

Captain Joe Sturgis

A Man Who Could Pilot a Boat In a Fog

By F. A. MITCHEL

When I was a student at a New England college I used to spend my vacations on the seacoast. I was fond of water sports—boating, fishing, bathing—and in the autumn shooting, though since the season for the latter came when I was engaged at my studies I could only enjoy it for a day or two at a time.

My favorite place for enjoying an outing was a village on the coast of Maine. There is no coast in America so sought during the hot months, for there is none so beautiful. There are islands and estuaries without number, while the air is pure and bracing. The only drawback is the fogs, which will occasionally sweep suddenly in from the ocean and at times last several days.

The village of B., which came to be the usual scene of my summer outings, looked out upon a bay beyond which was the boundless ocean. Sometimes I lay in a hammock hung between trees, watching ships pass far out on the horizon, dreaming of the people walking about on them, shifting their sails, at meals, or idling as I was. I had but to turn my eyes nearer, to an island beautiful as a fairyland rising out of a fairy sea, or, still nearer, to a strip of ground in its native state, brown, yellow and green patches leading up to a snow white cottage, behind which was a thicket of cedars.

Captain Joe Sturgis, a man who had acquired his title as master of a fishing smack, was my principal companion. He fished for a living, but in July and August, the fishing being poor, he rested, for he had made enough money at his vocation to build himself a snug home and have more invested at interest.

Sturgis was a plain, quiet, thoughtful, uneducated man, but I always felt that if he and I were obliged to float for our lives and there was but one plank between us he would leave me the plank. He used a single masted boat about twenty feet long for fishing purposes, and during my vacations that boat was my second home. The captain and I made cruises in her among the islands of the coast. There were four bunks in her, a small cook stove and mess kit. At night we would anchor in some inlet or little bay and after supper be lulled to sleep by the sound of wavelets beating against the side of the boat. That was years ago, but to this day I can hear the soothing splash. In the morning we would be up with the sun, and I would take a cold water plunge while the captain was frying the fish and making the coffee for breakfast.

I had taken position near the bow where I could watch, sitting on the deck with my back resting against the mast. It must have been near dawn that, looking aft, I saw, or thought I saw, a dim form at the tiller, while the sail was filled, though the fog had not lifted.

I have never since been quite sure whether I was awake, half asleep or asleep and dreaming. Nevertheless some one was at the helm and the boat was moving. It did not occur to me to get up and go aft to see who my pilot was, and this has led me to think that I dreamed. I sat where I was, looking into the mist now and again, hearing the swish of waves over protruding rocks, at times sailing near enough to them to see their dim, dark bulk.

I knew that there was or had been but one man at B. who could sail a boat in those waters in a fog, and that man was Captain Sturgis. I was possessed with the idea that time had been turned back ten years and I was again sailing with my old friend.

Yet I knew that Captain Sturgis was dead. How long I sailed thus I don't know, but when it came light enough for me to see, the fog lifted, and I recognized on either side of me rocks, by which I knew that I was emerging from one of the most tortuous, dangerous channels on this coast. There was a fair breeze, and the tide was with me. I was not far from B. and saw persons on the shore, evidently looking out at me.

I sprang to the tiller, which was deserted, and pointed my course toward B. In half an hour I reached the landing and was welcomed by anxious friends, who had feared for my safety. They asked me how in the name of conscience I had got through the channel from which they had seen me emerge, wrapped in fog, without striking the rocks. I told them I didn't know; it must have been either luck or Providence. I did not say what I believed and have since often partly believed that I had been piloted by the disembodied spirit of my beloved friend, Captain Joe Sturgis.

I left B. the same day, and I have never cared to go there since. Not only was I unstrung by having been tossed helpless on an ocean without being able to see half a dozen yards, but there was something frightful in my narrow escape. I did not shudder at having been piloted, as I believed, by my old friend; but, taking my experience altogether, I had no desire to sail in those waters again.

Time has taken away the horror of the situation and strengthened, or, rather, warmed my soul toward him whom I cannot but consider to be living a renewed life among the scenes he so well loved during his physical life and who, remembering me affectionately, came to my help in the hour of my trouble.

"Don't need even a jib for steering?" "No; with sails all in she won't go over. She's well ballasted."

These conversations with the captain led me to think that those who live near to nature, though uneducated, have a more comprehensive view of the universe, including themselves, not as brief existences, but as appearing under different forms. Houses and books tend to destroy this more extended view of ourselves. The houses exclude what is grand in nature; the books lead us to reason. And, exclusive of revelation, what basis have we for our reasoning? Is not one who takes his inspiration from nature more free to follow his higher instincts?

