



## PLEASURE YACHTING 'WAY DOWN SOUTH.

BY LORILLARD DUDLEY SAMPELL.

### PART II.

WHEN we were headed for Cat Island, and when "Pass Marianne Light" hove in sight, the wheel was put down, and we steered the old course, north of east.

Cat Island, like all the others of the string, is a long, narrow strip of land, covered for the most part with trees, and terminating at each end in a barren point of sand. The lighthouse stands out on the desert of sand at the west end, and has an unobstructed view of both Gulf and Sound. The sand gradually slopes away to the point, and continues on out under the water. The shoal continuation of a sand-bar is called a spit, and this one extends out for a quarter of a mile or so, with the water only two or three feet deep at high tide, while at ebb tide part of it is high and dry, and one can walk out an eighth of a mile further. This spit or promontory is covered with oysters, and in walking about or bathing in this water one has to wear shoes to keep from cutting the feet.

The lighthouse keeper showed us a relic in the shape of a 'coon's paw, which, he said, was a more potent charm than "the left hind leg of a rabbit," and he told us the story of how it came to be separated from the 'coon's leg.

"Cat Island is full of 'coons," continued he. "How they got here I don't know, as the island is twelve miles from the nearest, point of the mainland. I

reckon they voyaged on logs. One night, while we were standing on the gallery, we saw about a dozen 'coons creep out on the spit, hunting for oysters. One old 'coon sneaked up behind a big oyster that had his shell wide open and stuck his paw in to get the succulent bivalve. Quick as a flash the oyster clapped down on him and the 'coon yelled. He'd been there before, though, and began to tug at the oyster to get him loose from the mud and sand, but the oyster was one of a cluster and was too deeply imbedded to be moved. He hung to the 'coon like grim death to a nigger, and it looked as if the 'coon would be kept a prisoner. We were so interested in the struggle we stayed to watch it. The tide began to turn and all the other 'coons left the beach. The water got higher and higher, little waves were curling over the spit, and it looked as if the 'coon would be drowned. He made a last desperate effort to move that oyster, and then deliberately bit his paw off. He left it in the oyster and hobbled off on three legs. We ran down, and after a search of half an hour found the oyster as he was trying to eject the 'coon's paw and picked it up."

From where we were now anchored, in the offing of Cat Island, we could see Ship Island Pass, whence the shores of this coast were first seen by white men.

The next day was the glorious Fourth, and we were up in time to salute the rising of Old Sol in true patriotic spirit. After a most delightful surf bath, which we came here expressly to get, we made sail, and with a stiff sou'easter steered a northwest course for Bay St. Louis, where we wished to celebrate the natal day. We anchored off the O'Brien place, at the western end of the town of Bay St. Louis, before noon, and in time to witness a yacht race in which upwards of a hundred boats from far and near participated. The town was in festal array, and was entertaining its guests from the city and adjacent resorts in becoming manner. The immortal Stars and Stripes floated everywhere, and joy and peace and pleasure attested the universal pride in American independence.

That night there was a fine display of pyrotechnics. Houses and the yachts lying at anchor were brilliantly decorated and lighted, and fireworks, red-light and noise ruled supreme. For miles the beach was lighted up with huge bonfires, each resident trying to outshine his neighbors in patriotism. Gay parties were formed, and old and young, belles and beaux, all carried fuel to their favorite fire, enthusiastically contributing their share to the sparkle and splendor of the general homage to the nation's birthday.

Mississippi Sound is a large body of water, about a hundred miles long and twenty-five miles wide. The coast which bounds Mississippi Sound along the north and west may be said to be one continuous seaside resort. For sixty miles or more it is lined with magnificent villas, the summer homes of well-to-do people from New Orleans and of wealthy planters who move down from the interior for the summer season.

"The air breathes upon us here most sweetly."— *Tempest*.

