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A YACHTSMAN'S HOLIDAYS

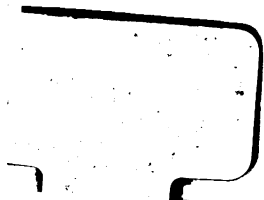


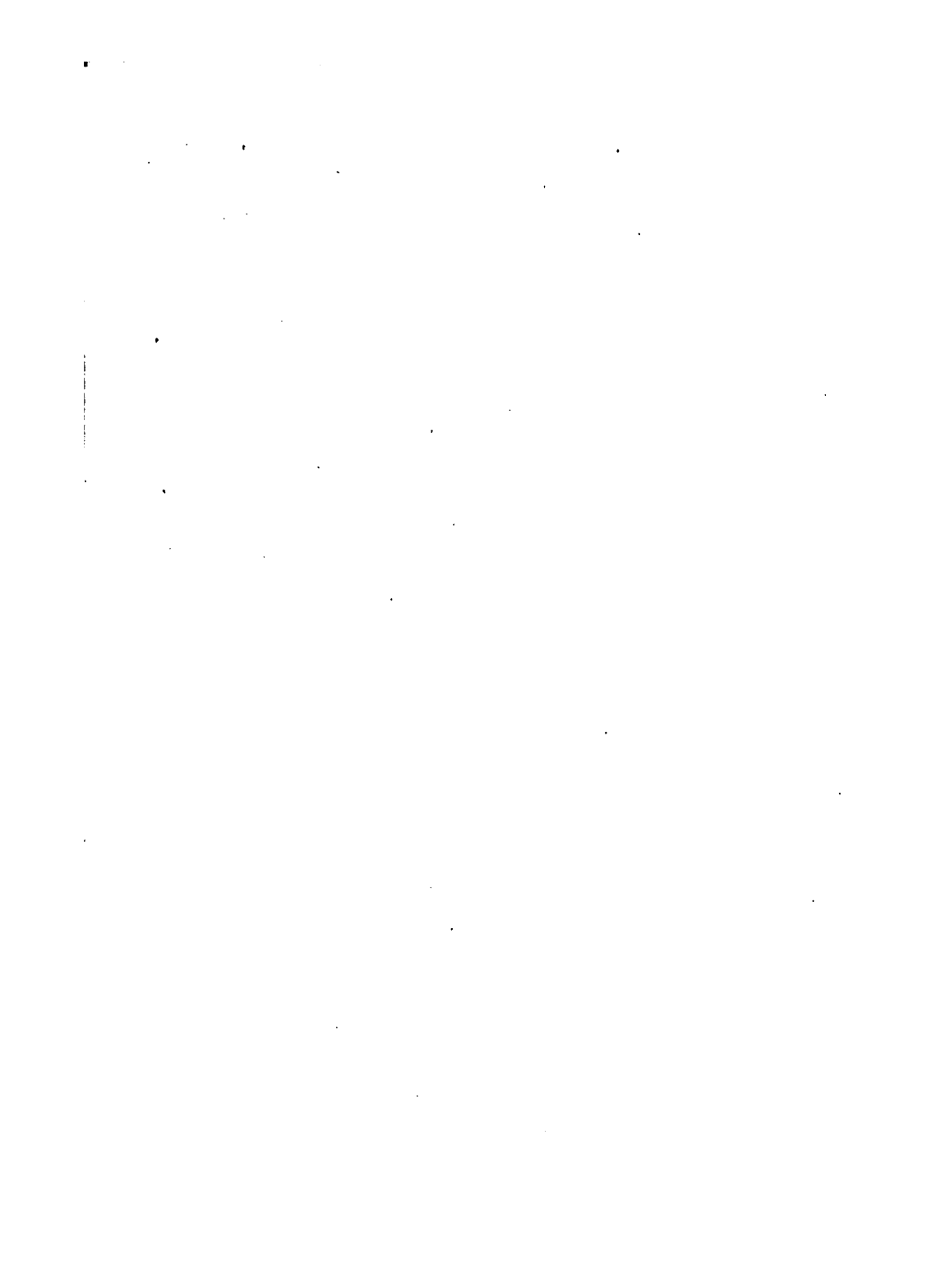
OR CRUISING

IN THE WEST HIGHLANDS

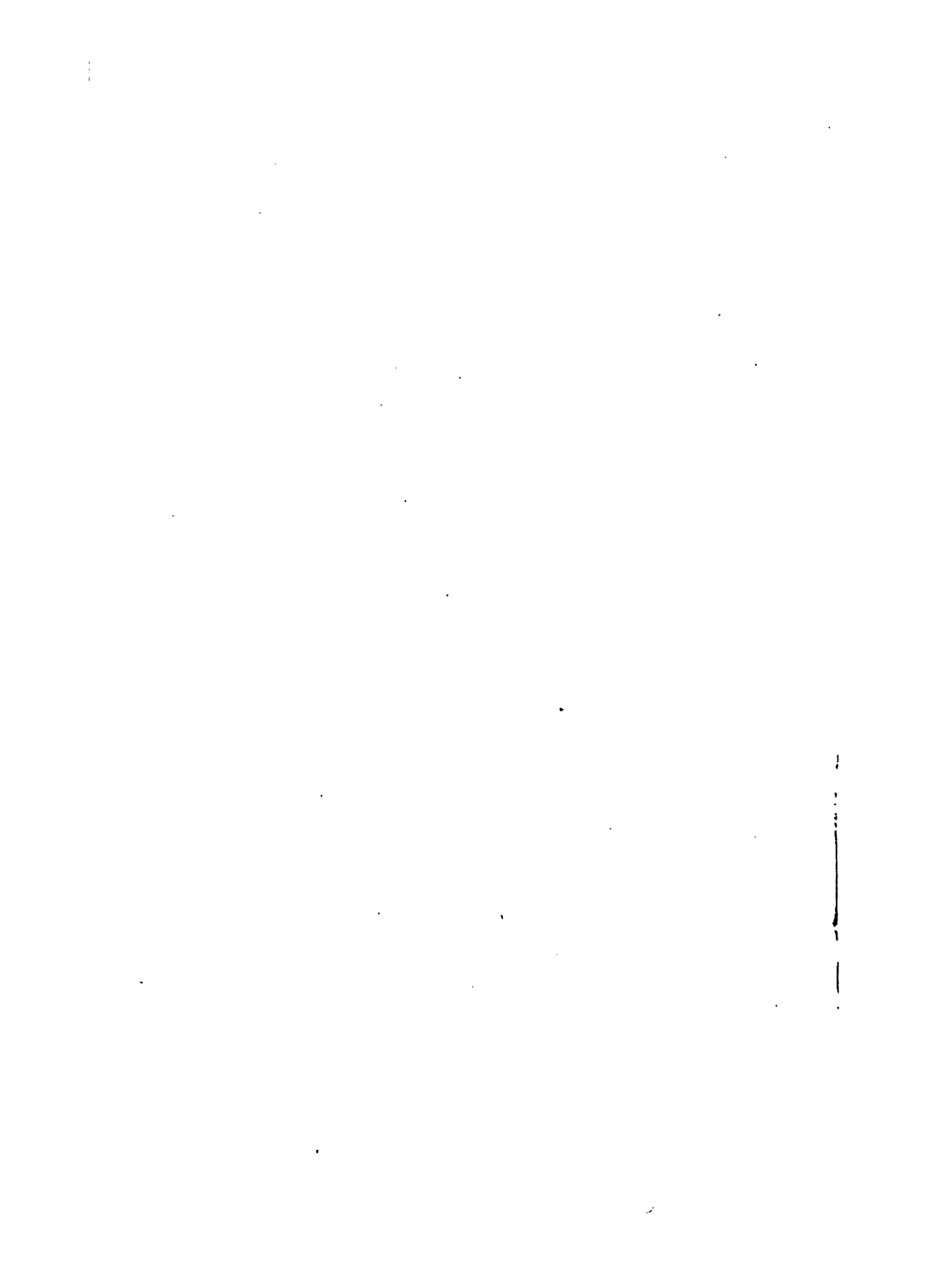


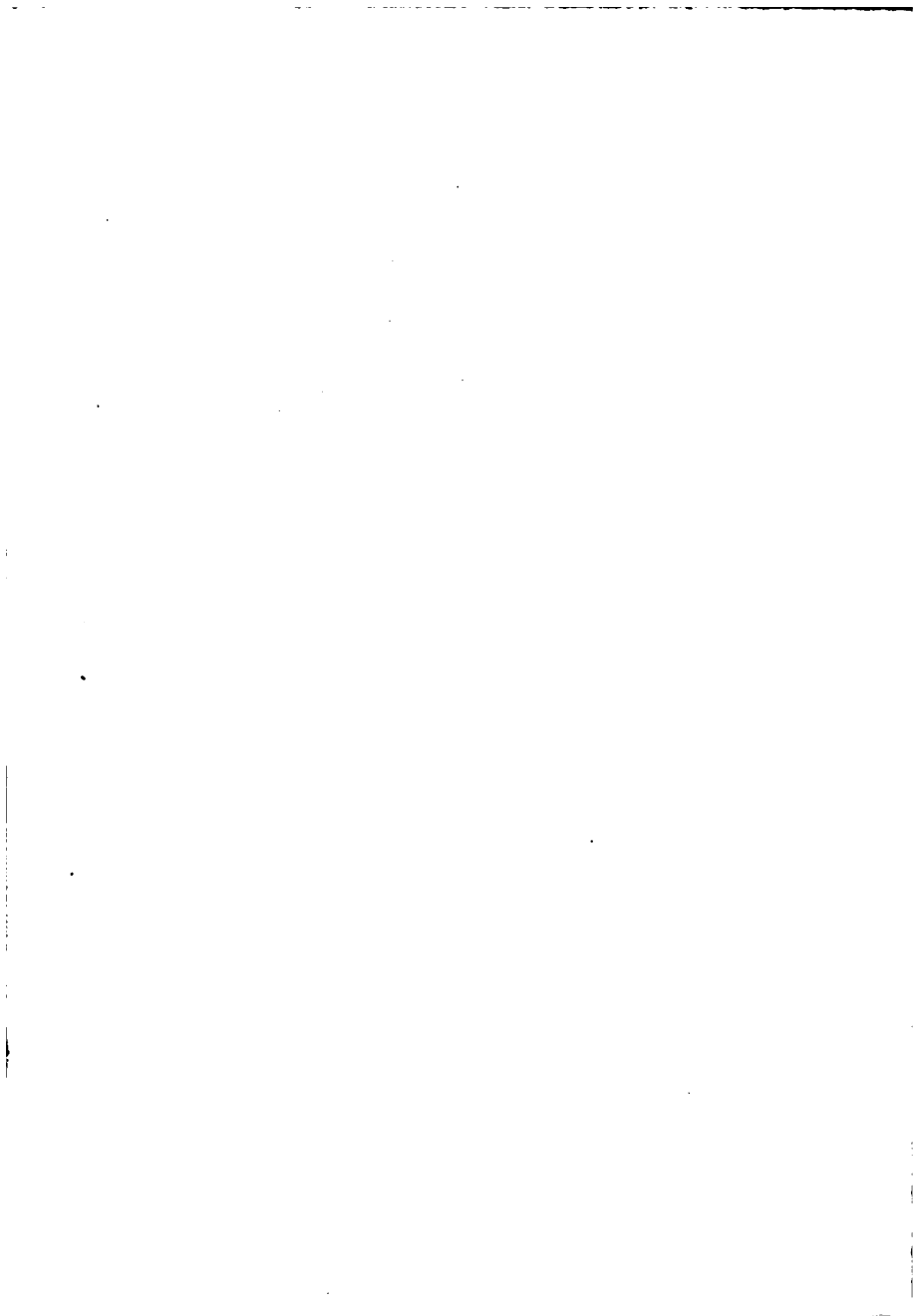
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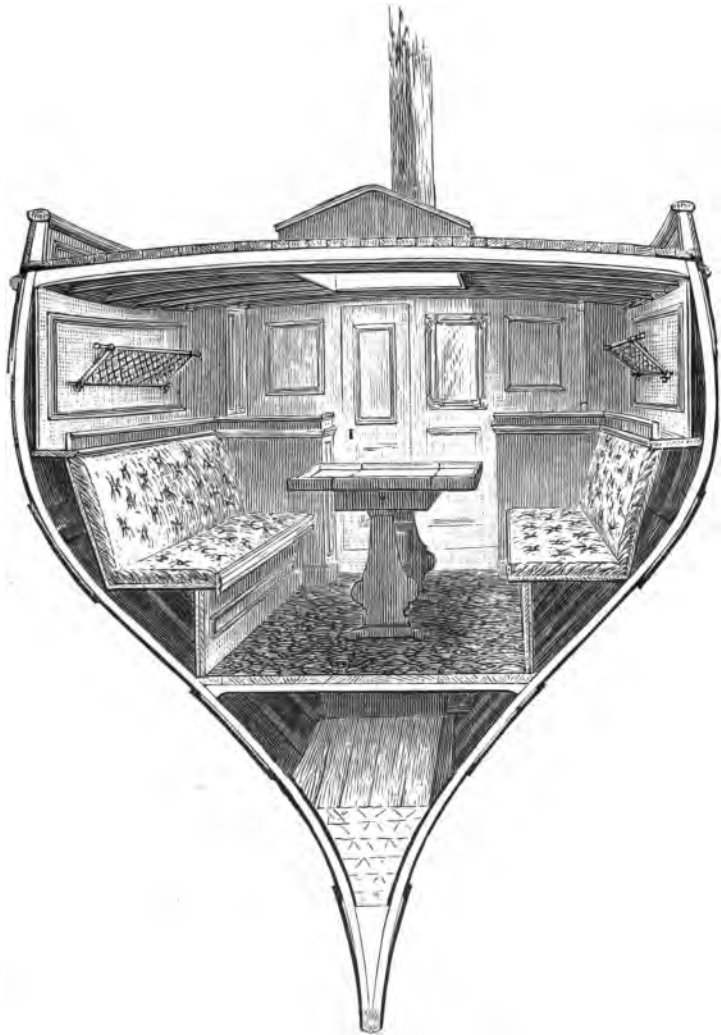




A YACHTSMAN'S HOLIDAYS.







CABIN OF THE "MERMAID."

A
YACHTSMAN'S HOLIDAYS

OR

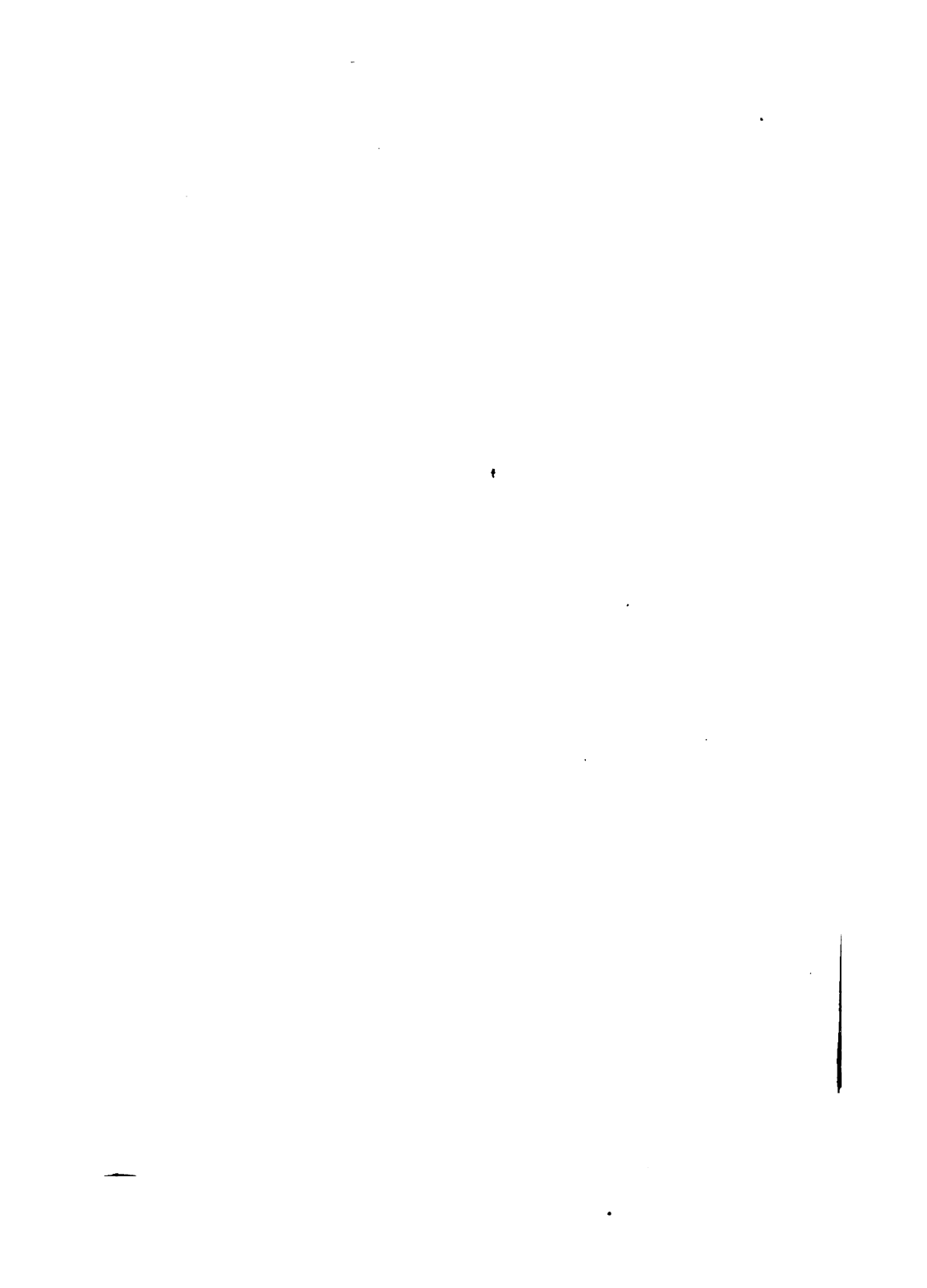
CRUISING IN THE WEST HIGHLANDS

BY THE "GOVERNOR"

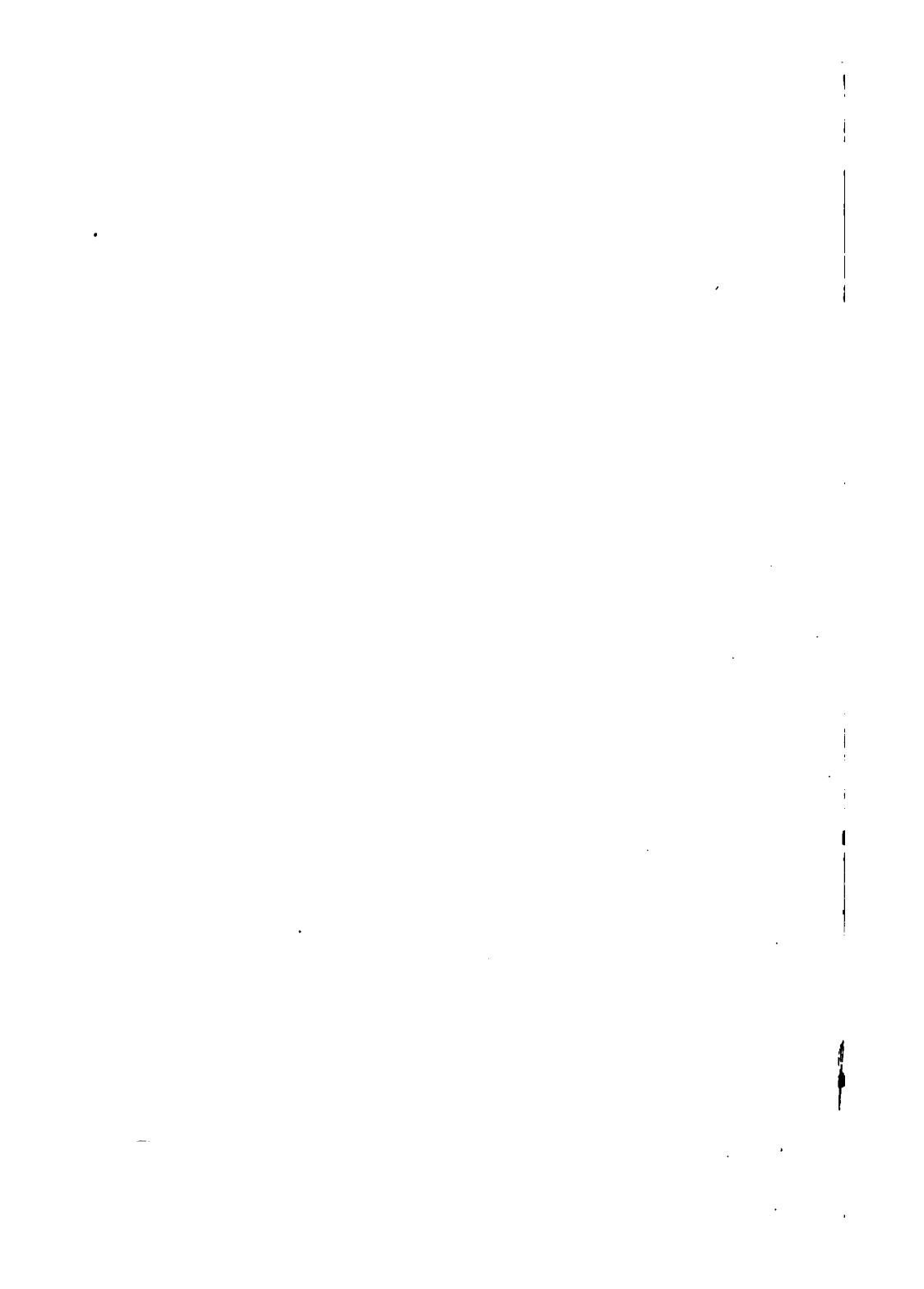


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1879

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TO
JOHN MacAUSLAND, ESQ.,
KIEKTONHILL,
DUMBARTONSHIRE,
THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED
BY
THE AUTHOR.



PREFACE.

THIS book, the work of an unskilled hand, aims only at interesting those who, like the writer, place yachting above all other pastimes, and who, for the love they bear to their favourite sport, will look with lenience on all shortcomings or inelegancies of literary style. A small part of it has already appeared in the pages of a well-known monthly, and the original sketch has been expanded into this volume at the suggestion of possibly too partial friends—not without misgivings as to the reception it may meet with at the hands of the impartial public.

It may chance that it shall come into the possession of some brother yachtsman who has hitherto made the Solent or the estuary of the Thames his cruising-ground, and that he may thereby be induced to extend his summer voyage to Scottish waters. I venture to think that that yachtsman will not be unthankful, and that he will blame me mostly for the too faint praise I have bestowed on the unrivalled scenery of our coasts.

Attempts at fine writing and elaborate word-

painting have been eschewed—the national destitution in the matter of humour is, I daresay, only too apparent; but I expect to be applauded for abstaining from increasing the bulk of the book by transcribing copious extracts from *Gazetteers*, *Legends of the Highlands*, and such like. I may therefore, if I choose, call it “a poor thing, sir, but mine own.”



PART I.
CRUISE OF THE "ILMA."





PART I.
CRUISE OF THE "ILMA."

CHAPTER I.

My country—Its scenery—Its climate—Its beverage—In praise of yachting—The "Ilma"—Proportions of yachts—Mr. Dixon Kemp's "Yacht Designing"—The tonnage rule—Lead ballast—*Revenons à nos moutons.*

EVER since Caledonia, stern and wild, was discovered and described by the late worthy Sheriff of Selkirkshire, it has continued to grow more and more in favour with the tourist in search of the picturesque, until it is now no contemptible rival to Switzerland itself—the European playground *par excellence*.

The scenery of that small portion of our island north of the Forth and Clyde is, for beauty and variety, not surpassed by that of any equal area as yet known and accessible to the holiday-maker; all kinds of landscapes, from the exquisite to the magnificent, being represented and repeated in endless succession within the compass of a few

days' journey. Locomotion is facile and inexpensive; hotels are comfortable, and for the most part reasonable in their charges, although now and then some cockney scribe publishes his indignation and his bill, setting forth how he was charged half-a-crown for a sandwich and a pint of Bass. It is admitted that an occasional Highland cateran disguised as a landlord does make rather much of the shortness of his season and his remoteness from Burton-upon-Trent; but, as a rule, the traveller can make tolerably good cheer at moderate cost.

