

MEMORIES OF YACHT CRUISES.

BY THE LATE CAPTAIN R. F. COFFIN.

No. IV.

DESPITE the charms of the cruise on an individual yacht, much is to be said in favor of the cruise in squadron. The cruise in the solitary craft may be very pleasant at first, but it is apt to become monotonous after a few days, unless the party on board has been most happily selected. While *en route* from port to port every craft bound in the same direction is at once made a contestant in an improvised race, and unless she, too, is a yacht, she is too easily disposed of. As has been often proven, the slowest of the yachts is more than a match for the fastest coasting vessel. Probably the fastest vessels encountered will be the fishing schooners, and some of these nowadays sport nearly as much fancy canvas as the yachts do. They are finely modeled craft, and generally sail, as the yacht does, in good ballast trim. As a matter of course, they are admirably handled, and occasionally the tedium of the individual cruise is enlivened by a more or less spirited trial of speed with a well-appointed fishing schooner. Always, however, so far as my experience goes, these trials end in favor of the pleasure craft, none of which can properly be considered slow, except by comparison with some other yacht. Nothing proves more conclusively that yachting means racing than the fact that the chief interest and pleasure of the individual cruise arise from these chance contests with vessels encountered *en route*.

Now, in the squadron cruise all this is furnished to hand, and as past of the regular order of things. Each passage between ports is a race, and each yacht selects her class competitors, and cares for the movement of no others in the fleet. Very much more now than formerly, care is taken to have these races fair, and a matter of official record. In some instances the New York Yacht Club has hired a tug to accompany the yachts for the whole cruise, and from her the time is taken accurately at the start and finish of each day's sail. Commodore Gerry (as noted in the September OUTING) has the regatta committee on the *Electra*, and makes a

specialty of having a correct record of the daily runs kept, making manifold copies of the result, and sending a copy to each yacht almost as soon as her anchor is down. This increases the interest in the cruise immensely. The New York, however, is the only club, except, of course, the American, which has a steam yacht for its flagship, and certainly there are few commodores who would take the trouble that Mr. Gerry does. I have no hesitation in saying that he is, in this respect, the best commodore that the old club has ever had.

In the Eastern, the Atlantic, the Seawanhaka, and other clubs which cruise in squadron, this matter of accuracy in timing is receiving more and more attention each year. In the printed orders of the commodore it is expressly provided that the first yacht to arrive at a designated point shall note her own time, and then the times of all that follow, and shall report the same to the commodore. The start is not entirely fair, as it is made by general signal, and some yachts must of necessity, where the squadron is large, be in a better position than others. It is, however, the much-vaunted "one-gun start," so strenuously advocated—for no reason that I can think of except that it is the style common in Great Britain. The British clubs, however, rarely start a large fleet, and where there are but five or six yachts, comparatively little trouble need be feared from permitting them all to crowd upon the line at once; while if there were thirty, forty, or more, vessels, confusion, and perhaps collision, would certainly result. After all, what can be fairer than the present American method of timing each yacht to a second at start and finish?

It is the continuous series of races, then, which gives the squadron cruise a charm lacking in all other forms of yachting; but it also has other attractions. The interchange of visits between the guests on the different yachts, the jolly dinners, the pleasant shore parties—all these make the cruise exceedingly pleasant, and no

club whose fleet is at all respectable should fail to encourage it. None, of course, can present such a fleet of fine vessels as the New York, Atlantic and Eastern clubs; but much enjoyment may be had, even if the fleet is not so imposing. The Knickerbocker Club can in numbers equal any, and its short cruises — generally in the early part of July—have been very enjoyable. The cruise of the Seawanhaka Corinthian Club this year was a great success, although its fleet was not large. The Larchmont Yacht Club has never yet found itself in a position to essay the cruise, but as in all other respects it has placed itself in the front rank, it may well be expected to in the future.

The difficulty where the yacht is small is to accommodate the guests. Roughing it is all very well in theory, but in practice it is unsatisfactory. Men on a pleasure trip do not care to rough it. There is also a difficulty in the small craft to find stowage for water and ice, two prime necessities; but if the runs are made short, so that the supply may be replenished daily, the small craft can manage very well, and I think in the future the annual cruise will become as much a regular feature of the yacht club programme as is the annual regatta.