Along many miles of the sloping beach there is but a single row of dwellings. but at more or less regular intervals there are thicker sections, and at a dozen or so places, where stores, hotels, boarding-houses and churches cluster, they take on the dignity of villages. These little towns are called Waveland, Bay St. Louis, Pass Christian, Long Beach, Mississippi City, Beauvoir, Biloxi, Ocean Springs, Pascagoula, Scranton, etc. During the winter months the

summer visitors to these resorts give place to Northern invalids and tourists, fleeing from the rigors of their home climates. Many Northerners, hunters for winter sunbeams, have their own residences along this coast. The attractions of a large, cosmopolitan city are within a few miles' ride, where the novelty and pleasure of an Oriental clime are afforded.

The winters on this coast are comparatively warm and dry, there being no protracted rainy "spells," and as a rule the sun shines brightly all day long, for weeks at a time. The summer days are not too hot, and are almost always tempered by a brisk breeze, either from the Gulf, or the piny woods in the opposite direction; and the nights are cool enough to require heavy bed-clothing. Both seasons are relatively bright and charming, the thermometer ranging only from about 35 to 85 degrees.

The characteristics of the whole coast are nearly the same. A wide "shell road" upon which the residence gates open, skirts the rising beach for its entire length. Back of the beautiful lawns and residences, stretch the primeval piny woods for counties and counties, enough timber to supply the world. This fine roadway is lined upon either side by magnolias and pines; and the oyster shells, originally heaped upon it half a foot high, have been crushed and packed down into a sort of macadam that is as smooth as asphalt and a perpetual joy to all who go awheel.

As the water close to the shore is not deep at times, bath-houses are built a considerable distance out into the surf. Each residence has a long pier extending out about a hundred yards, and ending with an unpretentious little sentry-box bath-house. The spiles supporting the bath-houses are roughly boarded in, the planks just close enough to afford exclusiveness and keep out large fish. Behind the bath-house is the boat anchorage, and its second story, on a level with the pier, is generally used as a boat and fishing tackle house. These scores of piers look like a fringe along the shore.

Many varieties of fish and crabs and oysters abound. Crabs can be had in any quantity, and are caught, particularly by children, with a string with a piece of meat attached. These delicious crustaceans are a staple and family luxury,

and are served in various and divers ways, such as stuffed crab, crab salad, crab fricassee, boiled crabs, crab gombo, and crab what-not. They are whiter and more tender and better than frogs' legs, lobsters or clams. They are brown and dark green above, and white beneath, but when boiled their shells turn red. A crab has enough meat to fill a large chicken egg shell.

The next morning we sailed on along the coast in company with a number of yachts bound for Pass Christian. This is a most delightful place to visit; it has, perhaps, some of the most aristocratic homes on the Sound, and is to the South what Newport is to the North. We spent the afternoon very pleasantly there, and much enjoyed a drive along the beach. Pass Christian is particularly strung out and has very little depth back. It may be likened to the bars of the music staff, the four parallel lines being represented by the shore, the roadway, the row of houses, and behind all, the railroad.

At five o'clock that evening we were back aboard and pulled up anchor for a moonlight sail out to Cat Island. The wind had hauled around a little more to the eastward and blew a good, strong, whole-sail breeze. The yacht laid well over, and the water rippled merrily through the scupper holes beneath the lee-rail, bubbling in and out as the craft gently dipped and alternately rose to the waves. As evening gave place to night and the moon shone forth upon the phosphorescent waters, it grew cooler, and heavy coats buttoned up to the chin were a decided comfort. We disposed ourselves at sweet will near the man at the wheel, sitting on the cockpit seats or stretched at full length on the deck or on the top of the cabin, and enjoyed a social siesta. The yacht slipped into the quiet water behind the lee of Raccoon Point on the eastern end of Cat Island, was luffed up head to the wind and the anchor dropped overboard about ten o'clock that night, ending a most memorable sail.

The nights on the coast are generally cool and pleasant. When there was a good breeze blowing, and consequently no mosquitoes, we made pallets on deck and, covered with two or three blankets, nighted it under the stars. When there was little wind we were forced to take refuge below, under the mosquito bars

over the berths. In either case we luxuriated in such sound and healthful slumber as only the rocking of the boat, the lapping of the water along its sides, and ozone-laden air can induce.

