

OLD SHIP CARVERS

Their Occupation Gone, Theirs Is Now a Lost Art.

FIGUREHEADS OUT OF DATE.

These Famous Old Fanciful Figures, Elaborately Fashioned in Wood, Find No Place in the Decorative Scheme of a Modern Windjammer.

While there is a revival of wooden shipbuilding in Maine, giving employment to the carpenter, rigger and sailmaker, there is not on the whole length of the coast any job for the carver of the figureheads. That is an occupation now entirely gone, for the figurehead is out of date and its carving a lost art.

One of the most famous of the ship carvers was the late William L. Sawyer of Bangor, who fashioned figureheads for the best square riggers that ever left Maine. He learned his trade in a Bangor shipyard when the banks of the Penobscot were crowded with

vessel frames, piled his cleaver, chisel and gouge through all the years of America's greatest maritime glory. He witnessed the decline of our ocean commerce and lived to see his occupation entirely gone.

For forty years or more did Sawyer carve images and cherubs, kings and queens, mermaids and dolphins, statesmen and warriors, not to mention an occasional lion and unicorn, eagle, for the ornament of "down-east" vessels, for every part of his considerable size carried a heavy load of some sort of ornament, made the bowsprit being regarded as necessary to complete her outfit. But now all that is gone. Owners can see no sense in spending money on such gewgaws as a blue-eyed low-crown. When they build a vessel now square riggers are no longer thought of they whittle her off for ward to a bilge head and let her go as that. Maybe a gift scrollwork tops her stem, but nothing more.

Thus it is that Bangor knows the wood sculptor no more, the sole reminder of Sawyer's art being a broken and faded specimen of his work, once carried by a big ship, but for many years mounted as a sign over his shop door in Exchange street. In the days of the Penobscot

whittled and chiseled from a pine log had golden trimmings on her Green America's greatest maritime glory. He witnessed the decline of our ocean commerce and lived to see his occupation entirely gone.

He sent him a commission by a friendly skipper to make a set of idols to meet the theological needs of the chief's heathen subjects.

The Western Belle is spending the evening of her days in a coal barge but the lady who graced her prow was retired from the sea and now occupies a place in a garden. One of her post-horns was a detachable arm, the one in which she held the wheel. During voyages it was hung so that the boys in 2nd boat could see it, being replaced when the ship was about to make a port. This was not known in the more elaborate of the old wooden figureheads, especially of men of war, where danger of shattering was greatest.

Some figureheads were illustrative of the vessel's name, others were whims of the owners or the captain, and still others symbols of events occurring at the time the vessels were built. The schooner War Eagle, for instance, was built in wartime, and she had for her figure-head a fierce looking eagle, perched on a heap of cannon balls and with arrows clasped in its talons. The War Eagle was destroyed some years ago at Boston by an explosion of naphtha in her cargo. The schooner American Eagle was decorated with a gorgeous bird of freedom and the brig American Union was liberally ornamented, stern and bow

with symbols of this nation. The old steamer Ex-Under had a figure of John Marshall holding the constitution, and the steamer Daniel Webster carried on either side a figure of the great orator, while in her saloon was hung a life-sized portrait of him, presented by the citizens of Boston. Boston Globe.

More in His Line.
"Do you think I will make a player?" asked a sluggish applicant for football.
"You may make a chess player," said the coach. "You are slow enough in moving."
Isaac Walton, Please Write—Hook, Texas.
Linc. North Carolina.
Sinker, Idaho.—Detroit News.

Riddle of the Plants.
That plants actually may see does not seem so impossible to those who have watched a grapevine reach across a space of several feet and obtain support for its onward growth by fastening its tendrils to neighboring objects. The long tendrils sent out by the grapevine sweep in long courses through the air until they touch some fixed object, such as a tree limb, a post or a wire, around which they quickly turn and bind themselves tenaciously. The seeming accuracy with which the tendrils reach out for distant supports is almost enough to convince one that the plants see what they are reaching for.—Exchange.

The Deduction.
"There's a proverb that fits every man."
"What one fits me?"
"To whom God gives office he also gives brains."
"But I have no office."
"Well, don't you see how it fits?"
—Cleveland Leader.

The Usual Thing.
"What's the proper thing at a wedding?"
"Wish the pair happiness and tell everybody else there's no earthly chance for it."
—Louisville Courier Journal.



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