

SAN FRANCISCO, SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 28, 1893.

THEY SKIM THE SALT SEA WAVE.

Something About Our Fast-Racing Yachts.



The Annie.

There is a popular idea that a yacht is a boat used mainly for racing purposes...

Like many other popular ideas this one is entirely wrong. There are racing yachtsmen and cruising yachtsmen...

In San Francisco Bay there are four yacht clubs, the San Francisco Yacht Club, Corinthian and Encinal...

As far as racing records go the San Francisco Yacht Club takes the lead...

In yacht clubs the fleet is divided into two, three or more classes, according to size...

It is for this reason that a system of time allowance is adopted, which is practically a handicap on the larger vessel...

The classification is usually made within ten-foot limits. For instance, the first-class boats would be all those between 50 and 60 feet in length...

All these yachts may start together at the same signal, but they are nevertheless racing in classes only...

It will be seen from these statements that the yachtsmen themselves, who should be best able to judge, recognize the fact that all yachts are not fast...

Nobody likes to be beaten even if he knows his boat is comparatively slow, and yacht-owners would decline to compete for a prize...

which they know from the nature of things is destined to be given to another craft.

The very large boats are so much faster than the small ones that clubs having mainly third-class boats will often prohibit large ones carrying their flag.

The San Francisco Yacht Club, on the contrary, with its fleet mainly made up of large craft, now seldom has a regatta, and its small boats have decreased in number...

Naturally the man who owns the fastest yacht of his class is willing enough for more contests which will add to the fame and glory of his boat...

It should be borne in mind, however, that it is a matter of no small expense to put one of these large yachts in racing trim...

In the first place, the large yacht cannot go on the beach to be cleaned. She must be put on the drydock and remain a day or two while her bottom is being put in order...

The public takes little interest in the contests of third and fourth class boats. If half a dozen of the well-known big fellows would agree to race the occasion would bring out thousands of people...

There is a popular idea that a yacht is a boat used mainly for racing purposes, and that to be a yacht it must necessarily be fast.

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The classification is usually made within ten-foot limits. For instance, the first-class boats would be all those between 50 and 60 feet in length.

All these yachts may start together at the same signal, but they are nevertheless racing in classes only, and the little ones are not competing with all the big ones.

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nor had a light air, and while the Chispa was becalmed the other boat made up the lost time and won.

Another well-remembered race which all yachtsmen here recall, was that between the sloop Annie of the Pacific Club and the schooner Chispa of the San Francisco Club.

The most exciting and best contested race ever sailed in this bay was that between the Nellie and the Chispa. It was over what is known as the channel course...

All the yachts in the bay turned out for this race, and a big fleet of spectators, etc., came along. The first time over the course the Chispa had a little the best of it...

The cutter Folly, our own only deep and narrow boat of English type, was built by the Davidson Brothers from designs by the late Edward Burgess.

It should be mentioned for the benefit of those who have given this subject no special attention, that the types of yachts used here for racing purposes are entirely different from those now in vogue in Atlantic waters.

On this coast the sailing is mainly confined to San Francisco Bay, which, while large enough, confines us to a certain tract of water deep in the central portions but shallow on the margins and smaller bays.

Ocean racing is sometimes indulged in here, but it is only the largest yachts which can do this. Once outside the Golden Gate rough seas and strong breezes are the rule...

South of Point Conception, however, the conditions change, and when once in the Santa Barbara Channel the winds get lighter, the fog disappears and the water is smooth.

The schooner Nellie, owned by Commodore J. Macdonough, is the largest yacht on the Pacific Coast and also the fastest.

The owners of the large yachts very seldom sail their own boats in a race. While able, perhaps, to sail about the bay, or direct operations in a scrub race...

No man is ever satisfied with the way any other man sails his boat. The owner is usually happy in the center that he knows best how to cut the most out of his craft...

Perhaps the fastest "all-round" schooner yacht ever had here was the Nellie, built by Captain Matthew Turner.

The Chispa, Con O'Connor and Fleur de Lis, which were in her class, and the Argie, which was larger, tried time and again to beat the Nellie, but without avail.

Caduce of the Pacific Yacht Club. This yacht was brought from New York on a ship's deck. She is what is known as the "skimming-dish" type, being broad and shallow.

During one of these races they had very rough weather indeed, and many thought the Annie could not live in the sea that prevailed. But she made good weather of it and showed a clean pair of heels to most of the fleet.

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The Chispa was sure that in a strong breeze it would have a half second's lead, but when the race was over she was found to have won the money and the Chispa the race, because while the Chispa had beaten her competitor at every point she struck a calm streak, while the O'Connor had a light air, and while the Chispa was becalmed the other boat made up the lost time and won.

From the navy-yard back to San Francisco is about twenty-eight miles, and as soon as Magazine Point is passed the white-capped waves and strong sweeping wind of "Fabo" are met.

There is a long beat dead to windward down that bay, with solid water tumbling over the bows and masses of spray flying aft to the cockpit so that old clothes are in order and the best helmsman takes the tiller or wheel.

