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YACHTING.

BY F. O. D.

(In Saturday Night—Toronto.)
Just now there seems to be a tremendous lot of interest in yachting. Perhaps a new impulse has been given to the ancient sport by Sir Thomas Lipton's fifth and huskiest effort to lift the America's Cup. Or it may be due to an outbreak of seafaring blood. Or then again, yachting may appeal to certain adventurous classes of the population for the opportunities it offers of sailing out beyond the three-mile limit where no dull Prohibition law has domain.

Talking of Sir Thomas, do you think he really was anxious to lift the Cup, anyway? Personally, we do think so, being of an extremely simple and credulous nature. Little given to probing for obscure motives in other people's actions. It seemed to us that no man would spend all that money and undergo the agonies of having his picture taken so often, unless he really meant business. But some people seem to have thought otherwise. We met a friend of ours just under the bulletin board announcing the result of the last race—"Resolute Wins, Cup Stays in U.S."

"My, what a relief this must be to Lipton!" said our friend.

"Relief? What d'you mean by 'relief'?" we asked in not unnatural surprise. About the only "relief" we could imagine Sir Thomas desiring was the good luck to "relieve" the Americans of the Cup.

"My dear chap, think what a calamity it would have been for him, if he had won! He would have had to go on defending that battered old trophy indefinitely, until they took it away from him again—in which case he would simply be regarded as a dud. Even successful defenders are never very popular. Public sympathy is nearly always with the other chap. How popular in the United States is the New York Yacht Club right now! Half the American papers have been roasting them on account of the conditions of the race, while Sir Thomas is a sort of national hero. I'll bet there are millions of patriotic Americans hounding their in-laws with Lipton's tea just to show their sympathy with him. Would they drink it if he took the old mug away with him? Certainly not."

It was a new and interesting point of view, and our friend stated it with

obvious conviction. While we did not accept it in its entirety, we could not help recalling the hardly disguised growls of disapproval which went up from the exploring fraternity when the late Commodore Pery discovered the North Pole. They seemed to feel that he had spoiled the game for all of them. So long as the Pole was undiscovered there were pleasant little jaunts to the Arctic Circle, where a fellow might eat pemmican and hunt Polar bears and flirt with Eskimo lasses to his heart's content. But once the trick was turned, once an explorer had the bad taste to find the Pole and carve his initials on it and stick his national flag in the top of it, the public naturally lost interest in the whole proceedings. It wasn't a race any more. It was just a surveying job on the ice.

Possibly European yachtsmen would have felt somewhat the same way if Lipton had succeeded in lifting the Cup. That would be an end of those little excursions to New York and all the joyous hullabaloo they lead to, and they would simply have had to settle down at home to the prosaic business of building defenders.

Now there is talk of some of our own Canadian amateur jack-tars challenging for the America's Cup. They want to get into the game, too. But it seems to us a mistake to send a Nova Scotia boat after the trophy. Not that the blue-noses aren't excellent sailors. That is not the point. Nova Scotia is "dry," and there would be no inducement to the New Yorkers to lose if it meant a subsequent visit to a country as arid as their own. Better notice that if it wins, the Cup will thereafter be sailed for right out in the St. Lawrence opposite the brewery.

That ought to bring results. Personally, our experience of yachting has been limited and not especially happy. We never seem to know what to wear or what to do, and what one wears seems to be even more important than what one does. For instance, the first time we were invited to a yachting party, we got into the oldest and most disreputable suit we had and a pair of "sneakers" that had been lying around in the cellar and were so shabby the plumber had disdained to steal them.

You see, we had a vision of ourself hauling on tarry ropes and breasting the spray and tumbling into the bilge and doing all sorts of reckless and jovial seafaring things. We thought of yachting as a rough sport in which a fellow had a filthy and amphibious but very bracing time of it, shivering his timbers and boxing the compass and all that sort of rot. Our notions of yachting had probably been derived from a youthful perusal of adventures on whalers and privateers.

When we arrived at the wharf, we found a very neat and shiny rowboat waiting for us. They called it the "tender"—possibly because a boat like that is so easy to damage. Our host was sitting in it, and when he surveyed our costume his face visibly lengthened. But he struggled heroically to live up to the traditions of bluff hospitality characteristic of those who go down to the sea in ships.

"Tumble in, old seaman," he shouted, "and we'll take you out to the Gwendoline—she's at her moorings around the point."

