

was foolish, he admitted, to suppose that the dictionary could "embalm his language, and secure it from corruption and decay." Academies had tried in vain. In his concept of a descriptive rather than prescriptive dictionary he discovered what the twentieth century takes for granted.

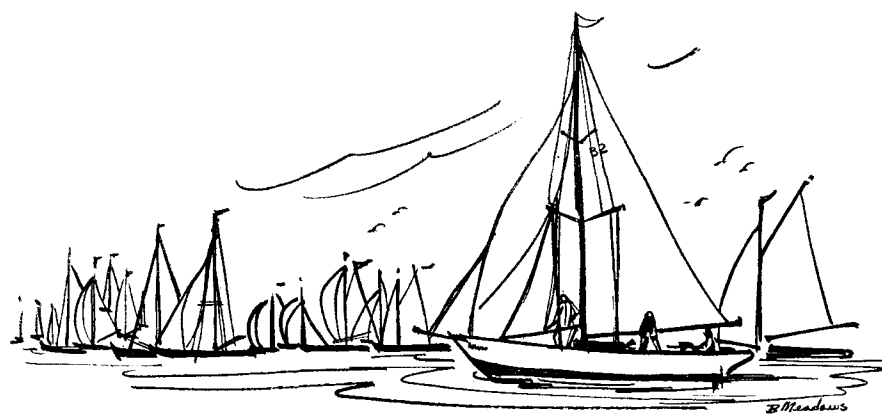
PUBLICATION was delayed until he could obtain a university degree to dignify his name on the title page. (As a youth he had attended Oxford for only thirteen months.) An M.A. "by diploma" was granted in February 1755. On April 15 the dictionary was put on sale, in a first edition of 2,000 copies at the extremely high price of four pounds ten shillings. At last from the ashes of a "harmless drudge" arose the redoubtable "Dictionary Johnson."

As he had expected, publication brought reproaches. Some were trivial, as when a lady pointed out his error in defining *pastern*, and he blandly announced his reason: "Ignorance, Madam, pure ignorance." Or when two ladies congratulated him for omitting naughty words, and he replied, "What, my dears! then you have been looking for them." To only a slight extent did he allow his humor or prejudice to infect his definitions. His definition of *pension*—"pay given to a state hireling for treason to his country"—backfired when he received one himself seven years later. Like the definitions of *oats*, *Tory*, *Whig*, *lexicographer*, *Grub-street*, *excise*, these eccentricities are too well known. In the total of 41,000 words most of his definitions are finely discriminated and judiciously phrased.

His book was acclaimed and denounced, but it frequently received the ultimate in flattery—imitation. For seventy-five years, while it was continually reissued in editions of lesser price, it dominated English lexicography.

It is at the same time a great pioneering effort and a landmark. To celebrate its anniversary James H. Sledd and Gwin J. Kolb have put together five somewhat uneven research essays as "**Dr. Johnson's Dictionary**" (University of Chicago Press, \$5). Their most interesting discussion gives the dictionary a place in eighteenth-century European lexicography. As Johnson himself would easily agree, his labor rested on that of his predecessors; but sitting on their shoulders (so to speak) he added the extra cubit of his own generous height. The dictionaries which later displaced his—Webster's and the great "Oxford English Dictionary"—may command our respect and admiration, but they do not move us with the same wonder and affection.

WEEKEND FUN



Sailing the Offshore Swell

This being the time of year when the thoughts of the five million boat-owners throughout our land turn waterward SR offers for their benefit an article in its occasional series on the literature of recreation. Its author, Thomas Caldecot Chubb, is an amateur yachtsman who has twice represented the Indian Harbor Yacht Club of Greenwich, Conn., against the Royal Bermuda Yacht Club and once against the Chicago Yacht Club. Recently he has gone over to power and now operates an express cruiser.

By Thomas Caldecot Chubb

SOME half a century ago, in his inimitable "Puck of Pook's Hill," Rudyard Kipling published a concise poem, "Harp Song of the Dane Women." It began with a pointed question:

What is woman that you forsake
her,
And the hearth-fire and the home
acre
To go with the old gray Widow
Maker?

