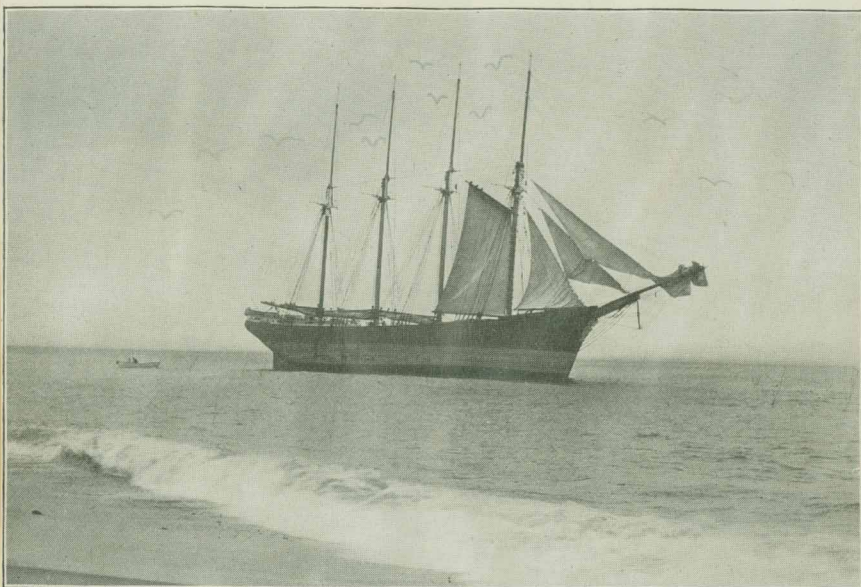


year, though in certain cases the period may be extended upon recommendation for a greater period, but not more than two years. In case of their death from service or from disease contracted in the line of duty, their widows and children under sixteen years of age are entitled to be paid during a period of two years the same amount that the husband or father would have received.

In addition to saving the lives of the imperiled, an important part of the duty of the life savers is that of saving property. The amount of property saved annually by these guardians of the coast largely exceeds the cost of maintenance of the service. The keepers are authorized and required by law to take charge of and protect all such



LIFE SAVERS FLOATING A SCHOONER.

property until claimed by those legally entitled to receive it, or until otherwise directed by the department as to its disposition. The keepers have the powers of the inspectors of customs and faithfully guard the interests of the government in all dutiable wrecked property.

Doubtless the United States Life-Saving Service system appears to be an expensive and elaborate one, but it must be remembered that, putting aside entirely the consideration of the value of human life, which is beyond computation, it saves many times its cost in property alone, and that it fulfils the functions usually allotted to several different agencies. It rescues the shipwrecked by both the principal methods which humane ingenuity has devised for that purpose, and which, in some countries, are practiced separately by two distinct organizations; it furnishes them the subsequent succor which elsewhere would be afforded by shipwrecked mariners' societies; it guards the lives of persons in peril or of drowning by falling into the water from piers and wharves in the harbors of populous cities, an office usually performed by humane societies; it nightly patrols the dangerous coast for the early discovery of wrecks and the hastening of relief, thus increasing the chances of rescue, and shortening by hours intense physical suffering and the terrible agony of suspense; it places over peculiarly dangerous points upon the rivers and lakes a sentry prepared to send instant relief to those who



THETA, STRANDED IN A BAD PLACE.

incautiously or recklessly incur the hazard of capsizing in boats; it conducts to places of safety those imperiled in their homes by the torrents of flood, and conveys food to those imprisoned in their homes by inundation and threatened by famine; it annually saves, unaided, hundreds of stranded vessels, with their cargoes, from total or partial destruction, and assists in saving scores of others; it protects wrecked property after landing from the ravage of the elements and the rapine of plunderers; it extricates vessels unwarily caught in perilous positions; it averts numerous disasters by its flashing signals of warning to vessels standing in danger; it assists the custom service in collecting the revenues of the government; it pickets the coast with a guard, which prevents smuggling, and, in time of war, surprise by hostile forces, which makes the service unlike all other organizations established for similar purposes.

The distinction of having founded and created the United States Life-Saving Service having been the subject of much discussion in recent years, General Superintendent Kimball, in his report to the Secretary of the Treasury as to the claims of W. A. Newell, as the originator of the system of the Life-Saving Service of the United States, in conclusion states as follows:—

“The fact is, the credit of originating and developing the United States Life-Saving Service cannot truthfully be awarded to any single individual.

“In Congress and out of Congress many men have contributed, some in a great and some in a less degree to the success of its fortunes. To even write down the names of the legislators in both houses of Congress, who have been its advocates and champions, and to refer ever so briefly to their valuable assistance, would occupy much space and require considerable research, but there occurred to me at once as conspicuous among the host of its promoters, Senators Hannibal H. Hamlin, O. D. Conger, W. E. Kenna, W. J. Sewell, and William P. Frye, and Representatives S. S. Cox, Charles B. Roberts, John Lynch, James W. Cobert, and Jesse J. Yeates. Presidents of the United States and various Secretaries of the Treasury have promoted its welfare. Many officers of the life-saving service also, as well as officers