The climate of Scotland, it has been said, is not all that is desirable; but he who is of a philosophic temperament finds comfort in its very uncertainty by reflecting that if we do fear sudden showers in fine weather, we can, on the other hand, be wonderfully hopeful when the weather is bad; and the happy individual who is endowed with artistic feelings recognizes in the frequent humidity the great agent in producing the glorious atmospheric effects visible nowhere else, the gorgeous sunsets, the tender tints on distant hillsides, the gloomy mist, and the roaring torrent. The one thing certain about Scottish weather is that it cannot be called monotonous, and that is a great matter; probably if the country had the climate of the Sinaitic desert its scenery would be quite as dismal.

So far as the effect on the health of occasional dampness (or, as it is called by the natives, "saft wather") is concerned, any anticipated evil may usually be averted by the judicious use of the not unpalatable wine of the country, diluted to the taste or capacity of the user. This beverage is as appropriate a concomitant of a humid climate as the soothing dock is of the irritating nettle, and the same beneficent Providence doubtless arranges the mutual juxtaposition in either case.

It is impossible to lay down absolute rules as to when this valuable therapeutic agent may be partaken of with advantage; but it may be suggested that about noon each day a moderate quantum should be served out with twice its bulk of water added.

Before dinner it will be found an admirable stimulant to the appetite, or, if that is already voracious, it will temper it to a gentle craving. During dinner it supplies the requisite fluid element of the meal; and after dinner, a modest sip undoubtedly assists digestion. Between meals it will rouse the flagging energies, and it is as certainly an excellent promoter of the feast of reason at the evening chat as it is the best possible nightcap.

Of course if the weather is very bad an extra nip may be found necessary; or if it is extremely hot, so as to make the drinking of unsophisticated

water dangerous, a modicum added to that otherwise insipid liquid will obviate the risk.

The part of Scotland at once the most pluvius and the most beautiful is, beyond question, the labyrinth of islands, lochs, and sounds extending from the Firth of Clyde to the Isle of Skye; at least such is the firm conviction of four friends who have for successive seasons spent their Midsummer holidays in various small craft which I—one of the four—have owned at different times.

For the viewing of that portion of the country to the best advantage there is no conveyance comparable with a yacht, be she large and luxurious or small and snug—at any rate we came to that opinion after some consideration. Each little cruise gave to the pastime new zest, and we separated each season resolved to renew and extend our explorations at the next opportunity, profiting by experience as we went on, and adding wrinkle to wrinkle with each little difficulty or *contretemps*.

The ingenious Mr. Buckle says ("History of Civilization," iii. 271), "every enjoyment by which no one is injured is innocent; and every innocent enjoyment is praiseworthy, because it assists in diffusing that spirit of content and of satisfaction which is favourable to the practice of benevolence towards others."

After all it is very faint praise of any enjoy-

ment to claim only for it that it injures no one; and if enjoyments with none but negative virtues are praiseworthy, à *fortiori* those pastimes which positively benefit one's fellow-creatures, by affording them means of earning a livelihood, are more commendable, especially if they are otherwise worthy of being indulged in by rational beings.

Without disparaging other sports, I claim for yachting that it has all the elements of a rational recreation. If a man be not too reckless in exposing himself to the vicissitudes of weather, it has the primary recommendation of being thoroughly healthy and invigorating.

To be sure, it wants the savage excitement of killing something, so dear to the British sportsman; but other, though perhaps tamer, occupation is always to be found. In small craft every one must make himself useful in some capacity, and the necessary work is just sufficient to occupy mind or body, without being harassing. The possession of a certain amount of skill in seamanship and *nous* in administration is requisite for the full enjoyment of the sport; and the exercise of these qualities conduces to the lively feeling of that content and satisfaction Mr. Buckle mentions, and which are experienced in an eminent degree by the practical yacht sailer, as distinguished from the "swell" who, under the careful tending of a handsomely decorated skipper and

a numerous crew, is transported from place to place with the least possible manifestation of volition on his own part.

Not that there is anything contemptible in being the owner of a large yacht, or that the owners of stately vessels are as a rule unfit to command them—is thy servant an ass that he should say such things?—still one is never identified with a big ship in the same way as with a little one, which really appears to be part and parcel of her master's personalty.

The first cruise of our *parti carré* was in a little hooker of only five tons, one of the earliest to appear of the narrow deep type now so much in vogue, and therefore considered by some knowing hands to be probably unsafe and certainly uncomfortable. In truth she was neither the one nor the other, being as reliable a little vessel as ever floated, buoyant as a cork, and stiff as a church; indeed, the very divergences from accepted models which she exhibited have since been exaggerated to such a degree that our old "Ilma" is now thought rather a round, beamy craft than otherwise, and her present owner has serious thoughts of lengthening her, to make her accord with the notions of the day. Whether or not the limit of narrowness and deepness has yet been reached, it is, of course, impossible to say, but anyhow the advocates of the broad, shallow

type have already got enough to disgust them with modern tendencies.

I have often been much amused by discussions, verbal and printed, on the question of the proportions of yachts, and by the extraordinary amount of prejudice that seems still to exist in some minds against vessels of considerable relative length and depth. It might have been expected that the issue of an authoritative work like that of Mr. Dixon Kemp on "Yacht Designing" would have acted like an extinguisher on the worshippers of broad beam; but in spite of all attempts to diffuse sound principles, one meets now and then with a most vigorous brandishing of the old fetish.

The argument is generally conducted in a manner which implies that the builder or advocate of broad vessels is a meritorious kind of person with good moral principles, a supporter of constituted authority and the Church Establishment; while the fellow who would say a word for narrow boats may justly be suspected of infidel proclivities, and is probably only restrained by the strong arm of the law from larceny and homicide. Nice distinctions are drawn between what is called "natural stability," which is a virtuous kind of stability, and "artificial" ditto, which is obtained in a mean, sneaking sort of way by lead keels, metal floors, and such iniquitous devices.

The evil practice of over-masting is generally held to be consequent on the adoption of narrow vessels; the latter is the first, as the former is the second, step on the *facilis descensus*—both of these, and the consequent impending decadence of yacht-building, being held to be due to the tonnage measurement rule, which has been all but universally adopted throughout the United Kingdom.

Is it the case that the yachts of the period—even racing yachts of advanced types—are inferior to their predecessors in seaworthiness or comfort, to say nothing of speed? I think not—in fact, very much the reverse appears to be the case; at any rate, coasting trips by the smaller classes are more frequent and more extended than ever; and now-a-days ten and five-ton yachts audaciously frisk round the Land's End every season, in search of worthy antagonists, carrying their crews safely and speedily, with no more of discomfort than is inseparable from the dimensions. The tonnage rule which has developed such boats cannot surely be all bad.

There is much more than this to be said for it, however. It really does measure the sail-carrying power of yachts fairly well—much better than any substitute as yet proposed; and the power to carry canvas is, perhaps, the most important quality of a sailing vessel. Taking the most diverse types—those as widely apart as the large

American schooners and the modern English "twenty"—the sail areas will be found to bear an almost uniform relation to a certain function of the tonnage, the square of the cube root, if my readers will pardon the technicality. As much cannot be said of any other rule with which I am acquainted.

Moreover, the tonnage rule is not wholly responsible for the tendency towards increased relative length, which is rather a consequence of the modern innovation of lead ballast, the use of which is extending even to cruisers, notwithstanding the expense, which is really the only valid objection to it.

Finding that by the use of lead sufficient stability (which cannot with propriety be divided into "natural" and "artificial") can be obtained without resorting to great beam, builders have ceased to adopt great beam, and have increased the other dimensions till it ceases to appear advantageous to increase them farther. A class of vessel has thus arisen which even the maligned tonnage rule would not make successful if ballasted with iron, but which answers very well when ballasted with lead, and the facetious nicknames of "lead mines" and the like have not hindered owners from being in the fashion.

Over-masting is not exclusively practised on narrow boats; it is quite as easy to over-mast a

broad one, and infinitely more likely to be disastrous. I take it that the capsizing of one of our best racing yachts at her anchor is a very remote contingency; yet such a calamity occurred not long ago to a large American yacht of the beamy type, one of the sort which assumes a bottom-upwards position with considerable alacrity when once a given angle of inclination has been reached; whereas a deep, narrow yacht with a low centre of gravity is in stable equilibrium in one position only, and that the upright position, which is, on the whole, the most convenient for the occupants.

But what has all this to do with cruising in five-tonners? Possibly not much; but having, as I hope, button-holed the reader, I wish to impart to him a little of the modern gospel of yacht-building for the confirming of his faith, if he be sound and of a right way of thinking, or that he may take thought and amend, if he be still seeking after false gods like "natural stability."

Besides, I want to justify myself for building a pleasure-boat on what was then thought to be the proportions of a mere sailing machine. But it is high time I introduced my friends.

CHAPTER II.

Nos intimes—The ship—The start—Blackfarland—Loch Gare—Homeward bound—Doleful Duncan's dreadful disappointment—Loch Tarbert—Garroch-Head—Bealmed—Fairlie—Man overboard!—Moored.

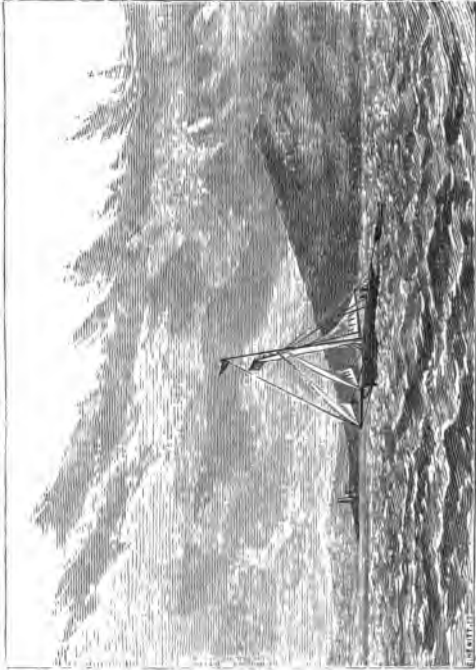
Seniores priores, let me present my accomplished relative who answers (occasionally) to the name of "Jim," an engineer by profession (not a civil one), a captain of Volunteers, an athlete and pedestrian, mighty on the main-sheet, powerful on the peak-halliards, terrible on the topsail tack. Hemp and Manila were to him like the withes to Samson, but fortunately for my cordage his antithesis was presented by comrade number two, called by his friends "Andy," who was never more content than when silently sitting at the tiller and gently persuading *more suo* the willing craft to do according to his pleasure. Chum the third is known as "Peter," a remarkably good smoker when he is not singing in Spanish, Dutch, Italian, or the simple vernacular; and, lastly, the reader's most obedient humble servant, dubbed the "Governor," on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle apparently, because he governed nothing, his lawful authority being had in derision by all the jovial Corinthians.

The crew consisted of a youthful Celt, whose

duties for the time were summed up in one word, "dishes."

Our conveyance and residence was twenty-eight feet long by six feet seven inches beam, having about four feet of head room in the main cabin. The deck from one foot abaft the mast to the stem was permanent, as were eighteen inches of waterway on each side and about seven feet at the after-part. A little cabin eight feet in length was formed by a portable roof hinged at the centre line for convenience in stowage, the after end of the roof being supported by a beam fitted at each end with brass dovetails sliding into sockets on the combings. The whole fabric—beam, roof, doors, &c.—could be unshipped and stowed in about thirty seconds between the seats under the waterways, the tops of the seats folding over and meeting in midships forming a level floor of a convenient height for working the craft as a half-open boat. In the cabin we made up beds, after a fashion, with cushions and hammocks, but we found our sleeping room pretty crowded, and as conducive to early rising as a mercenary match.

The principal feature in the galley arrangements was a most efficient cooking-stove, seven inches square, which boiled, fried, and stewed the most wonderful meals for its size; its capabilities were, I must say, taxed to the utmost.



OFF TOWARD POINT.

On a lowering day in July we started for a short trip to Loch Fyne, emerging from the Holy Loch with the faintest air from the north-east. As we slowly crept along the Dunoon shore we were joined by the "Thais," bound, like us, through the Kyles of Bute, but in the light wind we gradually dropped her astern.

A black streak to windward was widening over the Frith, and as the butt-end of an easterly squall struck the "Thais," her topmast, topsail, and attendant gear went over the bows with a crash, serving us as an emphatic warning to shorten sail *instantly*. We soon found our whole mainsail quite enough for us, but the wind being dead aft we let her drive.

The "Thais" being of heavier tonnage gained on us in the strong wind, and passed us off Toward Light, when she hove up in the wind to reef, we for our part dousing our mainsail altogether and keeping her reaching along with jib and staysail while we tied up three reefs at our leisure. By the time the "Thais" had filled again our mainsail was reset; we were over a mile ahead, and gaining all the time in the lumpy sea at the mouth of Loch Striven, being under snug canvas while our friend was smothered with over-carrying. After a glorious spin up the Kyles we came to in Blackfarland bay, opposite Tighnabruaich, an excellent anchor-

age in easterly wind. We thought twenty-two nautical miles in two and three-quarter hours very good sailing for a boat of our length, but the circumstances were exceptional.

The "Thais" dropped anchor close to us about ten minutes after our arrival, we, of course, endeavouring to look as if we had been moored for ever so long.

As it continued to blow a yachtsman's gale, we resolved to stick to our snug shelter for the night. Our stove was forthwith set a-glowing, and the odour of savoury meats ascended from the fore-castle.

Cooking and dining in a five-tonner under way are so inconvenient as to be next to impossible, therefore dinner is generally a moveable feast, dependent for its observance on wind and weather; at this time, however, we had nothing to do all afternoon but cook and eat, as it was not till the evening that the weather had moderated sufficiently to allow us even to go ashore for a constitutional.

The morning brought a complete change of weather: a light southerly wind invited the display of the greater part of the contents of our sail locker, and after an early breakfast we weighed and worked down the West Kyle. A long swell from seaward seemed to indicate stronger wind down channel, but as yet there

was no other sign of it, for after a few tacks across and across, the gentle breeze died away altogether, and the impulsive Jim tumbled into the punt, got out a tow-rope, and commenced towing as if the fate of empires depended on our reaching Ardlamont Point.

A plague of midges now settled down on us, and the active habits of these persevering and predatory creatures seriously interfered with our progress, as they were inconsiderate enough to arrange to have a banquet on the accessible parts of the person of our esteemed friend in the punt, who, being somewhat thin-skinned, resented the intrusion by divers contortions and many hasty expressions, such as I am certain would not have escaped him in calmer moments. Just as he was apparently getting delirious, the expected southerly breeze reached us, and we gaily bounded on our way. Turning Ardlamont Point, we reached fast to the Skate Island, whence it was a dead run to the narrows at Otter Spit.

Notwithstanding the efforts of the ship's company to distract the attention of the helmsman, in order that he might cover himself with shame as with a garment, by an unpremeditated "jibe," he contrived to keep the boom to starboard until it became necessary to alter our course at Otter Spit, a long gravelly shoal extending more than half-way across the loch. The manoeuvre was

then performed decently and in order, and an opportunity taken to recall to our Palinurus of the day before his disgraceful conduct in letting the boom come over with a tremendous thrash, nearly expending both the stick and the back-stays. On his promising to consider the "Governor's" ways and be wise, the hands mustered for punishment were piped down, and Peter, who had charge of the medicine chest, compounded for each a prescription as follows:—

R. Aquæ vitæ, oz. ij.
Aquæ puræ, oz. iij.
Misc. Fiat haustus.

Loch Gare was then fixed upon as the anchorage for the night, and there we accordingly let go in three fathoms.

This little loch is the *beau idéal* of a harbour for vessels under 12 feet draught. With a narrow entrance not more than 400 feet in width, well marked by a square white tower, it is all but land-locked. The depth of water is convenient for anchorage, being nowhere over four fathoms, and the shelving soft bottom all round would not hurt the vessel which approached the shore too nearly.

A handsome mansion overlooks it from the north side; at the south-west side a few poor shielings are huddled together, and the inevitable

public-house forms a prominent object in the landscape, but offers a very inferior description of whisky. Three or four serviceable-looking fishing-skiffs and a display of herring-nets on the "skemmils," or drying-poles, indicated the staple trade of the locality, but from the appearance of the cottages and that of their inmates who were visible, small profits had been pretty general for some time.

Our appetites having been appeased, we landed for a ramble on the hillsides, "our custom always of the afternoon," and one to be commended to persons who cruise in small boats, where exercise of the lower limbs is impossible.

Loch Fyne and the Sound of Mull for sunsets against creation! I have never seen one at either place which could be called ordinary, but we were favoured on this occasion with one of unusual splendour, which having enjoyed we returned on board and disposed ourselves for sleep. Our somewhat bulky collection of consumable stores, which overflowed the lockers and took up part of the cabin, interfered in no small degree with our elbow-room at bed-time, until it occurred to us to give them the use of the cockpit at night, where they were kept quite dry under the united waterproofs of the party. To such straits are those driven who cruise in five-tonners, and who require rather more than the average allowance

of space. Fortunately our closely-packed company included only one snorer, and as he was in the fore-castle, our repose did not suffer much interruption on his account, only enough to give excuse for the beloved growl of the true Briton.

Next morning promised a poor sailing day: a close waxy sky and a falling glass seemed to pre-
sage more rain than wind. Immediately after starting we got aground in the soft mud, having stood too close in shore, but six-and-thirty stone on the bowsprit lightened the ship sufficiently by the heel to back her off, and lying through the entrance we crept slowly down Loch Fyne.

As we opened up Loch Gilp the weather changed like the transformation-scene at a pantomime, where the gloomy gives place to the dazzling as by enchantment, a fine northerly breeze coming down the glens, clearing before it everything in the shape of mist or cloud. Over went the boom to port with what a Scotsman with fine onomatopoeia calls a "bringe," and what an Englishman must leave unnamed for want of a single word to suitably characterize a gradually accelerated rush accompanied by a certain amount of noise, and ending in an impact. Putting her shoulder to the work, off went the "Ilma" on her way, no longer

"shifting oft her stooping side,
In weary tack from shore to shore,"





LOCH TARBERT.

but making a steamboat course of it towards the Cock of Arran. Discontent gave place to the exhilaration produced by our headlong speed of seven knots an hour, a feeling unknown to those who go down to the sea in steamboats, even if they be carried over the briny at three times the rate.

Certainly there are some discomforts to be met with in little boats, but a very substantial amount goes to the credit of their account in the better appreciation of the delight of rapid motion which they afford to those who sail in them. Being so near the surface of the water the speed always seems greater than the same speed in a large vessel, and when you get to eight knots, which is not often, the pace appears terrific.

This sensation must be enjoyed to perfection in sailing canoes, which doubtless explains the fascination those rather risky vehicles have for a great many persons who appear to be quite sane on all other points.

We passed close by the entrance of Loch Tarbert, a most picturesque little inlet with a malodorous village on its banks, which is recognized as the head-quarters of the Loch Fyne fishery. This same village happened to be distinguished also as the birthplace of our "crew," who intermitted his labours with the breakfast dishes to gaze upon the home of his fathers with a tear in

his eye and a dishclout in his hand. We paid no heed to his suggestion that the harbour was commodious, being disinclined to lose a fresh fair wind for the sake of gratifying Duncan's too-evident desire to exhibit himself to his quondam associates in the gorgeous array of a yachtman; so as we shut in the entrance he disconsolately returned to his Sisyphus-like task of keeping us in clean crockery.

Loch Tarbert, although of great natural beauty, is not a very attractive yacht harbour. The entrance is narrow and crooked, and if you run in with a fair wind the probability is that before you have made up your mind where to pick up a berth, you have come into collision with one of the numberless fishing-smacks which are sure to be anchored in most admired disorder all over the place. It is best with the wind fair and strong not to think of rounding to at all, but as soon as you have got well through the entrance, lower away everything except perhaps the staysail; steer for a clear berth if you can see one, and let go under foot.

Coming out with a fair wind is easy enough, but beating out against a strong easterly breeze is a "caution." The present deponent once worked out under double-reefed mainsail, and does not desire to repeat the experiment. It was in a schooner of sixteen tons, to be further

referred to hereafter in these veracious pages, and it so happened that there were pressing reasons for making a start.

Our first exploit was to drag the anchor into shallow water, and run over it, breaking the stock, and causing ourselves great concern as to possible holes in the bottom. In the entrance it was impossible, owing to its narrowness, to give the yacht way, so she had to be sailed bare, and with the staysail-sheet to windward, at the risk of missing stays and going ashore—a consummation which all the idlers of Tarbert evidently expected to have the pleasure of witnessing. We were so short-handed in the strong wind that the helm had to be entrusted to a lady, all the A. B.'s being wanted at the sheets. Once through the narrows and into the bay outside, matters looked a little better; but even then it was nervous kind of work, as a heavy sea was rolling in, and it was necessary to keep the yacht going till close to the rocks, where to miss stays or gather stern way would have been certain destruction. However, that was neither the first time nor the last that the same little vessel got us out of a tight place, being as handy in stays as any cutter that ever was built, and her good qualities saved our bacon on that occasion; but only necessity would warrant getting under way in similar circumstances.

To return to Duncan's disappointment and our

cruiſe. We ſoon found him plenty of exciting occupation in keeping the ſoup pot on the fire, as the "Ilma" was beginning to roll on the following ſea at a rate which ſeriously interfered with culinary operations; ſo we hauled up the tack, and brought her to with foreſail aback, that our *chef* might put the finiſhing touches to the banquet, and no leſs that we might diſcuſs in peace and quietneſs our *déjeûner à la foreſheet*.

The breeze was too good for us to waſte much time over the walnuts and the wine, ſo as ſoon as poſſible we had the helm up again, and the unlucky Duncan found himſelf contemplating another pile of unclean ſtoneware.

No incident of importance broke the even tenor of our way, as we ſped along towards the Garroch Head, paſſing Inch Marnock, that abode of irreclaimable inebriates, cloſe enough to tantalize theſe unfortunates with the ſight of us imbibing our afternoon grog. On coming up with the Head, our progreſs was ſtopped almoſt as ſuddenly as if we had run our ſtem againſt it, the wind lifting, and the yacht reſuming her normal poſition in an inſtant. Boreas had laid down his bellows for the night—that was clear—and the proſpect of ſpending the dark hours in the vicinity of the rugged knuckle-end of Bute was leſs remote than unpleaſant.

Anchorage there is none, except the dubious

one of "Callum's Hole," which is only fit for a steamer or an open boat that can be beached and hauled up in the event of a sudden change of weather.

While debating as to our best procedure, sundry miniature cyclones commenced to darken the water about us, finally settling down to a good lusty pipe from the eastward, of strength sufficient to induce us to take down our topsail with all the agility of which we were capable.

Evidently the east had been the true wind on that side of Bute all the time; and as it had the appearance of holding at a good strength, Millport Bay or Fairlie Roads were obviously the best anchorages. The latter was fixed on, *nem: con.*, and a board over by the Cumbrae Lighthouse enabled us to lie up along the north shore of the lesser Cumbrae, towards the adjacent island of Great Britain, which, according to the famous old divine, had a narrow escape from forming part of Cumbrae parish itself.

The ebb tide was running round the Farland like a mill-stream, and the wind being as unsteady as east wind generally is on Clyde, we hesitated for a time between Millport Bay and our desired haven; but a "slammer" out of Fairlie Glen decided us, and drew us up to a good place abreast of Fife's Yard, where we anchored. Of a' the airts the wind can blaw, I most abhor the east,

for on its blowing steadily, one can't depend the least. At any rate upon the Clyde, full many a time and oft, it blows hard from the weather shore, while to leeward it's quite soft.

Indeed I remember well tossing about for hours on the swell in a dead calm off Glen Sannox in Arran, with all our kites flying to catch a chance puff; while a few miles from us, on the other side of the firth, a famous racer, under double reefs, was dismasted in a furious gale which never came halfway across.

A case in point was observed shortly after we anchored, for as we resolved to go ashore for fresh water, the wind increased from a moderate breeze to a violent squall, lashing the surrounding sea into foam. After waiting half an hour, the breeze subsided as quickly as it had risen, and we had the sea like a mirror till after midnight, when it blew great guns again till two o'clock.

Fairlie, though a pretty spot enough, owes little of its repute to attractive scenery. As the dwelling-place of three generations of Fifes, however, it is familiar in the mouths of yachtsmen as household words. A more unpromising locality for shipbuilding could hardly have been selected; inconvenient of access by sea and land, without accommodation for more than a very limited number of workmen, and with no natural produc-

tions of the least utility for building purposes, it is nevertheless, thanks to the remarkable ability, energy, and integrity of the Messrs. Fife, second in celebrity to no yacht-building port.

At the time of our visit it was the slack season, and the only vessel on the stocks was a fine cutter of some ninety or a hundred tons, then waiting for an owner. We landed, and walked round her and into her without let or hindrance. Work was over for the day, and the premises were apparently left to look after themselves. Burglarious attempts are, it would seem, not anticipated at Fairlie; at any rate, there were no evident preparations for resisting anything of the kind.