Very gingerly we lowered ourself over the edge of the wharf and down the rickety ladder that was fastened there. It was not an especially seamanlike performance—rather more like an elderly spinster trusting herself to a fire-escape at a fifth-storey window. But then a rowboat does look very small as seen from the top of a wharf, and there is a terrifying amount of oily water to fall into.

When we got into the boat we took a good look at our host, and noted that he was clad in spotless white ducks and a blue serge coat with brass buttons, the whole surmounted by one of those regulation yachting-caps which make even a bond-broker look like Admiral Beatty. He also took a good look at us, and—well, you know what he saw. We began to feel we had made a mistake.

It was worse when we got to the Gwendoline. She was all resplendent in white paint and polished decks and cute brass fittings, just like one of those lovely toy-boats they sell to little boys whose fathers have made a lot of money unexpectedly. The company was gathered on the deck or loitering about gracefully in the cockpit, and some of the hardy mariners were getting ready to pull up the snowy canvas into position. They were dressed like our host, as though they were prepared to jump right in and lead the cotillion at the yacht-club ball. There were several ladies, too, all in the kind of nautical costumes they make on the Rue de la Paix for about six hundred dollars each.

We clambered aboard, hoping in our heart that our foot would slip and we would sink to a watery grave right there and then. But we had no luck. We tumbled the wrong way—into the cockpit, those slippery decks are the devil to stand on when one isn't used to them. Our host dragged us out and presented us to his hostess. She seemed surprised—probably she thought we had been hired to bale the boat out or something like that. But our host was splendid. He made the very best of us. He said something light and pleasant about us being a real old salt-water doggie, one of those tarry veterans who disdained the lighter and more social aspects of seafaring life.

Our hostess looked rather unconvinced, but we could see that she was wavering in her first judgment. That was the time for us to jump in in a breezy way and slap her on the back and call her our "hearties" and invite her to "avast." But we didn't have the nerve. We didn't even know how "avasting" should really be done. Instead, we mumbled something inarticulate, reached for her outstretched hand, stepped on a brass arrangement for fastening ropes, and nearly plunged into the cockpit again. Our host caught us in time.

"You seem to like that place," he said in a weary sort of voice, and then turned away to give a lot of complicated orders to his brother yachtsmen. Nobody seemed to have anything special to say to us, though we heard our hostess remarking to one of the other ladies that "newspapermen are such an unconventional lot." Then they both looked at our trousers and

looked hastily away. To hide our embarrassment we seized a rope—they were busy hoisting the sail. We must have pulled the wrong one, for the sail proceeded to buck and swell in the most extraordinary way. Our host got very red in the face, but he still strove to be a gentleman.

"Perhaps you had better let us do this, old man," he said, after swallowing hard once or twice. "Probably you are used to a different sort of gear."

Then we went up in front and hid behind the mainmast. We stayed there for the rest of the trip. We were very lonely, and the deck grew harder and harder after we had been sitting on it for three or four hours. In that time there wasn't any wind to speak of—not enough to frighten an America's Cup racer. But nobody seemed to mind we must have travelled two miles. They hadn't come out to do any sailing. They weren't dressed for it in the first place. They devoted themselves to light conversation, eating, and singing. We didn't take part in any of it, though someone did pass us a sandwich after a while. But we were too miserable to eat. There were times when we thought of slipping gently overboard and swimming to shore. No one would have missed us.

Altogether it was a very dreary experience. We could get all the same sensations by moving the kitchen table to beside the bath-tub and lying on it and gazing down into the placid surface below.

Naturally we resolved that if ever again we went on a yachting trip, we would not be caught in such a condition of sartorial unpreparedness. In fact, we bought a blue coat and a white cap so as to be ready—we already had a pair of white pants. We had our yachting clothes laid away in camphor for a couple of years before an opportunity arose to use them. But finally an invitation came—oh, from another person entirely—and we got our duds out with all their pristine splendor unadorned by anything but a faint aroma of moth-balls. When we got to the wharf this time we would have made Sir Thomas Lipton himself blush in envy.

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for a yachting party. This time our host wore a torn jersey and a pair of soiled overalls. And he had nothing at all on his feet. The two other pirates who formed the crew had even less on—and dirtier. When they saw us they gave a howl of derision.

"For the love of gawd!" they shouted. "What d'you think this is—a yachting scene in a musical comedy? Get on to Willie and the creases in his pants!"

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