




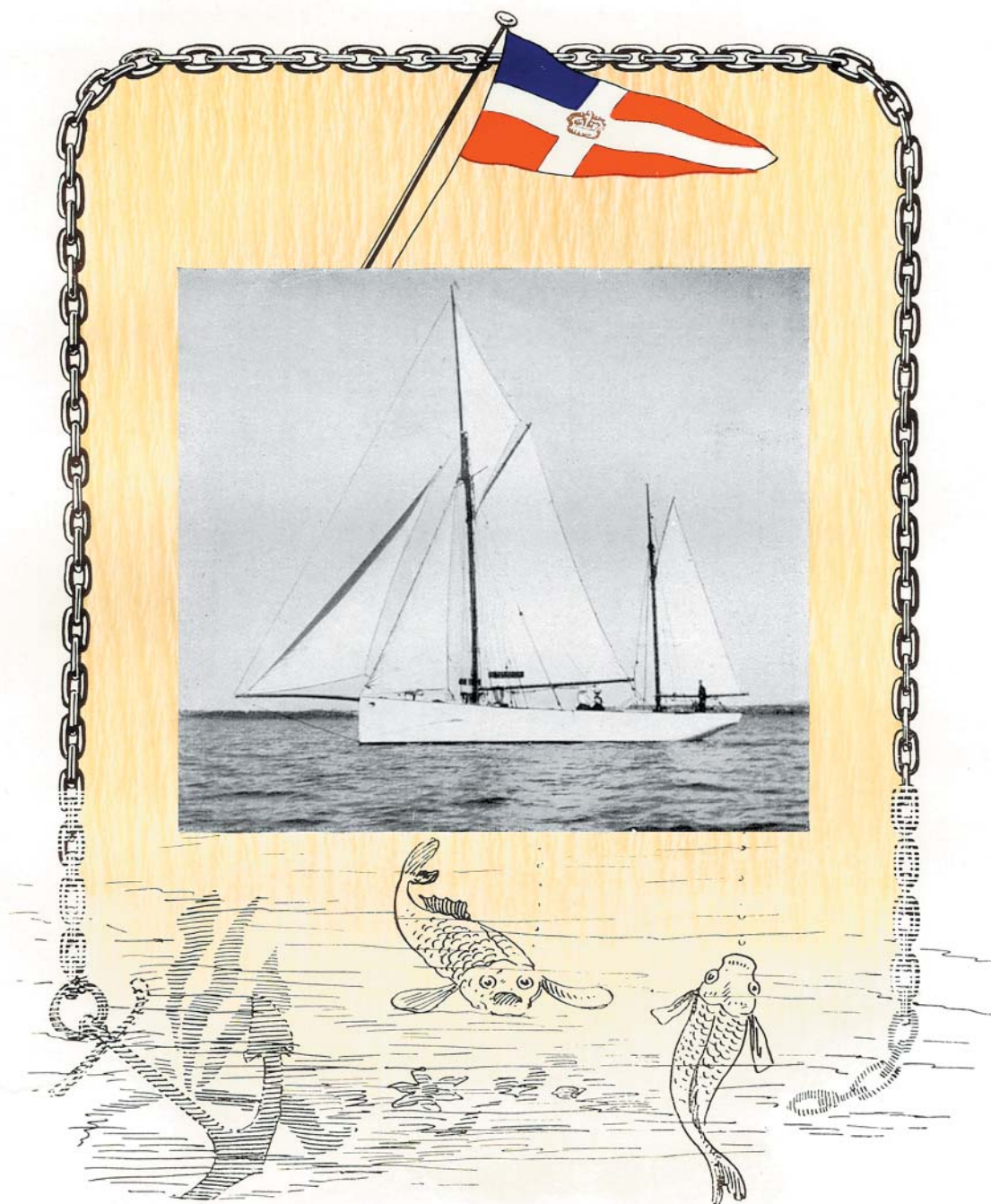
RAMBLER.



