

## HINTS FOR AMATEUR SAILORMEN.\*

BY A. J. KENEALY.

**T**HOUGH I recommend the catboat as a general craft for knocking about and having a good time in, I am not blind to the advantages of the yawl rig. In fact, the bold young seaman contemplating long cruises and sometimes venturing out of sight of land will find that the yawl rig possesses no mean merit. For single-handed cruising its worth has long been recognized. The sails are so divided that they are small and easy to handle, but this division of sail inevitably decreases the speed and also the weatherly qualities of the boat. If we take a catboat and change her into a yawl rig she will not be nearly so fast, nor will she point so close to the wind. There are fathoms of scientific reasons for this with which I will not bother my readers. Suffice it to say that it has been demonstrated practically over and over again.

But although the yawl-rigged sailing boat of the smallest type has at least three sails—foresail, mainsail and mizzen—yet the last named, after once being set, practically takes care of itself. The mainsail, too, is quite easily handled, the whole sail being in the body of the boat. The foresail sometimes gives a little annoyance in taking it in, if the boat is pitching her nose under in a steep sea. This, however, is unavoidable. Headsail on all sailing vessels, big or little, have never been conducive to dry skins under certain conditions of wind and sea. The yawl is always under control, and in this attribute lies her chief charm. When a squall is bearing down all one has to do is to lower the mainsail and pass a tyer or two round it to keep it muzzled. When the gust strikes the boat she is under easy sail and is not likely to come to grief. If the squall is of exceptional strength, ease off the foresheet and keep the sail shaking a little until you have felt the full strength of the wind. Act then as judgment may dictate. If the blow is very heavy and seems likely to last it may be necessary to take in the foresail and the mizzen, and close reef the mainsail.

If you are sailing with the wind a-beam and a squall smites you it may not be necessary to lower the mainsail at all. Ease the sheet right off so as to spill the

wind, and you will pass safely through the ordeal without parting a rope yarn.

In getting under way or in working up to anchorage in a crowded harbor or roadstead the yawl rig is one of the handiest known, for by having the mainsail furled the speed of the boat is reduced so that you can pick your way among the craft without danger of collision or striking flaws. So many famous cruises have been made in small yawl-rigged craft that there can be no doubt about their adaptability for such work, and to the man anxious for more ambitious achievement than merely sailing in rivers, bays and sheltered harbors, I most certainly would recommend the rig.

Despite its handiness and safety for single-handed cruising, I am not in favor of sailing by myself. I prefer a congenial companion to share whatever pleasure or peril may be encountered. Of course one must exercise some wise discrimination in the choice of a cruising companion; for when once at sea there is no way of ridding yourself of an objectionable mate except throwing him overboard, which would not be exactly fair to him. Besides, he might throw you overboard, which would be bad for you. There are, however, hundreds of good yachtsmen and boatmen who have made long voyages alone and have written charming accounts of their nautical expeditions. John McGregor's "Voyage Alone in the Yawl Rob Roy" and E. Middleton's "Cruise of the Kate" (also a yawl) are two entertaining books of sea travel which I heartily recommend to those who contemplate sailing by themselves.

While I am in favor of a catboat for general purposes in the neighborhood of New York, yet when long distance trips are to be made the yawl rig will, on the whole, be found preferable.

The ordinary jib-and-mainsail rigged boat, as seen in the waters round New York, might easily be improved upon. In the first place, the majority of them are too much after the skimming-dish pattern to suit my fancy. Then the mast is stepped as a rule too far forward for the best work, and renders reefing difficult, as she will not "lay to" comfortably under her headsail, whereas if

\* A chapter from a forthcoming book, "Boat Sailing, Fair Weather and Foul."

the mast of a boat is stepped well aft, cutter fashion, the boat will lay to quite well, and reefing the mainsail is easy. The American sloop rig is open to the same criticism, and that is why the English way of rigging a single-sticker is being adopted in all our new racing craft. To my mind there is nothing more hideous than a "bobbed" jib. It renders good windward work impossible, as it causes a boat to sag off to leeward and is in other ways a detriment. A small boat with the mast stepped in the right place and carrying a jib and a mainsail is, however, a very satisfactory craft, good at beating to windward as well as reaching or running. I should advise that a "spit-fire" or storm jib be carried along whenever a sail of any distance is contemplated, and also a gaff-headed trysail, so that the adventurous skipper may be always prepared for storm and stress of weather. This extra "muslin" takes up little room when properly rolled up.

The simplest and safest rig in the world is the leg-of-mutton sail. It is the one fitted exactly for river work, where one is sure to encounter puffs of some force as ravines are reached or valleys passed. To amateurs it is the sail *par excellence* for experimenting with, for no matter how many blunders are made a mishap is well nigh impossible. The leg-of-mutton sail has no gaff, nor need it have a boom. There is little or no leverage aloft, and all the power for mischief it has can be taken out of it by slacking off the sheet and spilling the wind. The learner might with advantage practice with a sail of this shape until he becomes proficient. If he eventually determines upon a jib and mainsail or yawl rig for permanent use, he may avoid wasting it by having it made over into a storm trysail.

I would strongly advise every amateur skipper to shun the ballast-fin device as he would shun cold poison or a contagious disease. That is unless he intends to go in for a regular racing career, in which case the cups carried off might possibly compensate him for the woe, the anguish and the premature gray hairs inseparable from this contrivance. Mind you these remarks of mine apply only to amateurs and not to grizzled sailing-masters of yachts who fully understand how to navigate and handle all types of pleasure craft. The-

oretically the ballast-fin has many obvious advantages.

