

A photograph of a sailboat's deck at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow over the water. The boat's mast and rigging are visible, and a person's feet are seen in the foreground, resting on the deck. The overall scene is peaceful and serene.

**JOHN  
MACGREGOR**

***THE VOYAGE  
ALONE  
IN THE YAWL  
"ROB ROY"***

**John MacGregor**

# **The Voyage Alone in the Yawl "Rob Roy"**

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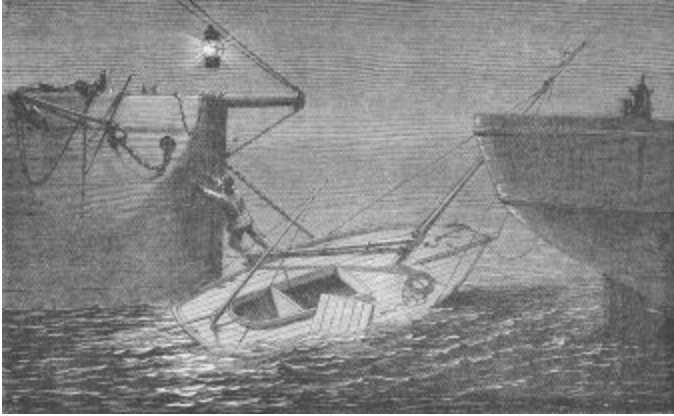
ROYAL NAVY TRAINING SHIPS FOR BOYS.

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## **PREFACE.**

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In the earlier part of this voyage, and where it was most wished for, along the dangerous coast of France, fine weather came.

Next there was an amphibious interlude to the Paris Exhibition, while the Rob Roy sailed inland.

Thence her course over the sea brought the yawl across the broad Channel (100 miles) to Cowes and its Regattas, and to rough water in dark nights of thunder, until once more in the Thames and up the Medway she was under bright skies again.

Cooking and sleeping on board, the writer performed the whole journey without any companion; and perhaps this log of the voyage will show that it was not only delightful to the lone sailor, but useful to others.

BLACKHEATH, KENT,  
*May, 1880.*

The Author's profits from the preceding Editions were devoted to Prizes for Boys in the following Training Ships:—

The 'CHICHESTER' in the *Thames*.

The 'ARETHUSA' in the *Thames*.

The 'CUMBERLAND,' in the *Clyde*.

The 'INDEFATIGABLE,' in the *Mersey*.

The 'HAVANNAH,' in the *Severn*.

The profits will again be devoted to similar Prizes as explained in the Appendix.

# CHAPTER I.

## Table of Contents

Project—On the stocks—Profile—Afloat alone—Smart lads—Swinging—Anchors—Happy boys—Sea reach—Good looks—Peep below—Important trifles—In the well—Chart—Watch on deck—Eating an egg—Storm sail.

It was a strange and pleasant life for me all the summer, sailing entirely alone by sea and river fifteen hundred miles, and with its toils, perils, and adventures heartily enjoyed.

The two preceding summers I had paddled alone in an oak canoe, first through central Europe, and next over Norway and Sweden; but though both of these voyages were delightful, they had still the drawback, that progress was mainly dependent on muscular effort, that food must be had from shore, and that I could not sleep on the water.

In devising plans to make the pleasure of a voyage complete then, many cogitations were had in the winter, and these resulted in a beautiful little sailing-boat; and once afloat in this, the water was my road, my home, my very world, for a long and splendid summer.

The perfect success of these three voyages has been due mainly to the careful preparation for them in the minute details which are too often neglected. To take pains about these is a pleasure to a man with a boating mind, but it is also a positive necessity if he would ensure success; nor can we wonder at the fate of some who get swamped, smashed, stove-in, or turned over, when we see them go adrift in a craft which had been huddled into being by some builder ignorant of what is wanted for the sailor traveller, and is

launched on unknown waters without due preparation for what may come.

I resolved to have a thoroughly good sailing-boat—the largest that could be well managed in rough weather by one strong man, and with every bolt, cleat, sheave, and rope well-considered in relation to the questions: How will this work in a squall?—on a rock?—in the dark?—or in a rushing tide?—a crowded lock; not to say in a storm?

The internal arrangements of my boat having been fully settled with the advantage of the canoe experiences, the yacht itself was designed by Mr. John White, of Cowes—and who could do it better? She was to be first *safe*, next *comfortable*, and then *fast*. If, indeed, you have two men aboard, one to pick up the other when he falls over, then you may put the last of the above three qualities first, but not prudently when there is only one man to do the whole.

