



(Illustration at top from painting "Thresh of the Sea," by Frank Vining Smith, courtesy Anderson Galleries, Chicago.)

IT WAS the night of last Nov. 21 on Lake Superior—the biggest and fiercest of the Great Lakes. The lake steamer John P. Geistman, loaded with coal and automobiles, her iron hull glistening with ice, pitched and rolled and writhed and yawed in the delirious clutches of an unpredicted storm that swooped at her zigzagly and played with her wantonly like a gorilla tearing the strings from a harp.

● The weather forecast of the day before had predicted calm over Lake Superior, yet one of the most vicious tempests in Great Lakes history arose in a few hours, seeming to come alternately from the north, the east, and the southeast, until at half past 7 on the evening of the 21st a mountain of sea plunged across the Geistman's deck, washing some ten automobiles and their heavy chains into

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the lake. Again around 9 o'clock an even bigger mass of water avalanched upon the tortured vessel, sweeping thirty-four more cars to the black depths of Lake Superior. Skipper Charles Auttersson said afterward that the gale shifted its angle of attack so frequently that "I couldn't put the vessel in any position in which she wouldn't roll. . . . It was the meanest blow I've ever seen."

● That sort of weather typifies the extremes to

By
GUY MURCHIE JR.

its wake. Sometimes salt-water sailors scoff at the need for taking precautions on the lakes—but not after they have sailed the lakes for a season or two. There is the famous tragedy which befell two French trawlers in the last week of the World war. They had been built by a Canadian

which Great Lakes climate can go. Spring is a relatively

calm season on the lakes, but an April shower will occasionally go wild on Lake Michigan and strew wreckage in its wake. Sometimes salt-water sailors scoff at the need for taking precautions on the lakes—but not after they have sailed the lakes for a season or two. There is the famous tragedy which befell two French trawlers in the last week of the World war. They had been built by a Canadian

shipbuilding company at Fort William, Ont., and were being rushed from that port to France. Disregarding storm signals in Superior's most treacherous month, two crews of forty some officers and men each set out aboard the two trawlers in early November to cross Lake Superior to Sault Ste. Marie and on to Lake Huron.

● But they never were seen after they steamed out of sight of Fort William. It is still a mystery what happened to them, but they certainly must have been swallowed up in the storm then raging, for "neither lifeboat, raft, piece of wreckage, nor body has been found from either one of them."

● What is the cause for such diabolical fury upon a mere lake? Is the same true of Lake Huron, Lake Michigan, Erie, and Ontario? What about Great Lakes weather in (Continued on page four.)