We awoke the next morning to see the sun's first rays sparkling and scintillating on the snowy whiteness of the sand on the island. Here there is one of the most curious manifestations of nature. In striking contrast to the green water and the ultramarine blue sky, there rises from the water's edge a mountain of sand, as white as the whitest sugar, called the Great Sand Hill. It rises many feet high, and its pointed top and perfect cone shape (true to the angle of inclination of sand) can be seen for miles away. It appears from analysis that this sand is the finest in the world for the glass and pottery trade.

We spent two days in this delightful vicinity. There is no habitation on this part of the island, and cattle and sheep were seen roving as wild as may be. A couple of minutes' walk across the sand, and the breakers of the ever-restless sea beat at our feet.

The surf bathing in the Gulf waters on the Louisiana and Mississippi coasts is said to be the finest in the world, simply because there is no treacherous "undertow" to drag the bather out to sea. No life-lines or anything of the sort are needed, as on the Atlantic coast, and children can be taken into the surf with perfect safety. On this shore the blue breakers roll in as grandly and refreshingly as on a rocky beach, but an element of safety is here, both as to drowning and danger from sharks. This is in a series of sand-bars that extend out for some little distance parallel to the shore. Bathers can stand on one of these, and find the water as it recedes but a few inches deep. As the next wave rolls in three or four feet high, turn the back to it, and you find yourself pleasantly carried in the direction of the beach. The next roller will often deposit you up on the shelving sand, and you are ready to wade out and try it again. It is impossible to stand up against the force of these billows; you have either to be borne shoreward or, as some experienced bathers do, dive through the base of the wave, just as it curves up over the bar, and, digging the fingers into the sand, hold

on until it passes. The waves rival the most ethereal blue above them in color; their crests, as they curl over and effervesce into spoon-drift spray, correspond to the silver-white rifts of clouds dreamingly floating in the distant blue, And so we bathed and fished and idled away the salubrious summer days most happily.

On the morning of July 8th we raised the "mud-hook," and beating out around the point sailed over to Ship Island and

While the *Ellen N.* lay there at anchor, as one of her boats was returning from shore a huge devil-fish, or giant ray, was seen sporting in the water near the yacht. It was a most curious-shaped fish. Just before finally disappearing it rose to the surface under the yacht's bowsprit, and slowly raising itself flopped one of its great black wings or lobe fins, fully four feet wide, up against the anchor chain. If it had been alongside the small boat, and had flopped its fin



AN OYSTERING PARTY.

anchored just inside the eastern point. Ship Island is the old National Quarantine Station, and is the most important island of the group, as to situation, and is seven miles long and three-quarters of a mile wide. The water in the roadstead, just north of the island, is very deep, and large lumber ships and ocean steamers anchor there for cargoes. As the water is not deep enough in the Sound for ships, the lumber is towed out from the Mississippi shore in lighters and loaded into the fleet of vessels waiting to receive it.

On the eastern end of the island are the old and new lighthouse towers and historic old Fort Massachusetts. The remorseless waves are dissolving this extremity of the island. As the water was washing and undermining the foot of the old tower, another was built further back on safer ground.

above us, we would have been covered as if by a tarpaulin, and surely upset, and would have had to swim for it in the bargain. This repulsive and formidable creature must have weighed fully 1,500 pounds.

While wandering along the shore that morning we found the carcass of a much smaller ray lying on the sand. It was white beneath and slate-colored on the back. These fish have very little body and a long slender tail, with a formidable spine or bayonet-like weapon rising from the base of the serpent-shaped caudal appendage. Three-fourths of the fish are the huge lobes or fins. A small species of ray, only a foot or two long, very common in the Gulf, is called the sting ray or "stingaree."