The Rob Roy was built by Messrs. Forrestt, of Limehouse, the builders for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, and so she is a lifeboat to begin with. Knowing how much I might have to depend on oars now and then, my inclination was to limit her length to about 18 ft., but Mr. White said that 21 ft. would “take care of herself in a squall.” Therefore that length was agreed upon, and the decision was never regretted; still I should by no means advise any increase of these dimensions.

One great advantage of the larger size, was that it enabled me to carry in the cabin of my yawl, another boat, a little dingey [3] or punt, to go ashore by, to take exercise in, and to use for refuge in last resource if shipwrecked, for this dingey also I determined should be a lifeboat, and yet only



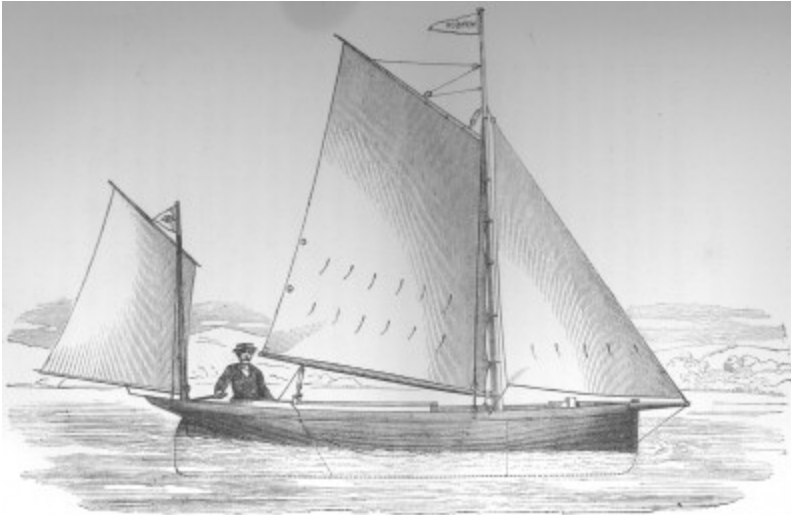
eight feet long. The childhood of this little boat was somewhat unhappy, and as she grew into shape she was quizzed unmercifully, and the people shook their heads very wisely, as they did at the first Rob Roy canoe. Now that we can reckon about three thousand of such canoes, and now that this little dingey has proved a complete success and an unspeakable convenience, the laugh may be forgotten. However, ridicule of new things often does good if it begets caution in changes, and stimulates improvement. Good things get even benefit from ridicule, which may shake off the plaster and paint, though it will not shiver the stone.

Thoroughly to enjoy a cruise with only two such dumb companions as have been described, it is of importance that the man who is to be with them should also be adapted for his place. He must have good health and good spirits, and a passion for the sea. He must learn to rise, eat, drink, and sleep, as the water or winds decree, and not his watch. He must have wits to regard at once the tide, breeze, waves, chart, buoys, and lights; also the sails, pilot-book, and compass; and more than all, to scan the passing vessels, and to cook, and eat, and drink in the midst of all. With such pressing and varied occupations, he has no time to feel "lonely," and indeed, he passes fewer hours in the week alone than many a busy man in chambers. Of all the people I have met with who have travelled on land or sea alone, not one has told me it was "lonely," though some who have never tried the plan as a change upon life in a crowd, may fear its unknown pleasures. As for myself, on this voyage I could scarcely "get a moment to myself," and there was always an accumulation of things to be done, or read, or

thought over, when a vacant half-hour could be had. The man who will feel true loneliness, is he who has one sailor with him, or a "pleasant companion" soon pumped dry; for he has isolation without freedom all day (and night too), and a tight cramp on the mind. With a dozen kindred spirits in a yacht, indeed, it is another matter; then you have freedom and company, and (if you are not the owner) you are not slaves of the skipper, but still you are *sailed* and *carried*, as passive travellers, and perhaps after all you had better be in a big steamer at once—the Cunard's or the P. and O., with a hundred passengers—real life and endless variety. However, each man to his taste; it is not easy to judge for others, but let us hope, that after listening to this log of a voyage alone, you will not call it "lonely."

