

"So they decided to try a lifeboat landing. The BRULIN's lifeboat, a much heavier craft than the little punt that had failed, was cleared away, and the ship steamed to windward of the barge so as to make a lee again. The boat was manned and the crew stood by to lower. Then the BRULIN took a tremendous roll and one of the davits jammed and the hoisting gear at the stern of the lifeboat fouled. She could not be got down safely, or on an even keel, so she was hoisted back on board.

"But Capt. Leonard was not to be beaten. If men and boats could not do it, the 'mudhook' might. Six times he patiently nosed the BRULIN up astern of the wallowing HUDSON, both vessels rolling like things demented. His hope was to drop an anchor, like a great fish hook, so that it would grip the wriggling whale. Sounds simple. But he was playing with a fish hook weighing a ton or two, and a line weighing a couple of tons more - chain cable, each link many pounds - and his catch was a heaving mass of steel to touch which might mean the sinking of two ships. Steel plates are strong, but they cut like tin when thousands of tons are behind the stroke.

"Six times the BRULIN approached the barge. Five times the engines were reversed and five times she backed away, missing the barge's stern by fathoms, feet or inches.

"The BRULIN began her work at 11 o'clock that November morning. At five that November evening, she was still at it. through the early dusk, the smoke plume of another steamer blurred the horizon. On she came, leaping and rolling in the heavy seas. She began to circle the BRULIN and the barge. She was the SIMCOLITE (an Imperial Oil tanker, later [b] IMPERIAL SIMCOE -ed.). Her captain hailed from her bridge, at a distance of 400 feet. The wind whirled his words up the lake.

"'We don't need any help!' roared Capt. Leonard. 'We're getting her.'

"The SIMCOLITE sheered off and steamed away on her course. As she departed, the BRULIN's bow grazed the barge's stern, on the sixth try. It was only a 'light touch', but the sparks flew and the forepeak plates and port side of the BRULIN were dented in - \$2,500 worth (a lot of money in 1935 dollars -ed.) and the stern plates of the barge were battered just as badly.

"But... The port anchor, dropped at the right second, gripped the stout steel bulwarks of the stern of the barge. And held! Then it began to snow.

"From five o'clock that evening till 11 o'clock that night, the BRULIN hung on in the snow, gradually increasing her precarious but tenacious grip. Six shots of anchor chain, 15 fathoms each, in all 540 feet of steel links, were veered out, the sag of the chain forming a sort of spring which kept the two vessels connected with a minimum of strain. Gently, the BRULIN eased away and got straightened out on a course up the lake, trailing the BRUCE HUDSON after her, sometimes stern-first, sometimes sideways, through the snow.

"At two o'clock next morning, the wind veered from northeast to east and it cleared. It blew as hard as ever and the sea ran high. By 11 o'clock in the forenoon (of the 17th), 24 hours after the BRULIN had sighted the barge in midlake, abreast of Cobourg, the pair had won to within four miles of Port Weller, the Welland Canal, and safety.

"But how to get in? It is one thing to tow a couple of thousand tons wrong-end-to with all the lake to roll around in, and another thing indeed to get such a prize, going both ways at once, into port. And it started to snow again!

"Again the landing boom was rigged. Again First Mate Levens, still on deck after 24 hours' ceaseless activity, swung like a spider twenty feet overboard from the BRULIN's side. A swell rose between the two vessels and subsided. Next moment, he was fair over the HUDSON's icy deck, plumb