

A DAY'S YACHTING ON THE ST. LAWRENCE.

It was a merry and somewhat noisy crowd that embarked one bright August morning in our little six-ton yacht to see all that could be seen of the Thousand Islands. There were about twenty persons, all told, in the party, which was made up of both sexes; small children were rigorously excluded, on the ground that they were nuisances, provision consumers and space occupiers. When we had stowed every one safely and comfortably away in the yacht, and had double-reefed the mainsail on account of the freshness of the wind and the timidity of some of the ladies, we swung out from the dock and were soon gliding over the river.

"Sailing 'mid islands green and fair
On broad St. Lawrence tides,
Where worldly thought and worldly care
All entrance are denied;
Nothing but nature still and sweet,
Nature beyond compare,
The shining water neath our feet,
Around the summer air."

The breeze was certainly one which even a sailor might call *spanking* and still retain his reputation for veracity. On the crest of every wave the white caps could be seen curling and seething as they passed again from foaming air-bubbles into water. From the bow of the yacht the water was thrown off in showers of spray, forcing those who had rashly taken a seat there to retreat to the stern, or put on their water proofs. A number preferred the latter alternative on account of the coolness and softness of the situation. There was nothing approaching to monotony on that charming summer morning, as we tacked and retacked in the channels between the islands. Everything was fresh and interesting to our visitors and we, who had long known and admired those familiar scenes were busily engaged in pointing out and naming the islands, and recalling all the stories and legends connected with them. Even the very shoals came in for a certain amount of attention, as the places which we must now steer clear of, and also as the ground of the fishing exploits of our younger days. The places would acquire an additional charm when it was known that such and such persons on board had had desperate struggles with huge fish at those very spots. Some of the minor details of the capture might be forgotten, but the main incidents and the weight of the fish *never*. It did not take us very long to reach the more open lake of the Thousand Islands, and, from our entrance upon it, we had a grand run on the quarter to the American side of the river, a distance of eight miles. We landed for a short time at an American town in order to allow our visitors a chance of seeing a real, live, Yankee in his natural place. After American customs, clothes and habitations had been thoroughly inspected, admired and criticised, and all our comments exhausted, we again embarked. The wind had fallen

somewhat while we were on shore, and when we returned our captain immediately shook out the two reefs which we had taken in at the beginning of our cruise. Later on in the day the wind became even lighter, and we were forced to hoist a top-sail. Knowing that the wind usually dropped with the setting of the sun, we prepared for any contingency of this sort by bringing along our light sails. After running down the American channel before the wind for three or four miles, we brought up under the lee of an island, landed and had a picnic dinner. Some of us then strolled about the island, some fished off the shore, while the lazier portion with cushions under their heads read the latest production of some eminent novelist, under the shadow of the spreading oak tree. Toward the end of the afternoon, our captain summoned us on board and remarked that we would not reach home very early, on account of the lightness of the wind. Only a few ripples disturbed the surface of the water; our mainsail hung listlessly down, and our topsails were doing all the work of locomotion. Conversation, which had been difficult to carry on in the morning, on account of the tendency of the leeward to run under water, now became general, and several of our number sung stirring songs and choruses, such as "Larboard Watch," "Laddie," &c. One of my comrades and fellow-campers had a splendid baritone voice, and as a leader in the choruses he was invaluable as his repertoire was inexhaustible. The presence of the water seemed to add a mellow effect to the songs, and to blend the different voices into one harmonious whole. After sunset, the brightest and loveliest moon of the year—the August harvest moon—shone forth in all its silvery effulgence, the scene was enough to satisfy the most fastidious lover of romance. The yacht glided along under full canvas like some spectral form, its white sails gleaming in the moonlight; the islands were softly and darkly outlined against the horizon. Here and there the cottages on them were illuminated with Chinese and Venetian lights, which presented a pretty effect. Most of the songs that were sung with the accompaniment of guitar and concertina, breathed of love and romance. Comic ones, however, were interspersed to relieve, as some one remarked, the feelings of the non-poetical and non-sentimental portion of the audience. The peals of musical laughter which come from the small row-boats around us, attested to the fact that our comic songs were appreciated by a larger number of persons than we had supposed. In fact, as we neared the town from which we had started, we found our yacht to be the centre about which numerous row-boats kept describing circumferences. Their approbation of applause was a deserved reward for the trouble which our songsters had taken in learning these songs. Having landed our visitors at the dock, we went on to the camp, and when we turned in that night, we were soon wrapped in a dreamless slumber, for the river air hath ever a somniferous influence.

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