During the first winter after I was graduated from college I heard of the death of my old friend Captain Joe Sturgis. He died in his bed, and it at once occurred to me that his spirit, freed from the clay of his physical body, went right out over the water and the islands among which he had so often sailed in his slower going boat. After his death I did not care to go to B. and did not see the place for ten years. Then it occurred to me that I would like to revisit the scenes I had so much enjoyed during my youth. I had long been immersed in business, and if I got an outing it was seldom for more than a fortnight. The influence of nature had long ago passed from me, and if I thought of the skipper who had been my companion it was not fitting in spiritual form over the waves, but moldering in the churchyard at B.

I found the place but little changed. I doubt if twenty houses had been added to those that had composed the town ten years before. I met persons whom I had known, but they, as well as I, had grown older. Sturgis' old boat was still in existence and in use. I had sailed her in fair weather both with the captain and alone, and I remembered the coast for a distance of, say, ten miles from B. sufficiently to take the boat over it. So I got into her one morning intending to revisit some of the nearby scenes of former years. I took no one with me, preferring to go alone.

The morning was bright and beautiful. I spent a couple of hours cruising about noticing old landmarks, or, rather, old sea marks, when, suddenly looking eastward, I saw the fog bank. There was little breeze, and I could not reach land before I was enveloped in one of those fogs so thick that they are really fine rain. I drifted for hours, hoping all the while that it would lift, but it did not. It came upon me at noon, and when night fell I was still enveloped in it.

That night is ever to be remembered as the most frightful of my life. There was no wind, and if there had been I would not have dared avail myself of it, for I had no compass and, in any event, was beset with sunken rocks. I passed the afternoon and the night till near morning in an agony of suspense, without food or water, then fell into either a stupor or a sleep.

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Farm and Garden

FARM POULTRY HOUSE.

Convenient, Sunny Location and Good Drainage Are Essential Points.

Good growth of poultry and heavy egg production depend to a large extent upon the proper housing of the stock. A bulletin issued by the Iowa agricultural experiment station sets forth the essentials of a good house in brief form.

The first consideration in building a poultry house is its location. It is of greatest importance to select a site having well drained soil. It is next important to have a convenient location. The poultry house may be nearer the residence than the live stock barns, and



Photograph by Iowa agricultural experiment station.

FRONT VIEW OF A-SHAPED PORTABLE POULTRY HOUSE.

as women have a large share in the management of the flock on the average farm it should be so located. It is undesirable to build the poultry house near granaries, cribs or barns which may furnish a harbor for rats and other vermin which prey on poultry. A sunny location well sheltered from the north winds is highly desirable whenever it is possible to obtain it without sacrificing good ground drainage.

The A-shaped movable colony home illustrated is cheap and light and has been thoroughly tried out and found to be very satisfactory for raising chicks in flocks of 200 to 300. It will winter from fifteen to twenty hens. The house is 8 by 10 feet and because of its lightness and substantial construction it can be readily moved from place to place on the skids which furnish the foundation for the house. It is warm and convenient, and the fowls are well protected from drafts.

NEEDS OF THE FARM.

There are two crying needs of the farm at the present time, the need of better methods of production and a more satisfactory manner of disposing of the products.

The Foot and Mouth Disease.

An English board of agriculture handbill states that "in the early stages of the foot and mouth disease the animal frequently snatches its lips and shows by the movement of its tongue that the mouth is the seat of suffering, and the saliva flows freely from the mouth."

"An examination of the mouth shows the existence of vesicles on the tongue and on the inner part of the upper lip and on the pad. These vesicles show themselves in the form of a tough white skin which can be easily stripped off, and a red, raw surface is found beneath. The animal seldom refuses food, but rolls it about in its mouth and often drops it instead of swallowing it. In most instances the feet are affected as well as the mouth."

The Horse's Hoofs.

If the horse's hoofs are hard and inclined to be "shelly" do not let anybody put oil or grease on them, for this only clogs the hoof material, which should absorb water instead of repelling it. Such hoofs are best treated by soaking them several hours together in warm water slightly salted or by turning out the horse at night in a pasture where he will have the hoofs wet in the dew. —Farm Progress.

"Critter" Wisdom.

Lack of care makes the cow kick, and she always hits the tenderest spot, the pocketbook.

With mature hogs, where it is desired to add fat to the body, potatoes may be fed with good results, but they are not as good as corn.