If I am not mistaken, the Seawanhaka Corinthian Yacht Club had its first cruise in July, 1879, and it *was* a Corinthian one, only a few professionals being allowed on the yachts. Well, it's all right for the guests on board a yacht to take a pull at sheets or halliards once in a while, but as for doing all the deck duty, turning out and washing down the decks, cleaning the bright work, and making and taking in sail continuously all day long, it is quite absurd. But this has to be done, if the wind be paltry and baffling. But as for calling it amusement, I think that when turning a grindstone becomes a pleasurable occupation, then strict Corinthian yachting will be a pastime, and not until then.

The Corinthian Club, on this its first cruise, assembled at Glen Cove, and sailed thence to Black Rock, with a fleet composed of one schooner and four sloops; among them the *Schemer*, then owned by Mr. C. S. Lee, who was lost last March in the yawl *Cythera*. He was a very intelligent gentleman, and one of the most skillful of the yachting men of the time.

Mr. Lee was one of the earliest converts to the cutter theory, and in 1881 he had the cutter *Oriva* built from a design by

John Harvey, who at that time was in business in London. Her advent not only introduced a new style in design, but also in workmanship, she being by all odds the best constructed yacht ever built in this country. She was not as narrow as the ordinary British cutter of her length at that time, and would have been still better had she been given another foot of beam. At that time, however, there was a mistaken notion on the part of those most violently affected by the "cutter craze," as it was called, that the British yachts sailed fast because they were narrow. People wholly ignored the fact that each builder made his yacht as broad as possible under the rule, and as soon as it was relaxed the *Thistle* was produced, by far the most speedy cutter yet turned out from a British yard. I think that, should a 90-foot boat be designed as a challenger for the *America's* Cup, the *Thistle's* proportion of beam to length will probably be exceeded in her, and that her success will be greater than that of the Scotch challenger.

At the time of this first cruise of the Seawanhaka Club, Mr. Samuel J. Colgate, of the schooner *Idler*, was the commodore, but the fleet on this cruise was under the command of its vice-commodore, Oliver E. Cromwell, and the schooner *Eddie* was the flagship,

From Black Rock the fleet sailed to New London. At that port it was joined by the *Muriel*, another of the Harvey cutters built in this country, and which antedated the *Oriva* by some three years. The first spar plan of this cutter was entirely too small, and her performance for her two first seasons only confirmed the centre-board men in their opinions as to the superiority of the broad and shallow model.

The Seawanhaka fleet went on to Newport, and later to New Bedford, where the cruise practically ended, the flagship having carried away her foremast on the passage from Newport.

The cruise of the Seawanhaka Club in 1880 was under the command of Commodore W. A. W. Stewart, who recently owned the yawl *Cythera*, which he had purchased in England, and who was lost in her. His loss, like that of Mr. Lee, who accompanied him as his friend and guest, was most serious to the yachting interests of this city, and one from which the Corinthian Club, of which these two gentlemen were the chief supports, will hardly recover.

The fleet of the club on this cruise was

larger than in the previous year. It had as schooners the *Wanderer*, Mr. James Stillman, and the *Clytie*, Mr. Anson Phelps Stokes; and there were nine sloops, the *Regina* carrying the pennant of the commodore. The fleet assembled at Glen Cove, July 13, and sailed thence to Morris Cove, at the entrance to the harbor of New Haven, a most inconvenient stopping-place. It is four miles from the city, has an inconvenient landing-place, and except in the daytime there is no regular communication with the city. No supplies of any kind can be obtained there. Still it is handy for a fleet of small yachts bound from Glen Cove, being about half way to New London.

At this latter port, whither the fleet next proceeded, it remained for a day, and had a sweepstake race between three of its sloops, for the delectation of the lady guests at the Pequot House, with whom, of course, the Corinthian "tars" were great favorites. This harbor will always be a favorite stopping-place for yachts. From the first of June until the first of October there is hardly a day that one or more of the pleasure fleet may not be seen at anchor off the Pequot House, or off the Edgcombe House, on the opposite side of the harbor. There is good water clear up to the city, for the largest yachts; supplies of all kinds are as abundant and cheap as in this city. There are facilities for hauling out, and several well-appointed shipyards where any kind of work on hull, rigging, spars or sails can be well clone, at a fair price. In the afternoon the wind as a general thing 'is fair for a run up to the city, and in the early morning there is usually, during the summer months, a light air from the northward to bring the yachts back to the anchorage at the mouth of the harbor.

The fleet this year, as in that previous, went on to New Bedford, where some racing had been arranged. Stormy weather prevented this, and a return to Newport was made, where the cruise ended.