THE Rambler is quite a new boat, having been recently built by her owner, Mr. Murphy, purely for cruising, and is fitted with auxiliary power. She is a very comfortable cruiser, her dimensions being 51 feet overall, with straight stem and short counter, 13 feet beam and 6 feet 6 inches draught. She is rigged as a ketch, and all her gear is heavy and essentially for cruising. The Rambler proved herself a wonderful sea boat, and demonstrated the fact that she would be safe in all weathers.

The Rambler arrived at Queenscliff during the afternoon of Christmas Day, under power, there being no wind, and a strong flow of tide. The Racing Committee came on board and made an official inspection, also sealed down the engine.

THURSDAY, BOXING DAY, 26TH DECEMBER.—A heavy northerly blew throughout the night, and our glass began to fall steadily, reading 29.72 at 4.30 a.m. It was not considered likely that one with any knowledge of weather conditions would start a race across the straits, so no preparations were made; breakfast had to be served while under weigh. At 5.45 the preparatory gun was fired at the fort, and it was then found that the Committee had decided in its wisdom to send the boats out, and the crew realised that they were in for a rough trip—which was subsequently fully justified. Sail was immediately hoisted, and the anchor weighed with all lower sails set. The boat stood out on the port tack to the N.E., and put about just as the five minutes gun went, and then stood down to the starting line. We were several hundred yards to windward when the starting gun boomed out, and the Shamrock crossed first, followed closely by the Ellida, and then the Rambler, with the owner (Mr.



RAMBLER.

L.O.A. - - 51 ft.
Beam - - 13 ft. 6 ins.
Draft - - 6 ft. 6 ins.

CREW OF RAMBLER.



MR. MURPHY, Owner.

MRS. MURPHY.

C. DALY.

L. BENNETT.

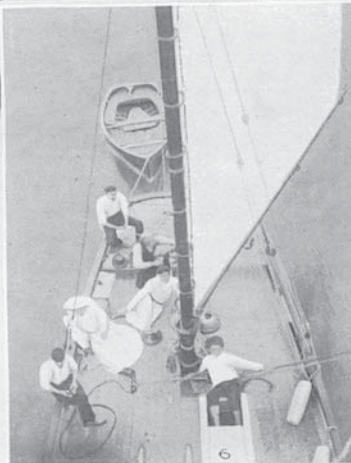
C. HACK.

