



Hints for Choosing a Canoe.

"What kind of a canoe shall I buy and how shall I choose her?" is a question frequently asked me in the spring by would-be canoeists. To them I reply, "It depends a good deal on the purpose for which you want the canoe, but there are a few general points which may well be borne in mind by any one in going to purchase."

In the first place, we have the material to consider. Shall the canoe be of canvas, bark or wood?

The greatest objection to canvas canoes is that they are usually of a model unsuited for general work. As roomy ladies' boats to used on a small, calm river, they are sufficiently satisfactory; but for long trips, or on large water where one is likely to find heavy wind and sea, they are anything but good.

But quite irrespective of model, canvas is not in the opinion of many canoeists, a desirable material for covering a canoe. It is less stiff than wood, and they regard it as "loosey" and limp in comparison. The canvas canoe, they say, has no "life" in her, no resiliency.

After much use, the canvas craft gets badly water-soaked, and becomes heavy. It is not less easily broken, and is very little lighter than basswood, which is far livelier. A cedar canoe is about the same weight as a canvas one of equal size. Canvas is also inferior to wood for speed—probably because its lack of life or resiliency causes it to drag as a bark canoe does when forced fast through the water. But I must say, in justice to the canvas canoe, that it is very "dry" when in good order, and not at all apt to become leaky unless badly used.

The principal merit of birch bark is that it is the most easily mended of canoe materials; but it is correspondingly easily broken. When out on a long trip, away from civilization, it certainly is an advantage to be able to mend your boat in a few minutes with a little bark and rosin; but this advantage is offset by the extreme care one is obliged to exercise. A blow on a rock which would only scratch a wooden boat will put a hole in a birch.

The model of the birch is almost always as objectionable as that of the canvas canoe, and the speed of the birch is inferior to that of the wooden boat. It is easy to get up a certain rate of progress, but the canoe then begins to drag, and the wooden canoe will easily pass it.

Basswood is the best material for a man who wants a strong, serviceable boat, and does not mind a few extra pounds of weight.

Cedar is lighter than basswood, taken on a higher finish, but is not as strong. A sixteen-foot basswood canoe will weigh from fifty-five to sixty-five pounds, and a cedar from forty to fifty-five. The cost of a cedar exceeds that of a basswood by from twenty to twenty-five dollars.

By all means choose a "smoothskin," that is, a canoe perfectly smooth on the outside. The lapstreak, that method usually adopted in skiffs, in which the outer strips lap over one another, has no advantages whatever for a canoe, but it retards speed and is ugly. Canadian builders, who turn out the best open paddling canoes for cruising, uniformly build them smoothskin.

In choosing your boat, avoid high bows. The bow should be as low as is consistent with reasonable proportions. Many models, especially canvas and birch-bark canoes, are built with great, useless bows, which simply add so much extra weight to the boat, and are very annoying wind-catchers. Any one who has paddled for several hours with a heavy wind on the quarter or dead ahead knows that each surplus inch of bow means a great deal of needless hard work.

If you wish a particularly stiff boat, one of great carrying capacity, and an excellent cruising and camping boat, you will take a model with a "tumble-home"—that is, a model where the sides slope inward instead of outward, as they near the gunwale. This gives more wetted surface, with the canoe light, than the ordinary model, as the bottom is flatter; also it causes the boat to be somewhat less cranky than the ordinary model.

My objection to the tumble-home canoe is that she is slower than a good canoe without a tumble-home, besides being not quite as easily handled and responsive to the paddle in a sea. She is usually alleged to be a better sea-boat, probably on account of her greater stiffness, but I have not found her so.

As regards size, the most generally used canoe is the sixteen-footer, and for ordinary general purpose work that is the size I should strongly advise. If one sometimes wishes to use her alone, he will find she can be easily handled by one man, and is equally satisfactory when three or four people are put in her.

A sixteen-foot canoe will carry two men and

four hundred pounds of "duffle" with ease. I myself, have put six men in such a boat, and although of course this sank her so much that her freeboard was very slight, it did not exhaust her carrying capacity. These remarks apply to an ordinary sixteen-foot wooden canoe.

Of course such boats vary very much in size, the beam running from twenty-eight to thirty-two inches, and the depth from nine to twelve or more. The size with a thirty-inch beam and a depth of twelve inches is, on the whole, the most satisfactory.