The Rob Roy is a yawl-rig, so as to place the sailor between the sails for "handiness." She is double-skinned to make her staunch and dry below, and she is full-decked to keep out the sea above. She has an iron keel and kelson to resist a bump on rocks, and with four water-tight compartments to limit its effects if once stove in. Her cabin is comfortable to sleep in, but only as arranged when anchored for the purpose:—sleep at sea is forbidden to her crew. Her internal arrangements for cooking, reading, writing, provisions, stores, and cargo, are quite different from those of any other yacht; all of them are specially devised, and all well done; and now on the 7th of June, at 3 P.M., she is hastily launched, her ton and a half of pig-iron is put on board for ballast, the luggage and luxuries for a three months' voyage are loaded in, her masts are stepped, the sails are bent, the flags unfold to the breeze, the line to

shore is slipped, and we are sailing from Woolwich, never to have any person aboard in her progress but the captain, until she returns to the builders' yard.



Often as a boy I had thought of the pleasure of being one's own master in one's own boat; but the reality far exceeded the imagination of it, and it was not a transient pleasure. Next day it was stronger, and so to the end, until at last, only duty forced me reluctantly from my floating freehold to another home founded on London clay, sternly immovable, and with the quarter's rent to pay.

At Erith then the Royal Canoe Club held its first sailing match, when five little paddling craft set up their bamboo masts and pure white sails, and scudded along in a rattling breeze, and twice crossed the Thames. They were so closely matched that the winner was only by a few seconds first. Then a Club dinner toasted the prizemen, and "farewell," "bon voyage" to the captain, who retired on board for the first sleep in his yawl.

The Sunday service on board the Training-ship 'Worcester,' at Erith, is a sight to see and to remember. The bell rings and boats arrive, some of them with ladies. Here

in the 'tween decks, with airy ports open, and glancing water seen through them, are 100 fresh-cheeked manly boys, the future captains of Taepings and Ariels, and as fine specimens of the gentleman sailor-lad as any Englishman would wish to see. Such neatness and order without nonsense or prim awe. Health and brightness of boyhood, with seamen's smartness and silence: I hope they do not get too much trigonometry. However, for the past week they have been skurrying up aloft "to learn the ropes," skylarking among the rigging for play, and rowing and cricketing to expand muscle and limb; and now on the day of rest they sing beautifully to the well-played harmonium, then quietly listen to the clergyman of the "Thames Mission," who has been rowed down here from his floating church, anchored then in another bay of his liquid parish, but now removed entirely.

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution had most kindly presented to the Rob Roy one of its best lifeboat compasses. The card of this compass floats in a mixture of spirits, so as to steady its oscillations in a boat, and a deft-like lamp alongside will light it up for use by night. Only a sailor knows the peculiar feeling of regard and mystery with which the compass of his craft becomes invested, the companion in past or unknown future perils, his trusty guide over the wide waste of waters and through the night's long blackness.

Having so much iron on board, and so near this wondrous delicate needle, I determined to have the boat "swung" at Greenhithe, where the slack tide allows the largest vessels conveniently to adjust their compasses. This operation consumed a whole day, and a day sufficed for the Russian

steamer alongside; but then the time was well bestowed,—it was as important to me to steer the Rob Roy straight as it could be to any Muscovite that he should sail rightly in his ship of unpronounceable name. [10]

While the compass was thus made perfect for use at one end of the boat, her anchors occupied my attention at the other.

It was necessary to carry an anchor heavy enough to hold well in strong tides, in bad weather, and through the long nights, so that I could sleep then without anxiety. On the other hand, the anchor must be also light enough to be weighed and stowed by one man, and this too in that precious twenty seconds of time, when in weighing anchor, the boat, already loosed from the ground but not yet got hold of by the sails, is swept bodily away by the tide, and faces look cross from yachts around, being sure you will collide, as a lubber is bound to do.

After considering the matter of anchors a long time, and poising too the various opinions of numerous advisers, the Rob Roy was fitted with a 50-lb. galvanized Trotman anchor and 30 fathoms of chain, and also with a 20-lb. Trotman and a hemp cable.

The operation of anchoring in a new place and that of weighing anchor are certainly among the most testing and risky in a voyage like this, where the circumstances are quite new on each occasion, and where all has to be done by one man.

You sail into a port where in less than a minute you must apprehend by one panoramic glance the positions of twenty vessels, the run of the tide, and set of the wind, and depth

of the water; and this not only as these are then existing, but in imagination, how they will be six hours hence, when the wind has veered, the tide has changed, and the vessels have swung round, or will need room to move away, or new ones will have arrived.