W. ARMSTRONG.

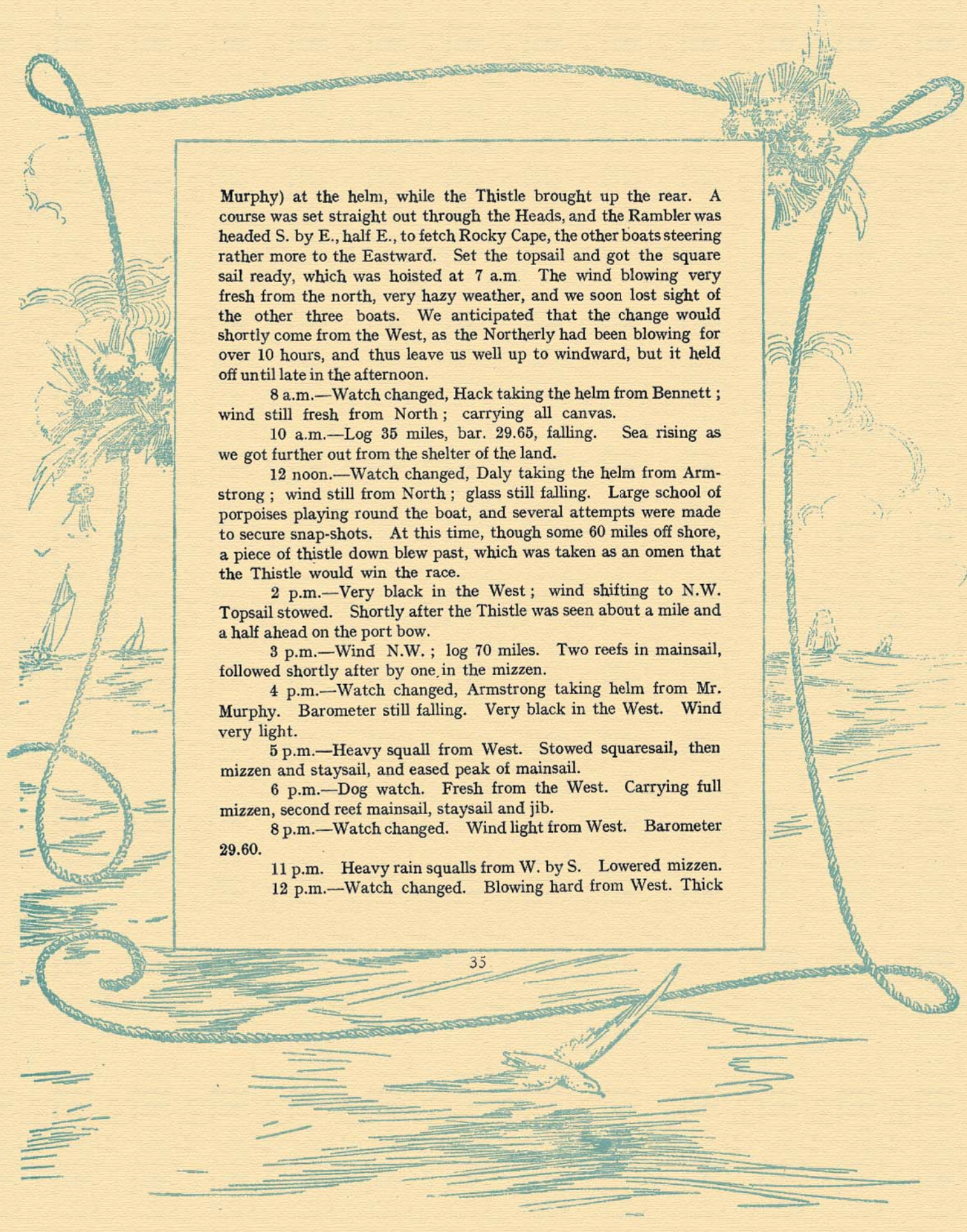
H. S. SCALES.

CAPT. W. TAIT, Navigator.

A. FOURCOUX, Mate.



RAMBLER SNAPSHOTS.



Murphy) at the helm, while the Thistle brought up the rear. A course was set straight out through the Heads, and the Rambler was headed S. by E., half E., to fetch Rocky Cape, the other boats steering rather more to the Eastward. Set the topsail and got the square sail ready, which was hoisted at 7 a.m. The wind blowing very fresh from the north, very hazy weather, and we soon lost sight of the other three boats. We anticipated that the change would shortly come from the West, as the Northerly had been blowing for over 10 hours, and thus leave us well up to windward, but it held off until late in the afternoon.

8 a.m.—Watch changed, Hack taking the helm from Bennett ; wind still fresh from North ; carrying all canvas.

10 a.m.—Log 35 miles, bar. 29.65, falling. Sea rising as we got further out from the shelter of the land.

12 noon.—Watch changed, Daly taking the helm from Armstrong ; wind still from North ; glass still falling. Large school of porpoises playing round the boat, and several attempts were made to secure snap-shots. At this time, though some 60 miles off shore, a piece of thistle down blew past, which was taken as an omen that the Thistle would win the race.

2 p.m.—Very black in the West ; wind shifting to N.W. Topsail stowed. Shortly after the Thistle was seen about a mile and a half ahead on the port bow.

3 p.m.—Wind N.W. ; log 70 miles. Two reefs in mainsail, followed shortly after by one in the mizzen.

4 p.m.—Watch changed, Armstrong taking helm from Mr. Murphy. Barometer still falling. Very black in the West. Wind very light.


5 p.m.—Heavy squall from West. Stowed squaresail, then mizzen and staysail, and eased peak of mainsail.

6 p.m.—Dog watch. Fresh from the West. Carrying full mizzen, second reef mainsail, staysail and jib.

8 p.m.—Watch changed. Wind light from West. Barometer 29.60.

11 p.m. Heavy rain squalls from W. by S. Lowered mizzen.

12 p.m.—Watch changed. Blowing hard from West. Thick



with rain squalls, carry on with double reefed mainsail and jib ; as it lightened hoisted mizzen and staysail.