The various kinds of weather during the night were followed by a scorching morning. No welcome breath of air tempered the fierce heat. "The ship from heaven received no motion, her keel was steady" in Fairlie Roads.

Our cruise was here enlivened by a mishap to one of our party, who attempted to pass along the waterway, while Peter, who was leaning over the mainboom, enjoying his smoke, interposed a "fundamental" obstacle to his progress, and not observing the sailing regulations which refer to bearing away, shot his unfortunate friend overboard. The ensuing splash was tremendous; but with the instinct of self-preservation, he grasped

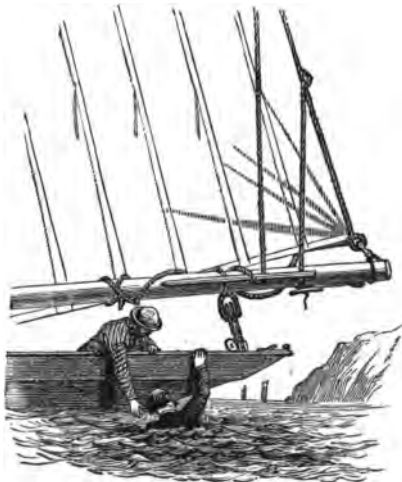
in falling the apology for a bulwark, and held on to it with the grasp of grim death, until the Homeric laughter on board subsided sufficiently to let the crew parbuckle and hoist him in, all the heavier by some gallons of sea-water, imbibed both by his clothes and the wearer.

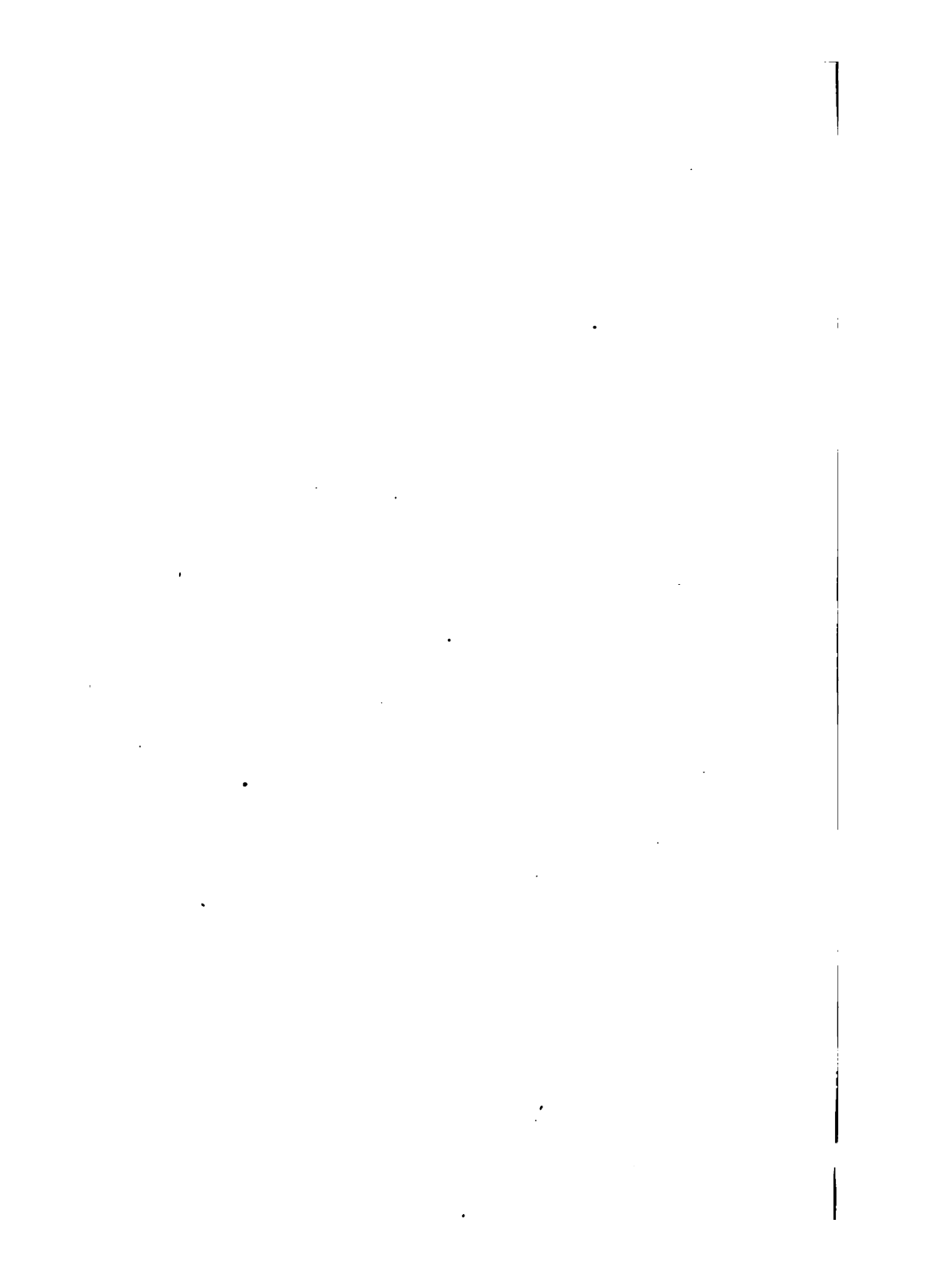
The rescued one, as soon as he recovered speech, rated his comrades in good set terms for their dilatoriness in getting hold of him, and endeavoured to make them realize the exceeding narrowness of his escape, and the desolation they would have felt at his loss. Whereat the graceless loons only laughed the more.

The weather all day continued very favourable indeed for drying wet garments, but remarkably unsuitable for sailing. Tiny puffs from all quarters kept us on the stretch, and it was by dint of the diligent use of our weather eyes that we contrived to grope along in a devious track towards our moorings.

The watch below had plenty of occupation found for them in making all the corners and lockers tidy and ship-shape, while those on deck did what in them lay to shove along the ship, so as to get in by nightfall. The cool evening breeze which not seldom springs up at the close of a day of tropical heat did us the kindness to carry us up to our anchorage about nine o'clock, and in the

morning the party broke up, resolved to seek fresh fields and pastures new in the next mid-summer.



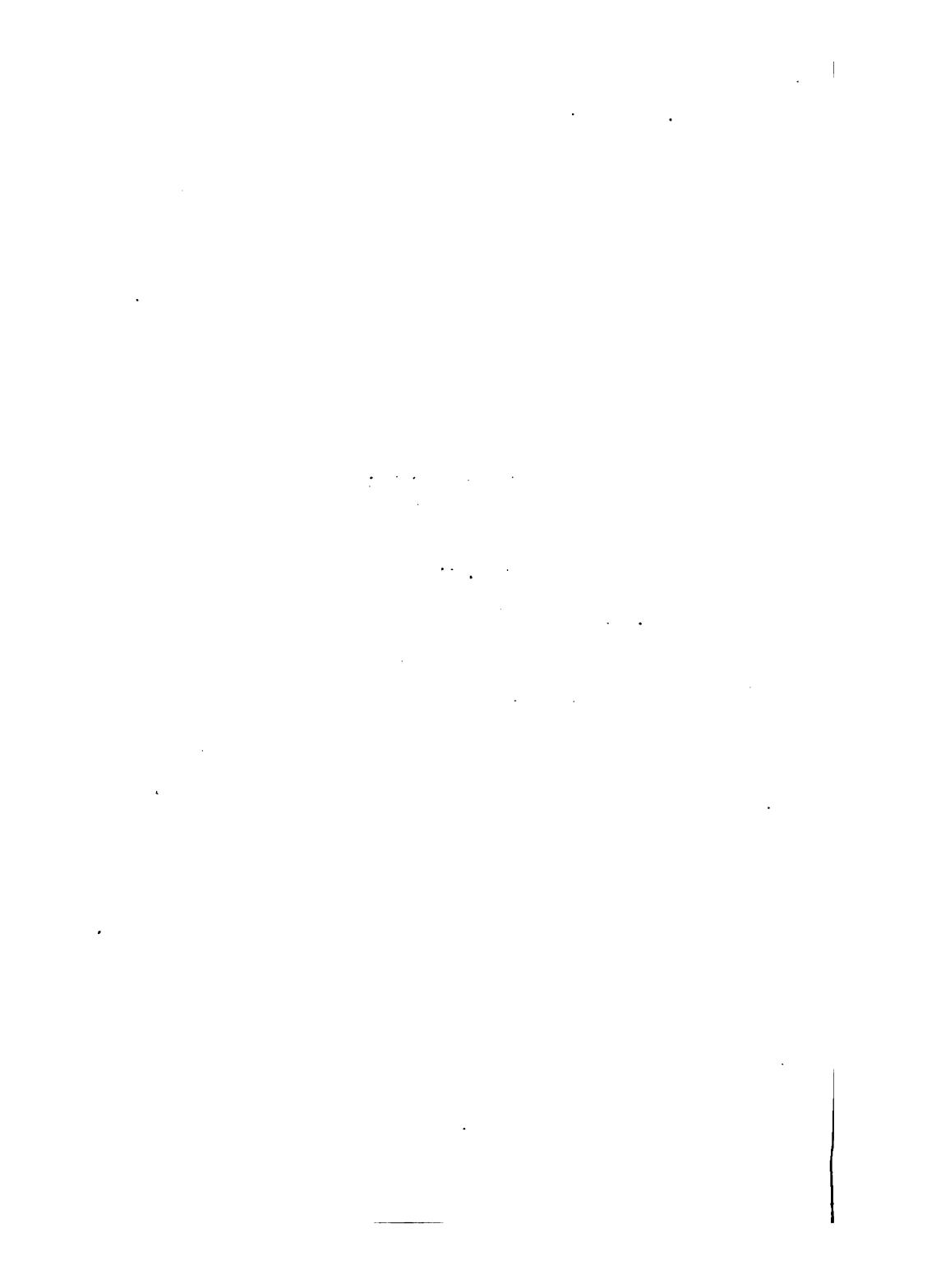




PART II.

CRUISE OF THE "CONCORDIA."





PART II.

CRUISE OF THE "CONCORDIA."

CHAPTER I.

Schooners v. cutters—The "Concordia"—Her crew.

I HAD long been possessed with the idea that it is possible to build a schooner which, with the allowance of tonnage for rig, shall be a match for cutters of her class; at all events, in breezes that are strong relatively to the size of the vessels.

It is evident that small vessels will meet with relatively strong winds more frequently than large ones, and, therefore, that schooners have the best chance of success against cutters in the smaller classes. It is undeniable that a schooner is heavily handicapped by her extra spars; at a moderate computation, the second mast and gear will affect her heeling over as much as seven or eight per cent. of additional canvas, and thus will prevent her availing herself of the means of propulsion to that extent. Against this may be set the extra length and weight of hull which may be expected to tell in her favour in a seaway.

On the Clyde it is permitted for schooners or yawls to enter in the classes limited by their reduced tonnages—that is to say, a schooner of sixty-four tons or a yawl of fifty tons may enter with forty-ton cutters, and so on, downwards, throughout the classes.

Although this privilege is not general, I am persuaded it ought to be, if racing with mixed rigs is to obtain at all; for if a schooner is no more than a match for a cutter of five-eighths her tonnage, why should she be prevented entering with her, or why should a yawl once-and-a-quarter the size of a given cutter, and thus fit to run her even, be barred from entering with her real colleagues, and be compelled to run against vessels virtually of the class above her which she has no reasonable chance of beating?

The rules which compel schooners and yawls to enter at their real instead of their effective tonnages operate, of course, only in classes under forty tons, and have the effect, where they exist, of totally extinguishing races for mixed rigs in all except the largest classes. This is a pity, as interesting problems might receive some elucidation by the extension of mixed races down to the very smallest classes.

Thinking favourably of the qualities of schooners of small tonnage as I did, I had the courage of my opinions, and built a little vessel

of only eight tons, which was named the "Concordia."

(I may here mention, once for all, that yachts mentioned in this book are *not* named as in Hunt's "Universal Yacht List.")

As a racer she was only moderately successful, being twice first and five times second, out of eight starts—one race and no more took place in a strong breeze, when she made an example of the cutters. As a cruising boat, however, I have never seen anything of her tonnage that approached her, so comfortable was she, and so complete in her appointments. Having what was then thought the prodigious weight of two and a half tons of lead on her keel, she was extremely stiff, notwithstanding a mainmast 24 feet from deck to hounds, a foremast 22 feet, and other spars in proportion. Her dimensions were—length between perpendiculars, 34 feet; breadth, extreme, 7 feet 6 inches; depth from the rabbit of keel to the upper side of deck beam at centre, 6 feet 4 inches. The head-room under the flush deck was 4 feet 9 inches, and in way of the small skylight there was standing-room for one man 5 feet 10 inches high to dress or shave. No coach-roof arrangements interfered with one of the principal beauties of a yacht—the greatest possible expanse of snowy deck plank; but as there was ample head-room for sitting on the low broad

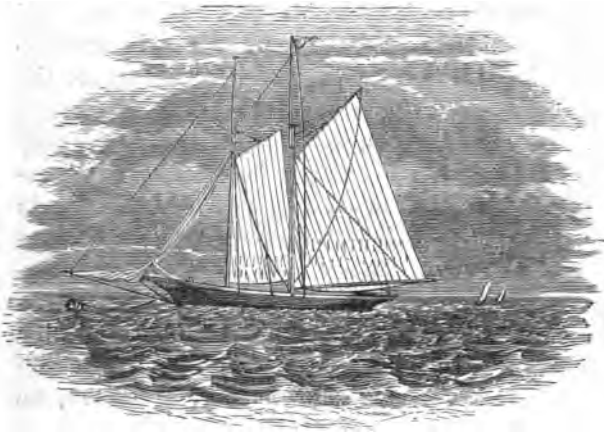
cabin sofas, and we didn't want to perform country dances in the saloon, the height in 'tween decks was considered enough, and unsightly excrescences for the purpose of increasing it were dispensed with.

In addition to the cabin sofas there was a wide berth on each side of the companion ladder; behind the ladder, which was portable, were the washing arrangements, and abaft these again a capacious sail locker. The companion opened from the cockpit, and could be closed by a watertight sliding door travelling in brass guides. The cockpit was completely watertight, and the floor of it was considerably above the load-line, to admit of scuppers being fitted to take water into the sea, without fear of any coming back through them as the yacht lay over. This arrangement is one to be commended for adoption in small yachts, as with no communication between the cockpit and the interior they are quite safe in rough weather, though occasionally swept by a heavy sea. The forecabin gave tolerable accommodation for two men, and other conveniences, as pantry, &c., were not neglected.

Much ingenuity was expended on the swinging table, as the mainmast came down through it, and it was necessary to make it to unship without taking the mast out. The difficulty was quite satisfactorily overcome, and the mast made

a very effective centre-piece or *épergne*, being utilized to relieve the not over-large table of some of its equipage.

In external appearance the "Concordia" was admitted to be rather handsome all over; but her cutwater, trailboards, and figure-head were espe-



cially approved by competent judges, among whom I number the fair dame, tender and true, whose counterfeit presentment in hard wood beamed upon the waters from under our bowsprit.

The much-enduring youth who was wont to broil himself and our mutton chops over the cooking-stove of the "Ilma," had long ago re-

turned to the bosom of his family at evil-smelling Tarbert, and the stately dimensions of our new vessel required us to ship in his stead two hands, a skipper as well as a cook.

The former office was filled by a grave, silent Celt, who had the look of being almost overwhelmed by a sense of the magnitude of the interests committed to his care. If he ever did forget himself so far as to allow a grim smile to wrinkle his weather-bronzed countenance, the momentary levity seemed to cause him great subsequent distress, and a preternatural solemnity would overcast his visage for some time thereafter. But Lachlan's disposition to speak only in answer to questions, and then with no diffuseness, was felt to be a considerable recommendation. His qualifications as a yacht-seaman, besides, were of the first order, and his industry untiring.

Most of his countrymen may, I believe, be trusted with untold gold, but I would rather not leave some of them in charge of unmeasured whisky; Lachlan, however, had not the least taint of the national weakness.

Duncan the second was a quiet, obliging lad, mightily in awe of the skipper, who used upon occasions to rate him with great vehemence and unwonted volubility in whispered Gaelic, to our intense amusement, the incongruity between the

apparent earnestness of the speaker and the almost inaudible voice being extremely comical. Notwithstanding these ebullitions, the two appeared to be on excellent terms, and both were at all times ready to exert themselves to the utmost for the comfort and pleasure of the cabin passengers.

CHAPTER II.

Embarkation—Calms—Loch Ranza—A sudden squall—
Kilbrennan Sound—Fickle winds—Campbeltown.

JULY had come round, the tardy Scottish summer had reached its prime, and the excitement of the local regattas had subsided. Arrangements for the annual cruise were duly completed, the "Concordia" put into the *statu quo ante* regattas, and on the appointed morning we saluted each other, and embarked with our impedimenta in the punt which Duncan had in waiting on the beach.

We started from the moorings formerly occupied by the "Ilma," provisioned for a week, and bound for wherever favouring winds would take us. In company with us at starting were the "Mariana" cutter, the "Lita" yawl, and the "Phryne" schooner, all vessels of much greater tonnage than ours, consequently we were speedily left far behind.

After the experience of the cruise described in the first part of this book, and others never recorded, we naturally settled down into our places very readily. Berths were allotted, lockers appropriated, clothing, &c., stowed away, all in the most businesslike and orderly manner, and everything made tidy and comfortable before we had finished a couple of tacks down channel against the light southerly wind. Coming up rigged out for seafaring, we dismissed Duncan from his short watch on deck to his duties in connection with the periodical refreshment of the inner men of the possessors of four fine healthy appetites.

Our resources were much more extensive this year in the way of amusements: having advanced to the luxury of a cabin table, a cosy game of whist was possible; a small library of books held out prospect of entertainment during the rains or calms for which one must lay his account, and Peter had contributed a breech-loading rifle, by means of which we proposed to fill our gamebags with solans, puffins, seals, whales, and "such small deer." But we found cetaceans scarce in the seas we navigated, and the seabirds would not sit still enough to be hit, so our favourite target was a string of bottles towed after the yacht, at which we expended a prodigious quantity of powder and lead. Somehow our stock of empty bottles never seemed to decrease.

Our progress was intermittent during the whole day, which was far spent before we had emerged from between the "heads," as the southernmost points of Cumbrae and Bute islands are called. On this the first day Duncan had miscalculated the capacities of the cooking-stove, with the disastrous result that our dinner was a remarkably late one, merging into supper. When we rose from it the night was "clad in the beauty of a thousand stars," and our white sails reflected the radiance of the full moon.

From the Garroch Head to Scriden Point is a long tow, but many hands make light work, and with a little assistance from the fitful puffs we lugged along the schooner into the Sound of Kilbrannan, thronged with fisher-craft hanging to their nets and looking most picturesque with the red light of their peat fires glancing on the dark forms of the fishermen bending over their nocturnal meal after the labour of shooting the miles of nets. Wishing them all miraculous draughts of fishes and keen competition among the buyers who relieved them of their scaly harvest, we threaded our way among them till we entered Loch Ranza, at the mouth of which we anchored, close beside a cutter which proved to be the "Mariana." She had evidently been moored there some time, to judge from the nasal chorus emanating from her interior.

As we got our canvas furled a fierce squall came tearing through the glens at the head of the loch, making a hum and clatter among our loose gear for the space of ten minutes, when it subsided as quickly as it had arisen. There was something awesome in the strength and suddenness of the blast and the death-like stillness succeeding it. It made us think of some of the little skiffs we had lately seen riding to their "trains" in the sound, and picture one of them returning with her heavy load of soaked nets and the few hundred herrings with which the hardy crew would purchase the necessaries of life for themselves and families. The imminent deadly squall finding the wearied helmsman half asleep at the tiller, and then another sad tale of lost fishermen, destitute wives and bairns. These Scottish lochs and glens are decidedly uncanny for open boats.

For all our tender solicitude on the account of fisher-folk, the whole population of Loch Ranza might have perished within a few yards of the "Concordia" without disturbing her crew's slumbers. Exposure to the keen sea air for some sixteen hours had made us uncommonly sleepy, and it was with infinite difficulty that the "Governor" got his unruly family into working trim and the anchor short by nine o'clock next morning.

A heavenly morning it was, the sky brilliant

azure flecked with whitest of clouds, a steady south-west wind rippled the waters of the Sound into gleaming blue and silver, while the dulcet murmurings of the brooks and the whisperings of the tree-tops from the shore, mingled with Peter's polyglot vocalizing and the soothing sibillation of a large panful of ham and eggs which Duncan was assiduously frying for breakfast.

We chuckled on observing that the "Mariana," where she lay under the point at the west side of the entrance, was surrounded by a circle of calm, and as we got our anchor aboard and proceeded down the Sound, we had the satisfaction of leaving her in the doldrums.

But not for long; their boat was soon ahead with a couple of stalwart Skyemen bending their backs to some purpose at the labour of towing. By the time we had made a couple of miles to windward she was feeling the breeze and coming after us at a great rate.

A stern chase is a long chase, and we had got in and out of Catacol Bay and well down by Carradale before her lessening of the distance between us became very obvious.

"She is nearing us," says Andy, who was steering, to the skipper, who was gazing to leeward behind the mainsail.

"'Deed, sir, she is not coming up on us wan bit," replies Lachlan decidedly.

A pause, during which all eyes are directed to the "Mariana."

"Oh, Lachie," says another, "you must see she is coming up now."

"Well, maybe she is, sir; but she has the win' stronger in there, I can see that very well. We should never come so far into mid channel wi' this win'."

'Bout ship it is then, and purchases are being set up all round to take the last inch out of her we can get.

By-and-by up comes the "Mariana" under our lee, launches out across our bows to windward, washing our decks to the masts with the sea she turns up.

"What do you say to it now, Lachlan?" asks the Governor.

"Well, sir," says Lachlan, not a whit abashed, "and what would be the use of hevin' a lairge vessel if she would not sail faster nor a smaal one?" and he glides forward with the air of an injured innocent.

But the race is not to the swift, and the "Mariana's" triumph was but short-lived. Lachlan was not far wrong about the wind and the advisability of keeping hold of the Kintyre shore, for the "Mariana" making long boards to either side got flat becalmed to the southward of Maughry Bay, while on our side there was still a fine

breeze of W. S. W. wind, enabling us to make a long and a short leg down the peninsula.

In due time we hauled up for the entrance to the magnificent natural harbour of Campbeltown, passed Davaar Island, skirted the long gravelly isthmus, the Dorling, which connects the "island" with the mainland, and not requiring to replenish our stock of usquebaugh, we stopped below Kilkerran, anchoring in ten fathoms on the south side of the loch. Lachlan was in high glee, he "chortled in his joy" at the thought of the hapless "Mariana" becalmed in the neighbourhood of the Iron-Rock ledges, while we were snugly moored in one of the finest anchorages in the country.

Tea over, Andy and I landed for a stroll as far as the metropolis of whisky. The hillsides bordering the road thither presented a most extraordinary sight, being literally covered by a swarm of human beings of both sexes, of all ages, in every variety of costume, who were carefully selecting the driest and easiest beds of heather obtainable for their accommodation through the coming night. It was Glasgow Fair, and these were of the working population of that busy city spending their holiday.

At that annual saturnalia weaving and spinning ceases, the sound of hammers closing rivets up is not heard, and more than one-fifth of the

whole of the inhabitants desert the city for a few days, by the numerous cheap conveyances which at that season compete for their patronage. By a singular fatality the fair holidays are almost invariably associated with heavy rains and the attendant discomforts, but upon this occasion the excursionists were blessed with clear skies and warm sunshine, much to their benefit and not a little to the disadvantage of the dealers in the national beverage. Sleeping *à la belle étoile* was evidently to be the order of the night, and it must be admitted that a bed of dry heather on the hillside is preferable to the chance accommodation offered in the slums of Campbeltown.

With some the only blanket is the insensibility to exposure produced by a plenteous indulgence in neat whisky, and in a few instances the evening's repose is preceded by a hearty bout at fisticuffs. But in this respect the Scottish workmen exhibit of late years a marked tendency to improvement. Most of them now leave the town really for the pleasure of a closer acquaintance with nature in its most attractive aspects, and it is no longer the invariable custom to circulate the bottle on leaving the Broomielaw.

On the Fair Saturday of last year (1878) no fewer than 130,000 left the city by one mode of conveyance or another; 26,000 by steamer (there being thirty-one sailings from the Bridge Wharf),

the bulk of the remainder by train. Not one serious accident to any of that vast number was reported, and the drunk and disorderly among them only amounted to 317, about one-fourth per cent. These statistics are alike creditable to the pleasure-seekers and those who managed the huge traffic on the railways and the steamers.

