WRECKS OF THE NEW JERSEY COAST

by Percy M. Cushing

IN THE department of the life-saving service at Washington they sometimes speak of "a night's work on the Jersey coast," which, to a casual listener, carries no especial significance. It is only when one is curious enough to probe behind the matter-of-fact attitude of the department officials, or dig into the time-yellowed reports of the coast patrol that one obtains a glimmer of what this branch of government service expects of its servants, and of the unemotional heroism that is concealed in that casual phrase—"a night's work.'

From Washington, if you go down into the life-saving stations along the Jersey shore, you will find the same casual indifference to the story of one night which is now history—an indifference that might lead to the belief that the occasion was a trifle, were it not for the fact that in the memories of the old men of the service its details are still vivid.

It was the third of February, 1880. Two storms were rushing along the Atlantic coast. They met off the Jersey shore, a howling, roaring conflict of wind and weather, snow-rent and sleet-riven.

As darkness settled the life-saving crews in the stations along the wind-swept coast watched the sea with foreboding in their hearts. At midnight the storm was at its height.

In the next twelve hours during its continuance the apprehensions of the Jersey patrol found realization. Within those twelve hours there were five wrecks within the scope of four consecutive stations, while another disaster engaged a station a short distance beyond. The men of the stations rescued forty-three persons, toiled hungry and half-frozen in darkness and tempest, established a standard of bravery and fortitude that is unique and went through the ordeal with that offhand carelessness of personal risk which characterizes those of their calling.

At one in the morning Keeper Charles H. Valentine of Station No. 4 lay gravely ill of pleurisy. At 1:30 Surfman Van Brunt, staggering into the drift of the gale on the west patrol, caught the red gleam of a light in the breakers. So fierce was the wind, filled with driven sand and sleet, that he could not look into its teeth, but by shielding his eyes and looking across it he saw the outline of a large schooner. She was the E. C. Babcock of Somers Point, and she was on a bar close to shore.

Van Brunt ran for the station and gave the alarm. Despite his illness, Keeper Valentine rose from his bed and in person led his crew to the rescue. Baffled by the snow which lay thick along the beach, by the gale that tore seams in their faces, and by the intense cold which froze shot line and beach apparatus, the life savers fought for two hours to get a line aboard the stranded vessel. At length they succeeded, and a man came ashore in the breeches buoy. He said that the captain of the Babcock had his wife and two small children on board. The breeches buoy was sent out again and the captain came ashore in it, his six-year-old daughter in his arms. His wife followed. Then came the mate with the other child. Last came the rest of the crew.

The life savers went back to the station, and in the early hours of the stormy dawn were hastily rearranging the apparatus when one of the men saw a large brig coming head on for the shore. Keeper Valentine had gone back to bed, but once more he arose and insisted on leading his men again to the scene of danger.

Before the crew could get the half-prepared beach apparatus to the surf, the brig, running furiously before the tremendous sea, her sails split and tattered, struck with terrific impact. The tide was very high, and the brig, the Augustina from Havana, came up close to the station and well inside the breakers. Just before she struck the life savers could see a man at the wheel, apparently steering composedly, his face emotionless, a pipe in his teeth.

When the shock came a torrent of frothing seas broke over the vessel's stern, covering the helmsan; but a moment later he could be seen standing at the wheel, unmoved. Then the brig swung broadside to the fusillade of thundering surf, and her crew fled forward to the bitts.

By this time the life savers were on the beach with their gun, while a crowd of some hundreds of persons watched from the shelter of the higher dunes. The brig was so close to shore that Surfman Garrett White, following a receding sea down the beach, succeeded in throwing a heaving stick and line on board her.

This the crew secured, and hauled the whip-line on board, but, getting the tailblock, did not know what to do next. In vain the life savers signaled and shouted to them. They were Spanish, and the directions on the billet attached to the lines were in Italian and English only.

At this moment the life savers were filled with horror. The crew of the grounded brig, unable to solve the mystery of riging the breeches buoy, were preparing to take a terrible risk. One of them seized the line and started the attempt of coming in on it hand over hand.