FRIDAY, 2 a.m.—Wind freshening still from West, with continued rain (now sleet). Stowed staysail.

4 a.m.—Watch changed. Barometer 29.58. Wind fresh from West; monotonously raining; dry socks at a premium.

6 a.m.—Wind dropping. Sighted Rocky Cape. Reefs shaken out and staysail set.

8 a.m.—Watch changed. Wind light. Course changed to S.E. ; log 158 miles. Topsail hoisted.

10 a.m.—Wind very light—doldrums. Set squaresail ; course E.S.E. ; raining steadily. Sight boat in shore, presumed to be the Thistle with jackyarder topsail set, apparently doing fairly well with wind off shore.

12 noon. Watch changed. Off Devonport.

2 p.m.—Good dinner of hot curry just despatched ; spirits all high, which even the rain cannot dampen, in expectancy of reaching Tamar Heads before nightfall. Wind fair from S.W., though light.

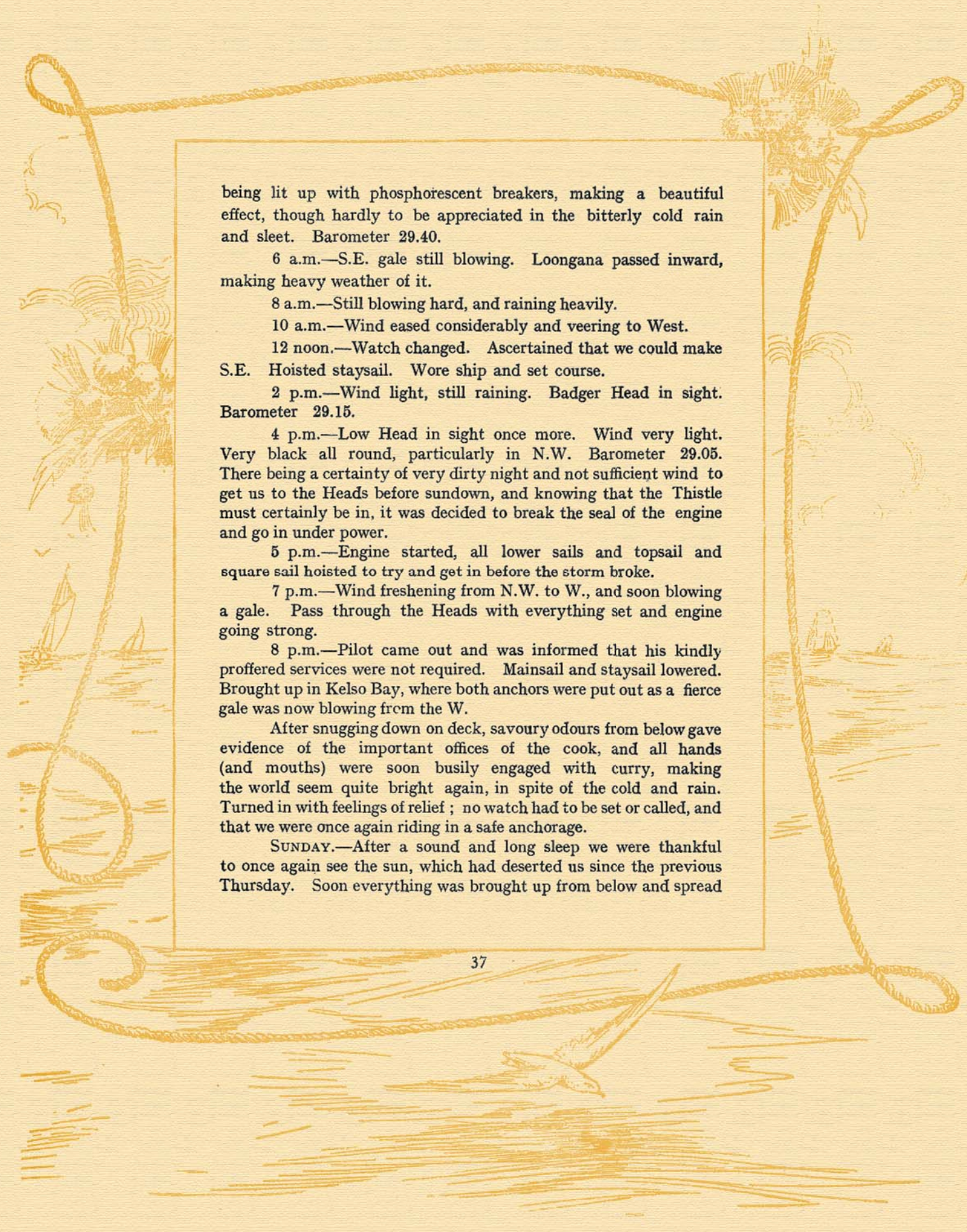
4 p.m. Watch changed. Sharp southerly squall. Topsail and jib stowed, and main and mizzen reefed ; spitfire jib set ; barometer 29.50.