The yacht carried a one-hundred-foot seine. To use it we folded layer on layer on the stern seat of a rowboat, and

then took it about two hundred feet from the shore in breast-deep water, and, as the boat was rowed along, gradually lowered it into the water. Cork or wood floaters at the top and lead sinkers along the lower edge held it perpendicular. When the net was all over-board, three men at each end pulled it toward the shore, where they gradually drew together, closing the circle. Standing in knee-deep water the seine was drawn in, a man on each side stooping down and holding the lead edge of the seine close to the bottom and throwing it behind him, so as to keep the fish from escaping. Half the length of the seine there is a large pouch or sack into which the fish retreat; when pulled up in shallow water this bag is picked up and the catch dumped into the boat. Frequently a haul is a boatload. Besides the variety of common fish, many and curious are the specimens of sea life brought out to delight the student of natural history. Many strange creatures fall into the boat or cling to the

as bluefish, red snapper, redfish, mackerel, flounders; and the pompano ("the woodcock of the seas") is often added to the fisherman's larder. The pompano is considered the most delicious fish that swims in the sea. This highly prized denizen of southern waters is a peculiar-looking fish with a body deeply compressed and forming a gentle curve from the middle of the back to the truncated snout, where it abruptly descends. The mouth is small and devoid of teeth, but the strong jaws are powerful enough to crush the mollusks and crustacea upon which it feeds. These fish are bluish, and beneath silvery, or golden, according to age.

The pompano has fewer bones than any other fish in the ocean; the backbone is the only prominent one, and that is so soft it can be eaten. It is often called the boneless fish. The flesh is white, of a very delicate flavor, and rich without being oily.

Redfish and red snapper are two of the most highly prized and numerous



NATIVE FISHERMEN'S QUARTERS.

meshes of the net, and one has to be chary not to have the hand injured by the crabs, catfish or stingarees. Globe-fish, the curious little seahorse, and many other not-known beautiful rayed sea-swimmers are fished up. The globe-fish is a peculiar little fellow that can so fill himself with air and water as to be as round as a football.

There is a superabundance of the well-known fish, superb for eating, such

of Gulf fishes. In color the redfish is not near as bright a red as the red snapper. The redfish is of a whitish or sandy color, and has a peculiar black spot on either side at the base of the tail, which are said to be the marks left by St. Peter's fingers when that Apostle picked up the fish and shook pieces of money from its mouth. The red snapper is the fish with which the ancient Egyptian Ptolemies used to amuse themselves

by watching it change color while in the throes of death.

But the most remarkably shaped fish seen in these waters is the flounder or sole. It is as flat as the proverbial pancake, and has both its "pop" eyes on one side of its head, so that it looks like a fish split down the middle and then spread out. The under side has an opaque, raw appearance, and a suggestion of backbone also helps out the similitude.

Another peculiar fish is called the "drum," from the singular drumming noise it makes in the water, which frightened the aborigines, gave the earlier settlers pause, as *Hamlet* would say, and has puzzled scientists for a century, to say nothing of giving inspiration to many a poet. At the mouth of Pascagoula River there is a spot called the "singing waters," where, on a quiet night there are to be heard most sweet and mysterious sounds. Now they seem to be overhead, and one imagines a *Prospero* and his obedient *Ariel*; again they are thought to be on the bank of the stream, but when rightly located they come from the water. The noise is said to be made by frightened drumfish seeking refuge in the shallow water from their relentless enemy, the porpoise. The drumfish somewhat resembles and has the same general markings as the sheephead. Its mouth is the chief characteristic, and the like is seen in no other fish. When closed nothing strange would be detected, but if pulled open the mouth spreads like an accordion and extends to twice its former length; pushed back, the curious membrane folds inside the jaws. The teeth of the drum are in the back of the mouth and are powerful grinders.

