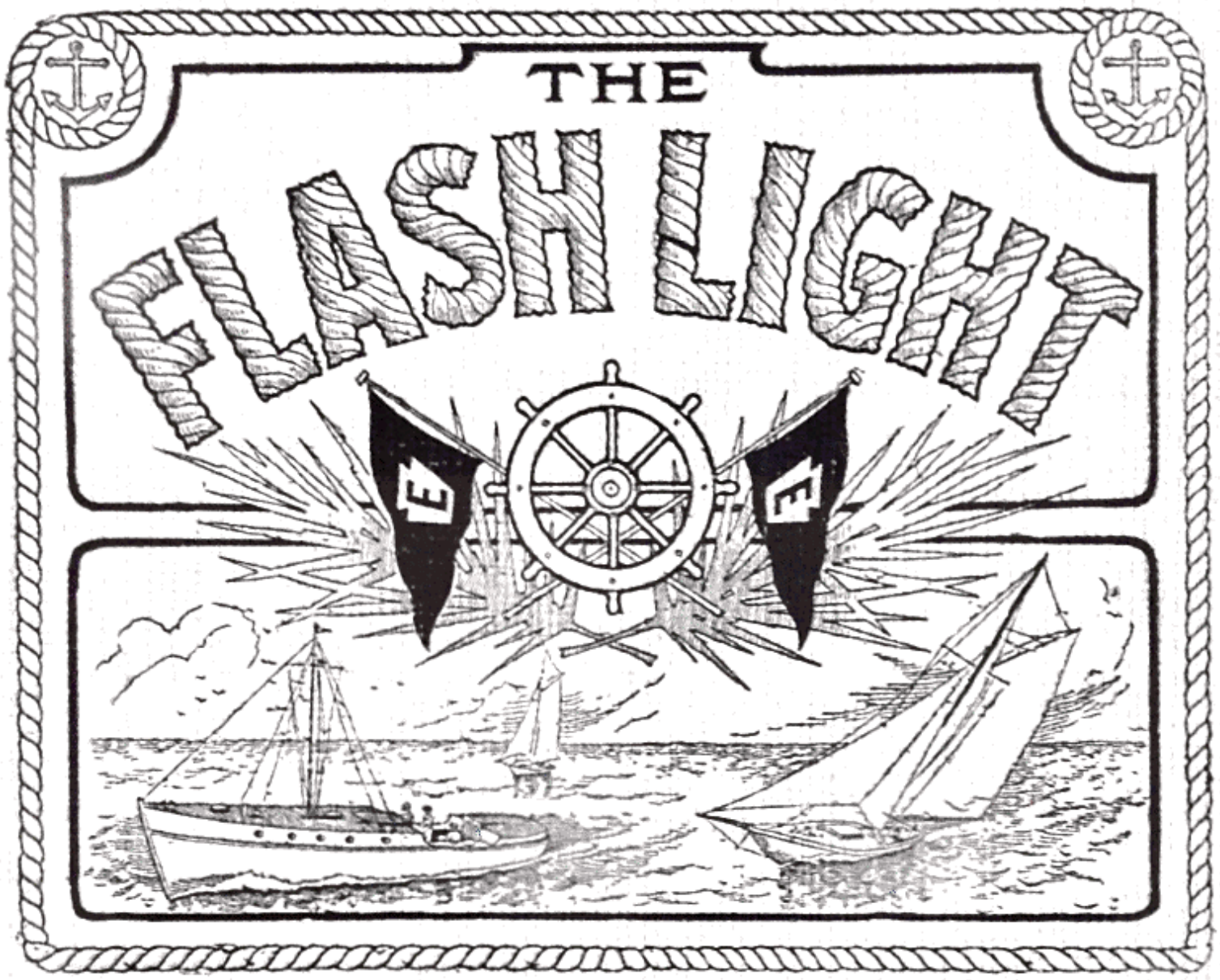
Vol. II October, 1912 Flash No. 4

THE FLASH LIGHT



PUBLISHED BY THE ERIE YACHT CLUB

The exact date of our Annual Banquet has not been determined as we go to press. The affair is in charge of a competent committee of the "old guard" from whom you will shortly hear.

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The Flash Light

MEETING NOTICE.