6 p.m.—Off Badger Head ; Low Head in sight ; log 193 miles. Phonograph giving selections below—" Sailor beware, Sailor, Take Care ! "

7 p.m.—Wind freshening strongly from the S.E. On lookout for Hebe Buoy. Within two miles of Low Head light-house when gale from S.S.E. with strong ebb tide came straight out of Heads and had to heave to under reefed mizzen.

9 p.m.—Being hove-to on the starboard tack drifting somewhat to the N.N.E. Hoist the head of the staysail, wore ship, and get several seas over the bows in the process. Gale continued throughout the night one man on watch to look out for passing craft. Water tanks in sail locker breaking adrift, make a difficult job getting them fast again, causing the ship's carpenter (Armstrong) some heavy work.

SATURDAY, 1 a.m.—S.E. gale still raging ; big seas running,



being lit up with phosphorescent breakers, making a beautiful effect, though hardly to be appreciated in the bitterly cold rain and sleet. Barometer 29.40.

6 a.m.—S.E. gale still blowing. Loongana passed inward, making heavy weather of it.

8 a.m.—Still blowing hard, and raining heavily.

10 a.m.—Wind eased considerably and veering to West.

12 noon.—Watch changed. Ascertained that we could make S.E. Hoisted staysail. Wore ship and set course.

2 p.m.—Wind light, still raining. Badger Head in sight. Barometer 29.15.

4 p.m.—Low Head in sight once more. Wind very light. Very black all round, particularly in N.W. Barometer 29.05. There being a certainty of very dirty night and not sufficient wind to get us to the Heads before sundown, and knowing that the Thistle must certainly be in, it was decided to break the seal of the engine and go in under power.


5 p.m.—Engine started, all lower sails and topsail and square sail hoisted to try and get in before the storm broke.

7 p.m.—Wind freshening from N.W. to W., and soon blowing a gale. Pass through the Heads with everything set and engine going strong.

8 p.m.—Pilot came out and was informed that his kindly proffered services were not required. Mainsail and staysail lowered. Brought up in Kelso Bay, where both anchors were put out as a fierce gale was now blowing from the W.

After snugging down on deck, savoury odours from below gave evidence of the important offices of the cook, and all hands (and mouths) were soon busily engaged with curry, making the world seem quite bright again, in spite of the cold and rain. Turned in with feelings of relief; no watch had to be set or called, and that we were once again riding in a safe anchorage.

SUNDAY.—After a sound and long sleep we were thankful to once again see the sun, which had deserted us since the previous Thursday. Soon everything was brought up from below and spread



out to dry, making the decks look rather like an old clothes shop.
Dry once more ! Dry socks again !! Luxury !!!

Looking back over these trying experiences, too much cannot be said for the seaworthiness of the Rambler. Hove to under reefed mizzen only, she rode out Friday night's gale without taking a single sea on board, and proved herself a thoroughly sea-going vessel. No apology need be made for breaking the seal of the engine, with the knowledge that the Cup could not be won, and the weather conditions prevailing at the time.

Steam power is very well in its place,
When water's smooth and the ship's in a race.
But when sea's rough and wind blowing a gale
There's certainly greater safety in sail.