Meantime the wreck of the Babcock, a quarter of a mile up the beach, had broken up, and the fragments of the vessel, together with her cargo of cordwood, were being swept by the current down about the Augustina, filling the surf with tumbling debris which well-nigh insured the death of anyone who fell into it. In a moment the whip line, over which the sailors were preparing to come in, fouled in the wreckage. Disregarding the shouts to wait, the first sailor, clad only in a pair of trousers, seized the line and began working his way in on it hand over hand.

Rushing waist deep into the breakers, White seized the man, and as the brig rolled inshore and the line slackened he slipped the bight from the sailor's neck.

The next second both were caught in the in-rush of wood and water and torn from the line to be hurled beneath the breakers. By a terrific effort White succeeded in regaining his footing and, still clutching the sailor, dragged him out of the surf.

While this struggle was taking place two more sailors had started down the line from the brig. Surfman Van Brunt sprang into the water to aid them, but was swept from his feet, his life hanging on a straw in the deadly mass of tumbling timbers. He was carried down-shore a hundred yards, where a friendly wave shouldered him up on the beach. At the moment Van Brunt's peril

was recognized by those on shore, Surfman Potter leaped to his assistance, only to be himself unfooted and flung on to a floating mass of drift. As he lay there strugglinig to get to his feet, the line suddenly tautened in the current and falling across his breast held him pinioned under water. For fully a minute he lay there helpless in sight of his comrades and slowly drowning. At last, nearly dead, a wave washed him free.

Meantime one of the two sailors was torn from his hold on the rope and washed ashore unconscious. Surfman Ferguson went for the other and brought him in. Surfman Lockwood rescued the fourth man.

And so, one by one, in grim hand-to-hand combat with the storm, the crew of the wrecked brig were rescued. Hours later she was boarded in the surfboat. In the cabin, lying in his bunk, a pistol bullet through his head, they found the captain. He had been part owner of the vessel, and when he had seen that she was lost, he had gone below, scrawled a note in Spanish saying he was ruined, and shot himself.

While the men of Station No. 4 were battling at these two wrecks, those of Station No. 2 were rescuing seven men and the captain's wife from the three-masted schooner Stephen Harding. While five miles off shore the Harding had been in collision with the schooner Kate Newman, which had gone down with all hands, save one man, who, as the vessels came together, leaped over the bulwarks of the Newman on to the deck of the Harding.

At the same time Stations Nos. 11 and 12 were waging one of the grimmest and gamest fights against masterful odds in the history of the service.

This struggle was at the wreck of the schooner George Taulane. The night before the big storm she was off Navesink, running steadily in the growing wind. An hour found the snow shutting thick over the rim of the sea, and the gale increased to a hurricane. It was two in the morning when the craft found herself in distress. At that hour the deck load of lumber, piled high, broke loose. The terrific roll of the schooner in the high sea sent huge timbers tumbling about her decks, making it almost impossible for the crew to stay above hatches. Twenty minutes later fire was discovered on board. Flames shot aft from the forecastle, igniting the deck load.

With her progress somewhat arrested toward shore by the dragging anchors, the Taulane began drifting parallel to the shore, getting in close to it very slowly. At this time she was discovered by the life savers of Station No. 11.

This crew, leaving beach apparatus behind and knowing that no lifeboat could live in the breakers, followed the craft as she drifted along the coast, calculating that she would ground near Station No. 12 and depending on that station for apparatus. Shortly afterward the wreck was seen by Keeper Chadwick of Station 12, who ordered out his crew with beach cart and gun.

At this time the vessel was about half-way between the two stations. On one side the crew of Station 11 were following her along the beach; on the other the crew of No. 12 were coming in to meet her.

It was between nine and ten o'clock when the two crews met. The horses that had started with the beach cart of the men from Station 12 had refused to ford the sluices between the hills and had been left behind, the men dragging the cart themselves. The helpless Taulane was then still holding off the bar by her dragging anchors, and still drifting along shore. The two life-saving crews now joined forces in a strange and terrible battle.

The vessel was 400 yards off shore, her men in her rigging, the seas breaking and tumbling white all over her hull. But she was still moving, steadily, surely, alongshore, her keel free of the sand.