The October Meeting of the Club falls on Wednesday the 9th. As usual it will be held at the Anchorage. It is time to think of the November election—ours, the most important one, of course, for there will be something doing next summer, and we cannot afford to be found wanting. Other matters of importance will be discussed.

Surely you can spare an hour for this meeting and we want you to be there.

G. R. OBERHOLZER, Sec'y.

DAVY JONES.

Down in the sea
  Among the sand and stones,
There lives the old fellow
  Called Davy Jones.

When storms come up
  He sighs and groans,
And that is the singing
  Of Davy Jones.

His chest is full
  Of dead men's bones,
And that is the locker
  Of Davy Jones.

Davy is Welsh—
  You may hear by his tones,
For a regular Welsher
  Is Davy Jones.

Whenever a fish gets drowned,
  He moans;
So tender hearted
  Is Davy Jones.

Thousands of ships
  The old man owns,
But none go a sailing
  For Davy Jones.

Unknown.

THE SPEED MANIA.

The Buffalo Motor Boat Club pulled off such a live, entertaining race meet in September, and are so proud of the smash they made of the world's competition record, that it is a pity that there has cropped out a doubt as to the honesty of the measurement of the Buffalo course. At first blush it would seem strange that the winning boat should be more than 3 miles faster than Maple Leaf, the winner of the international trophy at Huntington just 10 days before, with the Buffalo champion in competition. We confess it doesn't seem just right, but the speed mania has reached such an acute stage that the racing boat of today is not only the most unstable and uncertain craft afloat, but it outrivals the areoplane in doing the unexpected. It is high time that builders of speed boats return to sane construction and reliability. The numerous breakdowns that mar practically every race are a standing reproach to American skill.

The accuracy of race courses should be determined in all cases by an authority that is above suspicion. If we cannot have the high grade Corinthianism of sailing races, let power-boat men at least see to it that the sport does not fall so low in commercialsim as to raise a suspicion of doctored courses and to establish a very flexible unit of measurement called the "commercial mile."

THE FLASH LIGHT

Vol. II October, 1912 No. 4

Shows at intervals of one month a brilliant and illuminating light of first magnitude, alternating red and white, visible from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the icy wilds of Canada to the sunny hills of Mexico, wherever may be found a member of the

ERIE YACHT CLUB.

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F. M. Yates - - - - *Fleet Captain*
G. R. Oberholzer - - - - *Secretary*
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NEXT MONTH'S ELECTION.

"The Erie Yacht Club paid a nice compliment to our own Commodore Walter Brown in their little publication, The Flash Light. Thank you, men!"—*T. Y. C. Megaphone.*

Why bless your hearts, you're welcome.

But let's doff our caps, scratch our bald pates and try to recall just what that compliment was. Oh yes! It was that reference to his toast at the I. L. Y. A. annual banquet wherein he advocated choosing the best man for each position. "Elect the *man*, not the *boat*," he urged. With our own Club election only a month off this seems to be a most opportune time to again quote the worthy Commodore at the western end of the pond and commend the above sentiment to the thoughtful consideration of our members.

In years agone the club has not always selected the best man for the job. The men chosen have been royal good fellows personally, but have, in some cases, been misfits upon the particular pedestals upon which they have been placed.

It devolves upon the club to choose a new Commodore for the coming year—an important term by-the-way, owing to the 100 years peace celebration here and at Put-in-Bay.

We are also threatened with the necessity of electing both a new Secretary and a new Treasurer, although the writer hopes that this will not prove true. But whatever offices we must fill, select men of high standing in the community, men who will be constantly "on the job," alert to the club's best interests. One of these days the club is going to "do something." It is too early just yet to say what, but one of the many schemes that is incubating in the heads of our

members is bound to come to pass —just as sure as God made little fishes. We must be ready in the personnel of our officers as in other matters for what may come.

A GOOD JOB WELL DONE.

As announced in our two preceding "flashes" the unclaimed rigging and paraphernalia which has accumulated about the club house for seventeen years past was disposed of Saturday, the 28th ult. at auction.

There were main-sails, stay-sails, top-sails, jibs, spinnakers, sail covers, spars, gaffs, booms, sprits, cushions, awnings and what-not, and were sold at prices ranging from ten cents upward, the total receipts approximating twenty dollars.

