persons who eat raw fruits should chew them thoroughly on account of the starch they are liable to contain.

## RURAL MEASURES

DAIRY POSSIBILITIES OF STATE OF NEBRASKA.

### GOSSIP FROM STATE CAPITAL

Items of Interest Gathered from Reliable Sources and Presented in Condensed Form to Our Readers.

Matters of merit affecting the welfare of the farmer received favorable consideration at the hands of the 1913 session of the Nebraska legislature. Among the laws finally passed are: A non-salaried live stock sanitary commission; a non-salaried good roads commission; a new stallion registration law; important amendments to the irrigation laws; strengthening of the anti-discrimination law; a "blue sky" law which will censor the offering of shady investments; a proposed amendment to the constitution for a new system of revenue and taxation with a tax commission to report to the next legislature; a complete new insurance code conducted by an insurance commission; a county telephone law; a building for agriculture and horticulture on the state fair grounds. The appropriations carried in the general maintenance bill are: Three-fourths mill levy for university extension, one-third of which is for state farm use in case removal falls; \$37,500 at North Platte experiment station; \$5,000 at Scottsbluff; \$12,500 at Valentine; \$10,000 at Culbertson; \$50,000 at Curtis; \$10,000 at North Platte for dairy equipment; \$30,000 for state live stock sanitary board; \$4,000 for state board of agriculture; \$4,000 for State Poultry association; \$5,000 for State Horticultural society; \$2,000 for State Corn Improvers' association; \$2,000 for Live Stock association; \$3,000 for State Dairymen's association; \$15,000 for school of agriculture and home economics; \$5,000 for entomologist; \$12,000 for Nebraska conservation and soil survey; \$3,000 for state agricultural boanical works; \$15,000 for hog cholera serum production; \$15,000 for hog cholera serum subsidy fund.

### Nebraska a Dairy State.

A bulletin from the university, prepared by Prof. J. H. Frandsen of the dairy husbandry department, reads:

Conditions in Nebraska are remarkably favorable for dairying and in time we may expect to see this one of the leading dairy states in the union; but the industry here is as yet in its infancy; many years will be required before it has reached its full "safe and sane" development. There is money in the creamery business, but it is not a venture to be rushed into blindly without a thorough knowledge of the subject and local conditions. There are many parts of sparsely settled Nebraska and the districts of the state where the people are more or less indifferent to dairying, where the centralized creamery, with its cream stations and cream routes, fill a niche and opens up a market that could not, for a time at least, be had in any other way. Under these conditions the scattered farmers, interested in cream production, will generally find it more profitable to take cream to the most reliable existing creamery than to go to the expense of maintaining a new one.

### Will Test the Law.

Citizens of Wymore and vicinity who want to go fishing on the Sabbath day are preparing to test the law which prohibits that sport on the first day of the week, according to letters received by Governor Morehead. They make the contention that it is discriminatory to prohibit this form of sport and to allow certain other forms of activity to be indulged in by people of the state. A decision of the state supreme court says that the law is good with regard to some forms of amusement.

Surveyors have begun the work attendant upon the laying out of the new agricultural and horticultural hall at the state fair grounds. The building, which is to cost \$100,000, is to be pushed to completion so that it can be utilized at the coming state fair.

### "Beer Bottle Corner" Case.

Letters are still coming in to the attorney general's office regarding the recent supreme court decision in the "beer bottle corner" case from Cherry county. The decision of the court, validating late federal government surveys loses about 30,000 acres of school land to the state and makes it subject to homestead entry under the federal land laws. An effort is to be made to secure a rehearing of the case, and it is not improbable that the high bench will incline its ear to the legal department's petition.

Preparations are being made to spend \$64,000 in improving the state capitol building and in making room for some of the now overcrowded departments.

Bread delivered to housewives of Omaha, Lincoln and other cities of the state must hereafter be wrapped before being placed in the wagons which are to distribute it. Such is the substance of an order issued by Food Commissioner Harman. The step follows an investigation conducted by the food department.