The life savers at once placed the surf gun and a line which was fired fell across the Taulane out of reach of her shipwrecked crew. Before another could be fired the vessel had drifted southward out of range.

Loading the gun and apparatus into the beach cart, the two life-saving crews started after her alongshore, laboring manfully in the sand and flooded sluices to keep pace with the drift of the vessel to leeward. In order to do this they were obliged to proceed at what was almost a run. After twenty minutes of breathless work they were again opposite her, the gun was once more planted, and another shot fired.

At this portion of the beach the sand dunes were low, and the only point of vantage from which the gun could be shot was the top of the knolls. The knoll on which the effort was made was in an indentation in the shore, making it farther from the vessel, and, the line being wet and heavy, it failed to reach the Taulane.

Once more the crews of Stations 11 and 12 loaded the heavy beach cart and staggered on after the fast drifting schooner. As the chase led to the south, the conditions on the beach became worse. The surf washed in higher, the sluices became more numerous, and the dry sand-dune tops further separated.

The next dry hill was 400 yards farther on, and the beach that lay before it was well-nigh impassable. After twenty minutes of grim effort it was finally gained only to find that the vessel had passed it and was drifting on.

Perhaps the best account of the remainder of the terrible march to its ultimate end is given in the report of the service of 1880, which says of it:

"From first to last the difficulties of the life savers and the perils which beset them never slackened a moment. The wheels of the cart, in coast phrase, 'sanded down' so rapidly—that is, sank so quickly in the infiltrated soil—that the conveyance had to be kept on the move lest it should be lost. Often the cart had to be partially unloaded and portions of the apparatus carried by the crews to lighten it sufficiently to make progress possible, and at other times the men would have to fling themselves upon the wheels and hold them with all their strength to prevent the cart from being capsized by the inequalities of the submerged ground or the overwhelming inburst of the sea rushing high over the axles.

"The escapes were numerous. It was with great difficutly that the men could keep their feet in this constant onslaught and pelting of driftwood. But not a man fell away or flinched from the work before him.

"Not the least difficult of their tasks was that of keeping the lines, and especially the guns and powder, dry in the universal drench around them, and it is difficult to understand how they contrived it; for, aside from the number of actual firings, wherever a momentary pause of the vessel as she grazed bottom, or a slowing of her motion, offered an opportunity for action, at least a dozen times, and probably more, the cart was hurriedly unloaded on the nearest eminence, the gun planted and the shot-line arranged for the effort, when the wreck would suddenly roll away upon her course, and the men would have to reload the cart and toil on again after her. In this way and with these interruptions, they worked down along the beach to station No. 12 and a quarter of a mile beyond it, when a chance offered for another shot; but the line parted. The crew again moved stubbornly on. It was now noon, and suddenly the man so long seen hanging in the rigging fell into the sea and was gone. The crew still followed the vessel with unslackened activity. Half an hour later they saw another man drop lifeless from the ratlines.

"Laboring forward now for the rescue of the remaining five, they suffered a misfortune. In staggering and floundering through one of the worst sluiceways with the cart, the gun toppled off into the flood and was lost. A desperate search was made at once, and finally it was found in four or five feet of water, fished up and wiped dry, and carried thenceforth by the stout keeper on his shoulder. A man was dispatched back to No. 12 for a dry shot-line, while the crew, moved on to a point three-quarters of a mile below the station, where they got another chance to fire a shot, which, however, fell short, the tide having forced the firing party farther and farther back on the hills as they advanced, and the line, too, being weighted with moisture.

"The cart was again reloaded, and the march resumed. A mile below the station the man overtook them with the dry shot-line and, chance offering, the last shot was fired. This time it was a success! The line flew between the foremast and the jib-stay, and, the cut sweeping the bight of the line in to the side of the vessel, the sailors got hold of it and fastened it to the fore and main rigging.