Secretary Oberholzer as auctioneer was eloquence itself; everything offered for sale was, auctioneer-like—"perfectly good" and when the bidding was not as animated as desired he "bid 'em up" on his own account. A lot of the stuff which was absolutely too worthless to inspire any bid was thrown in the discard to be burned.

The club house presents a change appearance now that it is rid of so much junk, while everything remaining is tagged with name of yacht or owner.

Breaking it Gently.

Simkins always was soft-hearted, and when it devolved upon him to break gently the news of Jones' drowning to the bereaved Mrs. Jones it cost him much paper, ink and perspiration before he sent the following:

"Dear Mrs. Jones—Your husband cannot come home to-day because his bathing suit was washed away in the surf.

P. S. Poor Jones was inside the suit."—*Life.*

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FALL FISHING.

By Grant R. Lynch.

Not many of our members know what sport our anchorage and nearby spots afford to one not too much in a hurry in the early Fall.

Some few years ago, before Uncle Sam required all of my afternoons, if it did not look like good sailing I would take the "dink", a couple of light rods and a few chubs caught around the Club piers Then just keeping the boat moving and without splashing with the oars I would begin at the mooring of the old "Scorpion," where usually I would get a number of strikes and sometimes landed a good fish. Then straight toward where the "Iris" used to lay. That mooring was the best, and many good bass taken there have surprised our members. From that mooring in a line with the outer Water Works dummy there is a shelf of rock that the fish used to follow and along that and around the outer dummy I have lost many a hook and fish, but have taken many more than I have lost. From there I always skipped a space and started in again up near the Pittsburgh Docks and on a line just inside of the outer end, where the rock shelves down to deep water. Between the west dock and the middle one is very shallow and on the edges where it has been dredged I have taken as high as thirty bass in a late afternoon at this time of the year.

Not always have I had luck it is true, but nearly any nice afternoon, say after three o'clock until dusk, I would get four or five nice fish and usually more.

Now the bass fishing in the Bay was better this spring than it has been for some years. Why won't it be the same this Fall? Try it where I have had so much luck in the past and also above the docks

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THE REVENGE.

All Summer long the rocking-chair fleet has been bragging how *they* used to sail. Their know-it-all air and the way they patronized the boys who struggled for the finishing line, soaked and tired, all the season, was born in patience and modest silence. They lay low and waited. On the last Saturday in September, the aforesaid boys innocently suggested a veteran's race with the 14-foot class. Some of them bit, but the great majority were wary. Ex-Commodore Bliss had a sudden mission out of town; Ex-Commodore Morrison simply *had* to take Mrs. Morrison to see the Life Saving Station; Ed. Davis had a toothache or something; Rear Commodore Cummins wrote an elaborate letter of regret; Al. Gunnison didn't have any excuse and Ed. Slocum tiptoed behind the Club house when the time came. Commodore Foster, Treasurer Whitley and John Smart were game and were off in a flurry of excitement.

The audience was large and appreciative. It must have been a bit galling to have the boys yell instructions to "let down the center board," "your canvas is shaking," "look out for that dock," etc., etc. Oh, it was great!

They rounded the stake in good order, came back in great style and finished with the Commodore first, and Rea protesting that John Smart had fouled a tomato can or something. Anyway there was another race in which John, with a good

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lead, rounded to three feet from the line and lay flapping while Rea Whitley slid over first. John protested that his centerboard had struck something and demanded another trial in which the Treasurer again finished first, with a good lead, and was declared winner. Rea is about the only member of the R. C. Fleet who never said he could sail.

Now Carl Reichel had slid out in his cruiser early in the afternoon, and, with erring judgment came back too soon, and could not escape. Now Carl used to be some sailor, but, somehow he landed second amid a chorus of remarks more or less pertinent. Carl heroically tried his usual charming smile, but it was a failure, and he ended with the explanation that he had not started soon enough!

Next came Oscar Nick, very late vainly trying to pass the crowd on some very urgent business, but he was forcibly restrained and put into a boat. He had awful luck. Somehow his boat wouldn't sail, and he came in a bad third with Don Sterrett, home from college, first. Veteran Bill Ester came off with a second, and it served him right for he had no business to push his excellent yawl about with an engine all Summer long with canvas furled.