At Campbeltown no doubt there are special facilities for getting drunk, and there were some who found the temptation too strong for them. These obstructed the highway in various stages of intoxication, the amorous, the pugnacious, the amusing, and the brutal, but compared with the vast number of decent sober folk, the number of drunks was insignificant.

We shall see what the School Boards will do for the next generation of handicraftsmen; if universal education raises them a little further in the social scale it will not be a bad thing for anybody.

As we sauntered back to the yacht about half-past ten, we descried the "Mariana" coming into the loch in a mighty hurry, with every thread of canvas they could pack on to her. Passing disdainfully by the "Concordia," as if resenting the scandalous fluke which had given us the weather-gage of her, she held on for Campbeltown quay, and came to close under the distilleries.

There is no accounting for tastes : some people may like the odour of draff, and to some the spectacle of herds of swine feeding on garbage between high and low water may be a pleasing thing, but for my part when whisky is concerned I like the finished article, as a medicine, but abhor the vicinity of its manufacture ; and as for pigs—well, if those which ran down a steep place violently into the sea and were choked had been all that the world had to depend on for bacon, I should not have regretted that stampede. Therefore, when I stop in Campbeltown Loch, I anchor as far from the quay as possible, preferring the still neighbourhood of the cemetery to the neighbourhood of the *aqua vitæ* stills, and when I wish to enter the town I approach it from the rear, where the streets are clean and orderly as becomes a royal burgh of its importance, the abode of a keen-witted, energetic population.

Next morning by six o'clock we were under way again. We had some notion of going out as far as Sanda Island, with the view of making ourselves thoroughly acquainted with its harbour, but it looked rather dirty to windward, and a heavy swell was tumbling in from southward, so we resolved to make the wind fair for one day and run up Loch Fyne as far as it would take us. Having kept rather close under the steep high land of Davaar, we got suddenly becalmed by the

wind lifting on the hill face, and a strong current seemed to be setting us in towards a shore of large rough boulders, which would have made short work indeed of the tender sides of the "Concordia;" so "out oars" was the word, and two hands in the punt soon sprung her along into a light air, which by-and-by freshened to a fine whole sail breeze.

The wind being dead aft we set our racing spinnaker, which we had fortunately brought with us for a chance such as this, and as soon as it was boom-ended, we bowled along at a good pace, keeping an even keel, moreover, greatly to the satisfaction of Duncan while cooking our breakfast and of ourselves while eating it.

The spinnaker, which is such an unmitigated nuisance while racing, is one of the most valuable additions possible to the gear of a cruising yacht, far excelling the squaresail in efficiency and handiness. Of course in a cruiser the boom need not be of such an unconscionable length as it usually is in a racer. If made to top under the forestay it will be found quite long enough to spread a sail which will materially help the bark's progress in a long run, and at the same time not so long as to be in the way, whether up and down the mast or along the deck with the topsail yards.

On this occasion we carried the spinnaker the

whole day, with the exception of the interval when we had a free reach from Skipness to the Otter Spit, where the wind being too bare for spinnaker, we shifted for jib-topsail—another good cruising sail and a curse to racers, being an incorrigible spar-breaker when carried too long.

With the steady breeze we made about six knots an hour up Kilbrennan Sound, keeping the Kintyre side in case of a shift to the westward, which is always to be looked for in these waters. We passed close by Saddell Castle, a rather unpicturesque relic of antiquity, tamely situated in the middle of a green field in which they say no tree will grow.

Torrisdale Castle and Carradale House, modern erections not far from Saddell, both have greatly the advantage of the older building in situation, which is somewhat odd, as our forefathers were wont to set down their abbeys, cathedrals, and towers in the most striking situations the locality would afford.

Carradale only wants to be nearer Glasgow to be a popular watering-place; as it is its commodious pier serves for embarkation of thousands of boxes containing millions of herrings, and its cosy, cleanly little inn accommodates but an occasional Saturday sojourner. The country inland is full of beautiful scenery, of a kind for the most

part in pleasing contrast with the rugged coast.
Experto crede.

To the northward from Carradale pier there nestles under the cliff a little village which rejoices in the suggestive name of Grogport, and which, I am informed, used to be a famous rendezvous of smugglers, sma'-still men, and such like. Now there is not a more law-abiding people in the whole world than that which inhabits the Scottish Highlands, and an illicit distiller is as obsolete as the Caledonian wild boar.

The peculiar industry which formerly had its home at Grogport is now transferred to Campbeltown, and is carried on in twenty distilleries, which produce annually their two million gallons of *aqua vitæ* under Government inspection, the gauger and the distiller lying down together, like the Elysian lion and lamb.

Skipness Point was rounded at noon, when spliced the mainbrace, hauled aft our sheets a bit, and shifted spinnaker for jib-topsail, the yacht lying down to it and going a little over six knots, the speed we had averaged since the breeze freshened. Off Yellow Island the wind fell light, and coming more aft we set the spinnaker again.

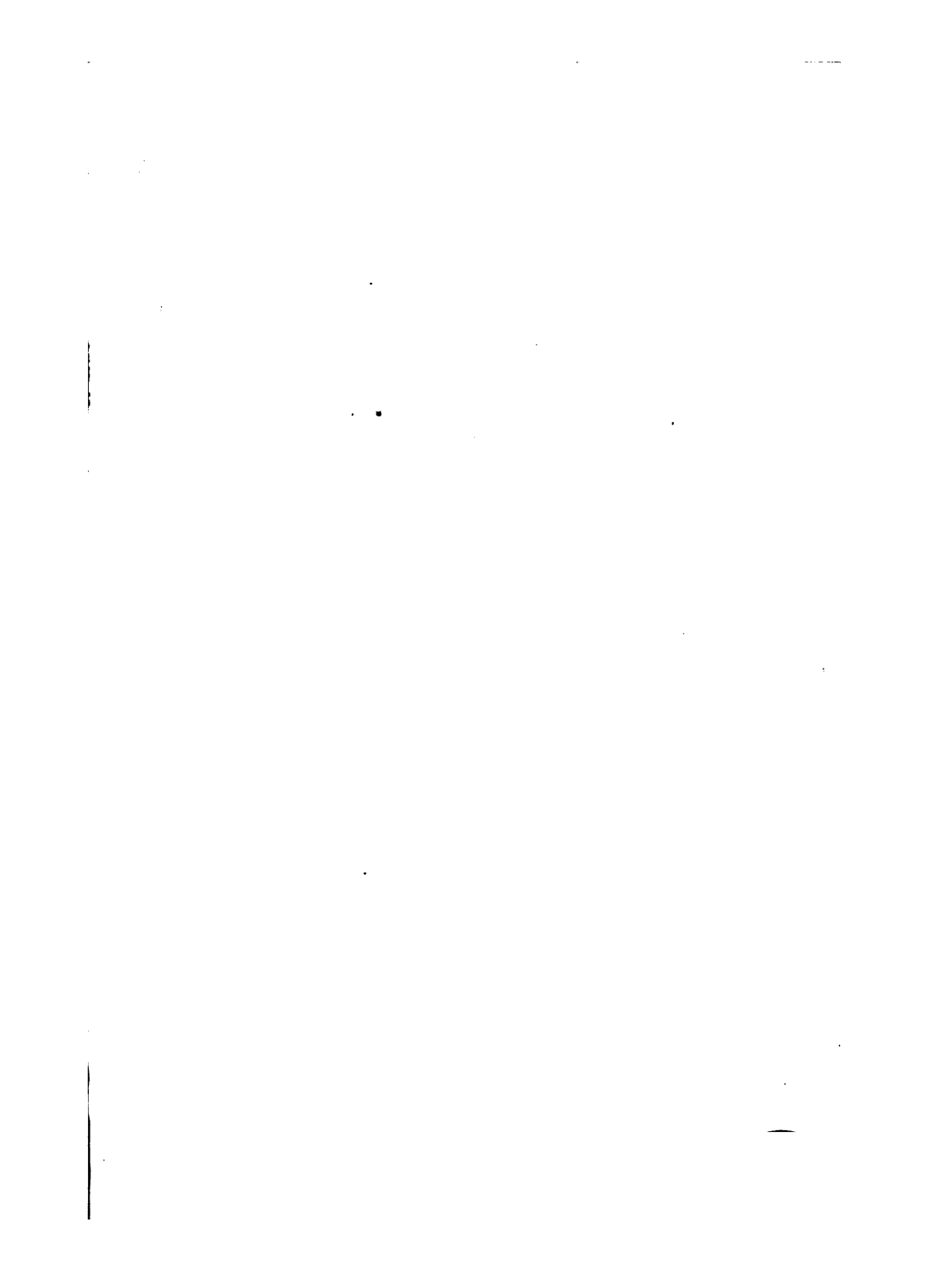
Our passage up the loch towards Inverary was a little monotonous; the wind was never strong, and our speed did not exceed four knots at any time after passing Otter Ferry. Near Minard we

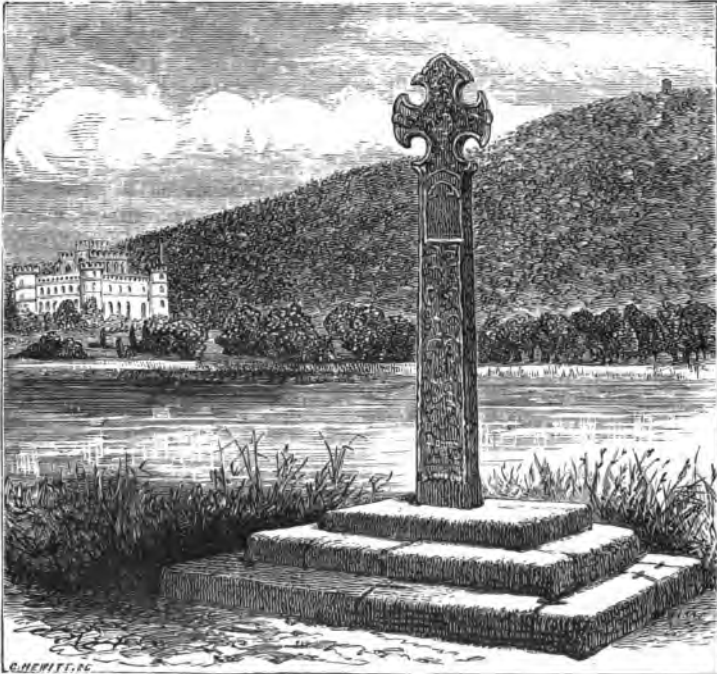
terrified a number of sea-fowl, but slew none, with our Snider. Off Furnace, famous for its granite quarries and enormous blasting operations, we passed the "Lita" slowly beating down, and at Inverary, where we slid in with the last of the breeze, we found the "Phryne" at anchor. Peter being acquainted with the genial owner of the latter vessel, took the punt and went on board to make a call, not, we suspected, without ulterior views of a possible invitation to dinner, but to our intense delight he returned shortly with a choice selection of tracts, bearing upon the cheerful subjects congenial to admirers of that style of literature, and containing invitations of a wholly different sort from that which he was believed to have expected.

It is very odd that the saintly persons who are given to the administering of these aggressive leaflets are generally so deficient in the cardinal virtue of charity as to imagine that every other person they meet must be an heathen man and a publican, and therefore a fit subject to vent tracts upon.

Any resentment, however, which we may have felt at being considered vessels of wrath was overborne by the interest we felt in that curious freak of nature, a tractiferous yachtsman.

After dinner Peter recovered a little from his discomfiture, and a stroll through the beautiful





CROSS NEAR INVERARY CASTLE.

grounds of Inverary Castle filled up our evening most pleasantly. We were convinced that Dr. Samuel Johnson could never have visited the home of the Macallum-more, or he never would have perpetrated that libel with respect to the lack of trees in Scotland. The wood round the castle is magnificent, and must have been so even in Johnson's time.

The morrow brought bright sunshine again but little wind, so that with half-an-hour's start we were able to keep ahead of the bigger vessel for a long time on our erratic way down Loch Fyne, and even after she did scrape past, uncivilly taking our weather, we kept company with her all day long.

In nine hours from the time of weighing anchor we were no further than Otter, and from that point our progress got slower and slower. After nightfall it was so very dark that we could not see the loom of land, although voices on the shore were distinctly audible; but feeling our way by the lead we anchored as soon as we got bottom in five fathoms, and turned in, leaving foresail and mainsail set ready for a sudden start, being by no means certain of our whereabouts.

The watchful Lachlan called all hands by "skreigh o' day," a light air having set in from the eastward.

Daylight showed us that we had anchored in a

little bay close to a stake net, fortunately just missing dropping our anchor into it.

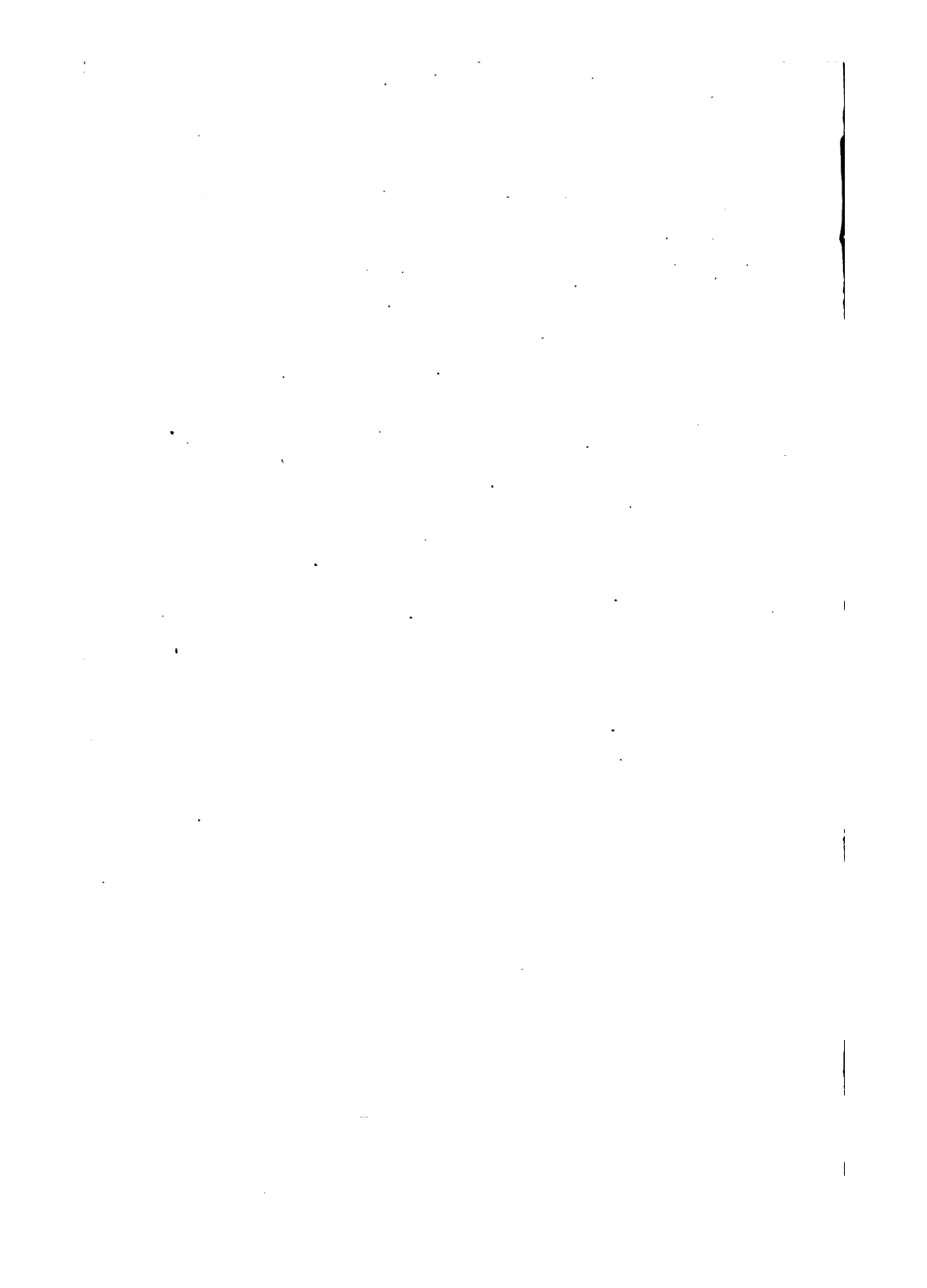
Within a couple of miles of us lay the "Phryne," which had held on all night, and shortly after starting we had the "Lita" astern, which had met us the day before on her homeward voyage; so we were evidently getting our full share of the paltry winds.

By keeping a bright look-out for stray puffs we managed to scull along towards Ardlamont, which we rounded at noon, the "Lita" being then miles astern and quite motionless, the "Phryne" about a mile ahead. Setting our spinnaker we gained somewhat on the big ship, but off Tighnabraich she caught a fine breeze of westerly wind, when we troubled her no more.

In due time we also got the west wind, and after a good run of three hours from the Rughaban point, we anchored at Hunter's Quay, the "Phryne" then disappearing into the Gareloch.

The unlucky "Lita" did not make her appearance till some three hours later, never having had a steady breeze all day. The "Mariana" had only anchored a short time before us, so that we had the grin on our side, none of the three larger vessels that had started with us and sailed away from us so disdainfully having gone over nearly so much ground in the time as we did with our tiny schooner.

Such is the glorious uncertainty of yacht sailing, and as long as flukes now and then comfort the heart of the owner of some ancient ark by giving him the weather-gage of a clipper, so long may flukes continue. Meeting the owner of the "Lita" on shore that evening, he good-humouredly congratulated us on having beaten him to Inverary and back; but on telling him we had spent a night at Campbeltown as well, "Bless me!" says he, "your craft must be built on the lines of the 'Flying Dutchman,' to sail independent of wind and weather. You ought to write a book about it." And I said I would.

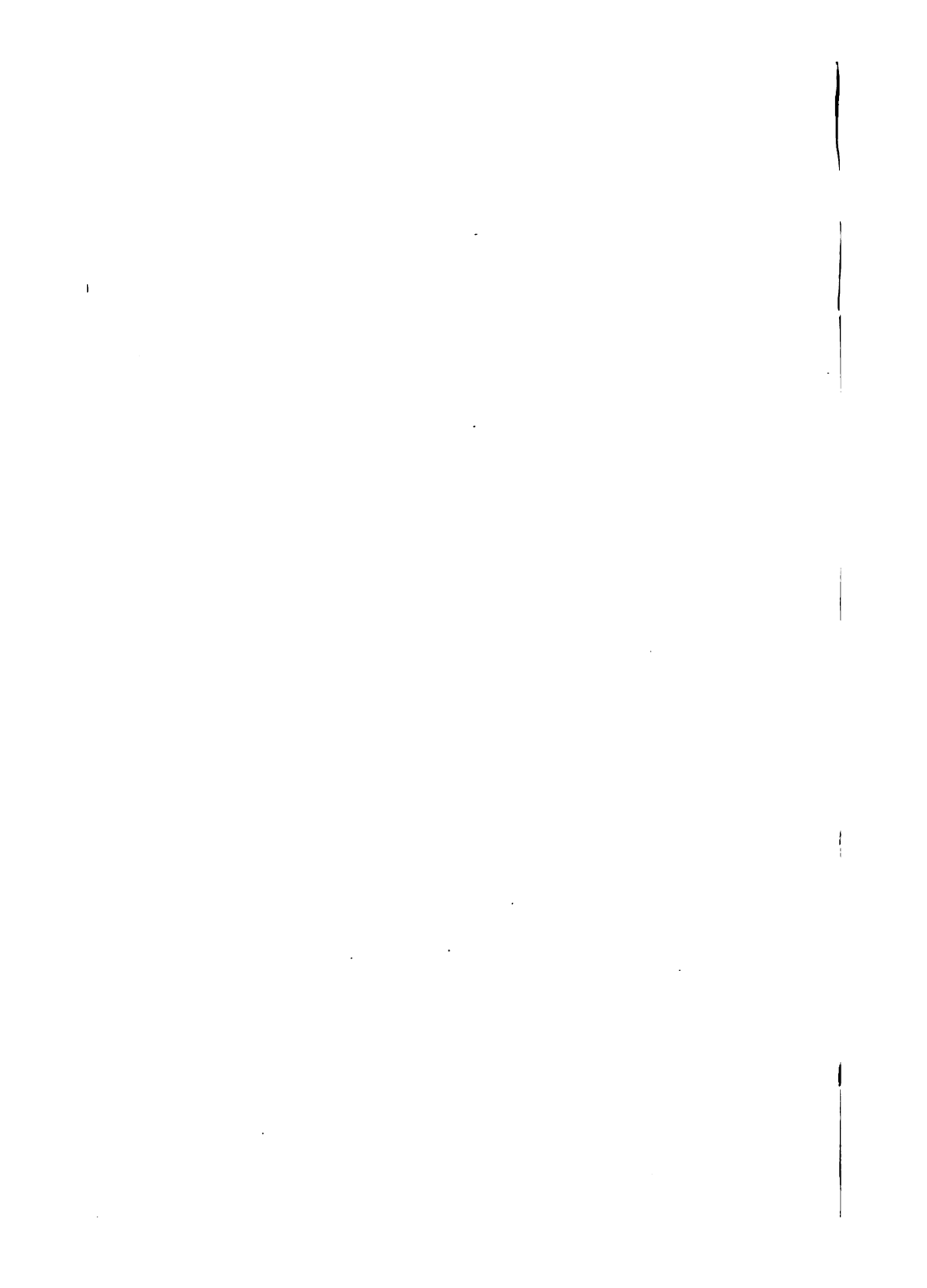




PART III.

CRUISE OF THE "PRINCESS."





PART III.

CRUISE OF THE "PRINCESS."

CHAPTER I.

Jim's defection—The "Princess"—Lamlash—Becalmed in Sanda Sound—The "Moil"—A long beat—Bear up for Blackmill Bay.

Nemo mortalium omnibus horis sapit. That is the best excuse I could find for Jim when he turned his back upon the breezy hills of Scotland and the Hebridean sounds for the scorched plains of Lombardy and the Italian lakes, forsaking the congenial society of his old shipmates for the irksome throng of tourists.

Phoenixes and Salamanders! only think of Milan in July! I firmly believe there is but one place hotter; but as it is vain to attempt to dissuade the individual who has determined to travel Cupar-wards from prosecuting his journey thither, likewise also the would-be pilgrim to the shrine of San Carlo Borrommeo, particularly if the pilgrim be of a decided, not to say obstinate sort, like our friend; we entered a mild protest, and

suggested the Hummums as a sudatorium equally efficient and more convenient; but still he answered with a sigh: "*Probo meliora, deteriora sequor*—you are right as usual, Governor; the season is unfavourable for Italy; nevertheless, to Italy I am going, although my heart's in the Highlands." To this hour the cause of this temporary aberration of mind remains a mystery.

Peter was in Portugal when the time of our annual trip approached, but nothing could have been further from his thoughts than missing us, and when our day of starting arrived, he was somewhere about the mouth of the English Channel, hurrying to join us as fast as a mail steamer could carry him:

The "Concordia" had been replaced by another schooner of double her tonnage, named the "Princess," a roomy, comfortable craft of great strength, an able sea-boat and having tolerable speed for a cruiser. She was, moreover, a remarkably handy craft, not only compared with schooners generally, but even with cutters of similar proportions, staying smartly in smooth water, and with unusual certainty in a heavy sea.

Under deck she was all that could be desired in a vessel of her size, her only defective fitting being that important one, the cooking-stove, which turned out a decided failure, so far as the oven was concerned. As our cook informed us:

—"It's a baad ofen, sir, a ferry baad ofen ; we are trying it the other day and it is tekkin' sux 'oors to bile a smaal rost, but it is never ready yet what-efer." Unluckily, this information came too late for us to replace the faulty apparatus by a better, and our culinary efforts were limited to boiling, frying, and stewing.

Lachlan was still our skipper, but Duncan was on a Mediterranean voyage, and the offices of able seaman, cook, and steward were combined in the person of Archy the ever-ready, a youth who constantly reminded me of the Irish carman who was said to drive with a rein in each hand and a whip *in the other*, for whether it was a top-sail that wanted lacing, a sheet or halliard that required a pull, was breakfast or dinner clamoured for, crockery to clean or knives to polish, the services of the ubiquitous Archy were at once requisitioned and immediately forthcoming.