The Atlantic Yacht Club, this year, had a fine muster of yachts, excelling, I think, that of any previous cruise. It left Whitestone July 31, under command of Commodore L. A. Fish, the present owner of the *Grayling*, with seven schooners and seventeen sloops. Its flagship was the schooner *Agnes*, the same which capsized at her anchor, with sails furred, while lying off Staten Island, in a hard squall last June. Her mishap has always been a mystery to

me, for although an extremely shallow vessel, she had great initial stability. The squall must have been extremely heavy.

The fleet pursued its usual route from Whitestone to Black Rock, where it remained over Sunday, and started the next day for New London. Here, on Monday evening, a ball in its honor was given at the Edgcombe House, and then, varying the ordinary route, it went to Block Island. Two or three attempts have been made by different yacht clubs to utilize Block Island as a stopping-place, but never with any satisfactory result. The anchorage is bad, and the harbor is but an apology for such. However, the Atlantic club desired to skip Newport if it were possible. The passage to New Bedford from Block Island was rather rough, and a stormy time there spoiled the hospitable intentions of the New Bedford Yacht Club in its behalf. There is no port at which the cruising yachtsman tarries, where he receives a warmer welcome than at the city of New Bedford. It is a hard place to emigrate from. As a harbor, however, it has its disadvantages; the entrance is narrow, and, with the wind blowing in, large and sluggishly-working yachts have to tow out.

The Atlantic club went on to Cottage City and had a great time there. Mr. Joseph Spinney entertained the members and guests at his cottage, and there were fireworks on the yachts, etc. Next day the fleet sailed for Newport. This plan of taking Newport in on the return to the westward is an excellent one, and the beat back from Cottage City is a better test of the qualities of the yachts than all the previous runs have been. From Newport the club ran over to Greenport, where it disbanded. It was by far the most successful cruise which the club has ever had, and I doubt whether it has ever been improved upon; much of this, of course, being due to its excellent commodore. Whatever Mr. Fish undertakes he accomplishes, as a rule, successfully.

The fleets of the New York and Eastern yacht clubs were joined in the cruise of 1880, the Eastern club coming west as far as New London, where it had to wait one day longer than had been expected on account of the tardy movement of the New York fleet. They had been delayed by calm weather on the passage from Glen Cove. Together, the two fleets went over to Shelter Island, making a magnificent display in front of the Manhansett House. From there, the combined squadrons sailed

to Newport and thence to New Bedford where there was a set race in which seven schooners and eleven sloops were started. The schooner *Halcyon*, then owned by General Paine, made the best time over the course, but the *Peerless* captured the prize from her on allowance of time. The *Halcyon* was originally a New York yacht and only of fair average speed; but after General Paine had purchased her, that skillful yachtsman experimented with her to such good purpose that he made her the fastest light-weather schooner in the fleets. For years, when the New York yachts raced in Eastern waters, she regularly captured the prizes.

The *Peerless*, which won on this occasion on allowance of time, was originally rigged as a sloop, having been built by the Poilons, in Brooklyn, for Mr. J. Rogers Maxwell, the present owner of the sloop *Shamrock*. She did not please the leading experts of the time, one of whom christened her "the Bull Pup." Mr. Maxwell, however, was not discouraged, and he finally made of her a fairly fast sloop. He then lengthened her and altered her rig to that of a schooner, and as such made her the fastest second-class schooner in America. At the time of this race she belonged to the New Bedford Yacht Club, having been sold to Vice-Commodore Hathaway of that club. The two squadrons proceeded together to Vineyard Haven, where, after the usual interchange of courtesies, the Eastern club parted company, going on to Boston, while the New York club returned to Newport, where it disbanded, having been kept together for ten days.

This was the year that the steel cutter *Vanduaara* came out in English waters, and created such a *furor*. The New York yachtsmen on their return from this cruise were greeted by rumors from across the Atlantic that another bid was about to be made for the *America's Cup*. This rumor did not trouble them much, but in the light of subsequent events, it is tolerably certain that if the *Vanduaara* had come in 1881, as threatened, she would have carried the cup back to England in her locker. Fortunately, or otherwise—for I do not know that it would be a misfortune if the cup was fairly captured by a foreign club—the *Vanduaara* did not come, but the *Atalanta* did, and was disposed of with all ease.

The schooner *Agnes* was the flagship of the Atlantic club during the cruise of 1881, once more carrying the pennant of Commodore Fish. In number, the fleet was not

as large as in the previous year, but there were five schooners and twelve sloops in the squadron when it left Black Rock, a very respectable fleet. The same old route was pursued—New London, Shelter Island, Newport and New Bedford; but here the monotony of the cruise was varied by a race, the entries comprising four New Bedford and three Atlantic club schooners and six Atlantic and seven New Bedford sloops. The New Bedford schooner *Peerless* and the Atlantic sloop *Fanita* and New Bedford sloops *Hesper* and *Nixie* were the winners in the several classes, so the honors were decidedly with the New Bedford club, as it captured three out of the four prizes.