The waters swarm with the delicious and toothsome shrimps of commerce. They are canned along the coast in great quantities, and in New Orleans, which is the headquarters of the trade, 100,000 cans a day are put up. They run in schools, and one haul of the seine frequently nets a boatload. At the factories they are placed in a trough, and with one twist a girl takes off one's head, and then with a pressure at the tail the shrimp is forced out. After being cooked in salt water they are put into little gauze bags, each bag just large enough to fit inside the can used, there being so much phosphorus in the

fish; that unless some precaution is taken to keep the meat from coming in contact with it, the tin would be eaten by its action. This little gauze veils a very large bugbear that puzzled packers for years. The device was patented by a New Orleans gentleman, and yachtman, by the way. It has revolutionized the industry, for by its use shrimps can be kept in tins indefinitely. On Barataria Bay, on the south coast of Louisiana, there is a Chinese colony that prepare shrimps in another way. They spread them out in the sun to dry. Many thousands of barrels of these dried shrimps are shipped from there to China every year.

In several places where there is a strong current close to the Sound shore the wonderful jelly-fish or Medusa is frequently seen. Bathers have to be careful, for when one of these, floating by, touches the naked body it leaves an excruciating pain as unbearable as the smarting of the nettle-pricked skin or the sting of a wasp. The surface of the skin touched by the tentacles becomes diffused and is accompanied by a sense of extreme heat. The redness and irritation last a number of hours and are soothed only by the application of fresh water. It is not known whether a sting is inflicted or whether an acrid secretion is merely thrown upon the surface. For the resultant erythema local alkaline water treatment with a little washing soda thrown in is effective.

The next morning we were up betimes and took a good plunge in the surf before breakfast, after which we got ready to cross the Sound to Biloxi, to replenish the larder and get a supply of ice. The wind was strong off shore, and we looked forward to an enjoyable sail beating up against it. As we hoisted sail, everything loose was streaming and fluttering in the boisterous breeze. The little schooner "schooned" (as Captain Robinson, of Maine, who invented this style of rig would say) away on the starboard tack, with mainsail, foresail, forestaysail, jib, and working maintopsail set, and with sheets as flat as a board. She lay well over, the lee rail being buried in a mass of foam, while the opposite or starboard cockpit-combing was reared up in the air higher than a man's head.

The Commodore was at the wheel strictly attending to business, with firm

grip, keen eye, and with his wits about him just as much as if he was holding the ribbons over the back of a Maud S., whirling along at a 2:10 clip. The wind was somewhat unsteady, and as every fresh puff struck her she was on the way up to meet it. The Commodore luffed, or as "the boys" would say, "shook 'er up," and had her back steady again in excellent style. The others of the crew did nothing but sit and watch the proceedings, all ready to obey orders, being sure to have something to hold onto. Although there was no danger (you could not capsize her if you wanted to), the inborn law of self-preservation unconsciously asserted itself; and if one would have thought to observe, it would have been seen that all were either holding fast to the yacht or had their half-clutched fingers conveniently near some projection that would afford a handhold. There was just enough element of danger in forcing the yacht to make it exciting. For some time not a rope was touched, and the only command given by the helmsman was to gratify his own personal desire; as "Vast there, you lubber; please go down and light me a cigarette."

A ten-mile beat, holding up the best we could, brought us well under the shore just at the western end of Mississippi City, where we came about and eased sheet for a reach past the town and along parallel to the shore to our destination. Four miles and a half to the east of Mississippi City, we sailed past Beauvoir (*i. e.*, fine view), where the Confederate chieftain, ex-President Jefferson Davis, spent his declining days; three miles further on we sailed by the Sea Shore Camp-grounds, a lovely spot where those of the Methodist denomination hold a summer camp-meeting.

As the water was rapidly shoaling we eased sheets a trifle and stood out from shore until the Biloxi lighthouse bore due north; then we came about and made a series of short tacks through a well-dredged and buoyed passage up to it, where we eased sheets and passed down, and came to anchor opposite the center of the town, among a fleet of fish, oyster, melon and charcoal schooners. Yachtsmen have a variety of pet names for these unpretentious and homely working schooners, such as "windjammers," "boxes," "old tubs," or "wind-wagons."