The fin consists of a plate of iron or steel to the base of which is affixed a bulb of lead, which, being in the best possible place, insures stability. The fin proper gives lateral resistance in an almost perfect form, for there, is no deadwood either forward or aft and the least possible amount of wetted surface. I remember when a little boy in a fishing village on the bank of a land-locked arm of the sea, where the water was always smooth, how we youngsters came to appreciate fully the worth of an improvised ballast-fin. We used to enjoy the diversion of model yacht sailing and the delights of many regattas. I owned one of the smartest models in the village. She was rigged as a cutter with outside lead, self-steering gear and all the latest maritime improvements, and she generally came out a winner. I tell you I used to put on a great many airs on this account, and as a natural result was duly hated and envied by my playmates, who owned more or less tubby craft that could scarcely get out of their own way.

But the day arrived when my pride was destined to have a fall. A shrewd youth of Scottish extraction came to our village for the summer with his father. He had the keenest, greenest eye you ever saw, and one of those money-making noses that are unmistakable. His whole physiognomy and form indicated shrewdness. He mingled with us for some time on the beach, mudlarked with the boys and watched our model yacht matches with undisguised interest. We all got the notion that he was an inland landlubber, though it is only fair to him to acknowledge that he never told us so in so many words.

One Saturday afternoon, after my little cutter had surpassed herself by distancing all her opponents, I indulged in some unusually tall talk, and challenged each and every one of my rivals to a race across the "creek," as the sheet of water was called, offering to give them four minutes' start, the distance being half a mile.

To my surprise, our green-eyed friend came along and accepted the challenge, saying that on the following Saturday he would produce a craft that would knock spots out of my cutter without any time allowance whatever, and with-

out the aid of a longer hull or larger sailsread. He also remarked that he had a month's pocket money saved up, and was willing to wager it on the result. I accepted his offer without superfluous parleying, and in my mind's eye was already investing that pocket money of his in various little treasures for which I hankered. But, for all that, I made every preparation for the fray, using very fine sandpaper and pot lead till my boat's bottom was beautifully burnished, and seeing that her sails and gear were in tip top racing condition. All the boys wondered what sort of a craft my opponent would bring out. He had never been seen with a boat of any description. We laughed in our sleeves and whispered it about that he would probably produce one of those showy vessels that one sees in the city toy store, and that generally sail on their beam ends,

The hour for the race arrived. The boys were all excited and flocked to the water's edge, whence the start was to be made. There was a goodly throng of them present, and, notwithstanding their contempt for the Scotchman, it was no doubt the desire of their hearts that some of my overweening conceit should be taken down a couple of pegs or so. Presently my rival appeared on the scene, carrying in his arms the queerest looking craft any of us had ever seen. Her hull was shaped like an Indian birch bark canoe, except that to the rounded bottom a keel was fastened. A groove was made in the keel, in which an oblong piece of slate was placed, to the bottom of which a strip of lead was secured. The rig was that of a cutter, and I noticed that her sails were well cut. She looked quite business-like, and when she was measured we found she was two inches shorter than my cutter.

There was a nice, fresh westerly wind blowing, and quite a lop of a sea running for diminutive craft such as were about to race. I had already deemed it prudent to take in a reef in the mainsail of my vessel, and set a No. 2 jib, but my Scotch friend said he thought his boat would carry whole sail without any trouble. The course was south, so the craft had to sail with the wind a-beam. The start was made, my boat being to windward, as I had won the toss. And that was all I did win. The "ballast-fin" craft beat my cutter so badly that

even at this distance of time my ears tingle and I feel ashamed. While my boat was burying herself, her rival took the curling wavelets right buoyantly, standing up to her work valiantly, and moving two feet to the cutter's one. We accompanied the model yachts in row-boats, keeping well to leeward, but quite close enough to observe their movements accurately. That was my first experience of the ballast-fin. We all became converts, and shoal, round-bottomed craft, with slate fins to give stability and lateral resistance, were thenceforward the fashion. My successful rival, we afterward discovered, was the son of a naval architect of repute, and he is now practising his father's profession with a good deal of success.

Thus I have not a word to say against the ballast-fin so far as racing is concerned, but in cruising the average man who sails for pleasure wants a craft that he can haul out of the water easily to scrub, clean and paint. Now, if you put a ballast-fin boat on the mud for any one or all of these purposes she requires a "leg" on each side to keep her upright, and also supports at the bow and stern to prevent her from turning head over heels. The stationary fin always represents your true draught of water. It is always with you and is an integral portion of the boat's hull. If you happen to get stuck on a shoal—and this is a contingency that has occurred frequently to the most skillful and careful navigator—in thick weather for instance, your lot is by no means to be envied. This is particularly true if the tide is falling fast. The boat would go over on her side as soon as the water got low enough. The crew and passengers might have to wait aboard until high water, and a precious uncomfortable time the would pass I am certain. When the flood tide made it might be a moot question whether the boat would float or fill with water.

The movable centerplate will always let you know when you get on a shoal, and will in nearly all cases give you warning in time to avoid grounding, which is always an unpleasant predicament and one entailing much labor. Then, again, the anchorages at which small boats can safely lie are generally pretty shallow at low water and the ballast-fin is found to be mighty inconvenient for such places.