The cabin occupants, that is to say, the Governor and the unfailing Andy Abbotson, having got their traps aboard, sail was made, the anchor weighed, and we drifted slowly out of Gourrock Bay at 11h. 15m. a.m., on a blazing hot July day. After starting we were hailed by the jolly owner of the cutter "Mariana," who, with the assistance of a formidable party of ladies, was improving his opportunities by making it twelve o'clock in the manner thereunto prescribed.

The "Mariana's" boat was soon alongside of us with a deputation, the members of which, with the curiosity said to appertain to the sex, were desirous of knowing if life were really supportable in a yacht of sixteen tons; and having surveyed the internal arrangements, they rejoined their friends, convinced that existence was not only possible, but might be delightful, with the accommodation a well-fitted craft of even that size possesses.

A soft breeze from N.E. now sprang up and enabled us to make about three knots an hour till half-past three, when it died away and left us becalmed till seven o'clock, freshening up then and carrying us into Lamlash harbour, where we anchored under the Holy Isle in seven fathoms.

This admirable anchorage, which not seldom shelters a hundred sail, was, till we entered it, unoccupied by anything larger than a boat; the easterly winds of the preceding days having cleared out the craft bound seawards, and the weather being so fine no incomer needed refuge. The Holy Isle was as still as I suppose it was in the days when its caves were inhabited by the pious recluses, the odour of whose sanctity clings to it still in its name. The inmates of the solitary house had evidently retired for the night, and, feeling the silence a little oppressive, we followed their example.

During a succession of southerly gales, Lam-lash Bay presents an aspect very different from that under which we saw it. Then it holds as many ships as would fill the docks of a respectable sea-port, and the shouts and songs of a thousand seamen resound along its usually still waters.

For weeks, it may be, its boundaries enclose the storm-stayed mariners; then comes a sudden shift of wind or signs of moderate weather, and the naked spars are forthwith clothed with canvas, the clank of windlass and the creak of tackle mingle with the quaint sea-ditties, the narrow throat between the Clachland Point and the island is thronged with craft whose eager skippers strive each to be the first in open water, and soon the harbour has resumed its normal state of dulness as profound as that of a coffin-maker's workshop on a Sunday.

The position of Lam-lash, at the entrance to the Firth of Clyde, is a most fortunate one for so good a harbour of refuge, and it has now received a tardy recognition of its importance by the erection of a lighthouse (showing a green light) on the south end of the island.

Formerly it was difficult of access at night, especially during the haze which always accompanies southerly gales, and many vessels which had been compelled to bear up have had to run

for Rothesay or Greenock, being unable to pick out either entrance against the lofty background of the Arran hills.

Next morning we weighed and passed out of the landlocked bay at half-past seven, falling in with a fine breeze from the eastward. As we scudded along close to the shore, the pretty watering-place at Whiting Bay was gleaming brightly in the morning sunshine; but for a cheerful morning prospect nothing could excel Archy's salmon steaks, the grateful odour of which was by this time assailing our nostrils so powerfully that we abruptly descended to make their closer acquaintance.

Breakfast over, everything appeared *couleur de rose*: overhead a cloudless sky, around a delightful panorama of rugged shore and sparkling sea, and above all, to make our bliss without alloy, a fresh, fair wind.

At nine we passed Pladda, jibed the main-sail, boomed out the foresail, and hove the patent log, our ship still merrily ploughing the briny; but as the sun went up the wind went down, and one o'clock found us in the sound of Sanda in a flat calm.

Whistling for wind being of no avail, and the time-honoured and beautiful custom of drinking to the breeze equally futile, we thanked Providence for an ebb spring-tide, which is a tolerable

substitute for a breeze in that locality if you happen to be bound to the westward, as it runs some five knots an hour.

This tide-stream may sometimes be an advantage in calm weather to the sailor with good local knowledge; some acute mariners can make it favourable for nine hours out of twelve, but in blowing weather it creates a terrific race which even large vessels cannot afford to despise, and which makes the neighbourhood of Deas Point a very desirable place for small craft to be out of. Experience of it in sundry equinoctial gales, and notably in a stiffish westerly breeze on a November evening, has begotten in me a lively feeling of respect for the terrible "Moil," and a disposition to avoid it on any but specially selected occasions. At this time, however, Sanda Sound was, if anything, too placid: still, the ebb being in our favour we complained not.

On getting into wider water the tide began to slacken, so we got the boat ahead and towed by spells in hopes of getting round the corner before the tide turned, and perhaps catching a breeze which would enable us to stem the flood. After a couple of hours of very hot work, we came abreast of the Mull of Kintyre lighthouse; but by this time the tide had turned, and no breeze coming to our assistance, there was nothing for it but to let her go wherever the flood-stream

would take her, which we accordingly did, and found ourselves at six o'clock much nearer Ireland than we contemplated when we set out on our cruise. A light air then enabled us to hold our own till half-past nine, when it freshened, and, the flood being nearly done, we began to make a little headway.

Our attention was then attracted by a dark sail which was rapidly gliding along close under the high land, and judging it to belong to some coaster, whose local knowledge was doubtless superior to our own, we tacked inshore to follow him; but before we got into his wake the darkness had hid him from our sight.

By midnight we were again off the Mull light, when suddenly the easterly wind came howling over the hill, making our little ship reel and stagger for a bit; but, recovering, off she went to the northward a good nine knots, her sides lapped as it seemed by liquid fire.

With the wind there came up a thick bank of clouds which obscured the bright full moon and made the darkness appear more black by contrast. All was now bustle and excitement; to make up for the long aggravating calm we kept her going hard under all plain sail and jib-headed main topsail, taking a pull here and there to freshen things up a bit. We could just lie our course to the westward of Gigha, and, at the rate

we were then travelling, we hoped to be well up for Sgeir-Mhoile by daylight.

This rock was formerly one of the most formidable dangers on the route to the north. It is of small area, and being only a few feet out of water is hardly visible at a moderate distance even in clear daylight; while all round and close to, the depths are so great as to give no indication of its neighbourhood. Now, however, the splendid revolving light exhibited upon it is a most useful finger-post for the navigator in Jura Sound.

The wind being a "soger's" one, we passed many sailing craft bound Clyde-wards at no great distance. Very few of them carried lights; but we, being law-abiding persons, displayed a red light in our port-rigging as by Act of Parliament required, and hoped that the look-out men on the coasters would not fail to see it.

By half-past two in the morning we were under the lee of Gigha. The wind had come more ahead, and had increased so much, that we had to send down the topsail, single-reef the mainsail, and shift jibs. At nine we passed the MacCormaig Islands, and had a good view of the ancient chapel which stands on Eilan Mor. This is one of the most entire of the very old ecclesiastical buildings in Scotland, and it is believed to be one of the most ancient, dating prior to the

erection of Iona Cathedral. It is, however, of much less importance architecturally, and is supposed to have been used merely for burial services in connection with interments in the adjacent cemetery.

The sickly-looking sun now gave us promise of plentiful rain, which shortly set in with that persistent drip so familiar to Highland tourists; but putting our trust in our changes of raiment, we defied the elements.

Getting out from the lee of these islands, we observed a hooker about a couple of miles to windward, which we were driven to conclude could be no other than the one which passed the Mull three hours before us, and in consequence we felt rather small at having spent the whole night in the wake of a coaster, but on coming up with her at noon we found her to be a fast-sailing "herring-couper" of about seventy tons, owned by a Skye merchant, and sailed by one of the 'cutest old salts on the west coast. Would that we had profited by his example and quietly dropped our mudhook in Loch Crinan, but we must be wiser than he, forsooth, and carry on in what had now become a very dirty afternoon.

The wind was by this time strong and squally, and the rain both heavy and cold, but the tide was in our favour as yet, and we counted on reaching Oban bay before dark. We bore through

the swirling Dorus Mor in a heavy squall, and beating up Scarba sound with the tail end of the flood passed Pladda light at 3h. 30m. The wind being now dead ahead was sending up a sea so short and high that by the time we had fetched Sheep Island our decks were being swept fore and aft and ourselves pretty thoroughly pickled with very cold brine. By five o'clock we had enough of it, and resolving that the better part of valour is discretion, we scandalized our reefed mainsail and put the helm up for Blackmill bay, which we reached at 6h. 15m. p.m., tired out with our spell of thirty-six hours on deck, twenty of them spent in turning to windward. After a plentiful hot supper to all hands, and the due observation of a certain rite not unconnected with a particular bottle, we turned in and slept the sleep of the innocent.

The skipper showed himself to be an out-and-out hydropathist, having lain down "all standing," as sailors say, with all his clothes wringing wet, and seeming none the worse in the morning. Not every one could do this with impunity, but "use doth breed a habit in a man," and a Skye-man is in his normal state when wet to the skin.

Next morning there was no occasion for an early start as the tide did not serve till after ten o'clock, and it is useless to attempt the passage among the Slate Islands against it, so we had

ample time to dry our canvas before giving it the final set-up, and to discuss our doings of the previous days.

"It strikes me, Lachie," said the Governor, "you were mightily scared about Corryvreckan yesterday; how you did hug the Craignish side of the Dorus Mor to be sure! I thought you would smash the jibboom against the rocks."

"Well, sir," replied Lachlan; "and it is but a baad place for smaal vessels, the Gulf, and for the matter of that it is not a very good passage for big wans neither, 'specially in spring tides."

"Were you ever through it, Lachie?" asked Andy.

"No, sir, I never was, but I hev had my bag in the boat ready to leave our vessel when we was becalmed between Ris-an-tru and Scarba with a flood-tide, but the wind sprung up and we weathered it."

"I do believe," quoth the Governor, "that this Highland Maelstrom they make such a fuss about is not half so bad as it is made out to be. The natives keep up the delusion that tourists may be properly astounded at the wonders of Nature which attract so much coin to this impecunious country. Don't you think now, Lachlan, the 'Princess' could have gone through the Gulf safely enough last night, only you were afraid I would find out the whirlpool to be a humbug?"

"Very possible, sir," cautiously responded Lachlan; "but you will observe, sir, we was bound for Oban last night, and it would hev taken us out of our way a bit."

Which there was no denying.

CHAPTER II.

An unsuccessful forage—Spiritual destitution—Loch Aline—Tobermory—Our day ashore—Slow progress—First view of Skye—Scavaig—Coruisk—The Cell a sell.

AFTER breakfast we made an excursion ashore in quest of some of the produce of the country in the form of eggs and milk. We found two houses with doors and windows wide open but without a soul inside or around, and as we did not care, by helping ourselves, to abuse the touching confidence in the honesty of wayfarers shown by these unsophisticated islanders, we re-embarked eggless and milkless and quitted our snug anchorage with the first of flood.

As we opened up Scarba sound we espied our friend the herring-couper coming along at a good pace, no doubt chuckling at his superior sagacity in contriving to get as far on the road as we were with some three or four hours' less sailing; but we

soon left him well astern. The wind being about S.E., we fetched right through the narrows between Luing and Pladda, and made a straight course for Easdale, which we passed at 11h. 45m. The sun now came out strong, and our rigging was soon hung with graceful festoons of soaked garments, the consequences of our sousing the day before.

It is a feature of Kerrera sound that the wind there seems always to be a-head whichever way you may happen to be going, and on this occasion no exception was made in our favour. Archy's duties therefore oscillated continually between the jib-sheets and the potato-pot, which boiled over every time we went in stays with a persistence worthy of a better cause. Oban bay was reached before these same potatoes were ready for table; and after dinner we went ashore for letters, and learned to our great satisfaction that "Peter" had landed in Liverpool and was after us hot foot, scattering telegrams over the whole country in his ignorance of our precise whereabouts; so leaving word for him to join us at Tobermory we got in fresh supplies at Mr. Cumstie's well-stocked emporium, and left for the Sound of Mull.

Apropos of stores, we found it necessary here to replenish our stock of whisky, which had declined in the most unaccountable way during the

passage, probably by evaporation caused by the intense heat of the first two days; and until I tasted the decoction promulgated by the Celtic distillery, I never properly realized what was meant by "the spirits of unjust men." A steady course of indulgence in the flowing bowl of turpentine, might in course of time qualify one's throat and palate for its enjoyment; but as we did not think the end justified the means, we confined our potations to the milder claret until our return to civilization and drinkable usquebagh.

Light and baffling winds kept us until 7 h. 20 m. p.m. under the headland on which romantic Dunolly stands, when a nice steady breeze drew us across to Lismore; from this to the entrance of Mull sound we had a strong N.E. breeze and heavy swell. Under the high land of Morven the wind became light again, and in the strong tide we made but little headway towards Ard-tornish.

"Beneath the castle's sheltering lee
We stayed our course in quiet sea"

a good deal longer than we cared to do, as night-fall was at hand and the entrance to Loch Aline is neither wide nor deep; still, as none of us had ever seen that most lovely inlet, we were very desirous of anchoring there.

We found the entrance about ten o'clock,

although it was pretty dark, the moon being still obscured, and in spite of a tide running out like a mill-race we forced our way in, a timeous puff over the hills standing us in good stead.

It is said that on the bar there is only six feet at dead low-water (spring-tides), and I think this must be correct. It was about four hours ebb when we passed in, and there being thirteen feet rise at springs, we should have found ten feet on the bar or thereabouts. Exact sounding is not possible from a yacht under way in a rapid tide. We made the depth eleven feet, which gave us three and a half to spare, our draught being seven feet six inches.

Inside the bar the water suddenly deepens to twenty fathoms, and towards the lower end of the loch it is only close to the shore that it shoals enough for convenient anchorage.

I hear that the owner of the surrounding land has recently buoyed all the dangers, so that strangers can now take up anchorage in the day-time without difficulty ; water is also supplied to vessels at the landing-place free of charge. These conveniences will no doubt attract visitors.

After supper we sat on deck till long after midnight, admiring the scenery by moonlight, which was then exceedingly bright. In the morning we saw it in the light of still more brilliant sunshine, and under both aspects Loch Aline

is charming ; the very difficulty of getting in and out gives a kind of zest to it, coy beauties being most run after.

A strong breeze and a swift ebb-tide sent us rushing out of the narrow entrance at something like twelve knots an hour over the land, and in the sound of Mull we made a decent eight under single-reefed mainsail, staysail, and second jib—foresail being stowed. We had a steamboat course of it along the Morven shore and rounded Calla Island, off Tobermory, in an hour and a-quarter from the mouth of Loch Aline, anchoring at noon in the bay as far as possible from the not over-savoury village.

Courteous reader ! You have probably heard mention of Damon and Pythias, Pylades and Orestes, David and Jonathan. Generous friendship among the male sex is so uncommon, that three couples furnish the only examples of it worth preserving in tale or history, and, after all, what were the acts of devotion for which these worthies have been immortalized ?

Pythias, who probably lodged with his mother-in-law, did, it is true, offer his neck to the Syracusan Calcraft of the period, in case his friend did not come to time. Electra, the uncomfortable sister of Orestes, persuaded that gentleman to murder his mother. He, to avoid making a toil of a pleasure, invited cousin Pylades to assist,

which he did, and subsequently married into the family. A nice lot weren't they to hold up for examples to ingenuous youth? I forget what disinterested acts David performed in my admiration for our own noble conduct herein recorded for the edification of a wondering posterity.

During four days we had been drifting in calms, baffled by tides, battered by head winds, and soaked with rain and spray, without having a thoroughly good run of twenty miles at a stretch; and now, on this the fifth day a strong steady fair wind blew from early dawn till sundown, and nothing would have been easier than for us to have reached Loch Scavaig, the goal of our hopes, in six or seven hours from where we turned aside to anchor at Tobermory.

The tempter could not have put it to us more strongly, but to our eternal honour we bade him get behind us and let our bark lie fretting at her cable, awaiting the arrival of the morrow's steamer from Oban.

Having thus resolved to give up sailing for one day, it behoved us to find the next most profitable manner of spending it, which was obviously exploring the neighbourhood on foot. I had a pleasant recollection of a walk along a most romantic cliff road to Runa Gall lighthouse, which I had once undertaken on a November day when storm-stayed in the bay during a passage round the north

of Scotland, and accordingly we bent our steps in that direction. This road winds along the face of an almost perpendicular hill-side, following, as it must needs do, all the indentations and sinuosities of the coast-line, and presenting at every turn a varied and magnificent prospect. Near the town the path is shaded by birch and hazel and climbing honeysuckle, but farther on, towards the lighthouse, the salt spray forbids any vegetation but grass and the hardy broom.

In front of the exquisitely neat and clean cottages which are the appendages of the lighthouse, the keeper was gravely promenading to and fro, the streamers of his bagpipes fluttering over his shoulders, and from the instrument he was extracting music as sweet as may be, the roar of the surf on the rocky shore making a suitable and impressive ground-bass.

The performer deprecated criticism, protesting he was only an "amatewer," and sitting down with us on a stone, dissected his pipes for our amusement. His conversation, during the short chat we had with him, we found, like that of most Highlanders uncontaminated by too much contact with their Lowland countrymen, evincing a singular intelligence and characterized by a propriety and even elegance of expression which would rather surprise some southerners I have met, who think of Celts as semi-barbarians,

scarcely restrained from smuggling, cattle-lifting, and the levying of black-mail.

Returning to Tobermory we searched in vain for a butcher's shop, and were about to go on board with the impression that no such institution flourished in the village, when we were accosted by an old aborigine with "Thus was a fine day"—we assenting most cordially he ventured to guess "You will be from the yatt," to which impeachment we owned. His motive for opening communications then appeared from his concluding that we were in want of what he called "some goot mittens," and we thereupon recognized in him the local butcher, and proceeded with him to his establishment, where heads and joints of sheep reposed in strange juxtaposition with boots and bibles, hardware and hosiery, tapes, threads, treacle, testaments, and such incongruous necessaries.

If it be true that the nearer the bone the sweeter the meat, no mutton could have been sweeter than that of Tobermory.

Our opinion of the resources of the place was altogether more extended after this episode, and Andy proposed we should ferret out a confectioner who would achieve for us a *chef d'œuvre* of his art to grace our dinner-table on the morrow in honour of the new arrival. After a long search, a man of dough was found, who declared himself com-





AROS WATERFALL.

petent to execute any order of the kind, having served his apprenticeship in Glasgow; but as the requisite materials were not obtainable in the island, our negotiations suddenly collapsed.

The remainder of the day was spent in loafing about the Doirlinn pass in the punt, and wandering around the lovely lake behind Aros Castle, a delicious nook with just the faintest suspicion of artificiality about it, enough to make one think that landscape gardening is not entirely contemptible even when exhibited along with the beauties of Nature unadorned.

We made a digression to the ridge over which a fine stream precipitates itself, making Aros waterfall. The way to it increases in roughness in a geometrical ratio, and ends in a climb which would not be unworthy of the powers of a chimney-sweep. The Governor being, alas, somewhat fat and scant of breath, was infinitely beholden to the more agile Mr. Abbotson for a frequent shove or pull till both reached the top.

Altogether, although we were insatiable in the matter of sailing, we were bound to confess that our *dies non* had not been quite blank, but that on the contrary it had been most enjoyably spent. All the same, we resolved that Peter should not be allowed to forget the sacrifice we had made for him.

Next morning we began to look out for the

"Mountaineer" long before she could possibly have left Oban, and being uncertain whether she would go out by the Ross of Mull or come up the Sound, our state of mind may be imagined, (but I will not attempt to describe it,) as upon the steamer's route depended our getting away before noon or remaining another precious day idle at Tobermory.

Fortunately for our sanity we descried her cloud of smoke about ten o'clock, and by eleven our trio was completed by the arrival of our friend, who had come *ventre-à-terre* from Lisbon to the Hebrides to keep tryst with his old shipmates.

The wind, which had stuck to eastward for five days, now suddenly chopped round to north-west, and as it was a most delicate zephyr, we spread to it all our kites. The "Princess" was a fair performer in light winds, her masts were taunt, and, as an eminent Irish yachtsman expressed it, "infurnel far forrut in her," giving her a mainsail not much less than a cutter's, and a maintop-sail a good deal larger in proportion to her lower canvas than schooners usually set.

Tacking in Bloody Bay, the scene of a terrible sea fight in ancient times, we left the Mull shore and stretched across to the Ardnamurchan coast, fetching Mingary Castle, an extensive ruin perched upon a steep rock. To have a good look at it, we stood quite close in, which can be

done even with a large vessel, as the shore is bold. Making short tacks off that land, we came at three o'clock abreast of Ardnamurchan Lighthouse, a handsome tower standing on the most westerly point of the Scottish mainland:—and then it fell a dead calm.

We suffered much from the intense heat, but some one providentially remembering the scientific fact that the exhibition (in a medical sense) of alcohol is attended by a diminution of the surface temperature of the body, we confiscated Peter's flask, and devoted a few minutes to experiments in natural philosophy.

We found some amusement in popping at the "dookers" with a pea rifle, a mildly-exciting, and at the same time bloodless recreation, the only result being vast consternation among the feathered tribes, who, relying upon the Sea Birds Preservation Bill, had been swimming round us with the most aggravating nonchalance.

We were indifferent to the fact that Barra Head was visible, though distant forty-four miles, and the skipper's information that it was seldom clear enough hereabouts to see so far, made us in no way thankful for the exceptional clearness of this particular day. What we wished to see was a ripple on the glassy ocean, and the punt straining at her painter instead of bumping at our quarter; but all the afternoon the provoking calm

continued, with just the gentlest, faintest, catspaw now and then, to keep us awake and eager. About six o'clock we were off the Scur of Eigg, and had certainly ample opportunity of studying its fantastic and ever-changing outline.

At nine o'clock we opened up the full view of the glorious Coolin hills, their rugged peaks sharply defined against a pale blue sky. The setting sun tinged them for an instant with violet and gold, then sank beneath the horizon, and almost as soon as the sunset tint had faded, the milder light of the full moon shed a softer but no less lovely radiance over the scene. It is almost sacrilege offered to moonlight—so frequently the poet's theme—to speak of it photographically, but I hope to be forgiven for recording that at midnight the smallest type was plainly legible.

Even Peter, who, being a sucking barrister, is given to questioning everything for the sake of argument, was forced to confess that in the matter of moonshine the Hebrides had considerably the advantage of Portugal.

The silence of the night was oppressive, being broken by nothing but the occasional squawk of a diver, the cheep of our own tackle, as the yacht rose and fell on the barely perceptible swell, and the faint crooning by our usually silent skipper of a Gaelic song, probably a Highland *Ranz des*

Vaches, drawn from him by the prospect of his native island.

And so the night passed until the dawn, which was scarcely less gorgeous in its golden tints than the sunset, and its glory was even more shortlived, for a thick bank of fog came rolling in from the westward, just giving us time to take a cross-bearing and prick off our place on the chart before it shut us in. With the fog came a light westerly breeze, so we shaped our course for Loch Scavaig and put our trust in that sweet little cherub specially detailed for the duty of looking after seafaring men, as we could hardly see the bits from the cockpit. At eight o'clock we made land close on the lee bow, which our skipper pronounced to be Strathaird point. Luckily the shore is here steep-to and gave us room to tack on sighting it, which we did sharply, standing off shore till we judged we could fetch the anchorage, when we tacked again and stood towards the head of the loch still steering by compass, having lost sight of the land as our head lay seaward.

Loch Scavaig is rather a ticklish place to be groping about in with a thick fog all round, but the wind was light, and we thought we were less likely to lose our reckoning under way than hove-to. Just as we reached the little island which forms a shelter for the anchorage, the fog rolled

up the hillsides like a huge gauze curtain, and Scavaig in all its grandeur was unveiled to our admiring eyes. At 10h. 45m. a.m., the welcome rattle of the chain through the hawse announced that we had reached the outward point of our voyage, and that henceforth our road would lie homeward. We had only allowed ourselves nine days to go and return in, and but two days and a half remained to us ; it therefore appeared most probable that we should have to finish our cruise at Oban and return by steamer, which was so distasteful a prospect that we forthwith voted our holidays extended *sine die* until the yacht should be safely moored in bonny Clyde again.

Breakfast over, we landed and crossed the barren strip which separates the grim Loch Scavaig from the still more awe-compelling Coruisk. No agglomeration of epithets can convey the faintest idea of that solemn landscape to any one who has never seen it, and to those who have had that privilege, no attempt to recall the impression it gives can seem otherwise than feeble. I therefore spare the reader any crude attempts at fine writing on the subject, and with praiseworthy self-denial refrain from cribbing from guide-book or gazetteer. I even omit the usual appropriate quotation "St. Mary! what a scene is here," &c. &c., and merely mention that King Robert Bruce (who considered himself



LOCH SAVAIG.

rather a judge of wild scenery) is reported to have sworn by his halidome that nothing like it had ever come under his notice. In his late Majesty's opinion we deliberately concurred, but we thought it safer not to swear by our halidomes, being uncertain what that would commit us to.

