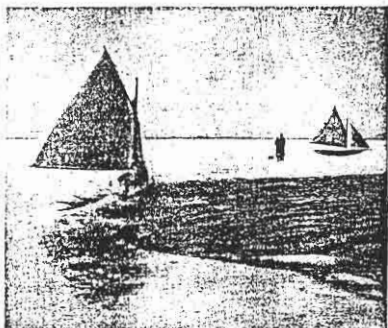


## SCOOTERING

Photographs by the author

ONE of the results of the long-continued cold of the last two winters has been the development of the rare sport of scootering. The south side of Long Island is famous for its automobiles in summer. The automobile of the winter is the scooter. Taking a gunning "punty" and fitting it with sails, the local sportsmen developed a craft that two men can carry on land, and in which they can scorch at breathless speed whenever there is ice, for a scooter is only a tiny flat-bottomed sloop, bearing a long runner on each side of her keel. For \$50 one may obtain a complete craft and enjoy the freedom of a roadbed stretching from horizon to horizon, with no speed restrictions except the caprice of the wind. One travels at a speed of thirty miles an hour at no cost for maintenance, and without fear of breakdown, conflagration or constable.

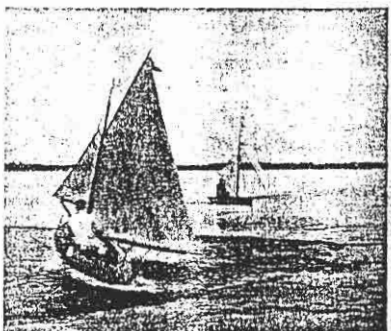
Owing to the length of the runners a scooter will surmount any obstacle over which the bowsprit of the boat can project. Cracks and hummocks,



Sailing from ice into open water

those terrors of the ice-boat devotee, are but pleasant surprises that add zest to the sail. Open water, too, is easily crossed, but, owing to the flatness of the craft and to the lack of a centreboard and rudder, the boat cannot be held true to her course for more than a few yards of open water. But with a beam wind and a good start the scooter will leap into a stretch of clear water, cross it with a rush like a "shoot-the-chutes" car, and gracefully regain the ice on the opposite side to continue her course without interruption. No other sport, unless it be the hypothetical one of flying, offers such varied excitement. This automobile of the ice is almost independent of the condition of the ice. Snow and slush are the only things that stop it. After a frozen rain storm scooters have sailed up the village streets.

The great point in favor of the scooter is its safety. The implements carried on a sail are simply an oar for paddling through open water

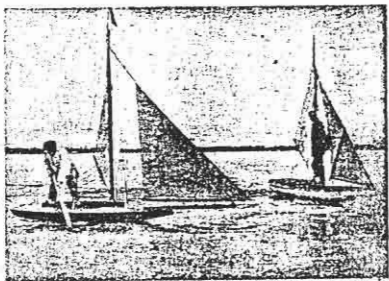


"Scootering" at high speed through open water

and an ice hook for pulling the craft out upon the ice should its speed in the water not be sufficient to enable it to regain the ice. With these helps one is prepared for any emergency that is liable to happen, and the only accident that is at all likely to disable the boat is staving in her planking by reckless driving over extremely rough ice. With over a hundred scooters out in all kinds of weather the only serious accident during all the past winter

has been a pair of sprained ankles, resulting from careless driving over huge cakes of ice.

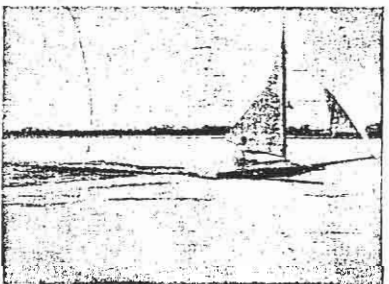
Organized scooter racing has been a weekly and even tri-weekly occurrence at Bellport, Patchogue and Sayville, and no less than five clubs of scooter enthusiasts have been formed. So far no official time has been taken, but a speed of a mile in a little over two minutes has been maintained over a triangular course of twenty miles. Some attempt has been made to classify scooters



Pulling the scooter from open water to solid ice by means of an ice hook

according to their size—those over sixteen feet and those under—but in actual racing the smaller craft is as likely to win as the larger one. In one race the class of smaller boats finished ahead of the class of larger ones.

If the coming winter is at all cold the ice on the Great South Bay will be covered with a white-winged flock of scooters. The ice boat is now a rarity, and in its place the bay men use small scooters for pleasure, and larger ones, carrying a ton or more, to transport their catches of fish and oysters. Through the quick and certain transportation of the scooter a great and growing industry



A scooter emerging at high speed from open water

of fishing through the ice for flatfish has been fostered.

Every good winter's day sees an army of well-wrapped men and women enjoying a spin as they would a sleighride. On a long stretch of clear ice they see no trees or telegraph poles gliding swiftly backward, and so they do not notice the speed, which would be terrifying on land. Within less time than it takes to hoist a sail in summer they have crossed the bay and are toasting their toes by the hearth of the life-saving house on the beach six miles away from home.

FRANK OVERTON.