Then after pointing out some of the discomforts that caused Dr. Samuel Johnson to growl: "No man will be a sailor who has the contrivance to get into jail," it came to the heart of the matter:

Yet when the signs of summer
thicken,
And the ice breaks and the birch
buds quicken . . .

. . . you steal away to the lapping
waters

And look at your ship in her
winter quarters.

You forget our talk and the mirth
at the tables,
The kine in the shed and the
horse in the stables—
To pitch her sides and go over her
cables.

Kipling of course spoke of the Vikings—the "creek men," who, according to the learned Dr. Frederick J. Pohl, not only beached their ships on Nantucket, but even sailed through Hell Gate. But the emotions he evoked would be equally familiar to any of those restless souls who, when the pussywillows grow fluffy and the sharp green lances of the paperwhites thrust through the loam, go down to their own lapping waters as a preliminary to taking part in what is now one of the most popular recreations in the United States.

I say "most popular" advisedly. Recent semi-official figures indicate that there are now 5,284,000 recreational craft on all waters in this country. To be sure, four million of these are "outboard-powered craft under sixteen feet in length," but there are said to be 520,000 sailboats and 760,000 auxiliaries and motorboats over sixteen feet long. There are also, four thousand "documented" pleasure craft—i.e., yachts large enough to carry papers like a commercial vessel. Even granting that some of these categories have been swollen by what a wise observer calls "educated guesses, perhaps with a touch of optimism as would be expected from someone in the industry," you have only to drive any spring weekend from the New York City line to New London (or along the shores of the Chesapeake, Lake Michigan, Southern California,

or any of the man-made lakes created by public or private power) to realize that "men in this cool breeze season" are still moved by the same "longing for the blue of the offshore swell" that they were when Leif the Lucky wandered westward.

The only difference is that the "Dane women"—and for that matter children—are no longer left behind. In the shipyards you will see potential candidates for Miss or Mrs. America, clad in dungarees and as busy scraping, sanding, varnishing, and painting as their so-called better halves. Afloat it is the same story. For some time now the "ship's husband" has been matched by the "ship's wife," but the ladies are no longer limited to keeping the good ship clean below decks or to slaving in the galley. (They would rebel at that—they do enough galley-slaving ashore in the modern servantless home.) They now take their place on deck.

At the excellent classes conducted by the United States Power Squadron the gals in increasing numbers are now studying piloting, dead reckoning, and how to bring a twin-screw cruiser alongside the dock. It is reported that barnacle-handed old salts no longer rub their eyes and mutter briny oaths when they see a ketch "manned"—if you will pardon the expression—by an all-girl crew, sailing coastal waters. The ladies have long since moved into the racing game. No member of the so-called weaker sex has yet won the rugged thrash to Bermuda or the even more rugged Fastnet Race, but the cups in our living room indicate husband and son have a hard time keeping in sight of wife and daughter. We have a racing class at the yacht club from which I sail and three of its first six championships were won by members of the fair sex.

Yachting has also become more modest and more democratic. Gone probably forever are times epitomized by the famous J. P. Morgan story. A newly rich friend went to the financier

and asked him if he could afford a yacht. "You can't," said Mr. Morgan. "How can you answer so quickly?" came back the friend. "I haven't told you my resources." "If you have to ask the question you can't afford one," replied Mr. Morgan. In those days this answer was supported by the facts.

Let us consider a few of them. From 1871 to 1937 private American owners defended the America's Cup (and each defense entailed building from two to five yachts) no less than sixteen times. The smallest defender was *Mischief*, seventy-nine tons. The largest was *Reliance*, 149 feet long and with 16,000 square feet of sail. When my father won the Astor Cup in 1915 the press referred patronizingly to "the little schooner *Queen Mab*." She was seventy-six feet overall. But in 1915 it was still not out of the ordinary to see great winged beauties like the 200-footers *Karina* and *Sea Call* or the 185-foot black-hulled three-master *Atlantic*, which had sailed from Ambrose Light to England in less time than the fastest clipper. As recently as 1937 the 267-foot *Hiesmaro* and Morgan's 343-foot *Corsair*, each flying an appropriate banner, were but two of the many you would see as a matter of course at the Yale-Harvard boat race. When the New York thirties—forty-three feet overall—came out in 1905 they were for the fellow who did not want anything too big.