## HUSBAND NAILED RUBBER ON GATES

Wife so Weak and Nervous Could Not Stand Least Noise—How Cured.

Mumford, Ala.—"I was so weak and nervous while passing through the Change of Life that I could hardly live. My husband had to nail rubber on all the gates for I could not stand it to have a gate slam."

"I also had backache and a fullness in my stomach. I noticed that Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound was advertised for such cases and I sent and got a bottle. It did me so much good that I kept on taking it and found it to be all you claim. I recommend your Compound to all women afflicted as I was."—Mrs. F. F. MULLENDON, Mumford, Alabama.

An Honest Dependable Medicine is Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. A Root and Herb medicine originated nearly forty years ago by Lydia E. Pinkham of Lynn, Mass., for controlling female ills.

Its wonderful success in this line has made it the safest and most dependable medicine of the age for women and no woman suffering from female ills does herself justice who does not give it a trial.

If you have the slightest doubt that Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound will help you, write to Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co. (confidential) Lynn, Mass., for advice. Your letter will be opened, read and answered by a woman, and held in strict confidence.

## CANADA'S OFFERING TO THE SETTLER

THE AMERICAN RUSH TO WESTERN CANADA IS INCREASING

Free Homesteads in the new Districts of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta there are thousands of Free Homesteads left, which to the settler who desires to own a home in a few years time will be worth more than the price of the land. These lands are well adapted to grain growing and stock raising. EXCELLENT RAILWAY FACILITIES. In many cases the railways in Canada have been built in advance of settlement, and in a short time there will not be a settler who does not have a railway station within ten or twelve miles from a line of railway. Railway Rates are regulated by Government Commission. Social Conditions. The American Settler is at home in Western Canada. He is not a stranger to a situation, but he has the nearly a million of his own people already settled there. If you desire to know why the condition of the Canadian Settler is prosperous and why he is so well equipped for literature, music, etc., to W. V. BENNETT, Canadian Government Agent, of address Superintendent of Immigration, Ottawa, Canada.

Widow's Ways. "Mamma, why did you tell Mrs. Le-motte that I was only eighteen when I am really twenty-four?"

Widow—Because eighteen is six years under twenty-four, my dear.

Daughter—Yes, I know; but surely I don't need the benefit of those six years at my age, do I?

Widow—Not at all, my child; but I do.—London Tit-Bits.

Rainy Spell. Beautiful the rain is, cheering to the crops; umbrella men, gosh men, hail those gracious drops. Blest precipitation, early, latter, fall; but kindly pipe and smoke it—you've been ruining baseball!

Kill the Flies Now and Prevent disease. A DAISY FLY KILLER will do it. Kills thousands. Last all season. All dealers or six sent express paid for \$1. H. BOWERS, 150 De Kalb Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y. Adv.

An Exception. "I don't want anybody to mine matters about this house." "But, dear, how about the pies?"

Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup for Children teething, softens the gums, reduces inflammation, allays pain, cures wind colic, a bottle at a time.

Virtue is not only its own reward, but sin is its own gravedigger.

## PAINFUL, TRYING TIMES

Housework is hard enough for a healthy woman. The wife who has a bad back, who is weak or tired all the time, finds her duties a heavy burden. Thousands of nervous, sickly women have traced their troubles to sick kidneys—have found quick and thorough relief through using Doan's Kidney Pills. The painful, trying times of woman's life are much easier to bear if the kidneys are well.

An Iowa Case. Mrs. J. Hunt, 104 S. 1st St., Fairfield, Ia., says: "For thirty years I suffered from kidney trouble. I had severe backache, headaches and dizzy spells, and my limbs ached so I couldn't walk. Doan's Kidney Pills cured me when everything else failed. I cannot praise them too highly." Get Doan's at Any Store. 50c a Bottle. DOAN'S KIDNEY PILLS. FOSTER-MILBURN CO., BUFFALO, N. Y.