On a previous visit to Coruisk I had trudged with a friend from Camasunary round Sgor-na-Sorith, and after a laborious walk, or rather scramble, we found ourselves in a sort of *cul-de-sac*, from which we were extricated by a picnic party, who had come in a boat from Torrin, and landed at the head of Scavaig. We were very much obliged to those excursionists, and we have no doubt they were most worthy fellows, but we could not help thinking that a noisy party of holiday-makers, with their paraphernalia of table-cloths, crockery, and other accessories of a plenteous luncheon, were out of harmony with the weird desolation of our environment—it reminded us of the intrusion of the money-changers and them that sold doves into the holy temple—so, after a glance at the lake we had come so far to see, we retraced our toilsome way to Camasunary and Sligachan.

On this occasion we had all within the range of our vision completely to ourselves; no living creature but our own party was to be seen, we

were free to revel in the noble scenery with no jarring interruption to discompose us.

But a falling barometer warned us to seek a more hospitable harbour than Scavaig affords; our heads were full of moving narratives of awful adventures in that treacherous basin, of yachts torn from their moorings and dashed into fragments on the sunken rocks with which the place abounds, of punts lifted bodily out of water and blown goodness knows where, leaving the hapless crews to swim for their lives with the cheerful prospect of breaking their necks in a vain attempt to reach the nearest dwelling or perishing by starvation in that desolate region. So we made sail southward at 3h. 30m., and there being but little wind, turned up Loch Slapin to have a look at that

"Sunless well
Deep in Strath-aird's enchanted cell."

The eastern face of Strath-aird point (which divides Loch Scavaig from Loch Slapin) is honey-combed with caves of all sizes. The largest, called the Spar cave, is the one we were now bound to explore. Heaving-to off the entrance, which is not difficult to find, being a deep fissure in the rock with perpendicular walls, and on the plateau above a paling round it to keep the sheep from falling over, we provided ourselves with

candles and pulled ashore to the landing-place. To land here would be impossible with the least wind from any quarter but directly off shore; the beach is exceedingly rough, and the swell, even in a calm, sufficient to stave in a boat against it, if due caution be not observed.

The alert Archy, oblivious of the damage to his wearing apparel, was over the side as soon as we came into shoal water, and, watching his chance, adroitly carried in the punt on the crest of a roller, beached her without damage, and gave us the chance of getting ashore dry-shod before the next surge broke.

A few paces from highwater-mark is the cave, and oh, my dear Sir Walter! how could you call that abominable hole an enchanted cell, or suggest that any decent, well-brought-up mermaid would ever use it for a bathing-house? It would not make a good pig-stye, because the pigs would all be smothered in the mud, which seems fathoms deep. We shuddered at what might be our fate if we missed our footing on the stepping-stones, by means of which we picked our way into its recesses, till we were brought up by a precipice described in the guide-books as of alabaster (Sir Walter again, I fear); but if it ever had the purity of alabaster, it has got woefully soiled since. At the summit of this acclivity, those who have a fancy to scramble over dirty wet rocks may be

gratified by a candle-light view of a little pool of water—the "sunless well."

Need I say that I was quite satisfied with the report of my more agile companions, and evinced respect unto the knees of my pantaloons by remaining on the level? Not even an announcement that the mermaid was in her bath would have tempted me to climb. I cannot think that any one who has in his neighbourhood a railway cutting through a water-bearing rock, need go out of his way to see the Spar cave.

In former days, I understand it was a curious sight from the number of large stalactites which hung from its roof; but these have disappeared long since under the tourist's unsparing hand.

CHAPTER III.

Any port in a calm—Uneasy anchorage—On the high seas—Into smoother water—Crinan—The Canal—Home.

DARKNESS was approaching, and being pretty well worn out with our night watch on deck and our day's clambering on rocky shores, we were now chiefly concerned to find a snug place to drop our anchor in; and passing by Tarsea Bay, which we thought too much exposed to the south-

ward, we came to near the mouth of Loch Eishart, in a bay which was afflicted with the unpronounceable name of Tocabhaig, and which being open only from N.W. to N.N.E., we judged would shelter us from the breeze that we were almost certain would soon pipe up from southward, the glass having fallen rapidly all day, and the air being oppressively warm. To gain even this doubtful shelter, the tow-rope had to be put into requisition, the wind having quite died away.

On the north horn of the bay is the fine ruin of Dunscaith Castle, alluded to by Ossian in connection with a young person of the name of Bragela. We proposed to ourselves to land and visit it on the morrow.

Our skipper, being here but a short distance from his home, was granted leave of absence for a few hours as soon as things were made snug for the night; but he had not been gone long, when lo! down came the wind from N. b. W. over the Coolins, and before we had time to utter the traditional invocation to Jack Robinson, the yacht was plunging and tugging at her cable as if she wished to lay her bones for good and all among the reefs which the breakers all round now revealed to us.

This was decidedly tiresome; instead of being comfortably tucked into bed, as we had hoped,

all hands had to keep themselves ready for a sudden start, in case of the yacht breaking away, as seemed likely enough. We could not heave up and shift anchorage for good reasons: we and our skipper would have had difficulty in meeting again, the telegraph not being laid on in that part of the island; secondly, and chiefly, the hands left on board had not weight enough to get the anchor; so we waited patiently the turn of events.

Between one and two in the morning we heard a faint hail ashore, the indefatigable Archy was off like a shot with the punt, and, being well acquainted with the locality, contrived to get safely through the labyrinth of broken water and bring the skipper aboard. It being evident that the sooner we shifted our quarters the better for the underwriters, the watch below was called to make a start. Andy promptly obeyed the summons; but our legal friend contented himself with putting his head up out of the companion, and again retiring to take the whole case into avizandum. He was heard to mutter on descending some incoherent remarks about the Bay of Biscay and fresh-water sailors which we were much too busy to resent. By daylight we were under snug canvas, double-reefed mainsail, staysail, and third jib, and at four o'clock commenced heaving short our cable; but before the anchor was nearly

under her forefoot it broke away, and the yacht filled with her head, as a matter of course, in the direction which gave us least room, by the same law of Nature as that which makes bread-and-butter fall with the buttered side down.

We barely managed to stay, a very uncertain operation with an anchor and seven fathoms of chain over the bows, and shaving the rocks stood out to sea, making a good offing before heaving-to to get our anchor aboard.

"Cott pless me!" ejaculated Lachlan aside, "that wass a narrow eskepp! I thoct we wass ashore aaltogether."

"Couldn't have happened in a better place, Lachlan," said the Governor. "An unknown coast, imperfectly surveyed, rocks not laid down on any chart, and all the rest of it. We could have made a first-rate defence at a Board of Trade inquiry, our certificates would have been returned to us with a compliment from the presiding justices, and we should have left the court without a stain on our characters. That is to say, if we managed to land ourselves, which did not seem at all certain."

"That is aal very well for you, sir, who are not belonging to the place; but I am here jist five mile from where I wass born, and if I wass to lose a vessel on this shore I would never go home anny more to be laughed at by every old wumman

in Sleet. But oh! she is the handy, handy boat, and I would get her under way out of anny place if we had a quicker purchase for the anchor. She is as quick in stays as a cutter, ay, and more too."

Squaring away the mainboom, we dropped our peak a little and flattened the head-sheets to prevent her broaching to, and shaped our course for Ardnamurchan, not without some misgiving as to what might be in store for us; but the slashing breeze was so exhilarating after the long calm, that bringing up was not to be thought of with the wind fair, though a trifle too strong for pleasure-sailing. Besides, it was not practicable, as there was no available harbour nearer than the Sound of Mull.

The sea increased every foot we sailed, until we came to Ardnamurchan, where it ran mountains high, and so cross, the tide being at the flood and against the wind, that we looked for the crest of a comber aboard of us every minute. To add to our excitement, a large whale passed us close to leeward, turned and passed under our stern, giving us an opportunity of admiring his magnificent swimming powers; but we had other fish to fry and did not give the whale much attention, our minds being occupied with the thought that it would be necessary to jibe presently, a manoeuvre requiring some judgment in such a sea.

We could not sufficiently admire the behaviour of the "Princess" in the confused, sweltering sea; she seemed to revel in her gallop on Neptune's white horses after the comparative inaction of the two previous days. We shipped no water to speak of, but our unfortunate punt, which was rather large to carry on deck, got filled, and the strain on the painter pulled half the stem out of her; having taken the precaution to fit a preventer to the foremost thwart, we contrived to keep hold of her in her dilapidated condition.

Choosing a favourable opportunity, we jibed without accident, and rounding Ardnamurchan point were soon in tolerably smooth water. Running past Tobermory harbour, which in the rough weather looked as cheerless as lately it had appeared sunny and inviting, we set the foresail, and off Fuenary shook out our reefs and shifted jibs.

At eleven o'clock there was a flat calm in the sound, and the rain poured down on our devoted heads in tropical abundance; this was provoking, but it is Highland weather, and those who cannot dispense with "the comforts of the Sautmarket" must e'en take honest Nicol Jarvie's advice and come no farther north than Glasgow. For seven mortal hours the rain never slackened, and we made very slow progress indeed until six o'clock, when a rattling breeze from N.N.E. blew the rain

out to sea and set us scudding down the Frith of Lorn with mainsail and foresail goose-winged. Pladda was passed at 8h. 20m., the Dorus Mor at 9h. 30m., and we dropped anchor at Loch Crinan at 10h. 15m., after a splendid run from Skye, the seven hours calm notwithstanding.

Deep and dreamless were our slumbers that night, as we had long arrears of sleep to make up, having been sixty-four hours awake, with the exception of an occasional short nap snatched anyhow.

Next day was the one originally fixed for our return home, and we were very hopeful of keeping time if we had any luck at all. By eight o'clock we were cruising about Loch Crinan, and at nine entered the canal. We speedily found a party, answering to the name of Duncan, who was possessed of a horse, which we hitched to the fore end of our ship and made rapid progress towards Ardrishaig till brought up at the first lock.

Here commenced delays, aggravated in our case by our having to haul into a basin to wait the coming up of the "Linnet" with "Her Majesty's Bags," as the locksman put it, and a motley crowd of tourists, who stared at us till we were constrained to blush. I except Duncan; I don't think he blushed—in fact, he could not—a peony would have looked pale beside that Bardolphian countenance.

Duncan may have had his failings; inconvenient bashfulness was not one of them. When we arrived at Cairnbaan, the highest point of the canal, he expressed indignant surprise because we did not seem to recognize that this was the generally accepted time for serving out the "crock." Andy interpreted grog literally, and offered to put water in his whisky, but he shrank from the qualifier like a mad dog, protesting that "thae scoondrel mairchants wass aalways putten too mitch watter into the whusky already," and, swallowing his copious dram at a gulp, remarked "that'll doo eenoo." Before we parted at Ardri-shaig, he reminded us that he had forgotten to pledge our healths in his former jorum, and intimated his longing to repair the omission. A large beakerful of the "Celtic" having been handed him, it followed its predecessor down his capacious throat, while he bestowed upon us a hideous leer intended to express his tender solicitude for our welfare. After this last dose we looked as though he should have swollen or fallen down suddenly, but when we had looked a long time and saw that no harm came to him, we changed our minds and said that he was a devil to drink whisky.

While in the canal, Andy was promoted to the responsible position of cook *vice* Archy, on shore at the checkropes. His term of office was rendered

memorable by the manufacture of a soufflé of eggs which would have immortalized a *cordon-bleu*. Cookery is evidently his vocation, and he is understood to be at present studying Francatelli with the view of producing, at our next cruise, some elegancies not often seen at a yacht's table.

At three o'clock in the afternoon we left the canal and were soon bowling down Loch Fyne with a strong breeze on the starboard quarter. We passed Ardlamont point at 5h. 15m., and entered the Kyles of Bute, which seemed so home-like after the sombre lochs and hills of Skye. Toward lighthouse was rounded at 8h. 15m., when the wind, hitherto fresh, failed us, and with diminished speed we glided up the Firth of Clyde, dropped our anchor at ten o'clock in the Holy lock, and our cruise of 400 miles was over.

As the punt went off again after landing us, the following dialogue was heard over the still waters.

"Iss that you, Erchee?"

"Ay, it's me, Angus."

"Iss the 'Princess' pack again?"

"Ay iss she."

"Wharr wass you, Erchee, wass you at Skye?"

"Deed wass we, Angus."

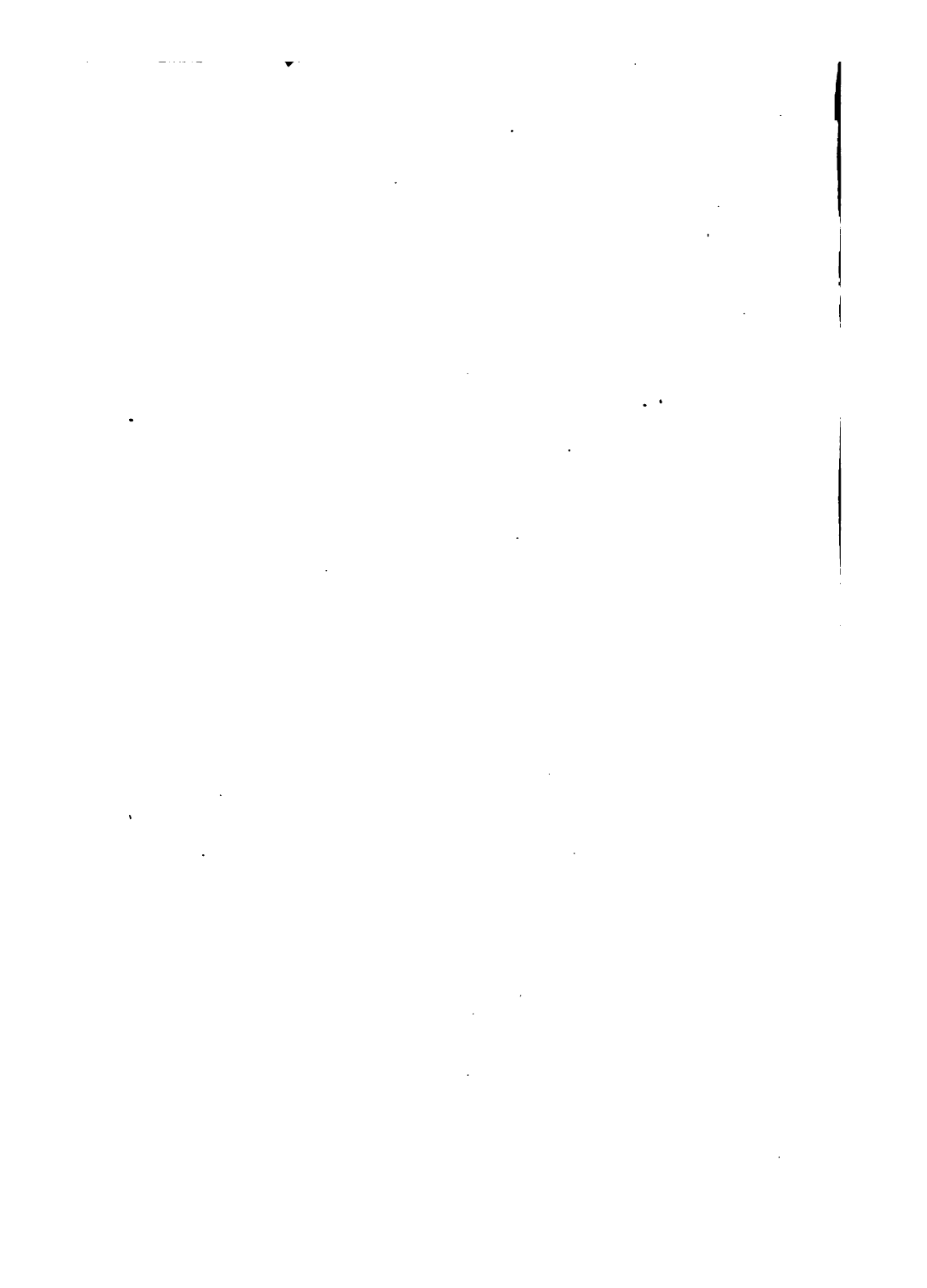
"And whan you left Skye, Erchee?"

"Yesterday mornin' we are leavin' Loch Eishart."

"An' that iss wan lie, Erchee Macalister, an it's the coot cheek you hev to be tellin' me you are coming from Skye in two dez with a sellin' yatt."

"Coot cheek yoursel', Angus MacDiarmid, we are comin' in two dez, and we are seevin' oors bekaamt, and we are ten oors to an anchor, and we are sux oors in the canawl too, and you can ask the skipper mirover, and mebbe you will not caal him a lye-ar, bekass he tells you we mek a coot passitch."

"Cosh, put it wass a grett passitch whatefer."
And was it not ?

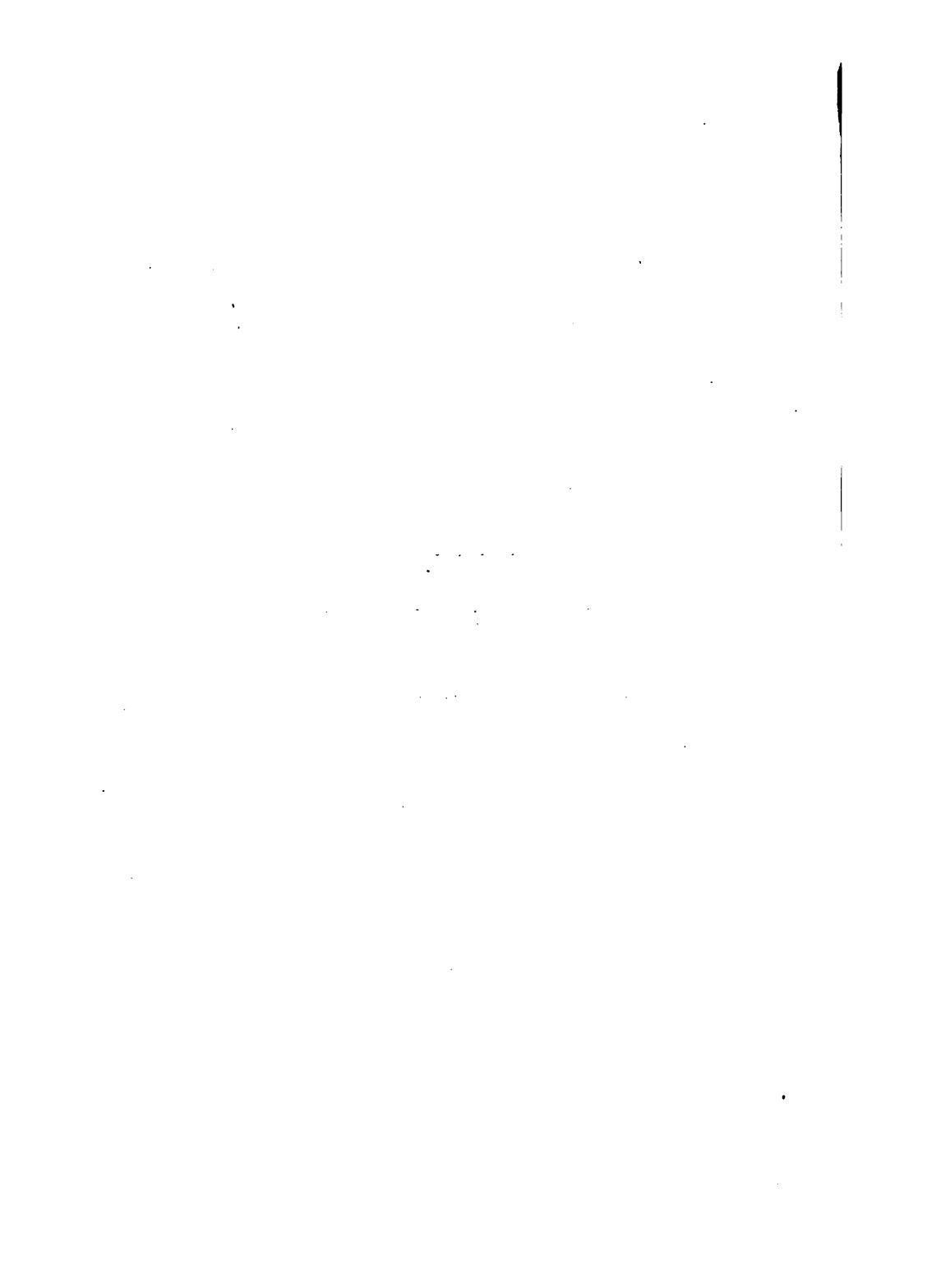




PART IV.

CRUISE OF THE "MERMAID."





PART IV.

CRUISE OF THE "MERMAID."

CHAPTER I.

Concerning two of a trade—The "Mermaid"—Setting out—Slow progress—A welcome change—The Sabbath question—A fluttering of kites—Oban.

"You don't mean to say, Governor, that you have asked a German to go with us on our next cruise? You know very well I detest Germans." Thus Jim to the Governor as we sat on the beach discussing the details of our proposed trip.

"But, my dear Jim," responded the latter, "Mynheer van Touwslager is not a German, he is a Hollander, a unit of that indefatigable nation which keeps its head above water by incessant draining and pumping from behind its dykes—the greatest bankers and embankers known to history."

"Dutchman or German, it is much the same; in fact, the former will be the more inconvenient travelling-companion, because, although I can ask the time of day in German, I am thankful to say I never learned Dutch."

"Keep your mind easy, Jim my boy, Van Touwslager speaks English perfectly well; indeed, he could not have had a much better accent if he had been brought up in Sanct Mungo's own city, where we know the pure vernacular is universally spoken."

"I am sure he will be an unclean fellow," persisted Jim, "and want to smoke in bed most likely. I will be hanged before I will occupy a cabin with a fellow who smokes in bed!" Here Jim assumed the air of a man with a grievance.

"On the contrary," answered the Governor, "although a Dutchman, my friend does not smoke at all. He chews not, neither does he snuff. I hope *you* won't be so ill-mannered as to blow your baccy in his face as you do in mine; and as for cleanliness—bless my soul! have you never heard of Brock? I have no doubt the Heer will be over the side every morning, for he is great at swimming; moreover, he is a good cook, and will, with Archy as *sous-chef*, providently cater for four of the most ravenous persons I ever saw round a table."

"Dear me! quite a universal genius, evidently! I suppose lithotomy comes easy to him, and he would not object to act as seat-warmer for the Lord Chancellor on occasion," sneered Jim, as he retired murmuring the name of Holland's chief city, at least I thought I recognized the sound of the last syllable.

I ought to have remembered the wisdom of my ancestors regarding two of a trade, but my Batavian friend did not appear to me likely to introduce professional jealousy into our select circle, and as he was a stranger to the beauties of the West Coast, I thought the opportunity a good one for showing him something of a country so different from his own.

The "Princess" had gone the way of her predecessors and had found a new owner. She was replaced by a smart cutter of twenty tons, a cruiser so far as fittings and accommodation were concerned, and by no means contemptible as a racer. The skipper maintained that, to make her take the first place in her class, she only wanted a handier crew than the scratch lot which those who only race occasionally must put up with, but he was no doubt a little partial.

At the same time there was much force in what he said; a yacht owner who goes in for racing only now and then, may have a fast vessel and still not be able to win from the cracks, which are raced three or four times a week throughout the season, manned by picked crews and kept in perfect trim. Yacht-racing is no longer a mere pastime, it is a profession, and a racing vessel is hardly ever used for pleasure sailing, partly because she is generally rather

deficient in the necessary adjuncts to comfort, but chiefly because a racing skipper and his crew would think cruising a sinful waste of time and neglect of opportunities for adding to the prize-money.

Of course, the modern system has done much to produce fast vessels, but it does not suit old-fashioned yachtsmen, who believe cruising to be the chief end of yachting, though they like to stir their blood occasionally by the excitement of a race. Therefore, this kind of yachtsman must content himself with the cruising matches which some clubs affect, or the wretched device of handicap races.

The skipper and cook of the "Princess" had transferred their services to the "Mermaid," to them was added a general utility hand called "Jack" or "Check," according as he was hailed from aft or from forward, a zealous youth, but lacking in experience.

Under Lachlan's tuition he increased in wisdom daily, and soon became a useful, as he was always a willing hand.

The Governor, having torn himself from his Lares and Penates, dropped down to the clubhouse at Holy Loch, to pick up the chums who came off in a shore boat ominously laden. The skipper looked aghast as portmanteaus, packing-

cases, and bundles followed each other in a stream till the decks were littered all over.