Now, the racing yachtsman comes to the front, for the commodore has set the signal "try rate of sailing," and every boat in the fleet, little and big, has a contest on hand.

It is not often that those on the deck of a sailing yacht can make the passage down San Pablo Bay of a summer afternoon with dry jackets. The seas are short, high and white topped; the opposing wind rushing along at a twenty-five or thirty mile rate, and the ebb tide current, with its increased burden of the waters of the two great rivers of the State, helps to increase the roughness of the water.

Accidents have ever happened on this cruise as many times as it has been made by boats of all sizes. The smaller yachts, with no hope of getting home within two hours of the big ones, carry sail just as hard and souge into the heavy head seas with as much relish as if there was a chance of winning.

The secret of this, aside from the enthusiasm and general excitement of a race, that there is some other small yacht of equal size in the fleet which must be beaten at all hazards.

If the racing yachtsman has his pleasures what of him who owns a cruiser? A cruising yacht, by the way, is one not fast in its class, and with no chance for prize.

The cruises here are generally from Saturday afternoon until Sunday night as to time and almost anywhere about the bay as to place.

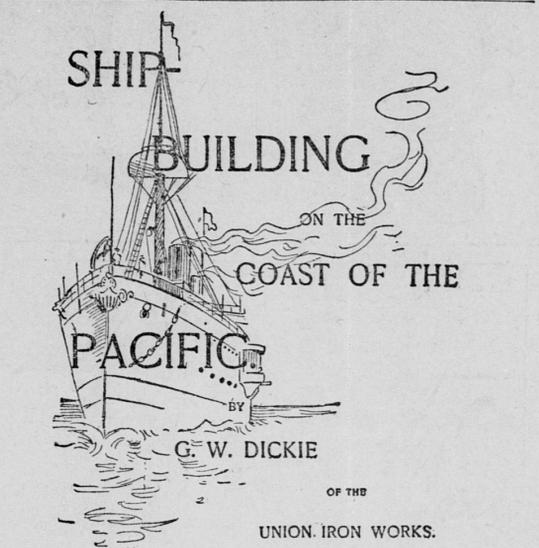
There are many quiet coves and calm creeks in the yachting fraternity and seldom visited by others. With a party of half a dozen or so, according to size of yacht, after a few hours sailing either in the strong channel breeze or along the Marin County shore, the anchor is dropped in a sheltered cove.

The cruises in squadron are those when the whole fleet start together for Mare Island or Martinez and remain over night. Next day they start at gunfire and are signalled by the commodore to "try rate of sailing," which means a race back through San Pablo Bay to the clubhouse.

When there is a week or so to spare a cruise up river is in order to Sacramento or San Joaquin rivers, Napa, Eureka or Montezuma, Geographical, Mokelumne, Suisun or other creeks or sloughs.

From these statements it will be seen that San Francisco yachting differs materially from that carried on in Eastern waters, where they have to contend with calms rather than gales of wind.

Most of the summer the yachts go up with sheets eased off and light sails spread. It is coming back that gives the opportunity for most of the "scrub races" which occur here.



SHIP BUILDING ON THE COAST OF THE PACIFIC. G. W. DICKIE OF THE UNION IRON WORKS.

What are the future prospects for ship-building and kindred trades in San Francisco? In order to arrive at a reasonable answer to such an inquiry we must consider, first, what favorable circumstances are operating to develop such industries in this city, and second, what unfavorable conditions prevail here that operate against the development of these industries.

The favoring circumstances are the natural harbor facilities possessed by San Francisco; the great coast line to the north and south of this harbor which must be developed as the needs of an increasing population require; the natural increase of the foreign commerce of this port which, though not large at present, must expand as the products of our soil and the results of our industries need outside markets for their surplus productions.

The amount of shipping engaged in the foreign and domestic trade of this port requires a large amount of work for repairs, changes and renewals, and in order to maintain the necessary force of workmen ready for extensive repairs making sudden calls for large numbers of men, new work must be under way as a foundation for steady employment.

Our State laws have not been enacted with a view to foster the commercial interests of the State and the port of San Francisco. A ship owned and registered at the port of San Francisco does not engage in the commerce of San Francisco and is not subject to the same duties and taxes as other ships.

It is unfortunate that such a large proportion of the savings of the people engaged in our industries cannot be invested in other industries, but must be absorbed in the difference between the buying and selling prices of city lots.

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returns there will be plenty of investors ready to take all the shares available. Each ship has its own owners and is managed on an independent account.

This fact of independent ownership in the several vessels comprising the fleet managed by a certain shipping-house gives perfect stability to the management, as they act as managers by contract with the owners, and not by being re-elected yearly by stockholders of a company.

This system of owning has a very different effect on investors from that of owning shares in a stock company. By the system so prevalent in Britain each investor owns so much in a given ship. In that vessel he has a certain interest. He will follow her record all over the world. Her chances of making a rapid passage or securing a good cargo at a good freight rate are questions of personal interest to him.

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G. W. Dickie