These being the *data*, you have instantly to fix on a spot where there will be water enough to float your craft all night, and yet not so deep as to give extra work next morning; a berth, too, which you can reach as at present sailing, and from which you can start again to-morrow; one where there are no moorings of absent vessels to foul your anchor, and where the wind will not blow right into your sleeping cabin when the moonlight chills, and where the dust will not blind you from this lime barge, or the blacks begrime you from that coal brig as you spread the yellow butter on your morning tartine.

The interest felt in doing this feat well is increased by seeing how watchfully those who are already berthed will eye the stranger, often speaking by their looks, and always feeling "hope he won't come too near *me*;" while the penalty on failure in the proceeding is heavy and sharp, a smash of your spars, a hole in your side, or a sleepless night, or an hour of cable-clearing to-morrow, or all of them; and certainly in addition, the objurgations of every yachtsman within the threatened circle.

Undoubtedly the most unpleasant result of bad management is to have damaged any other man's boat; and I cannot but mention with the greatest satisfaction, that after so often working my anchors—at least two hundred times—and so many days of sailing in crowded ports and

rivers, on no one occasion did the Rob Roy even brush the paint off any other vessel.

Not far from my yawl there was moored a fine old frigate, useless now for war, but invaluable for peace—the “‘Chichester’ Training-ship for homeless boys of London.” It is for a class of lads utterly different from those on the ‘Worcester,’ but they are English boys still, and every Englishman ought to do something for English boys, if he cares for the present or the future of England.

Pale and squalid, thin, heartless, and homeless, they were; but now, ruddy in the river breeze, neat and clean, alert with energy, happy in their wooden home, with a kind captain and smart officers to teach them, life and stir around, fair prospects ahead, and a British seaman’s honest livelihood to be earned instead of the miserable puling beggardom of the streets, or the horrid company of the prison cell; which, that they should lie in the path of any child of our land, adrift on the rough tide of time at ten years old, is a glaring shame to the millions of sovereigns in bankers’ books, and we shall have to answer heavily if we let it be thus still longer. [14]

The burgee flag of the Canoe Club flew always (white with our paddle across  $\text{O C}$  in cipher) and another white flag on the mizen-mast had the yawl’s name inscribed. Six other gay colours were used as occasion required. These all being hoisted on a fine bright day, and my voyage really begun, the ‘Chichester’ lads ‘boyed’ the rigging, and gave three ringing cheers as they shouted, “Take these to France, sir!” and the frigate dipped her ensign in salute, my flag

lieutenant smartly responding to the compliment as we bade "good-bye."

The Thames to seaward looks different to me every time I float on its noble flood. I have seen it from on board steamers large and small, from an Indiaman's deck, the gunwale of a cutter, and the poop of an ironclad, as well as from rowboat and canoe, and have penetrated almost every nook and cranny on the water, some of them a dozen times, yet always it is new to see.

Thames river life is a separate world from the land life in houses. The day begins on the water full an hour before sunrise. Cheery voices and hearty faces greet you, and there seems to be no maimed, or sick, or poor. From the simple fact that you are on the river, there is a brotherhood with every sailor. The *mode* is supple as the water, not like the stiff fashion of the land. Ships and shipmen soon become the "people." The other folks on shore are, to be sure, pretty numerous, but then they are ashore. Undoubtedly they are useful to provide for us who are afloat the butter, eggs, and bread they do certainly produce; and we gaze pleasantly on their grassy lawns and bushy trees, and can hear the lark singing on high, and peacocks screaming, and all are very pretty, and we are bound to try to sympathize with people thus pinned to the soil, while we are free in the fine fresh breeze, and glide on the bounding wave. *N.B.*—These very people are all the while regarding *us* with humane pity, as the "poor fellows in that little ship there, cabined, cribbed, confined." Perhaps it is well for all of us that the stand-point of each, be it ever so bleak, becomes to him the centre of creation.



As the country lane has charms for the botanist which will sadly delay one in a summer stroll with such a companion, so to the nautical mind every reach on a full river has a constant flow of incidents quite unnoticed by the landsmen. In the crowd of ships around us, no two are quite the same even to look at, nor are they doing the same thing, and there are hundreds passing. What a feast for the eye that hath an appetite! The clink of an anchor-chain, the “Yo-ho!” of a well-timed crew, the flapping of huge sails—I love all these sounds, yes, even the shrill squeal of a pulley thrills my ear with pleasure, and grateful to my nostrils is the odour of tar.