The boats were laid up and Ed. Slocum appeared around the corner with a fresh stogie, safe and happy at his escape.

The boys are smiling and content, but regret Slocum's escape, for he has been dean of the R. C. Fleet for lo, these many years.

It has been our experience that a gasoline engine is a thing that can make you think you are an engineer one minute and a helpless idiot the next.—*Rough Notes.*

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THE MYSTERIOUS SHIP'S BELLS.

It was Labor Day, Monday September 6, 1909, a rather hot, quiet, uninteresting sort of day, when the writer found himself as the guest of one whom we will call Jack Sharp a passenger aboard the good steamship "Joshua Rhoades," bound for Port Arthur, Ont. Soon after dinner the Captain sought the "hay" as he affectionately called his bed, Jack was left in the pilot house swapping yarns with the Mate and Wheelsman and the writer appropriated one of the big leather couches in the observation room, which seemed to him to offer the greatest change and relief from the monotony of his usual work-a-day life.

We were ploughing our way northward up Lake Huron and were at the time off Saginaw Bay. Suddenly there came in through the open windows the familiar ding-ding, ding-ding, ding-ding, ding—whether it struck six, seven or eight bells I did not observe, but I quickly sprang over to the port door away from whence the sound seemed to come, fully expceting to see close by either a government vessel or a large yacht, but finding nothing in sight but an endless expanse of green water I ran to the starboard side where I was greeted by only a similar sight.

I then concluded that the irrepressible Jack was striking the time on the ship's fog-bell, but, thought I, "What nerve to do that right over the head of the sleeping Captain." Curious to see what time it was that Jack struck I glanced at my watch and found it to be just 3:20, and decided that there must be some difference between our watches and that he had struck seven bells—half past three.

With the approach of supper time Captain and passengers gath-

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ered in the pilot house as was our custom, and in the course of our talk I remarked upon Jack striking the ship's bells two hours before. He disclaimed having done so, and stated that he had been in the engine room most of the afternoon. Thereupon the Mate looked around and said: "Why I heard those bells and I supposed one or both of you did it and I was afraid you'd awaken the Captain; it was just 2:20 o'clock."

"No," said I, "it was 3:20 o'clock."

It was soon discovered that while the ship observed Central time I still carried Eastern time, which explained the hour discrepancy between our watches.

Inquiry proved that no one of the crew had struck the bells—indeed the only large bell which the ship possessed was the fog-bell which hung directly in front of the pilot house in plain sight of those at the wheel and on watch, and out of reach of any but those in the wheel house. Where did the mysterious sound come from? Was it a phantom bell made audible only to the mate and the writer, and rung by one of the many brave sailor-men who have found Davy Jones' locker in that locality?

The incident made a very live topic of conversation during the remainder of the trip and it remains a mystery to this day.

The Ditty Bag.

"If they were out-of-doors all summer would even one's capstan?"—J. J. H.

* * *

"If SHE prefers sailing to power-boating should one call her his windlass?"—G. R. O.

* * *

If you see a loving couple up forward does that indicate that the craft has a spoon bow?"—W. H. G.

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THE JOY OF SMALL-BOAT SAILING.

By JACK LONDON.

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A sailor is born, not made. And by "sailor" is meant, not the average inefficient and hopeless creature who is found to-day in the forecastles of deepwater ships, but the man who will take a fabric compounded of wood and iron and rope and canvas and compel it to obey his will on the surface of the sea. Barring captains and mates of big ships, the small-boat sailor is the real sailor. He knows—he must know—how to make the wind carry his craft from one given point to another given point. He must know about tides and rips and eddies, bar and channel markings, and day and night signals; he must be wise in weather-lore; and he must be sympathetically familiar with the peculiar qualities of his boat which differentiate it from every other boat that was ever built and rigged. He must know how to gentle her about, as one instance of a myriad, and to fill her on the other tack without deadening her way or allowing her to fall off too far.

The deepwater sailor of to-day needs know none of these things. And he doesn't. He pulls and hauls as he is ordered, swabs decks, washes paint, and chips iron-rust. He knows nothing, and cares less. Put him in a small boat and he is helpless. He will cut an even better figure on the hurricane deck of a horse.