A firm, hard collar that fits is invariably better as well as easier on the horse's shoulder than the ill fitted-contraption that has to be padded.

In using a separator in the dairy always start it slowly and never run it at a higher speed than your instructions specify. Running it too fast is not only throwing the butter fat away in the skimmilk, but the separator bowl is liable to burst and kill the operator.

Try to give every horse a good mate to work with. You have all seen horses that were made as ugly as sin just because the horse they had to work with walked slower than they did or for some equally good reason. A mate is a horse that is congenial to the other one in all respects.

BUTTON MAKING.

This is an Occupation That Calls For No Special Skill.

Buttons have an irresistible fascination in these days for the clever home dressmaker, for they put within her reach a practically infinite number of effective touches for her frocks which will take from her very little in the way of either time or money.

A pretty button can be made by first covering the padded mold with white silk and putting over this two thicknesses of silver gauze decorated with a little cluster of steel beads—in the center—from which radiate half a dozen or more loops of reseda green chenille. Narrow shaded ribbon can be woven into a charming button cover. A foundation should be cut from white silk. On this lay short lengths of the ribbon, the edges touching, and sew the ends securely. Then, with a needle threaded with ribbon, darn in the reverse pieces. If liked a tiny frill made of slightly gathered ribbon may be sewed around the edge of the button.

Motifs cut from lace which has passed its days of usefulness in the ordinary way can do their part toward making fancy buttons. A small daisy pattern tacked to white silk and worked over in satin stitch in any color preferred with a few French knots added will make an embroidered button that is decidedly expensive in appearance. On cloth or velvet a button covered with velvet and trimmed with a fine braid in a fancy mixture of colors may be used. The braid can be knotted in the center and radiate toward the outer rim, where the separate bits should be connected by a single strand of the braid, with knots to keep all in place.

SEASONABLE RECIPES.

Corn Souffle.—Green corn and cheese souffle is little known, possibly, to most housekeepers, but its acquaintance is worth making. Have ready a cupful of corn cut from the cob, a cupful of grated American cheese, a tablespoonful or two of minced green pepper, three eggs, a tablespoonful of butter, half a cupful of flour, two cupfuls of milk and half a teaspoonful of salt. Melt the butter and cook the pepper soft in it. Make a sauce with the flour, milk, butter and salt. Beat the eggs separately, turn the yolks into the sauce, stir in the corn and fold in the whites. Turn into a buttered dish and bake in a moderate oven about half an hour.

Whitefish Fritters.—When you have any cold whitefish on hand you can make a very tasty dish in this way: To a cupful of the fish flaked up fine add half a cupful of mashed potatoes, half a cupful of grated breadcrumbs, half a cupful of cream, the beaten yolks of two eggs, salt and pepper to taste. Mix well together and then make into oblong shapes and flatten on both sides. Beat the whites of the two eggs and dip the cakes in this, then into breadcrumbs, and fry a nice brown in bacon fat or vegetable oil. Serve at once, garnished with parsley.

Sliced Peaches.—Four pounds of peaches, one cupful of vinegar, one tablespoonful of cinnamon, one tablespoonful of cloves, three pounds of brown sugar, one teaspoonful of ginger, one teaspoonful of salt and one-eighth of a teaspoonful of red pepper. Boil the sugar and the vinegar. Scald the peaches, remove the skins and cook in the syrup. Tie spices in a bag and cook with the peaches. When the peaches are tender pour into stone jars. Reheat the syrup every day for a week, pouring when boiling over the peaches. All kinds of small fruits may be speeded in this manner.

Use of "Mountain Peak" Braid.

Braid is much used on the new hats and used not in plain bands or bind-



A DASHING HAT FOR FALL.

ings, but in all sorts of queer and unexpected convolutions.

This new hat displays the "mountain peak" braid used as edging, and the black and white quill is placed in a dashing manner.

Men's Card Prizes.

Prizes for card parties are easily chosen for women, but for a man's prize there is usually some difficulty in selection. A paper cutter is generally acceptable, and one can now be had for a very moderate sum, just 35 cents, which is excellent for this purpose. It shows a Japanese warrior in full armor, mounted on horseback, carved as the handle of a good sized paper knife. The knife itself is made of bone. This is stained a brownish tint, which takes off the crude appearance. Another paper cutter, suitable for a "booby prize," is of wood and shows on its surface a tiny monkey which is reaching up for two apples just out of his reach. This one is but 10 cents.

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