Meanwhile we are sailing on to Sheerness; and no wonder that the Rob Roy fixes many a sailor’s eye, for the bright sun shines on her new white sails, and her brilliant-coloured flags flutter gladly in the wind as the waves glance and play about her polished mahogany sides, the last and least addition to the yacht fleet of England.

Rounding Garrison Point, at the mouth of the Medway, our anchor is dropped alongside the yacht ‘Whisper,’ where the kind hospitality to the Rob Roy from English, French, and Belgian, at once began, and it ceased only at the end of my voyage.

After our tea and strawberries, and ladies’ chat (pleasant ashore and ten times more afloat), the blue-jackets’ band on board the Guard-ship gives music, and the moon gives light, and around are the huge old war-hulks, beautiful, though bygone, and all at rest, with a newer, uglier frigate, that has no poetry in her look, but could speak forth loudly, no doubt,

with a very heavy broadside, for her thundering salute made all the windows shudder as she steamed in gallantly.

The tide of visitors to my yawl began at Sheerness. Among them I caught a boy and made him grease the mast. His friends were so pleased with their visit, that when the Rob Roy came there again months afterwards, they brought me a present of fresh mussels, highly to be esteemed by those who like to eat them—everybody does not; but then was it not grateful to give them thus? and is not gratitude a precious and rare gift to receive?

The internal arrangements of the Rob Roy yawl are certainly peculiar, for they were designed for a unique purpose, and as there is no description (at least that I can find) of a yacht specially made for one-man voyages, and proved to be efficient during so long a sail, it may be useful here to describe the inside of the Rob Roy. Safety was the first point to be attained, as we have already mentioned, and this was provided for by her breadth of beam (seven feet), her strongly bolted iron keelson, her water-tight compartments, and her double skin, the outer one being of polished Honduras mahogany, and the inner of yellow pine, with canvas between them; also by her strong, firm deck, her undersized masts and sails, and her lifeboat dingey.

Next we had to consider the capacity for comfort; not for the sake of any luxurious ease which could be expected, but so as to take proper means to preserve health, maintain good spirits, and to economize the energy which would undoubtedly be largely taxed in downright physical muscular work, and which now would be liable any day to

yield if overwrought by long-continued anxiety, wakefulness, and exertion.

For this purpose the actual labour bestowed upon maintaining the outward forms of a (partially) civilized life must be a minimum, and the action required in times of risk or danger must be as little encumbered as possible; and as every arrangement came frequently under review, and improvements were well considered in meditative hours, and many were put in practice during a stay at Cowes, where the very best workmen were at command, it may not unreasonably be asserted that for a solitary sailor's yacht the cabin of the Rob Roy is at least a very good specimen of the most recent model, and perhaps the best that has been devised as a basis for the next advance.

Although at present I have no radical improvements to suggest upon the general plan, it is, of course, open to the refining experience of others; and I do not apologize for speaking of the fittings of a little boat as if they were mere trifles because it held only *one* man, when they may in any degree be useful to yachts of larger size, and thus to that noble fleet of roaming craft which renew the nerve and energy of so many Englishmen by a manly and healthful enterprise, opening a whole new element of nature, and nursing a host of loyal seamen to defend our shores.

From the sketch given at p. 23, and one partly in section at p. 41, it will be understood that the Rob Roy is fully decked all over except an open well near the stern which is three feet square, and about the same in depth; a strong combing surrounds both the well and the main hatchway as a protection in the sea. [20] This well or after compartment

is separated from the next compartment by a strong bulkhead, sloping forward (p. 7) to give all the room possible for stretching one's limbs and a change of posture, and also so as to form a comfortable sloping back inside in the cabin, while it supports a large soft pillow, the whole being used as a sofa to recline on while reading or writing, or finally being converted into a bolster by lowering it when the crew is piped to bed for the night, or at least such hours of it as the tide and wind may allow for sleep.

Fronting the seat the binnacle hangs with its tender thrilling compass inside, well protected by thick plate glass, and the lamp, which is always ready to be lighted up should darkness need it; for experience has showed me only too plainly that it will not do to postpone any preparation for night, or wind, or hunger, or shoal water, but that you should be always quite prepared for them all.

