

Woman's Sports.

By Cyclist.

OUTDOOR PASTIMES FOR WOMEN.



THE wily Jerome knew whereof he wrote when he affirmed that 'girls did not look half bad in a yachting costume,' for indeed, it would be hard to frame a pretty face in a more becoming 'get-up' than the round neat straw sailor, or the soft and pliant Tam O'Shanter; or to garment a lithe figure in a more jaunty gown than the cream flannel, easily fashioned suit, that reveals beneath its hem the bold, little tan shoe, and that rolls back its wide Bryon collar above a bare, free throat that wind, wave and sunlight kiss into strength and a certain brown beauty, the birthright of the summer girl.

To the lazy, care-free devotees of sport, yachting is the prince of pleasures. You lounge up on deck when the breeze is light, and drink in life-giving airs in the most blessed indolence known to woman-kind. You watch the boys scramble about tugging at ropes that have extraordinary names, and shifting three-cornered canvas with apparently unnecessary haste and caution. You listen to their hoarse voices, shouting above the wash of waves and creaking of booms, and you wonder why it is they cannot talk in English when afloat as well as ashore. They call the craft 'she' with ostentatious frequency, and attribute to her the most remarkable actions. You endeavor to follow the dialogue of the gentleman astern, with the youth who is climbing heedlessly about the fore, but you finally give up the attempt and loll back on your cushions with half-shut eyes, through which you see light clouds scudding across a fair, blue sky, some meaningless ropes and brass eyelet holes, and the full, white sails outstretched to a 'licking wind that chases itself down the broad, blue lake.

You lie and listen to the swirl of foam cut by the bow into two long lines that ripple along your course, splashing over and anon above the gunwale, and purring that ceaseless song forever lying in the depths of lake, river and ocean. You care very little where the boys steer to or how often they tack to get there. You only know that they can steer; that they are strong, and agile and capable; that they are masters of this disembodied thing that is scurrying along with you in its embrace; and you only hope they will leave you undisturbed to lie and dream and doze; that in case of accident they know how to swim for it and manage the dingy, and that above all things they will not ask you to arise and scramble about the rigging to assist them, for the

practical part of yachting is scarcely your province. It is quite sufficient satisfaction to your nautical ambition to be able to handle the little lug-sail which on breezy mornings you run up in the bow of your cruising canoe. You know all about that; in fact you made it yourself and had a terrible time stitching it on the sewing machine; but forever afterwards there was something of your own personality in that bit of canvas, and you would not exchange it for all the fanciful ducks. But this huge craft is a bird of another plumage, and the only thing you can command about her is a voracious appetite, and the willing slavery of the crew who, after a run of miles on miles, bring from mysterious holes in the miniature cabin, boxes of biscuits, cans of meats, jars of marmalade, and hosts of apologies for the welcome repast that is 'only sea-fare, ladies, and you must take us as you find us.'

And afterwards, when the sun is thinking of his warm western nest beyond the purple rim of the coast-line, when the breeze-hushes its boisterous voice preparatory to the lullaby it will sing to him as he dips beyond the horizon, you lie at full length with your hands behind your head, and some way or other the little home-made lug-sail is stretching out its white arms before you. Perhaps it is that the yacht is cleaving smoother waters now, that eventide is hushing the roar of the great depths beneath you; perhaps some of the boys have used a phrase that you learned long ago from wood and water lore—howe'er it be you are far, far away on a wild inland river, kneeling in the stern of your canoe, while a handsome lazy affair in white flannels decorates the bow. He sings, while you shoot through a score of eddies that are capering madly around innumerable stones, and with one grand skirly-whirly you find yourself skimming along on a wide, smooth stream where the hills lower to flats and meadowland, and a brisk, light wind laughs the busy little rapids to scorn. With a great deal of floundering and bungling he gets the mast up and excavates the sail from under the thwarts. You tell him several times just how to fix the whole business and he does it exactly the opposite way, then you beach the bow and walk up to deck, stepping meanwhile over his big shoes and telling him he is a great stupid. He laughs a tantalizing little laugh, and when finally you get 'out,' with canvas spread to the light summer wind, when your hands are gripping the paddle handle, your teeth fast locked on the sheet, when the little craft pulls ahead faster, faster faster, the bow ballast creeps cautiously astern, the curly head rests—oh! so near your bare, burnt arm, and a pair of marvellous eyes melt into yours as—

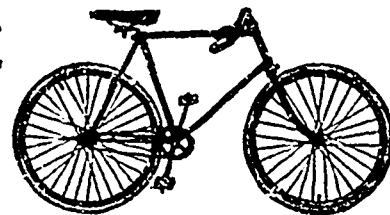
'Port, ladies!' says a cheery voice, and

you start as if from sleep, a laughing face is bending over you, but it belongs to the sturdy chap in dark blue serge. The other eyes, the home-made sail, the wee canoe, the far-winding river, have gone. You raise yourself on your elbow, but

all you see across the gunwale is a long, low line of harbor lights. The yacht is hardly moving, the sails flap indolently against the masts; you have left the world of wind, wave and dreams far, far out at sea.—*Outing.*

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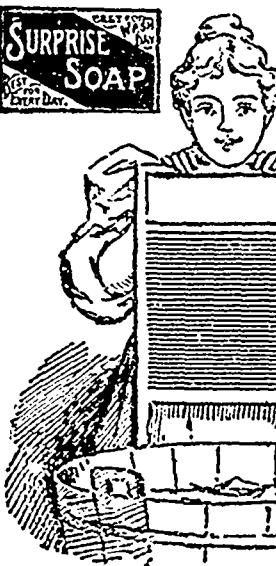
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