The cruise of the New York Yacht Club for the year 1881 promised at its beginning to be the most brilliant in its history. It assembled at New London under the command of Commodore Waller, with the *Dauntless* as the flagship. By way of opening the cruise in an interesting manner. Mr. Charles Minton, who was then the secretary, offered a \$250 cup for a schooner prize on the run to Newport the following day, to be taken by the first yacht in, without allowance of time. It was shrewdly suspected that the secretary believed that without allowance of time there was no yacht in the fleet which could beat the *Dauntless*, on board which he was sailing, and that he intended the cup as a prize for the commodore. Had the start been made as arranged, all would have been well; but at the hour named a fog hung over the harbor and Sound like a pall, and there was scarcely any wind, so the race for the Secretary's Cup was declared off.

In the afternoon, however, the fog lifted, a good breeze sprang up, and the fleet started. When the schooner *Tidal Wave* passed Point Judith, there was not a schooner in the fleet which was not hull down astern of her. It had been resolved to sail for the Secretary's Cup the next day from Brenton's Reef Lightship to Clark's Point, off New Bedford; but in view of the performance of the *Tidal Wave* in this run from New London, she seemed a certain winner, and such a state of affairs was particularly distasteful to Fleet-Captain Robert Center and the others on board the flagship.

What was to be done to avert the threatened calamity? I know not who was responsible for the action, and should not state it if I did, for it was peculiarly disgraceful. A half hour before the start,

Fleet-Captain Center rowed through the fleet and gave notice that no yacht could sail for the Secretary's Cup unless the owner was on board. By a curious coincidence, as the elder Mr. Weller might have said, the only yacht which did not have her owner on board was the *Tidal Wave*, the yacht which had run all the other schooners out of sight on the previous day.

No meeting of the club had taken place in the meanwhile, and where any one obtained authority for such an unheard-of rule it is impossible to say. Captain Center, however, frankly admitted at New Bedford the next day, that the action was taken solely with a view to barring out the *Tidal Wave*. He, however, based his action on a personal feeling against Captain "Joe" Elsworth, who, because he had sailed the *Countess of Dufferin* in her second race for the *America's Cup*, had excited Captain Center's ire. He had determined—so he said—that Captain "Joe" should never again sail for a cup in the New York Yacht Club. Since that time, as we all know, the club and the public have been glad to avail themselves of Captain Elsworth's skill, and he has been an important factor in the preservation of the great yachting trophy. After all, this disgraceful business was not at all necessary; for although the *Tidal Wave* started with the fleet, and although Captain Elsworth did his best to get to Clark's Point ahead of the lot, the little New Bedford schooner *Peerless*, the once despised "Bull Pup" of the New York experts, captured the Secretary's Cup.

Of course, after this plain expression of feeling on the part of the officers of the club, Captain Elsworth could not consent to remain with the squadron, and immediately left it. The result was the loss of the only light-weather schooner that had any chance against the *Halcyon*, and in the races which were sailed while the fleet was at New Bedford for the cups presented by Mr. E. A. Buck of the *Spirit of the Times*, the *Halcyon*, as usual, captured the schooner prize.

This was rather a disastrous cruise, although it had promised so fairly. Commodore Waller had gone to the expense of having a large barge towed to New Bedford, and on board her a ball was given, the music being furnished from New York. But there were several days of foggy weather which interfered materially with the programme. Finally a start was made, from Vineyard Haven for Boston, but,

threatening weather being encountered, the fleets returned to Vineyard Haven, and the Eastern club concluded to part company and go to Newport. So it was arranged that next day, if the weather was favorable, the New York club should go on to Boston. During the day, however there were many defections, and next morning but a small fleet remained. The commodore also was taken seriously ill, and the fleet was disbanded. No cruise ever cost flag-officers so much money, and none was ever less satisfactory.

The Seawanhaka Corinthian Yacht Club postponed its cruise this year until August, hoping to have the British cutter *Madge* accompany it, but the canny Scotchman who had charge of her did not care to have her speed measured with other yachts until her regular races came on. The club made its muster at Whitestone on this occasion, and went from there to Morris Cove, Commodore Stewart had his pennant on the schooner *Sea Drift*, and his fleet was very small, there being, besides this schooner, only seven sloops. Among these was the cutter *Oriva*, on her first cruise. The cruise was very tame, and only extended as far as Newport. It was the summer of President Garfield's death, and he was just hovering between life and death when the club started, a circumstance which prevented some of the yacht owners from joining.