Above the binnacle is the chart; that is to say, a rectangular piece cut out from the larger sheet, and containing all that will be sailed in a day. The other parts, too, of the chart ought to be kept where they are accessible for ready reference.

Rain or the dashing of a wave or two soon softens the paper of the chart, and on one occasion it was so nearly melted away in this manner in a rough sea that I had to learn its lines and figures quickly off by heart, and trust to memory for the rest of the day.

To prevent another time such an awkward state of things, I made a frame with a glass front and movable back, and this allowed each portion of the chart to be placed inside, and to be well protected, an excellent arrangement when

your hands are as wet as all other things around, and the ordinary chart would be soaked in five minutes.

The chart frame is also detachable from its place, as it is sometimes necessary to hold it near a lamp at night so as to read the soundings. To aid still further to decipher the chart at night and in dull afternoons, there is a small mounted lens in a leather loop alongside, which has often to be used. The compass [22] itself is so placed that you can see it well while either sitting or standing up, or when lying at full length on the deck, with the back against a pillow propped by the mizen mast, the blight sun or moon overhead, and a turn or two of the mainsheet cast about your body to keep the sleepy steersman from rolling over into the water, as shown next page.



This somewhat effeminate but decidedly comfortable attitude in which to keep one's watch on deck, was not invented until farther on in the cruise; and it seems odd that I should so long have continued to sit upright for hours together (wriggling only a little at the constraint) for many a fine day before adopting for a change so obvious a posture, and thus effectually postponing any sense of weariness even in sailing for a whole day and night. Still it is only for

light airs, gentle waves, or in deep rivers, or with long runs on the same tack, that the captain may do his duty while he lies on a sofa. In fresh breezes and rolling seas, or in beating to windward with frequent boards, such indulgence is soon cut short; and indeed the muscles and energies of the sailor are so braced up by the lively motion and refreshing blasts when there is plenty of wind, that no *ennui* can come; and there is quite enough play of limb and change of position caused by the working of the ship, while he soon learns by practice to steer by the action of any part of his body from head to feet being in contact with the tiller, that delicate and true sensorium of a boat to which all feeling is conveyed.

Sometimes I would sit low and out of sight, but with a glance now and then at the compass, while the tiller pressed against my neck. At others I would lie prone on the hatchway with my head upon both hands, and my elbows on the deck, and my foot on the tiller; while, again, every day it was necessary to cook and eat, all the time steering; the most difficult operation of all being to eat a boiled egg comfortably under these conditions, because there is the egg and the spoon, each in a hand, and the salt and the bread, each liable to be capsized with a direful result.

Uncovered and handy for instant use there lies a sharp axe at the bottom of the well, by which any rope may be cut, and a blow may be given to the forelock of an anchor or other refractory point needing instant correction, and near this again is the sounding lead, with its line wound on a stick like that of a boy's kite. I soon found that much the best way to tell the fathoms, especially at night, was to measure the

line as it was hauled in by opening my arms to the full stretch of one fathom between my hands.

In two large leather pockets fixed in the well, were sundry articles, such as a long knife, cords of various kinds, a foot measure of ivory (best to read off at night), and a good binocular glass by Steward in the Strand. [25]

Turning now to the left of the seat in the well, we open a door about a foot square, hinged so as to fall downwards and thus form a cook's "dresser;" and now the full extent is visible of our kitchen range, at p. 41, or in nautical tongue here is the caboose of the Rob Roy.

It is a zinc box with a frame holding a flat copper kettle, a pan in which to heat the tin of preserved meat for our dinner to-day, and the copper frying-pan in which three eggs will be cooked *sur le plât* for our breakfast to-morrow.

The invaluable Rob Roy lamp [26] is below this frame, and a spare lamp alongside—a fierce blast it has, and it will be needed if there is bad weather, for then sometimes as a heavy sea is coming the kitchen is hastily closed lest the waves should invade it, but the lamp may still be heard roaring away inside all the same. An iron enamelled plate and a duster complete the furniture of our little scullery, all the rest of the things we started with having been improved out of existence, for simplicity is the heart of invention as brevity is the soul of wit.

