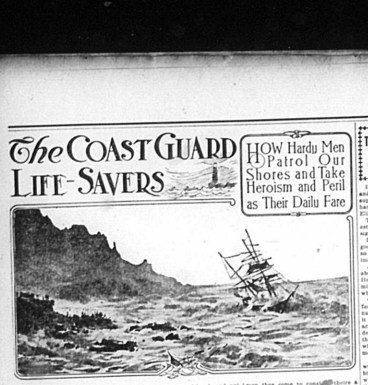
The COAST GUARD LIFE-SAVERS

HOW Hardy Men Patrol Our Shores and Take Heroism and Peril as Their Daily Fare



THE best time to read this story would be a night of storm. Sit with the howl of the wind in its ears and the spatter of the sleet upon his windows it would seem good to the reader to know that the men of the coast-guard patrol, in relays that intertwin from sunset to sunrise on clear nights and through all the hours of the twenty-four on days and nights of darkness and danger, are tramping the beaches of the whole United States in an almost unbroken succession from Quoddy Head to Cape Fear, from Oswegan to Duluth, and from Petersen's Point to the Golden Gate.

Nightly the members of this hardy and heroic band of men patrol a constant series of the coasts of this country. There is no relief for them. Away at the far North a man may be pacing his beats when storms send a thousand at the same time a guard at the far South, and between these two and links of the two lines there are hundreds of other watchers, each tramping his beat to the midway point where he meets the patrol from the adjoining station, and then turning back to his quarters, alert every minute, peering through darkness and fog, blinding rack and flying spray, ready and trained to turn a Coston light, to hurry to the wire with a report of a ship in trouble, or to man into the lifeboat for a race through the surf in a vessel in distress.

A Hard Life.

The coast-guardsman's life is a hard one. It abounds in peril. But it has the fascination of the lure of danger and no enlisted man of the army or navy surpasses the beach patrol in fidelity to duty or insensity in devising ways to help the helpless. It is no unusual thing for a guard to be blown off his feet by a gale and compelled to crawl on all fours to his station, or to be forced to wade breast deep for he has to make his way through rain, sleet and sand more than once every winter and through the drenched and trailed pool of water left by the rushing wash of a storm that would leave no landfather behind. More than once in the teeth of a stiff northwester he sails his food from Sandy Hook to send into which he sinks to his boot tops at every step, stumbling over half-buried casks and timbers that have been thrown up by the force of the coast and cold nights the beach may be hard and smooth, but only rarely is it often enough are of freezing temperature. But the guard keeps his head back, the pale and endures the cold, his eyes always watchful and his ears always quick to catch the sound of human need and terrible cries.

A Visit to the Station.

It is an illuminating experience to visit one of these stations. It matters but little which one it is, for they are all alike in one. Every station has its history and its traditions, but all are very much alike in their methods of work and in general environment.

Probably you would approach one of the stations on the Long Island coast. It is a low, one-storied, shingle-roofed building, painted a dull gray, and set on a bleak stretch of sand dunes, with the long breaks of foot from the shore line, and with the sea on one side and the bay on the other. Or, if you are in Maine, or in the Carolinas, or in Florida and Cape Cod fishermen. Many of the stations are perched on rocky cliffs or bluffs before entering the service. Most of them have been built on sandy points. Therefore they are very small and they are scattered, and in case of the government's new scheme of the Chautauqua next season, and the Chautauqua next season, and the Chautauqua next season, and