"As the schooner still continued to drift and roll, nothing could yet be done, but while the greater part of the force loaded up the cart and trudged on with it, three or four kept fast hold of the shore end of the shot-line, and kept pace with the wreck in leash. At the end of another quarter of a mile the vessel suddenly struck the tide setting north, stopped, swung head offshore and worked back to her anchors under the comb of the breakers. The time had come at last; and the whip-line, with its appurtenances, was bent on to the shot-line, hauled aboard, and made fast by the tail of the block to the mainmast head.

"The wreck now slued around broadside to the sea and rolled frightfully. The hawser followed the whip-line on board, and the breeches-buoy was rigged on, but the vessel rolled so that it was impossible to set the hawser up on shore in the usual manner, so it was rove through the bull's-eye in the sand-anchor, while several men held on to the end to give and take with each roll of the vessel. The work of hauling the sailors from the wreck was now begun with electric energy. After two men were landed, the vessel took the ground, but the circumstances increased rather than diminished her rolling, and some conception of this powerful motion may be derived from the fact that in one instance the breeches-buoy with a man in it swung in the off-shore roll fully fifty feet in the air.

"The strain and friction upon the hawser were so great that the lignum-vitae bull's-eye through which it ran at the sand-anchor, despite the hardness of the wood, was worn fully half an inch deep during 30 minutes of use. Within those 30 minutes, however, the five men were safely landed, the last man getting out of the buoy at half-past two."

And so closes the story of that which in the department at Washington, is spoken of casually as "A night's work on the Jersey coast."

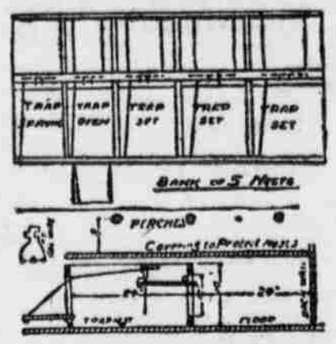
POULTRY

ADVANTAGES OF TRAP NESTS

By Use of Device Number of Eggs Laid by Each Hen May Be Ascertained Without Trouble.

The primary object of using trap nests is to develop a heavy laying strain. It has been found by the use of trap nests that the number of eggs laid per hen in an average flock varies from 40 to 245. Without using trap nests, the results from such a flock would be uncertain and probably unsatisfactory. It is the object of the poultryman to breed and build up the strain which lays the heaviest, by breeding to the heavy producers.

For fanciers, the trap nest is indis-



Sectional View of Nests.

pensable on account of the fact that in the ordinary pen there are from six to 12 females to one male. If trap nests are used, and there are as many as there are females in the pen, it is possible to distinguish each hen's eggs, while if the trap nests are not used, this is impossible.

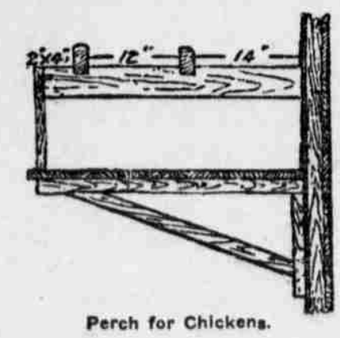
The use of trap nests goes far to prevent the hens forming the habit of egg-eating. They are likely to form this habit if kept in limited quarters. If so kept, they are probably not given the very best food, and probably not enough of it, especially animal food.

The accompanying drawings of a bank of trap nests are self-explanatory. The nests are built without any top or bottom. The hen enters through the back of the nest, brushing under the hanging wire, which releases the door. She then passes on to the nest compartment toward the front end. To inspect the nest, and to remove the hen, ascertain her number, and secure the eggs, the front door is simply unbuttoned, and let down. It will be noticed that the two doors are fastened together with a cord, so that when the front door is let down, the trap is automatically set again. The hen will find it difficult to leave through the back door at this time, as the hanging wire permits her to go one way only. These are so simple that in making them in almost any quantity, the material should not cost over 15 cents, at most, per trap nest.

PERCH SPACE FOR CHICKENS

Small Hens Should Be Allowed Six Inches, While Larger Birds Should Be Given Eight.

As a general rule, small hens should have about six inches of perch space, while the larger hens should be allowed eight inches. In the winter they huddle closer together, but in the summer there should be plenty of room to allow them to spread out.



Perch for Chickens.