"Pless me! but it is an aaful stuff that iss comin' aboard," quoth he aside to his familiar, who responded, *sotto voce*, "I am thinkin' we are not coin' to sterf whateffer." And, indeed, the prospect of death from inanition looked remote in view of the piles of victual which our Dutch friend built up on our decks, nor had the wily fellow forgotten the wherewithal to moisten the solids, a comfortable jar of Talisker forming a prominent feature in the heap of stores. Jim professed that nothing less than the glorious vintage of champagne would tickle his dainty palate, and as the Governor set his face like a flint against such gentility on shipboard he brought his own liquor. Peter was given to dilute his meals with pale ale, Andy's affinity was good Bordeaux, the Governor forswore thin potations and addicted himself to grog, while Mynheer never dreamed of scorning any of the above beverages. This diversity of tastes necessitated great variety in the liquid stores, but our honorary steward having set himself to the stowing away of the *omnium gatherum*, the lockers had swallowed up the consumables and the wardrobes the wearables in an amazingly short space of time; then all was shipshape again, and the skipper's phiz began to assume a more placid aspect.

Nothing vexed that man's soul like the appearance of untidiness, the demon of unrest possessed him at all times, but seemed to rend him on the occurrence of anything that disarranged the usual spick-and-span look of the craft under his care.

While we were settling down, arranging sleeping berths, and whereabouts the limits of each man's accommodation were to be fixed, the "Mermaid" was quietly slipping down channel. A clear sky and a rising glass sent our spirits up, and we started in hopes of weathering the Cape of Storms yclept the Mull of Kintyre with the next morning's ebb. *L'homme propose.*

Light and variable winds made the length of our road nothing to the breadth of it till the afternoon, when a steady zephyr enabled us to lie our course.

Blue-water regulations being strictly enforced, the look-out forward reported a strange sail on the weather-bow steering S.W. "Why, Governor," cried Jim, as we neared her, "it's your old ship the 'Ilma.' Don't you remember what a jolly thing we once thought it to go a-cruising in a fiver?" And the Governor looked and sighed, to think how ill his now rheumatic limbs would suit the limited dimensions of a five-tonner's cabin, and how in that identical hooker four of the present company had roughed it in seasons

past, and scorning delights had lived laborious days.

Passing close under her lee, it was ascertained that she was bound for Oban and the Sound of Mull, *viâ* the Crinan Canal. We exchanged good wishes and were shortly out of hearing.

Our old friend the "Mariana" passed us on her way home, saluted, and signalled her owner's intention of following us northward in a few days.

At four o'clock we emerged from between the Heads, but darkness found us no farther down than the Holy Isle. Conversation flagged and antiphonal choruses on the nasal organ alone broke the silence of the night. The idlers betook themselves to rest and enjoyed it, undisturbed by any careening of the yacht to unmannerly breezes, while the watch on deck not knowing their weather eyes from their lee ones, for the most part kept both shut.

Pladda lights were blinking in the morning twilight as we came up with them, looking like ourselves, but half awake, and, before we had brought them over the taffrail, broad daylight had paled their ineffectual fires.

The watch below was called at four a.m., but by five the irrepressible Dutchman had the stove alight, and shortly thereafter coffee ready for all hands, which opened the eyes of the whole ship's

company. Our escort of coasters of all sizes and rigs still hung about us, impartial catspaws bringing first one and then another to the front. Twenty-one sail, all bound westward, were close to us, and it appeared that we were not likely to lose sight of them for some time. Our honorary steward, or Hofmeester, as he called himself, set about breakfast in due time, and earned his diploma by accomplishing an Irish stew in all respects worthy of our appetites, which were by this time prodigious.

All day long a sea of oil reflected a sky of brass, not a ripple broke the monotonous glare. I might trot out the famous simile of the "painted ship," &c., in no circumstances could it be more appropriate. Numerous were the expedients to hasten the leaden-footed hours, bathing was resorted to every now and then, the Governor creating much interest by his appearance in a unique costume, the edifice being crowned by a broad-brimmed hat which preserved his valuable cranium from the fierce beams of the sun.

Cards were introduced, but voted too exciting with the thermometer at 125°. A pretence of reading was most favoured, and one ingenious youth provoked the envy of his shipmates by his utilization of the jaws of the trysail gaff as a head-rest.

An important diversion was created by Van

Touwslager's announcement that "Dinner was yooost ready," and, on descending, we found that our judicious under-deck manager had provided a repast in every way suited to the weather. Cold meats, green peas, and new potatoes—the latter being considered early in Scotland if procurable in July—stewed apricots for dessert, the whole washed down with the liquefied sunshine of the Rhineland, or the stronger vin-du-pays, according to the taste of the drinker.

The smoke, the siesta, the yarn filled up the afternoon; and on the first symptoms of a decline in the temperature, the punt was manned, and towing by spells ordered, all hands taking their due share. By nightfall we came within hearing of the tolling of the bell on Paterson's Rock—a dismal sound, calling up visions of storm-tossed barks, and weary, anxious crews, straining their senses to make sure of the whereabouts of that dangerous reef.

It is true that Sanda light marks it by disappearing on a bearing a little to the southward of it; but Sanda is a red light, and not visible at all in dirty weather for any great distance; thus it is uncertain whether the non-appearance of the light is owing to being too near the rock, or not near enough Sanda. The writer has twice rounded the Mull, passing outside the island, without sighting the light at all; and once passed

close to the rock by daylight in a gale, when the buoy was seen wildly rolling about, but no sound of bell was audible, and, therefore, would not care about trusting much for keeping clear of it to anything but a good offing.

At half-past ten p.m. we entered the Sound, and it being dead low water, we had the whole flood tide against us, and no wind, so presently the Commander thought he might as well have the forty or more winks of which he stood in sore need, and, leaving the deck in charge of the skipper and Van Touwslager, turned in.

But not to sleep. His thoughts reverted to the events of that night twelvemonth, when the "Princess" lay becalmed not far from the very spot where the "Mermaid" then was; and he wished with considerable fervour that so opportune a breeze of easterly wind would spring up, when, as he lay and wished, a southing in the rigging and a gurgling along the bends notified that the yacht was in rapid motion. See what it is to be a righteous man!

Putting his head up the companion he saw that we were close to the frowning cliffs, and apparently rushing through the water at a great pace, but passing the land slowly withal, for the flood was still young, and running four knots an hour at least.

Steadily the wind increased, and little by little

we made good our way round the corner. Off the Mull light, a strong puff into the topsail bent the weather crosstree till the topmast showed symptoms of going over the side, but before we had time to call the hands to shorten sail, we were startled by an apparition which rose apparently from the depths of the sea, or the bottom of the yacht, through the deck and towards the heavens. As it stopped short at the mast-head, and applied itself to unlacing the topsail, we identified in the supposed ghostly form the substantial figure of Archy clad in a cutty sark, which fluttered gracefully in the wind above a pair of most Esau-like nether limbs. His smartness saved our topmast, but the punctilious Lachlan was horribly scandalized at his appearance on deck in such a scanty costume.

The strong wind and the weather-going tide made the sea like a boiling pot; under all lower canvas we stirred it up a good deal, getting our decks thoroughly washed in the meantime. Before the tide turned, we had stemmed the flood, got round the corner, and hauled up for Jura Sound.

The sunrise over the Kintyre hills was most brilliant, having the appearance of a vast celestial conflagration, until the sun emerged from behind his fiery veil, and flooded the landscape with pure light.

The delicious tints on Gigha, Islay, and Jura were fit to drive a painter crazy with rapture and despair as one lovely hue succeeded another with a rapidity which would baffle all attempts to catch and transfer them to canvas. Chilly and hungry as we were, appreciation of the beautiful in nature was not wholly crushed within us—we that were on deck forgot our fatigue and the discomfort following a sleepless night in our delight at the noble prospect spread out before us, and probably then unseen by all eyes except our own.

The wind held good for a couple of hours after dawn, when it died away, and left us tossing on the swell. The incessant pattering of reef points and the "cheep-cheep" of the gear tired our patience sorely, and various dodges in the shape of guys and outriggers were resorted to in order to lessen the annoyance. As the sun mounted the wind came round by south to westerly, and with the light breeze we crept up the Sound under all sail, gaff-topsail of the biggest and jib-topsail included.

By seven o'clock all hands were on deck except the barrister, who had been in a comatose state since before midnight. "I am getting uneasy about him," says the Governor.

"He likes his nap, does Master Peter," says Jim; "but there is his matin song."

Allegretto amoroso.



1. O mi gus-tan to-das, mi gus-tan to-das, mi
2. Y en-tre-gan-ni, y en-tre-gan-ni, y



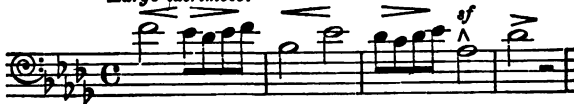
gus-tan to-das a en-trañ-ar, per la pre-ti
en-tre-gan-ni con ma-ni-a, al' a-mo-ro-sa,



- na, la pre-ti-na, la pre-ti-na abra-zar.
al' a-mo-ro-sa, al' a-mo-ro-sa gra-ci-a.

"Peter! do stop that row," sings out the Governor, catching sight of Lachlan's face of horror, and recollecting that it was Sunday morning.

Largo lacrimoso.



O! dolce il mio te-sor, o quanto il mio dolor, o

"Petarr," from on deck—Lachlan's nerves were evidently in a state of tension.

Allegro vivace gioioso.

Oh! vat je hoed en trek mynheer, oh! vat je hoed en
 trek! oh! vat je hoed en trek mynheer, oh!
 vat je hoed en trek! Zoo-dra als dat jy en kan,
 do mol - to for - te.
 Zoo - dra als dat jy en kan, Zoo - dra
 for - tis - si - mo.
 als dat jy en kan, VAT JE HOED EN TREK.

"PEET-TARR!!!"

"Did you call, Guv'nor?" asks Peter, with the suavity of a man who has had a good night's rest, as he put his head up the companion.

"Well, I didn't exactly call, I may be said to have shouted, roared indeed; but you made such a bellowing yourself—don't you know it's Sunday? Lachlan looks as if he expected the laws of hydrostatics to be entirely suspended on this occasion, like the free list at a theatrical benefit,

and the 'Mermaid' with her crew to sink to the bottom of the sea for your desecration of the Sabbath. You may not whistle or sing in a foreign tongue on board this ship on a Sunday; your songs may be highly improper for aught we know, anyhow they have an uncertain sound. If you like to strike up 'Coleshill' or 'Martyrdom' I don't know that I shall feel called upon to object, but I must have the Skipper's feelings respected." Whereupon Peter subsided, lit a huge meerschaum, and looked wise. The Sabbath question was shelved for a time, only to be discussed again in the forenoon as we sat in a bunch in the cockpit.

"How then," asked Jim, "does this stickler for Sabbath observance reconcile it with his conscience to sail on Sunday for your pleasure?"

"Ask him," responded the Governor.

He did so, whereupon the Skipper explained, "Well, sir, you see we canna be said to be sellin' for pleasure jist now, it's a work of needcessity, us being under way at any rate. We are off the Moil at midnight on Setterday; now there is no pless to anchor at the Moil, we are only sellin' till we get a good pless to come to in. If we was to get under way on a Sabbath mornin', it would be aaltogether defferent; unless, indeed, we was hevin' to shift from a anchorage that wasna safe."

"Are you satisfied, Jim?"

"Quite satisfied, Governor, that a Scottish Pharisee will devise some way of justifying himself for doing under certain conditions that which he admits to be wrong in itself. I find no fault with Lachlan, it is the natural consequence of his education and surroundings that he should think as he does; but I am thankful I don't require to soothe my conscience with sophistries, as it reproaches me with crimes of its own invention."

"These sentiments," quoth the Governor, "are somewhat latitudinarian; but I am free to admit that we might be less innocently engaged than we are at this moment. It is now just twelve o'clock (and that reminds me, Heer van Touwslager, that this is the second day you have helped yourself first, don't deny it, I see the dewdrops glistening on your mane); at this hour, thousands of our countrymen are sweetly slumbering under the soporific influence of a preached gospel. Those persons will go home as conceited as possible at having fulfilled the whole duty of man by being present at the delivery of two sermons, and very likely will not perform any other duty the better on that account. Here, if we like, we can seriously meditate or converse on great subjects, undistracted by uncongenial surroundings, nay, rather prompted thereto by our present situation,

resting on the bosom of the unfathomable deep, under the majestic heavens, encircled by the everlasting hills."

"Brayvo, Guv'nor!" put in Peter. "Couldn't you tip us a sermon yourself?"

"Well, I might," said the Governor, "if I could only divert my thoughts from my congregation of scoffers. I might for my text take——"

"Grog," interrupted the Heer, his glowing visage level with the deck; and at that welcome sound we hastened below.

Dinner on that afternoon became a high function, and Jim's purpose in bringing his basket of champagne was revealed. It was the Governor's birthday, and the royal liquor was to drink his health in. The toast was received with great effusion and much clinking of glasses, but the speeches on the occasion have been unfortunately lost.

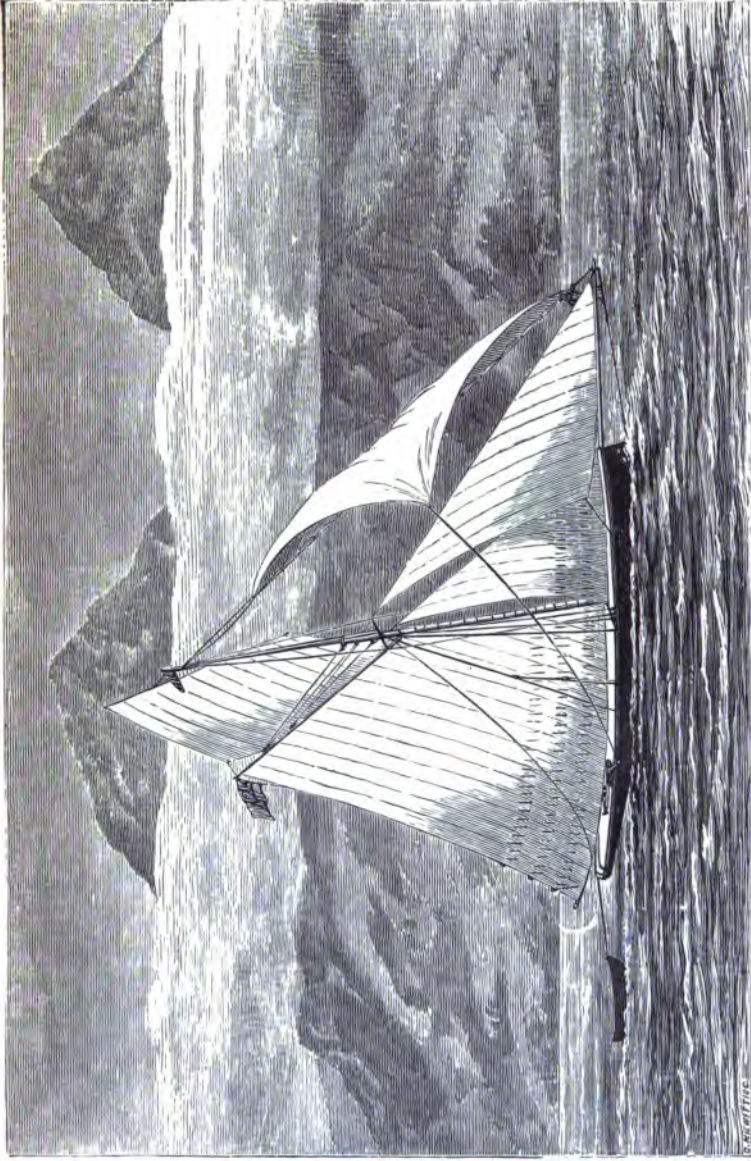
The festivities over, we went on deck to find ourselves up with the Paps of Jura, on which was resting a solid cloud-cap, the object of the Skipper's earnest attention.

"There will be something out of this yet," muttered he, evidently thinking that judgment on us for the morning's offences was only delayed; and the words had hardly escaped him when the wind began to rise and the waters of the Sound

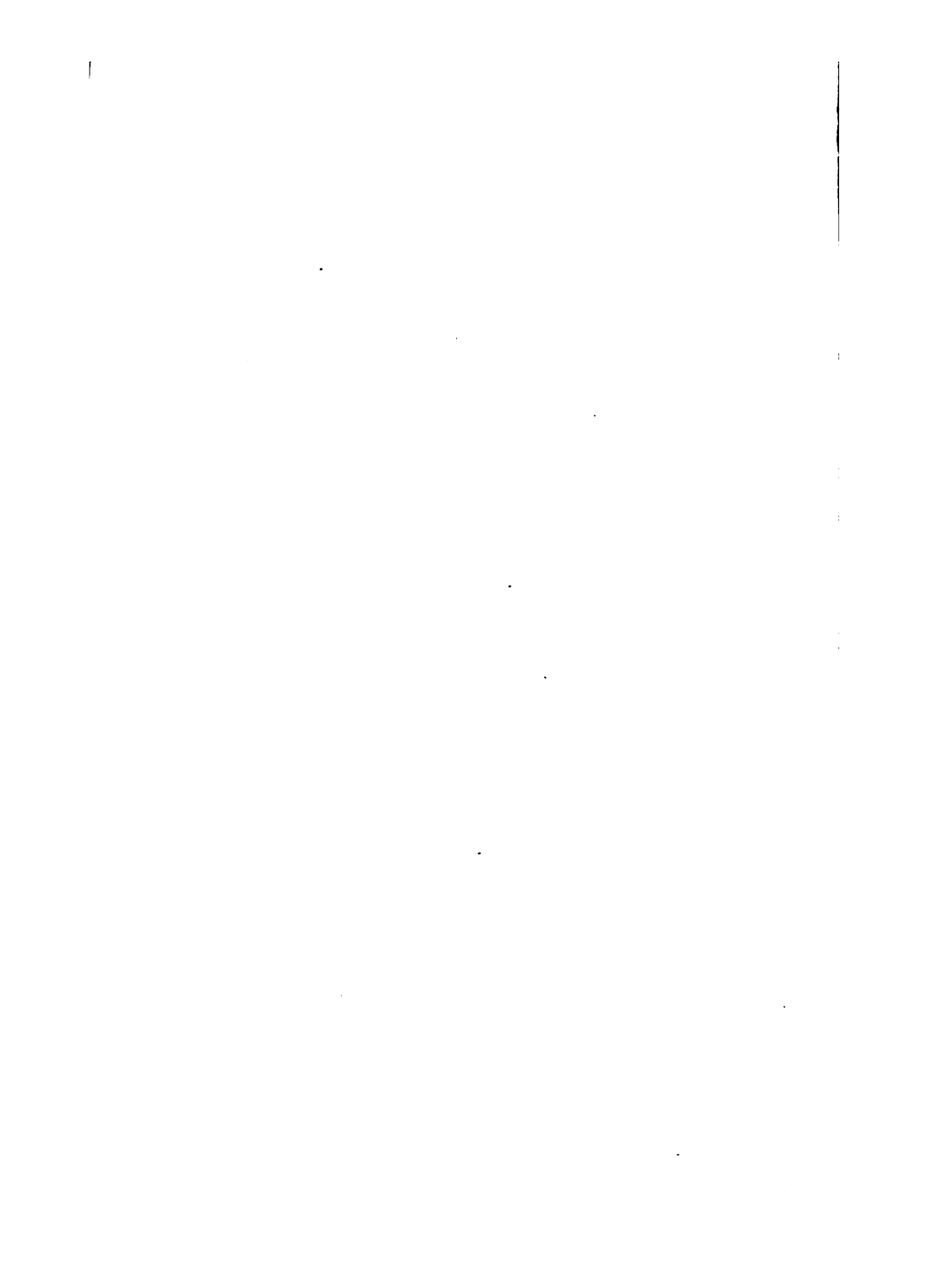
to blacken in patches, every moment widening. The *dolce far niente* feeling which had kept possession of us for so long was quickly dissipated. One hand was soon at the bowsprit end struggling with the wildly flapping jib-topsail, but two were wanted before it could be stowed; the gaff-topsail threatened to take itself in before it could be got down in the regulation manner. By the time we had it on deck the bowsprit complained most unmistakably about the size of the jib, so we shifted it, reefed the mainsail, and ran down the staysail. Under this reduced canvas the rail was buried in foam, and we were bursting through the strong ebb at a great rate.

"Verschrikkelijke schaduw!" exclaimed Myrheer, crawling out of the lee scuppers. "Vat a goontree. I go to shleep for vife minute in de zonshine. I wake, and it blow like de bliksem, and so tick is it zat you can nossing see."

The mist which now enveloped us is no unusual phenomenon in the West Highlands, and is sometimes very puzzling to those without good local knowledge. We could, however, see for a quarter of a mile, and, with a leading wind, the navigation along the shores of Jura and Scarba presents no difficulty, provided the Gulf of Corryvreckan can be avoided. As the tide was ebbing, we were in no danger of being drawn into the Gulf, the ebb running from the Ocean to the inner sounds, and



“LOWER AWAY THE JIB-TOPSAIL.”



the wind being so strong we could make good way over the adverse tide.

As we approached the Slate Islands, the tide turned, and the flood bore us through the narrows at Pladda at a rapid rate.

The fog lifting just then, we had a fine view of the bold shores of Mull and the islands that stud the Firth of Lorn. Off Easdale the lightening breeze enabled us to make more sail; and in Kerrera Sound, which we entered about seven o'clock, the wind was all aloft, and our biggest topsail made the most of it. Gliding into Oban's lovely bay, we dropped anchor off the pier at ten minutes past eight, this being our first halt since leaving the Clyde.

Van T. had provided a formidable meat-tea, which we attacked in the most impetuous manner, calling forth from the caterer warm approval of our appetites.

"Die kerels hebben kleermakersdarmen," said he, meaning thereby that our digestive arrangements were those of tailors. Persons of the sartorial persuasion in Holland are proverbial for their appetites, it seems.

The meal over, we sallied ashore for news of the world from which we had been detached for three days; we found the terrible disaster to the "Thunderer" in all men's mouths, and it was being discussed in the smoking-room of the Great

Western Hotel with great volubility, and more or less knowledge—generally less. This national calamity overshadowed other topics, and furnished matter for fierce controversy between our Dutch and Scottish engineers, on the relative merits of British and continental practice, till the other members of the family could stand it no longer, and, wishing a plague o' both their houses, insisted on the passing around of the loving-cup, and adjournment for a good square sleep.

CHAPTER II.

Westward ho!—An uncivil stranger—Tobermory—A good passage—Isle Ornsay—Manners and customs of the natives—Portree.

AFTER eight hours' refreshing slumber, all hands were awakened by a prodigious splash, sundry snortings and blowings, as if leviathan was sporting around us. A shrill "hooch," apparently expressive of supreme satisfaction, informed us that Mijnheer was taking his morning bath; his lively tones were presently heard from the deck, exhorting us sluggards to get up, and tumble over the side.

Breakfast over, we all landed; some of us to telegraph to anxious relatives, a small foraging

party, personally conducted by Van T., to replenish the storeroom, on the contents of which serious inroads had been made. The energetic Hofmeister led the way, as if he had been born and brought up in Oban; two porters followed him with wheelbarrows, and these long-suffering men were dragged to fishmongers' shops, ironmongers' stores, butchers' stalls, and grocery establishments, until their vehicles would hold no more. Profiting by the experience of our sufferings from the heat of the previous days, a huge block of ice was included in the purchases, and carefully deposited under the cabin sole, embedded in a heap of sawdust. We found the sawdust after some days, but the ice was never seen again.

Returning on board, we found all sail set and the anchor hove short. Lachlan was in a great hurry to be off, for an English yawl of about double our tonnage had just started for the Sound of Mull, and the ambitious skipper was anxious to find if we could keep her company. Before we had our heap of comestibles stowed below and safely chocked off, she had the start of us by an hour, and we gave up the idea of ever getting near her.

Outside of Kerrera there was a fine N.W. breeze, making it a dead beat to Tobermory, whither we were bound. "Ready about" became

a monotonous cry with our short tacks, and in the sound we made slow progress against the ebb, although the breeze was as much as we could show a whole mainsail to, and we ranged across from shore to shore very quickly. The honorary steward was in a state of great indignation about the angle of heel, and uncouth gutturals rumbled in his throat because no one would listen to his suggestion to shorten sail in order to facilitate his culinary labours.

"You will have your dinners, no doud, and you expegd it vill be ready, aldo she roll about like de bliksem," growled he.

At last he subsided, partly from exhaustion, partly from good nature, contenting himself with casting upon us occasional reproachful looks from the scuttle.

"I say, Governor," says Jim, "what fearful imprecations the Batavian uses. I declare my blood freezes at the sound of that verskreek—something or other, that is always on his tongue."

"That is a case of deceitful appearances, my dear boy. What seems to you, being ignorant of Dutch, a strange oath, is really a very innocent expletive taken from Shakespeare, or as he calls him, Skakkesperry."