Taxes, the redistribution of the wealth, the high cost of building, and the even higher cost of operating have changed all this. The great schooners and the great steam yachts have disappeared. The *Atlantic*, for example, after a long period of idleness is now a museum piece. The last of the cup defenders was broken up for her metal during the war, nor is it likely that another will ever be built. If you have anything forty-three feet long—power or sail—your friends wonder about that oil well. The small boat is now supreme.

Nor is this reduction in size and in-

The Season's Boating Books

SHIP ASHORE. By Jeannette Edwards Rattray. Coward-McCann. Probable price, \$7.50.

SAILING ROUND CAPE HORN. By Guenther T. Schulz. Dodd, Mead. \$10.

THE COMPLETE BOATING HANDBOOK. By Robert Scharff. McGraw-Hill. \$4.95.

NEW COMPLETE BOOK OF SMALL BOATS. Bobbs-Merrill. \$2.75.

POWER BOATING PRESENTED IN PICTURES. By Geoffrey Smith. Wilfred Funk. \$4.

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF OUTBOARD MOTORBOATS. By Hank Bowman. A. S. Barnes. \$5.

THE COMPLETE BOOK OF KIT BOATS. Bobbs-Merrill. \$2.75.

CLOUD OF ISLANDS. By W. I. B. Crealock. Hastings House. \$4.

crease in numbers limited to racing sail boats. Motor boats and relatively small auxiliaries are coming out almost on an assembly-line basis both here and—fortunately for the purse—abroad, and since even a moderate-sized express cruiser can cost a few pennies a new type of what the sailing men call "stinkpots" has appeared: the outboard cruiser. Small and cheap, outboard cruisers were an innovation only a few years ago. They now fill the recreational waters with happiness and penetrating noise.

WHAT is the significance of all this to the reader of a periodical devoted to ideas and books?

It should be of some sociological interest that there are few participant sports which have a greater mass appeal than this flourishing recreation on which a billion dollars are now spent annually. In the matter of numbers taking part my guess is that golf is the only rival. The other big-number sports—baseball, basketball, football—are spectator sports where relatively few players entertain the crowded stands. But the sixteen million (this figure too is semi-official, but this time seems low to me) who in 1955 will go down to the sea in anything that floats will all play an active role. The veriest landlubber—if directed with the right kind of profanity—can at least sway on a halyard or help weigh the anchor and will, therefore, come ashore with sore muscles but with a sense of having done something. Being a believer in participant—as opposed to spectator—sports, this seems to me all to the good.

Yachting is also a sport with rich literary associations. Oddly enough, (Continued on page 53)

Military Funeral

By Martha Banning Thomas

WE KEPT the silence as we knew we should;
We thought of goodness, and our thoughts were good;
We bowed in wordless praying, and we stood

As still as listening ghosts, we'll always mourn,—
Who breathed, as we are breathing now, were born,
And died. The bugle was a trumpet horn

Gathering our griefs together in one well
Of quietness. God's gale rose like a knell,
And struck, not silence, but a sounding bell!

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From "Argonaut" to "Yalta"

IT WAS Churchill, with his strong sense of history and of hope, who named it "Argonaut"; it was the later frustrations, the fears and hatreds, which reduced it to "Yalta" and converted it into the symbol of unwisdom, short-sightedness, and betrayal which it has become for so many today. There was no golden fleece; the tinsel they brought away instead had begun to tarnish within a month, and the argonauts, their high purposes forgotten, have been condemned ever since for failing where no men, probably, could have succeeded.