Perches should be 12 inches apart and not closer than 15 inches to the wall or ceiling. Show birds, especially Leghorns or similar type, should be kept at a greater distance from walls and ceilings. Many good birds are spoiled by "brooming" their tails against the walls.

There are several methods of making movable perches. One of the most common is by hinging them to the wall at the back.

Fertility of Eggs.

The disposition of the male bird has considerable to do with the fertility of the eggs. A male that is greedy and quarrelsome is apt to drive hens away from the feed and gulp down more than is good for him. Such males become overfat and consequently sluggish.

On the other hand, the too gallant male will stand back while the hens are helping themselves. His condition is as bad as the greedy bird, for he is undefed and has not the proper strength to fertilize.

Hen Not Sentimental.

There is no sentiment in a hen. Her only object in life is to get enough to eat. If she is given that and a warm, well-ventilated house to sleep in all night, a dry sheltered place in winter, she will do the rest.

The Onlooker

by WILBUR D. NESBIT

AN UNCLE BILL STORY

"I took a trip upon a ship," my Uncle
William said;
"By some strange whim or fancy grim to
travel I was led.
The ship was named Apollyon
And had a grip and trolley on,
And you must learn that on the stern
they had the figurehead.

"We sailed due east a mile at least and
then they took my fare—
A five-cent piece, my little niece, was all
I had to spare.
They rung it on a register
And then the captain said: 'You stir
The slightest speck from off this deck and
we will not get there.'

"They then sailed west and stopped to
rest and then went north again,
The captain ate some chocolate and
growled at all the men.
He said, 'To keep the balance 'll
Now reef the main-to'-gallan'-s'l,'
'Tis past belief—a coral reef they hove up
there and then

"Ten miles or more were we from shore
when suddenly we stopped,
Then singing songs of rights and wrongs
the rail and hull they mopped.
I stood and watched them, worrying,
And begged they would be hurrying,
But with a thud that chilled my blood the
anchor then they dropped.

"The idle crew had naught to do and
took to playing cards,
The solemn cook perused a book astraddle
of the yards,
The mate, whose name was Hannibal
Talked of a fearsome cannibal
With whom, it seemed, or else I dreamed,
he had been jolly pards.

"O, such a trip on such a ship I never
took before;
I begged for speed; they said, indeed,
they'd sail that day no more—
The captain, very cynical,
Was winding up the binnacle
Until in deep and peaceful sleep he snored
a dulcet snore.

"I dared not cough, I crept right off and
walked ten miles to land;
I can't forget I got right wet until I
reached the strand;
I tried to be amphibious
And sprained both of my tibias,
And that is why, 'twixt you and I, hard
work I cannot stand."

A Polite Expression.

"I wish you would build me a swine cravat," said the delicately nurtured young man who had become a gentleman farmer.

The country carpenter puzzled over the order for a whole day, and at last sought the gentle child of fortune and confessed his ignorance.

"Why, dear me," said the gentle youth, "I do not like to use the vulgar expression, but if I must I must. What I require built is a pigstye."

A Jewel.

Mr. Gooph—I tell you, Blithersby's wife is a jewel.

Mr. Wooph—Is that so?

Mr. Gooph—I should say so. Why, he went fishing yesterday and came home with an empty jug, a can of salmon and two salt mackerel, and she complimented him on his luck.

The Literary Maiden.

"You must have discerned my love," sighed Harold Spooneigh to Beatrice Ritem, "for my face is as an open page to you."

"Huh," sweetly replied the fair young girl, "as far as I am concerned your face is a rejected manuscript."

Sage Advice.

First Prisoner—Now, cully, when you goes before de judge, tell him your name is Shamrock II.

Second Prisoner—What for?

First Prisoner—'Cause he's one o' these yachtin' sharps, an' he'll give you a time allowance.

What It Means.

Miss Wunder—Why do they have that deep crease in the new Panama hats you men are wearing?

Mr. Knowsit—Why, that represents the Panama canal.

A Possible Explanation.

Mr. Gooph—I tell you, young Sportleigh is a chip off the old block.

Mr. Wooph—Maybe that is why he is so knotty.

Wilbur D. Nesbit.