Biloxi is the largest of the Sound resorts and is a very prosperous place of itself, having fish, oyster and fruit-canning factories. It is a great place for the Sunday excursionist. As at the town of Bay St. Louis, it has a large bay running around to the eastward and back in the rear to the north of the town. The railroad bridge crosses the neck of Biloxi Bay to Ocean Springs. Out in front of Biloxi lies Deer Island, probably so called because a deer was never known to take refuge there.

We lay at anchor that night, and sailed away the next morning. We passed down by Point Cade and the canning factories, with their great heaps of shells? and out between Deer Island and Biloxi Bay, from where we could see the high, verdant and attractive shores of Ocean Springs. The wind was light when we started, a mere butterfly breeze, but we thought when we got out from under Deer Island it would spring up a bit. Our conjecture as to more wind outside did not immediately prove true. When far enough east to clear the spit of the island, sheets were eased and the yacht was headed south-east for Horn Island. The wind, an easterly one, was light and baffling all forenoon, and the weather threatened to be stormy. It was cloudy and therefore not overly warm, and the lack of breeze was not so unbearable. Towards noon it turned squally, that is, there were rain-squalls all around the horizon.

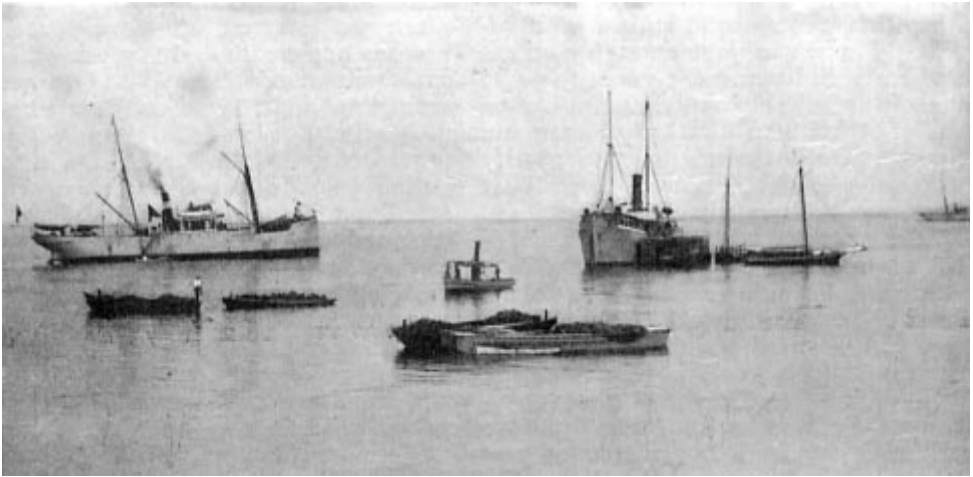
We floated lazily along, with everything snug, expecting one to come down on us at any time. The wind increased strongly from the east about two o'clock, and we bowled along with renewed energy and held well up to it. It kept getting darker and darker, and late in the afternoon, when we had the western end of Horn Island abeam, a squall struck us and blew great guns and rained, "a deluge poured from all the urns of heaven." We were lying at anchor, taking it easy, with all sails furled, and in every way prepared for it when it broke. The squall came on rapidly, plainly defined, and with the beating rain and mist obscuring everything behind it like a pall. It worked around to the north and veiled Round Island from sight, and then closed about us from both south and north. With the yacht pointing into the eye of the wind and swinging to a good stout anchor, and

another brought on deck in case she began to drift, we all felt secure, and somebody nicely expressed our sentiments with the exclamation: "Let 'er blow." One man, encased in oilskins, was always on deck to keep a lookout, while the others sat in the cabin and peered out of the companionway at the angry gusts of wind and rain sweeping and swirling by. The waves were high and the boat rolled merrily up and down on them; one minute the bowsprit was soused half its length under water, while the next ugly green wave sent it pointing skyward and the stern down, so that we thought we could see the bottom through the waves' trough.