I shall never forget my child-astonishment when I first encountered one of these strange beings. He was a runaway English sailor. I was a lad of twelve, with a decked-over, fourteen-foot, centre-board skiff which I had taught myself to sail. I sat at his feet as at the feet of a god, while he discoursed of strange lands and peoples, deeds of violence, and hair-raising gales at sea. Then, one day, I took him for a sail. With all the trepidation of the veriest little amateur, I hoisted sail and got under way. Here was a man, looking on critically, I was sure, who knew more in one second about boats and the water than I could ever know. After an interval, in which I exceeded myself, he took the tiller and the sheet. I sat on the little thwart amidships, open-mouthed, prepared to learn what real sailing was. My mouth remained open, for I learned what a real sailor was in a small boat. He couldn't trim the sheet to save himself, he nearly capsized several times in squalls, and once again, by blunderingly jibing over; he didn't know what a centre-board was for, nor did he know that in running a boat before the wind one must sit in the middle instead of on the side; and finally, when

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we came back to the wharf, he ran the skiff in full tilt, shattering her nose and carrying away the mast step. And yet he was a really truly sailor, fresh from the vasty deep.

Which points my moral. A man can sail in the fore-castles of big ships all his life and never know what real sailing is.

From the time I was twelve, I listened to the lure of the sea. When I was fifteen I was captain and owner of an oyster-pirate sloop. By the time I was sixteen I was sailing in scow-schooners, fishing salmon with the Greeks up the Sacramento River, and serving as sailor on the Fish Patrol. And I was a good sailor, too, though all my cruising had been on San Francisco Bay and the rivers tributary to it. I had never been on the ocean in my life.

Then, the month I was seventeen, I signed before the mast as an able seaman on a three-topmast schooner bound on a seven-months' cruise across the Pacific and back again. As my shipmates promptly informed me, I had had my nerve with me to sign on as able seaman. Yet behold, I *was* an able seaman. I had graduated from the right school. It took no more than minutes to learn the names and uses of the few new ropes. It was simple. I did not do things blindly. As a small-boat sailor I had learned to reason out and know the *why* of everything. It is true, I had to learn how to steer by compass, which took maybe half a minute; but when it came to steering "full-and-by" and "close-and-by" I could beat the average of my shipmates, because that was the very way I had always sailed. Inside fifteen minutes I could box the compass around and back again. And there was little else to learn during that seven-months' cruise, except fancy rope-sailorizing, such as the more complicated lanyard knots and the making of various kinds of sennit and rope mats.

The point of all of which is that it is by means of small-boat sailing that the real sailor is best schooled.

For genuine excitement and thrill, give me the small boat. Things happen so quickly, and there are always so few to do the work—and hard work, too, as the small-boat sailor knows.

After all, the mishaps are almost the best part of small boat sailing. Looking back, they prove to be punctuations of joy. At the time they try your mettle and your vocabulary, and may make you so pessimistic as to believe that God has a grudge against you—but afterward, ah, afterward, with what pleasure you remember them and with what gusto do you relate them to your brother skippers in the fellowhood of small-boat sailing.

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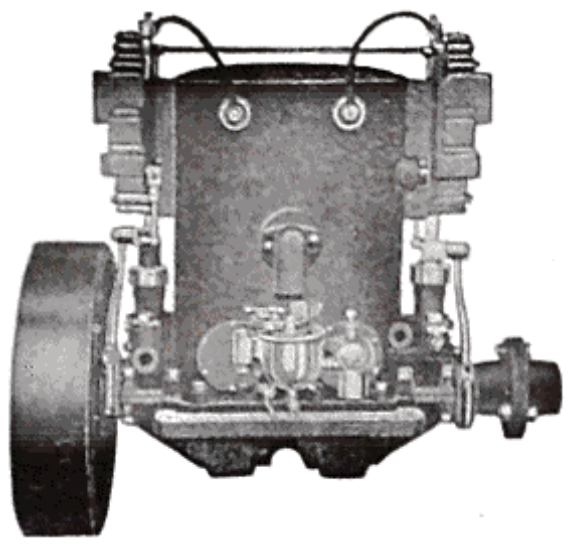

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Jos. Lowes,	7	"	" "
M. Weindorf,	10	"	Jump
Dr. Condren,	10	"	"
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Wm. Schad	7½	"	"
And others.			