If we desire to get at the tubular wooden flag box that some gay colours may deck our mast in entering a new harbour, this will be found inside the space aft of the caboose; and again, by reaching the arm still further into the hollow behind our seat, it will grasp the *storm mizen*, a

strongly made triangular sail, to be used only in untoward hours, and for which we must prepare by lowering the lug mizen, and shifting the halyard, tack, and sheet. Then the Rob Roy, with her mainsail and jib reefed, will be under snug canvas, as seen at page 57.

But now it is bed-time, and the lecture on the furniture of the yawl may be finished some other day.



## CHAPTER II.

### Table of Contents

Sheerness—Governor—Trim—Earthquake—Upset—  
Wooden legs—On the Goodwin—Cuts and soars—Crossing  
the Straits—The ground at Boulogne—Night music—Sailors’  
maps—Ship’s papers—Weather—Toilette—Section.

Sheerness is on the whole a tolerable port to land at, that is, as long as you refrain from going ashore. The harbour is interesting and more lively than it appears at first sight, but the streets and shops are just the reverse.

The Rob Roy ran into this harbour seven or eight times during her cruise, and there was always “something going on.” The anchorage on the south of the pier is in mud of deep black colour, but not such good holding ground as it would seem to be, and then what comes up on the anchor runs like black paint upon your deck, and needs a good scrubbing to get rid of it from each palm of the anchor. Even after all seems to be cleared away thoroughly, there may be a piece only the size of a nut, but perverse enough to fasten upon the white creamy folds of your jib newly washed out, and then the inky stain will be an eyesore for days, until, for peace of mind, the sail must be scrubbed again. Trifles these are to the yachtsman who can leave all that to his crew, who sees only *results*, but when the captain alone is the crew, the realities of sea life must be endured as well as enjoyed, and yet surely he is the one to enjoy most keenly the luxury of a white spotless sail whose own hands have made it so.

If any sailor henceforth has me for his captain, and he has to “tidy up” my yacht, he may be sure of having a very considerate if not indulgent master—“Governor,” of course, I mean, for there are no “masters” any longer now, they are all promoted to the rank of “Governor.”

And the reason I should be considerate is that until you do it all yourself you cannot have any idea of the innumerable *minutiæ* to be attended to in the proper care of a yacht. Mine, indeed, was in miniature; but the number of little things was still great, though each little thing was more little. On the whole we should say that a yacht’s crew, even in port, have full employment for all their working hours if the hull, spars, sails, ropes, and boats, besides the cabin and stores, are always kept in that condition of order, neatness, cleanliness, readiness, and repair which ought to be little short of perfection when regarded with a critical eye.

In like manner as you drive out in a carriage and return, and the carriage and horses disappear into the stables for hours of careful work by the men who are there, so may the day’s sail in a yacht involve a whole series of operations on board afterwards. Inattention to these in the extreme can be observed in the boats of fishermen, and attention in the extreme in the perfect vessels of the Royal Squadron; but even a very reasonable amount of smartness requires a large expenditure of labour which will not be effectual if it be hurried, and which is, of course, worse than useless if it is done by inferior hands.

In perfect trim and “ship shape” now, we loosed from Sheerness, to continue the sail eastwards, and with a

leading breeze and a lovely morning. This part of the Thames is about the best conjunction of river and sea one could find, with land easily sighted on both sides, yet fine salt waves, porpoises, and other attributes of the sea, and buoys, and beacons, and light-ships to be attended to, and a definite line of course determined on and followed by compass. A gale here is not to be trifled with, though in fine weather you may pass it safely in a mere cockle-shell, and the last time I had sailed here alone it was in an open boat, just ten feet long inside. Still the whole day may be summed up now, as it was in the log of the Rob Roy, "Fine run to Margate;" the pleasures of it were just the same as so often afterwards were met, enjoyed, and thanked for, but which might be tedious to relate even once.

The harbour here dries bare at low tide, and as seventeen years had elapsed since we had sailed into it, this bad habit of the harbour was forgotten, but more years than that may pass before it will be forgotten again, for as evening came, and the water ebbd, and I reclined unharnessed in the cabin, reading intently, there suddenly came a rude bumping shove upwards as from below, and then another—the Rob Roy had grounded. Soon there was a swaying this way and that, as if yet undecided, and at length a positive heel over to *that*; the whole of my little world within being canted to half a right angle, and a ridiculous distortion of every single thing in my bedroom was the result. The humiliating sensation of being aground on hard unromantic mud is tempered by the ludicrous crooked appearance of the contents of your cabin and by the absurd sensation of sleeping in a corner with everything