After watching the heaving water for half an hour, the Cincinnati Sailor be-

and the sun, after all, set bright and red. Just at dark we picked our way between a number of lumber ships lying in the shelter of the island, and dropped anchor overboard near the lighthouse. In running in to an anchorage here a great deal of care is required to get safely in around a shoal, a sort of sea wall of stone required to be deposited along there by ships when unloading their rock ballast to take on cargoes of lumber,

After a late supper we went ashore and paid the lighthouse-keeper and his family a visit. They took great pride in showing us their charge, one of the finest and most important beacons in the South. It gives a white light varied by red flashes at intervals of one minute, and is visible twelve miles. Its lenses



IN SHIP ISLAND ROADSTEAD.

came rather pale under the gills; and, after observing that he believed seasickness was caused by the motion and the sight of going up and down, he remarked that he did not care whether school kept or not, and went and lay down on a berth amidships, where the seesaw sensation was not so perceptible, while O. B. Joyful softly hummed after him the Gilbertian refrain:

"When de winds do blow,  
I generally takes me down below."

The squall blew itself out in about an hour, when we went on deck, put up the working sails and hoisted the "ground tackle" with a good deal of hard tugging, and then steered for Horn Island light. In half an hour the sky cleared up, the weather was nice and fresh,

and lamp, the whole apparatus not much larger than a butter tub, cost something like \$20,000. The sand-spit on this end of the island is constantly shifting. Vessels should not attempt Horn Island Pass without a pilot, when drawing over ten feet of water, as the channel changes somewhat with every heavy gale. A pilot boat is stationed in this vicinity. A cross on a pole is a signal to the pilots from the lighthouse-keeper that a sail is in sight.

Formerly this end of the island was washing away, and the old abandoned lighthouse that once stood on solid ground is now entirely surrounded by water. The new house is built back on a more substantial sand-dune or tree-grown hillock. Beginning at the light-

house and stretching away to the western end the island is covered with trees and foliage, and is intersected by numerous lagoons. A quarter of a mile back there is a lagoon which swarms with fish that would do credit to the most expensively stocked fish-pond.

Horn Island is verdant all the year round, while in summer the center of it blooms as an oasis in a desert of sand. It has the finest surf bathing, and is the most beautiful and romantic of these gleaming islands of the Gulf,

The next morning was balmy and serene. We were awakened by the feathered songsters merrily piping their anthems of joy and love from the trees on shore. The fearless and soul-stirring whistle of "Bob White" told plainly that in this wildwood the quail were unmolested, and needed not the protection of the law and the game warden. "Sand peeps" and plover were running hither and thither upon the shore, and tireless-winged gulls and pelicans and other aquatic birds soaring athwart the heavenly blue added animation to the scene. When your true poet passes, the fame of this earthly elysium—if there is such a thing it is hereabouts—will be echoed down the ages. Let me lie beneath yonder greenwood tree and dream of the forest of Ardennes.

During our three days' stay at Horn Island the weather continued fine. Cool, spice-laden zephyrs steal over the broad sea to this latitude, and cocoonut, date and palm pervade the air with aromatic balm. We fished, bathed and explored to our hearts' delight, and greatly enjoyed walking over the sand and hunting for sea-shells, which are in infinite variety, and other curiosities. One of the most peculiar objects found on these islands is the cast-up shell of the hermit or horse-shoe crab. There is seen scurrying back and forth the rock crab, which is pure white in color, and the comical little "fiddler crab," which has one large claw, shaped like a fiddle, as long as itself, projecting from one side. But the most interesting specimen of all is the spawn of a sea-shell, often called "vegetable rattlesnake," which is washed up on the sand. It is about a yard long, and looks like a row of empty seed-pods, or of a string of wooden buttons, but is quite light and filmy. Inside each of these troche-shaped sections repose a row of apparently per-

fectly formed miniature conch-shells about the size of a grain of rice. There they live and grow by the hundred, shut up close from the salt water, till they reach a proper age.