Although the Seawanhaka club did not obtain much credit from its annual cruise in 1881, it covered itself with glory by its matches with the cutter *Madge*. There can be no doubt but that the two sloops selected as the champions of the club in the *Madge* contests were as good as any of their sizes in the club. It is equally certain that they were brought to the line in a miserably slipshod condition. The fact was, that at that time the yachting men of this country had the most thorough contempt for the British cutter. Captain Ira Smith, who sailed the *Schemer* in her race with the *Madge*, when his attention was called to the miserably setting topsail on his yacht—an old one borrowed for the occasion—shrugged his shoulders and said, "Oh! it's good enough; anything will do to beat that thing," pointing to the cutter, which was lying a short distance away attired in one of Laphorn's most perfect suits; and the captain's remark exactly expressed the general feeling at that time.

Mr. Henry Steers, Captain "Joe" Elsworth, and many members of the clubs

had been to England and had seen these yachts sail, and knew that they were speedy; but their utterances were received with incredulity. "They sail well enough when compared with each other," it was said, "but put them alongside of our centreboard yachts and they will be beaten easily." The average Bay Shore boatman hitched up his trousers and said oracularly: "It stands to reason them things

away down on their sides can't sail; a boat has got to have bottom fur to sail on,"

Had the *Madge* been the *Vanduaara*, the *America's Cup* would have gone back to Great Britain, beyond a peradventure. That was one chance of which John Bull failed to avail himself; he has another this season—will he avail himself of it? *Quien sabe?*

ON BLADES OF STEELE.

BY D. BOULTON HERRALD.

To the enthusiastic skater even the pleasures afforded by the enclosed rink are manifold, but who will compare them to those offered by the far-stretching reach of the frozen river or lake?

However tastefully decorated the rink may be, it cannot bear comparison with the arena supplied by Nature. Instead of flags and streamers we have the green pines on the distant hill-tops, while closer at hand the trees, clothed with leaves of autumn tints, are painted by Nature's brush. The carpet of brown, withered ferns and grass is dotted here and there with drifted heaps of early snow. In place of long lines of promenading, gossiping humanity, our boundaries are the barren shores, their sameness relieved here by an upturned boat and there a stranded log. Replacing the glare of the electric light, we have the sun's genial rays, or the softer and more beautiful moon. Gone is the damp vapor that will ever arise from even the best-appointed rink, and we can revel in the crisp and bracing air of autumn. Surely, then, is outdoor skating entitled to the palm. In the rink the never-ceasing round from left to right, and, at the sound of the bell, from right to left, grows wearily monotonous, even though the most charming of partners may glide by one's side. Round and round the skaters promenade in endless procession. You dare not go too fast nor yet too slow, for the one will surely bring you into collision with some one who blocks the way; the other will still more certainly run some one into *you*.

But in the glorious open all is changed. Your skates locked on, away you glide, fast or slow, turning and twisting without let or hindrance, as fancy prompts your path. Do not go near that hole! Beware

of yonder stick! Though half hidden in the ice, it yet projects enough to catch the point of your skate and give you an ugly "cropper." Crack! You are on thin ice. Keep nearer to the shore. Who is this coming up behind so fast? He evidently wishes to have a "brush," and you are not unwilling.

So on you fly, past the creek, with timorous children and girls covering its surface. They prefer to skate over the shallows to trusting themselves upon the deeper river. Here's the deserted pottery, bleak and dismal, with sashes that hold naught but the ragged edges of the panes that once kept out the weather—victims of the small boy and his "sling." And here the Fair Grounds, the long rows of white-washed stabling, grand-stand and buildings glaring in the bright sunshine. The oblong race track recalls memories of the close finish between "Little Vic" and "Chestnut Jim." How your heart stopped still until "Vic" showed her nose under the wire, a short head to the good, for she carried your "pile" on her handsome shoulders! On and on, until the bridge stops your progress. The ice beneath it is not of sufficient strength to bear your weight.

Then, after walking across the road and climbing the fences, you come to the narrows, where the ice is ever frail. Keep well in, under the trees, skate swiftly, and do not tumble, or you will surely get a ducking. Halloa! the man ahead seems to be in difficulties. He has fallen into a water-hole! Now, put on a burst and try to avoid meeting with a like mishap. You near the victim as he stands over the waist in water. His coat collar seems to offer a good hold—and the idea is no sooner thought of than acted on. As you pass,