

*Wood Panels for the Yacht "Aloha II"*

**N**ORSE LEGENDS CARVED IN WOOD TO DECORATE COMMODORE JAMES'S YACHT, *ALOHA II*

MR. KARL VON RYDINGSVÄRD has just completed an interesting and unusual decoration for the deck saloon of the new auxiliary yacht, *Aloha II*, which is now being built for Mr. Arthur Curtiss James, commodore of the New York Yacht Club. Mr. and Mrs. James, who are both enthusiastic yachtsmen, took a trip to Iceland some years ago and became much interested in the art and literature of the Norsemen. The sagas of the old Vikings, essentially a seafaring race, offered many suggestions for appropriate decorations. Mrs. James chose William Morris's translation of the "Volsunga Saga" as the motif for the embellishments of the yacht. The three large panels show, first, Sigurd, the Volsung, drawing the sword from the house tree, the Braudstock, where it had been placed by the god Odin, with the promise that whoever had the power to remove it should become possessed of his own godlike strength and wisdom. Many had tried in vain, among them Segeir, a neighboring ruler, young and powerful, who is shown sitting beside the old king. Bitterly disappointed, he offers to buy the sword from Sigurd, but is repulsed with scorn. He then asks the old king for the hand of his daughter, Signy. In order to pacify him the king consents, believing himself so powerful that Segeir will not dare to be treacherous. The next panel shows her embarking with him for her new home. She goes most reluctantly, having a premonition of ill fortune. Her worst fears are realized; for having taken away as many of the king's followers as possible, Segeir kills them all. The gradual downfall of the Volsungs follows, and when they are finally reduced to a mere handful, King Gunnar musters them all, sails away with his entire fleet and is never heard of again. The three smaller panels show the home life of the Volsungs. The thingvalla, or court of justice, which was always held in the open air; the hunter; and the fishermen drawing in their boats while the fish hang drying and a woman in the foreground sits mending a sail.

Between the portholes small panels are introduced, showing the *Coronet* and the *Aloha I*, formerly owned by Mr. James, and a third panel on which is the *Halj Moon*.

The stairway shows on the four newel posts and rails the mythological serpents so characteristic of the Norse decorations, with their interlacing bodies and curious, grotesque heads. The posts are sur-

mounted with balls on which are carved the map of the world as it was known in those days. Built-in seats in the corners of the saloon also show the interlacing serpent forms, as do the bronze grilles screening the electric lights. The frieze, composed of carved panels alternating with these grilles, shows the history of water craft, beginning with the ark and ending with the *Lusitania*. The designs for the pictorial panels were made by Mr. Otto Wigand in collaboration with Mr. Von Rydingsvärd, who is also making the furniture for the saloon in the same style. All of the hangings and upholstery are also being woven in the old Norse designs by Mme. Anna Ernberg, of Brooklyn.

Mr. Von Rydingsvärd was educated as a decorative sculptor in the Teckniska Skolan, of Stockholm, and served a strenuous Old-World apprenticeship of six years before coming to this country. After working here for three years on conventional architectural decoration, which he found little to his liking, he opened a studio of his own, where he has since taught and worked along original lines, doing much to raise the standard of his craft. For some years he was a director at Teachers College, Columbia University, and also taught in the Rhode Island School of Design and many other schools.



*Decoration for Commodore James's Yacht, "Aloha II"*

THINGVALLA  
OR THE COURT OF JUSTICE

BY KARL VON  
RYDINGSVÄRD

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