On the morning of July 13th, at two bells, or nine o'clock, we turned the prow of the yacht away from Horn Island, and scudded before the breeze by Round Island and into the north shore. We had trawl lines out for mackerel—they will only bite at a moving object; but the boat did not have to tow an ounce of fish that day. We followed the channel into the mouth of the Pascagoula River, sailed along by half a mile of beautiful sloping lawns and residences, and anchored on the river front of the town of Scranton, Miss. This place is quite a lumber port. The logs are floated down the river from the primeval forest to the saw-mills along the shore. The mills burn their refuse, and the glare from the burning heaps of bark, sawdust and other debris can be seen far at sea at night.

There is a great deal of fruit raised on this coast—peaches, pears, grapes, plums and figs—and all do well, especially the latter, as it is situated in the fig belt. Fresh figs are the most delicious fruit that even one accustomed to Bartlett pears and Delaware peaches ever ate. Fresh figs are as different from the imported dried fig in appearance as a frog is from a tadpole; in taste they have the lusciousness of the peach, the freshness of the pear, the sweetness of honey, and are flavored with ambrosial tincture. July is the month for figs. Lots of them are canned or crystallized at Scranton. We bought them fresh from the tree and beyond compare for fifteen cents a bucket and loaded up "chock-a-block" with them.

We wound our way up a little hill through bursting blossoms and under trees weighted with leafy greenness, fruit and bloom, to the stores, post-office and depot. The people of this end of the country facing the Sound are fully aware of the coast's attractiveness and valid claims as the greatest natural winter and summer resort in the country, and they do their share in helping to advertise it. Pascagoula and Scranton people, as well as those of Bay St. Louis, Biloxi, and the other coast resorts, have conditions in their home atmosphere for comfortable living through the year

which Florida cannot offer in the winter, nor the Gulf of St. Lawrence exceed during the summer solstice.

After getting our mail and sending telegrams home announcing our whereabouts and giving the approximate date of our return to business, and no member in the meantime having received an urgent notification to return home at once, we dropped down the river that same evening and steered our course for Petit Bois Island against a stiff south wind. "The musically streaming, odorous south wind," to quote from Emerson, merrily hummed through the rigging.

Petit Bois Island is aptly named, being a barren stretch of sand and but "little woods" discernible, and those away on the eastern end.

Flocks of pelicans, gulls and "oyster openers" wheel overhead or troop at the edge of the title. The most conspicuous of all Southern "shore birds" is the American oyster opener or scissor-bill. They are found on this island in large numbers, and they afford a picturesque sight as they dart about, uttering discordant squawks, as though proud of their skill and queerness. This wonderful bird has a body like a gull, but there the resemblance to any other creature ends, for its peculiar bill is characteristic of it alone. The bill, a bright red in color, is long, thin, and looks for all the world like a pair of large shears. It is used for prying open oysters. The lower mandible is thrust between the valves and the shell wedged open as with an oyster knife. The oyster is then cut away with a shearing motion

of the blades of the beak and swallowed. Should the bird be unable to insert its bill between the valves, it bangs the shell against a stone so as to fracture the sharp edges where the shell closes, just as an oysterman makes an opening by striking an oyster a blow in the same place with his knife.

On the next afternoon the *Ellen N.* was beating down along the northern edge of Petit Bois Island. The crew busied themselves in making her snug and in stowing away their fishing implements and odds and ends for which they would have no present use. The cruise to the eastward was about to end. After jogging along and to and fro in the comparatively placid and well-protected waters under the mainland, we now prepared to test our sea qualities and to impart a fitting finale to the outward voyage in a dash along the open Gulf. Petit Bois was our turning point. As the yacht slid into the short black tide-rip off the eastern point, where the green and the blue meet, sheets were flattened down and the yacht was gybed preparatory to beating out into the Gulf against a south wind. At this juncture all hands fell to and "spliced the main brace," Well out in the long blue surge the wheel was put down and sheets were eased and the yacht's head swung back and was pointed in the direction of home. With the wind abeam and steady we skirted in succession well out to sea by the backward-lying islands, threaded the string of pearls, as it were, and by the next forenoon had run back to Lake Borgne and the land, and thence into home waters.