Basswood is usually painted, cedar varnished. For rough usage the basswood boat is the best; as regards appearance and lightness, cedar takes the palm.

One point I would emphasize. Be sure that you have thwarts instead of seats in your canoe, and learn to paddle kneeling with both knees on the floor leaning against a thwart, instead of perched upon a seat with your feet out in front of you. The latter method is well enough for those who go canoeing only to take out ladies. It also can be used with effect in a racing canoe with a double-bladed paddle, but I am speaking of single-blade work. A sitting paddler has no sort of control over the balance of his boat, is not able to use his strength properly, and has but little "purchase" on the water.

Any one who has ever gone on a long trip involving broken water, who has ever shot a rough rapid, or handled a canoe in a heavy sea where the boat required to be continually nursed, knows that one cannot sit and do any of those things with either skill, comfort or safety.

All of which signifies that if one chooses a canoe sixteen feet long by thirty inches wide by twelve inches deep, built of cedar or basswood, smoothskin, and with or without a tumble-home, he cannot go far wrong.

DENIS ST. BERNARD.

Tipping.

Not long ago a curious lawsuit was fought and decided in Chemnitz, Saxony. A gentleman had been staying at a certain hotel four weeks, and throughout that time had had the service of "Boots," who blacks your boots, brushes your clothes, and performs other little services.

When the gentleman was leaving the hotel, he gave to Boots a fee of four marks—about a dollar. Boots demanded more, and when the gentleman refused to give it, sued him for an amount which would make up the "tip" to twelve marks, or three marks a week. In his plea he alleged that the hotel proprietor did not pay him anything; that he received only his board and lodging and tips to pay two others; that he depended on tips for compensation for his services, and was entitled to receive them regularly from guests of the hotel.

The court gave judgment to Boots for ten marks, thus recognizing the legality of the tipping system. The judgment has been appealed against by the gentleman, and the case is still待审.

The tipping system has been growing in the Old World for many years, and has made much headway in America. The use of the verb "to tip" in this sense is accounted as slang, but it should really be considered legitimate idiom, since it has been in use in this sense for two hundred years.

At the very beginning tipping was properly received as a kind of bribery, and so it still is. A public servant, like a beadle or a verger, was tipped to lead him to perform some special service, which possibly was against his orders, or the doing of which for one prevented him from doing his duty to another. At the present day a railway, hotel or restaurant employee is often tipped to do his ordinary work a little more carefully than usual; and very likely he is led by his tip to neglect another patron who has already paid for his services.

In this sense the tipping system is wrong and unjust. In gentlemen's clubs tipping is rigidly prohibited, because it involves inequality of service and perfect equality is the first requisite of a good club. But tipping is not wrong if, for a fair and equal service rendered, without the expectation of a tip, a small gratuity is willingly given.

The English use the verb "to tip" in a sense which does not prevail in the United States. That is, in the sense of a small gift of money to a boy or girl friend when they are not expected but merely out of good feeling or generosity.

In Thackeray's novels and letters schoolboys are always being tipped by grown-up relatives and friends. Even boys of wealth and of aristocratic lineage seem, in Thackeray's and other English novels, to always watching to be tipped by their elders. Thackeray, who had been educated at Charterhouse, after life always went prepared to tip the boys there, or some of them, when he visited the school. All the boys, who were of good families, seemed to regard the acceptance of these gifts of money not beneath their dignity.

It is related in Mr. Melville's "Life of Thackeray" that he and a friend were once walking on the street in London when they saw a party of schoolgirls coming down the street and about to meet them. "See those little girls coming!" said Thackeray. "Let's tip 'em!" So he searched in his pockets for coins, and when the girls came up he exclaimed to them, "Six bright little girls, and six bright little sixpences!" and gave them each sixpence.

It is a common practice for a boy to tip a stranger, or from any one but a parent or near relative, is totally against the principles of well-taught American children, no matter if they are quite poor. It is to be hoped that it will remain so.

Until within a recent period, any American waiter or waitress who had served tipping. Unfortunately this is not now the case. The practice is becoming very common, and in restaurants and hotels the tipping of waiters is almost universal. It is still, however, a practice for which few defenders are found, and many men of undoubted generosity of habit stand out against it on account of its essential injustice.

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