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There is never lack of exercise in small-boat sailing, and the hard work is not only part of the fun of it, but it beats the doctors.

I was born so long ago that I grew up before the era of gasolene. As a result, I am old-fashioned I prefer a sail-boat to a motor-boat, and it is my belief that boat-sailing is a finer, more difficult and sturdier art than running a motor. Gasolene engines are becoming fool proof, and while it is unfair to say that any fool can run an engine, it is fair to say that almost any one can. Not so, when it comes to sailing a boat. More skill, more intelligence, and a vast deal more training are necessary. It is the finest training in the world for boy and youth and man. If the boy is very small, equip him with a small, comfortable skiff. He will do the rest. He won't need to be taught. Shortly he will be setting a tiny leg-of-mutton and steering with an oar. Then he will begin to talk keels and centreboards and want to take his blankets out and stop aboard all night.

But don't be afraid for him. He is bound to run risks and encounter accidents. Remember, there are accidents in the nursery as well as out on the water. More boys have died from hothouse culture than have died on boats large and small; and more boys have been made into strong and reliant men by boat-sailing than by lawn-croquet and dancing school.

And once a sailor, always a sailor. The savor of the salt never stales. The sailor never grows so old that he does not care to go back for one more wrestling bout with wind and wave. I know it of myself. I have turned rancher, and live beyond sight of the sea. Yet I can stay away from it only so long. After several months have passed, I begin to grow restless. I find myself day-dreaming over incidents of the last cruise, or wondering if the striped bass are running on Wingo Slough, or eagerly reading the newspapers for reports of the first northern flights of ducks. And then, suddenly, there is a hurried packing of suit cases and overhauling of gear, and we are off for Vallejo where the little *Roamer* lies, waiting, always waiting, for the skiff to come alongside, for the lighting of the fire in the galley stove, for the pulling off of gaskets, the swinging up of the mainsail, and the rat-tat-tat of the reef-points, for the heaving short and the breaking out, and for the swirling of the wheel as she fills away and heads up Bay or down.

"If one stood in with the steward could he obtain freeboard?"—E. A. D.

Oscar H. Nick

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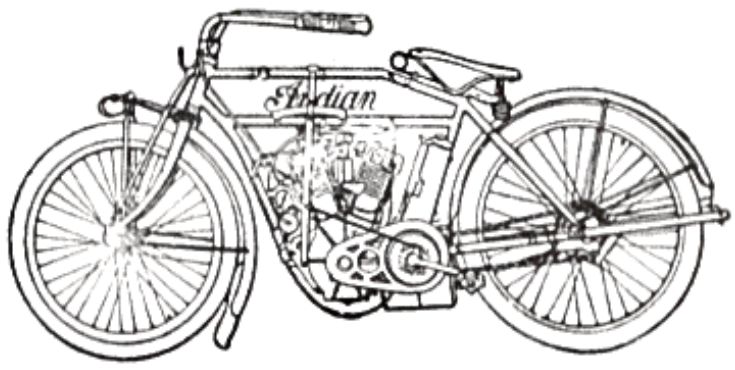

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REAL MEANING OF "AT HALF MAST."

Perhaps you have noticed that whenever a prominent person dies, especially if he is connected with the government, the flags on public buildings are hoisted only part of the way up. This is called half mast. Did you ever stop to think what connection there could be between a flag that was not properly hoisted and the death of a great man.?

Ever since the flags were used in war it has been the custom to have the flag of the superior or conquering nation above that of the inferior or vanquished. When an army found itself hopelessly beaten it hauled its flag down far enough for the flag of the victors to be placed above it on the same pole. This was a token, not only of submission, but of respect.

In those days when a famous soldier died flags were lowered out of respect to his memory. The custom long ago passed from purely military usage to public life of all kinds, the flag flying at half mast being a sign that the dead man was worthy of universal respect. The space above left it is for the flag of the great conqueror of all—the Angel of Death— *New York Sun*.

RIPLETS.

Commodore Bliss defied the equinoctial season by running across to Canada on the 21st ult. But he has not bragged very much since about the weather he encountered on the trip.

Captain Reichel took a fishing party over to Bluff Bar on the 14th ult. and while across the pond his motor sustained a minor mishap. Rear Commodore Cummins happened along with the "Jay Dee" and yanked him home.

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