Except for General MacArthur's remarkable attempt to rewrite the record, the storm caused by the State Department's publication of most of the surviving record of this tragedy is already subsiding to teapot proportions. Publication has not done the harm that was prophesied; it did not prevent ratification of the German treaties, and despite Churchill's obvious displeasure it seems to have put no great strain upon our alliances. It has, on the other hand, produced little new fuel for the embittered fires of domestic partisanship—and reflected little credit upon the patently political motives responsible for the compilation and the curious manner of the release.

The compilation was ordered by the Republicans when they took power in 1953, in the hope that it would sustain both their campaign charges of pro-Communist betrayal against the Roosevelt Administration and their overrash campaign promises to denounce the Yalta agreements and "roll back" the Soviet conquests which they ascribed to that meeting.

But the folly of the latter enterprise has long been apparent to the Republicans and anti-Rooseveltians themselves; they have learned that a "roll back" is a practical impossibility and that there is nothing in the Yalta agreements to be denounced—except, possibly, some Soviet undertakings which might conceivably be useful some day. And there are no fresh evidences of betrayal; there is no suggestion of a treasonable Alger Hiss poisoning the councils or doctoring the papers; there is nothing to sustain the more grotesque charges of a fatuous Roosevelt openhandedly selling the Poles and the Chinese Nationalists into Communist slavery; there is little to alter the general picture of the famous conference with which we had already become rather wearisomely familiar.

Some of the more embarrassing jocularities and side-remarks which the papers are supposed to contain have been edited out; enough remain, however, to provide confirmation for what was already reasonably apparent. It is clearer than before that Roosevelt was tired and ill, that he was poorly prepared, and that coordination of his policy with Churchill's was seriously deficient. He was still distrustful of what he considered to be the promptings of "British imperialism," and inclined to conceive his role as more that of mediator between Churchill and Stalin than that of Britain's ally in a struggle between East and West. He, like the other two, was suffering delusions of grandeur; he was still too trusting of the Russians; he could still propose cheerfully to Stalin (in Churchill's absence) that

Hong Kong be given to China under an international port administration, or scribble a testy minute: "All this is rot: local politics. I am quite sure he [Churchill] is thinking now about the next election in Britain."

ROOSEVELT left it to Churchill to carry the main brunt of the battle for a decent settlement in Poland, but it is not clear that the President could have done better had he pressed with greater vigor. Indeed, it is even less easy than before to believe that the Presidential attitudes materially affected the outcome. Particularly this is true in regard to the Far East. The most significant of the new material in the compilations is provided by the reports of the military staff conferences; and these put the famous allegation that Roosevelt at Yalta sold out the Chinese in order, unnecessarily, to induce Russia to enter the Japanese War in a rather new light. It is plain that neither Roosevelt, Marshall, nor any of the Joint Chiefs journeyed to Yalta with the idea that they would have to bid for a Soviet entry. In the previous October the Russians had told them (through Harriman and General Deane) that they would enter the war and had outlined the plan of operations they intended to follow. For the American military men at Yalta Soviet participation was already a foregone conclusion; their problem was simply to coordinate Russian and American operations. Roosevelt and his political advisers had to consider not what they might offer the Russians to bring them in, but to what extent it would be possible to resist the demands certain to be made.

Some could not be resisted in any event; thus, the Soviet staff simply informed the Americans that Russia "will occupy southern Sakhalin as quickly after the beginning of hostilities as possible and will do this without American help." When Stalin made his demands explicit Roosevelt acquiesced and said that he would take them up with Chiang Kai-shek. He might have put up a stiffer fight to limit Soviet aims, but since with the coming of war Soviet troops would be on the ground to enforce them anyhow, it is difficult to see that he could have accomplished much in that way, except by forcing the issue to a complete break. It may be said that a break would have been preferable, as the event proved that we did not need Russian military help in the Far East. But that would have fractured the alliance at the moment of impending victory in Europe—a risk no statesman could have dared to take.

Thus, the Yalta papers, if they add