"Poor dear divine Williams, how art thou translated! All rights should have been reserved, at any rate as far as Dutch is concerned."

The heeling of the yacht did not prevent the cooking of a noble stew, to which we did ample justice. Does the reader think there is a good deal in this book about eating and drinking? No faithful record of a yacht cruise is otherwise possible; there is so much time on hand, and appetites are so good, that the various meals have a surpassing interest for the voyagers: if it be not so, there must be some grave defect in their digestion, or their cook is a bad one. Neither impediment to the due enjoyment of our provender troubled us.

The skipper had strict injunctions to sail the yacht easy while we dined, but to our shouts from below he turned a deaf ear, or protested that the wind was so unsteady he could do no better; and somehow she never seemed to approach the upright position unless when tacking. The swinging table did its level best, but casualties were frequent. The Governor had a bottle of wine upset into his plate; the ketchup permeated Peter's pudding; while Andy had a cup of scalding coffee spilt over his knees. Mijnheer anathematized "dat Lommel of a Lachlan" in vain, and on coming on deck the skipper's mutinous conduct was explained. The yawl was only a little bit to windward of us on the other side of the Sound, and it was doubtful which would be able to show her lee side to the other when we met. As we

neared her we made her out to be an old-fashioned cruiser of some forty tons, carrying two boats in davits—a short-masted, round-sided old drogher, as weatherly as a haystack or a Lochlomond gabbart. We were, therefore, likely to cross her track though she was then to windward, and as we were on the starboard tack we assumed she would go about, or modestly pass under our lee; but not a bit of it. Relying on her heavy weight, she coolly held on, and made us go to leeward of her. We should have run her down without the least compunction, so far as she was concerned, but we had a great objection to damaging our own ship and interrupting our cruise.

The skipper's Highland blood got up at this insult from the "Sassenach;" he implored us to go about after him, as there would be no kind of satisfaction in passing a long way to windward of him in the middle of the sound; so round we went, but our friend had his eye on us, and tacked at the same moment. "Tam her!" cried Lachlan, startled out of his propriety, "ef she is not about too; did ever anybody see such impidence!" Being now on the port tack we had to go round his stern a second time, as we were too close to risk going across his bows.

Resolving not to be done a third time, we put the helm down just as our bowsprit cleared his

mainsheet, and were soon on his weather quarter. Luffing was of no use, as we could shoot to windward twice as far as he could, so having "established an overlap," as the Y. R. A. hath it, we remonstrated with the stranger.

We hazarded conjectures as to his birth and parentage, suggesting that his male parent had been a marine *chef de cuisine*, that his vocation was military and not naval, and having exhorted him to study the Merchant Shipping Act and other educational works, bade him farewell, promising to announce his coming at Tobermory.

No other incident broke upon the monotony of the beat up the sound, except when the staunch old "Eolus" took the conceit out of us by rushing through our lee like a steamer. "Ready about!" and "Helm's a-lee!" every now and then stirred the crew into momentary activity. The breeze held good until we sailed into the harbour and dropped anchor in thirteen fathoms, opposite the Mishnish Hotel, at half-past seven.

A stroll to the lighthouse filled up the evening pleasantly, and as we returned on board our uncivil friend in the yawl was just letting go at the far end of the bay.

An early start next day was resolved upon. At half-past four the Governor looked out and found it was a stark calm; by half-past six Lachlan

reported a breeze, all hands were called, and a start made at seven.

Outside the harbour a fine westerly wind was blowing, and we could just fetch to windward of the Ardnamurchan shore. "An airy start is a good start," remarked the skipper, sententially gazing to windward; "there will be a breeze o' win' the day, bekass the sky is cloudy an' oppen." And indeed by the time Ardnamurchan lighthouse came in sight there was a good breeze, and some sea, too.

Easing off sheets as we brought the light a-beam we got the cringle-headed topsail on her, and the barkie began to go along.

We were much more comfortable than those on board a fine cutter of about seventy tons which passed us bound south, driving into the short sea at a great rate, and sending clouds of spray over her and as high as her cross-trees. Every minute the wind and sea increased till it became evident that we should have to shorten sail if we didn't want the yacht to turn round and lock us in the face like an unruly tandem leader.

We got the topsail in. The staysail had to be run down, as it threatened to carry away the stove funnel, and, having resolved to come to at Isle Ornsay, the skipper took it into his head to shift jibs for the safety of the bowsprit, while beating into that anchorage. As we were stag-

gering along with only the mainsail set, a tremendous squall of wind and rain burst upon us, burying the yacht's bows nearly to the bitts. With much difficulty we got the boom amidships and choked down two reefs, while the steersman had his hands full keeping her dead before the wind, with the mainsheet flattened in, and no headsail standing. A broad rudder and a deep keel stood us in good stead; still she wanted looking after to avoid a broach to, which would have been disastrous.

The punt towed badly, and made the wildest dashes at our counter, seriously mutilating a fine salmon which Archy had hung over the stern. Veering out more painter did not seem to do any good, as it gave her more scope for erratic gambols.

In due time we sighted Isle Ornsay lighthouse looming through the mist, but held on our course till we brought the beacon a-beam; then we hauled aft the sheets and worked into the bay, anchoring in three fathoms.

To enter this capital harbour in thick weather or at night requires some caution, the light being placed more as a guide for the navigation of Sleat Sound than as a mark for the harbour. A stranger is apt to haul close round the lighthouse and go ashore on the reef which extends north-east from the island; to avoid doing this, the

beacon must be sighted before one can be sure of being clear of danger. This beacon is a solid piece of mason work, surmounted by a cross, in all 34 feet high; but being painted black, it is not easily made out on a dark night.

After luncheon we landed for a stroll, this part of Skye being new ground to us all. A string of packhorses starting for the interior first arrested our attention, this being a mode of transport unfamiliar to dwellers in the lowlands.

We endeavoured to engage in conversation with the two old ladies who seemed to have charge of the cavalcade, but they had no *Sassenach*, and we could speak no Gaelic. They pricked their ears at the sound of Dutch, but they found it was Greek to them.

At a short distance from the beach stands the local hotel, where a fair sample of the country wine was produced. We opened negotiations for supplies by asking for eggs, with the result of educing a curious trait in the Highland character.

"Ecks!" exclaimed our interlocutor, "iss it ecks? whatt wass you coin' to do wi' ecks? No, we hev no ecks!"

"Bliksem!" cried the Batavian, "do I not see many cocks and hens around your house. Is it dat dey lay no eggs, dese hens?"

Thus pressed, it was admitted that the hens

laid occasional eggs, which were at once packed and sent to the all-devouring Glasgow: further, that the steamer had just sailed that morning, and carried off every single procurable egg in the village.

But our steward was not the man to be put off this way, and following the landlady into her kitchen, thence into her hen-house, returned with three or four dozen chickens *in posse*, for which we were charged at the rate of ninepence per dozen, probably double the market rate. This indisposition to part with produce is often found in the Highlands, and is sometimes extremely provoking.

Continuing our walk, we brought up next at a primitive-looking erection, which previous visits to Skye led us to believe might possibly be a human habitation. The walls of it were about four feet high, built of boulders from the sea-shore without mortar, cement, or anything to fill up the interstices, other than a luting of mud or some even less cleanly substance.

Stooping under the lowly lintel we entered, and after our eyes had become accustomed to the dim light, we began to make out the details of the *ménage*.

On a seat made of the root of a larch tree sat a very old woman, leisurely washing from her feet the incrustations of the past few weeks in

an iron pot which on other occasions most probably cooked the family porridge. On a rough bench sat an older man in an attitude suggestive of the cobbler, his actual vocation as it proved. In a corner was some coarse sacking stuffed with filthy straw—the nuptial couch of the ancient couple. In and out there pattered some draggled hens, while three or four ducks with their flat feet mixed the accidental impurities with the damp mud of the floor into a charming compost. The scanty peat fire smouldered in the middle of the apartment, the pungent peat reek finding its way out by the numerous apertures in the roof, through which not a little rain entered. A young calf had strayed in for shelter, and met us in the doorway as it made its exit. There was no pig to be seen, although the hovel was everything a pig could desire.

"Heer Mozes!" exclaimed the horrified Van Touwslager; "is it possible for peoples to live in sooch a house like dose! I say, old gentleman, vat is your peesaniss?—how you make your livings, hein?"

"I am a shoe-mekker, chentlemen," responded the old fellow, in a very tremulous voice.

"But I see not any shoes you make. You have nossing to do at present, is it not?"

"Well, sir, I am an old man, now, sir; ant I am not able anny more to mek strawng shoes. They

are buyin' them aal at Kennedy's stores. I jist do a little repairs now and then. Last fortnight I was pretty buzzy—I med a shullin' aaltogether in the two weeks."

"Verschrikkelijke schaduw! one shilling in fourteen days! Hear dat, ye roovers, who each eat at a meal vat would feed dese peoples for two monse at leasd. How old you are, mine friend?"

"I am echtty-two, sir, but I hev ferry goot health yet, if it wass not for the roomatizum."

"Eyhty-doo and live on half a sixpence a week. Let me give you a monse pay, old fellow," said Mijneer, as we took our leave, glad to escape from the smoky interior into the fresh air.

We visited one or two other cottages, but saw nothing so squalid as this. Poor enough some of them were, but in most there was an attempt at order and cleanliness, sufficiently successful to make them more inviting.

On returning to the beach we found that a sheep had been slain by an enterprising native in honour of our visit, the half of which (the sheep, not the native) presently adorned our counter.

Dinner had been arranged to come on at the unusually late hour of seven, to fill up the long evening at anchor, and as we sat in the cabin awaiting its appearance the voice of lamentation

in the forecastle reached our ears. Mark Antony over Cæsar's corpse did not display his manly grief more pathetically than our provider in bewailing the mangled appearance of the salmon after having served as a fender for the punt during our run up the Sound.

Such was his pride in his catering, that he refused to be comforted, even after gashes, salmon and all, had disappeared.

In the dusk we put out a net from the stern of the yacht, and had in a couple of hours three dozen fine fish of various sorts, besides a number of dogfish, which don't count. The skipper took vengeance on them for having the presumption to exist by breaking their backs with much energy over the gunwale of the boat.

Next morning the tide served at noon through Kyle Rhea, and at half-past ten we weighed anchor and proceeded northwards with a fine westerly breeze—entering the Narrows at twelve.

The sublime scenery of this magnificent pass impressed us much as the swirling current bore us swiftly through it to the placid bosom of Loch Alsh, on which we emerged in fifteen minutes after passing the ferry house at the southern end of the Kigh. In Loch Alsh what remained of the wind was ahead, and we had a good view of either shore as we tacked across and across. Loch na Beaste is a tempting-looking anchorage, the

shores being fringed with wood to the water's edge—the Balmacarra side is almost as attractive, while eastward the romantic Loch Duich invites the explorer to enter and linger. But we were northward bound, and unwillingly left these charming nooks for future cruises.

Near Kyle Akin the navigation is rather intricate with a foul wind, but the large scale chart makes everything quite clear, and we found no difficulty in avoiding all the obstacles. The blessings of all yachtsmen rest upon the able and industrious naval officers who made the laborious surveys from which these admirable charts have been compiled.

We tried the white fly and spoonbait in the Narrows without success, although at times the gurnets hereabouts are voracious enough to take a bright hook without dressing or bait of any kind.

Off the Bow Rocks we were becalmed for an hour, which we utilized by sitting down to dinner. The breeze obligingly sprung up again just as we finished and held us all the way to Portree. Even in the Caol Mor, celebrated for calms and baffling winds, we had a strong, steady nor'-wester which brought our topsail on deck. Loch Ainneart, notorious for frightful squalls, was on its good behaviour, and its smiling aspect would even have beguiled to anchor therein ill-informed per-

sons who had not profited by careful reading of Commander McDougall's excellent Sailing Directory, wherein he sums up his advice as to the navigation of this loch by instructing the mariner to keep out of it altogether.

Off Ben Inivaig a multitude of solans were fishing for herrings, whitening acres of sea with their incessant diving, and awakening the echoes with their loud cries. We gave the Ben a wide berth, as ugly squalls are apt to come rushing down its steep sides, to the great detriment of spars and cordage, and working up the north side of Portree harbour anchored off the beautifully situated, but uncleanly town in seven fathoms, at half-past six.

CHAPTER III.

The Uig coach—Friget Venus—The Quiraing—Start for home—Isle Ornsay—Lochs Scavaig and Cornisk—Rum—Tobermory—The prattling pilot—Crinan—The canal—Anchored.

WE found many letters from home awaiting us at the Portree post-office; but no newspapers less than ten days old were to be found in the village, although Skye is only a day's journey from Glasgow or Edinburgh since the Dingwall and Skye

railway obliterated one of the most delightful coaching journeys in Scotland. Portree does not support a journal of its own, and the thirst for news of the great world does not as yet seem great among the natives.

We were advised that a coach started in the morning for Uig and the Quiraing, so we took places for the lot, and announced a holiday for the crew. Before returning on board we ascended the woody bluff which projects into the harbour. From the summit of the tower surmounting the eminence a fine view of the bay is to be had, which is worth climbing for.

Those who had remained on board had pretty good fortune with their hand-lines, having caught a couple of dozen haddocks and codlings, most of which graced our breakfast-table in the morning. This was spread at an early hour, as the "cotch" started for Uig at ten, and we judged it prudent not to be too late on the ground, in case seats should be scarce.

We found that all our fellow-passengers were ladies: we were therefore bound to concede them the choice of seats, and when they were seated it was evident that the conveyance would not hold our party, two of the ladies being of prodigious stoutness.

Peter volunteered to wait behind; but several other voyagers having made their appearance

while we were adjusting ourselves, another wagon was produced, and the two vehicles rattled off together along an excellent road.

The country over which we were carried is bleak and barren ; no views of any attractiveness are to be obtained until Loch Snizort comes in sight, and the sad-looking firmament which seems to always overhang the Isle of Skye gives a very sombre appearance to the monotonous landscape.

Our efforts to entertain our lady fellow-travellers were not appreciated by the elder of the two duennas, and our liveliest sallies had not the least effect in thawing the icy barrier of reserve behind which that majestic female retired and frowned us into desisting from attempts to lighten the way for those who had been thrown into our company. We therefore subsided into silent melancholy, relieved by the comfortable reflection that madam's frigidity would not last while she climbed the precipitous Quiraing.

In due time we arrived at Uig, which is eight miles by the road from the Quiraing, but only six by a short cut. Wagonettes were in waiting for those who chose driving to the foot of the mountain ; but the "Mermaid's" party set out on foot, the heavy-weights among us lagging somewhat behind as we breasted the steep foot-path.

The Quiraing is now so familiar, even to many who have never seen the mountain itself, by reason of the beautiful photographs procurable almost everywhere, that a description of its fantastic peaks, clefts, and plateaux, would be superfluous. How the mountain came to be broken up into these extraordinary shapes, is doubtless an interesting subject of investigation. I am satisfied to contemplate the picturesque result without being too curious to follow the process of its creation. The ascent is toilsome, but not, properly speaking, difficult, or in the least dangerous in any part; the view, on such a day as we had, superb.

The coast of Ross-shire was plainly visible, the entrances to Gairloch and Loch Torridon could be distinctly traced; Rona and Raasay lay, as it were, at our feet, and the undulating surface of the Isle of Skye rolled away from us into the blue distance. Having taken in the magnificent prospect, and stowed it away into one of memory's pigeon-holes, we descended and soon overtook our stout friend, who had never reached the top at all, painfully retracing her steps "larding the lean earth as she walked along," and resting on the arm of a stalwart Highlander from Stenhol, who earns a scanty livelihood in the tourist season by executing occasional small jobs of portorage for overloaded pedestrians.

By the time we reached the spot where the carriages stopped, Van Touwslager, Peter, and I had had enough of walking and gladly took our seats. Jim and Andy set off to outwalk each other back to Uig, which they reached only a few minutes after us who went on wheels.

My host of the brand-new inn which has been erected at Uig to meet the ever-increasing demand for such accommodation, had provided for us a plentiful dinner of many courses—a spreading of the table in the wilderness as unexpected as it was welcome. I could not but regret, however, the charming little thatched cottage of former days, when tourists were scarce, and a more homely but not less palatable refectory used to be served at the most modest charges by the same civil kindly landlord.

The "Long Island" was as visible on the west as Ross had been on the east. We cast wistful eyes towards Stornoway, but time did not permit us to extend our cruise so far; and at half-past six we turned our faces southward and homeward, arriving at Portree in about three hours thereafter, somewhat tired with our day's excursion; and going on board at once, betook ourselves to sleep.

At four o'clock next morning all hands were called, and in thirty-five minutes after the *réveille* we were sailing out of the harbour.

Raasay Sound and Caol Mor would tax the patience of the most Job-like yachtsman—when it does not blow a gale there, anything like a steady breeze is unknown. A calm one can understand, and even be resigned to; but the tantalizing alternations of calm, gentle breezes from this quarter and that, the little whirlwinds of astonishing keenness that subside before they tauten a sheet, make a kind of patch-work weather very trying to the temper. How Jim did "unpack his heart with words" during his trick at the helm!

By the most diligent use of the occasional puffs we contrived to reach the Cailleach stone about four o'clock, our progress having been at the average rate of one and three-quarter miles per hour. The tide being on the flow, we had to anchor until it turned in an hour and a-half's time; this interval was variously employed: Jim and Andy fished with some success, Peter smoked, Van Touwslager bathed, somewhat to the displeasure of the fishers, and the Governor retired to the cabin and gave himself up to meditation.

As the tide turned to ebb, we weighed and drifted with it down Kyle Rhea, but at nine o'clock we were still distant five miles from Isle Ornsay, when we proposed to anchor, whereupon Andy and Jim took the boat and rowed to the

village for supplies and expected letters. By half-past eleven we managed to get our anchor down inside the beacon, and, with the exception of those who stayed up to haul in the net, all hands turned in after a very tiresome day.

The normal breakfast hour—eight o'clock—was returned to next morning, and ten o'clock was named as the hour of starting. A yachting friend came alongside as we were heaving up, and we learned from him that the squall which descended upon us from the Paps of Jura, had met him off the Mull of Kintyre, and compelled him to douse everything but a staysail and run for Campbeltown. He described the violence of it as something quite tropical, and having ladies on board he judged it most prudent to bear up.

Since then he had to report baffling winds which kept him back, till he was now three days behind us, instead of only a few hours, as he was when that, to him, unlucky squall turned him and drove us on our way.

Waterproofs were now in demand, as the rain poured heavily ; but as Mynheer emerged, after a lengthened toilet, clad in complete armour, the clouds dispersed, and the sun came out brilliantly, the wind keeping strong from the north-west.

As we reached down Sleat Sound, it freshened all the time, until at noon we had to shorten sail and strike the topmast. We were short-handed

by one this day, as Jack had to keep his bed with what fishermen call a "salt-water boil," an ugly sore on the knee-joint, said to be the result of constant drenchings with sea water. Van T. was quite in his element doctoring the invalid, ruling him with a rod of iron in the matter of poultices, diet, &c.

Coming out from the leeward of the Point of Sleat, a fine round-backed sea met us, and made the "Mermaid" prance about in a most lively fashion. We were bound for Loch Scavaig, and were a little afraid that we should not find it very easy to make the anchorage, as it is apt to be unpleasantly squally thereabouts, with wind of any strength from northerly quarters.

However, after a delightful sail, we reached the mouth of the Loch about three in the afternoon, and the wind died away in the most opportune manner to a faint air, which just carried us in to the back of the island, under the Hill of the Roaring Blast, about four o'clock.

In this bight the precipitous hills, which rise to a great height out of the water, dwarf everything—it appears as if there was not room to swing round an anchor; but we found that a forty-five fathom warp would not reach either side, and it was only by bending two together that we could make fast to the ring in the rocks, thoughtfully provided by the Royal Northern Yacht Club for

the convenient mooring of yachts in this rather insecure harbour. Similarly it appears to be but a short distance to the landing-place at the head of the loch, but it is found to be a tidy little pull of half a mile; and Sgor Dhu, an insignificant-looking clump of rock, round which the little river rushes, turns out to be 600 feet high by the aneroid.

From the top of this rock the yacht looked a perilously small conveyance for eight human beings to traverse the seas in; and the bay which, from her deck, looked too contracted for her to ride in, is seen to be large enough for three or four of her size to swing clear. On this occasion the low clouds increased the apparent size of the frowning crags, and Scavaig and Coruisk were seen in their most imposing aspect, looking the veritable abomination of desolation.

Coruisk is now easily accessible by steamer from Oban. The inevitable scarlet pinnacle of Messrs. Hutcheson lies moored inside of Eilan Glas, and a plank road has been constructed by that enterprising firm from the shores of the salt-water loch to that of the fresh-water one, in order that Tom, Dick, and Harry (or, as our Batavian friend would say, *Jan, Piet, en Klaas*) may be able to visit this paragon of landscapes with the minimum of inconvenience. But all the tender solicitude of these much-respected steamship owners

will avail the aforesaid but little, if the wind be fresh from the west as Ardnamurchan is rounded, and great will be their discomfort, although the ships are staunch, and the commanders as considerate as they are skilful. Fortunately, good weather is the rule in high summer, and generally, the voyage is as a lake trip.

Far be it from me to disparage the facilities thus afforded. Thousands have been thereby enabled to see this out-of-the-way part of the kingdom who would never otherwise have had that pleasure; but it is not as one among a throng of excursionists, gentle reader, that you will to the full enjoy Coruisk.

To do so it is needful to come as we came, to spend a day absorbing the magnificent prospects of the locality, that they may remain a joy for ever in the memory, and to pass a night, if possible, in the eerie solitude of Scavaig, listening to the sough and moan of the wind among the glens and caves, the murmur of the river, and the plash of the wavelets.

Then, if you are *fanatico per la musica*, will Hebridean overtures create themselves in your brain, and you will dream symphonies in A minor, or, at least, you will thank Heaven that Mendelssohn wrote one for you, with its picturesque *allegro*, its irresistible breezy *scherzo*, its passionate *adagio*, and its wildly energetic *finale*, all

most exquisitely reflecting the sights and sounds of the Scottish Highlands as perceived by his refined senses. We chose Saturday afternoon for our arrival, that we might have the Sunday, when the tourists cease from troubling, to wander about at our sweet wills.

On the Sunday morning we landed, after a late breakfast, and, finding a boat hauled up on the beach of Loch Coruisk, took the liberty of launching her, and pulling up to the end of the loch. The further shore appeared almost to recede as we approached it, so much longer did it take to reach it than seemed possible. At the head is a considerable extent of level ground, through which a limpid stream glides, and flows into the loch. Returning, we hauled up the boat carefully where we found her, proposed and carried unanimously a vote of thanks to the unknown owner for his courtesy in lending her, and got on board the yacht about noon.

The skipper, who never appeared at his ease in this anchorage, had all ready for a start, our present circumstances being such as to make it lawful to sail on the Sabbath day; and after luncheon we got under way with a light breeze from the westward, which freshened every minute, till under Soa we came into a fine whole sail wind.

We hauled up for Rum, not intending to

stop there, but merely to have a look at Loch Cresorst. It was occupied of course by a fine schooner yacht: one is safe to find a representative of the pleasure-fleet in every snug anchorage on the west coast during the season.

Checking our sheets, we reached fast along the Rum shore; and getting out of the lee of the island, had the wind strong with a grand swell from the ocean, which greatly interfered with the preparation of the viands Archy was earnestly labouring at under Van Touwslager's supervision. Will some genius invent a stove that will keep level in all circumstances, and thereby earn the approbation of all yachtsmen—and they are many—who love a good dinner?

Perseverance does wonders though: not only were the more important dishes duly cooked to our satisfaction, but a trifle of an omelette about two feet in diameter was presented to us with the usual formula, "*Als je dat op hebt zal je niet meer hol zijn*"—"when you that have eaten then shall you be no longer hollow."

A superb sunset lit up the Small Isles and the Ardnamurchan land, lending them the gorgeous colours of the sky. As we took the post-prandial coffee on deck we admired the prospect and were thankful.

It was Sunday evening, and we discoursed of brotherly love. So elegantly indeed did some

of us talk, that my feeble pen declines to attempt to reproduce the conversation here; so Peter's graceful flights of fancy, and Jim's vehement expounding, are, alas! lost to a world which might have profited by the record, if stenography had been an accomplishment of mine.

In the Sound of Mull it was almost a dead calm; so quietly did we glide along that we contrived to separate an unwary maternal "dooker" from her offspring. The solicitude of the mother as she searched for the baby was rather interesting, and her note in calling quite different from the usual complacent "urrah."

We managed to get into Tobermory harbour about half-past ten, and anchored for the night off the pier.

Next morning Abbotson and the Governor, being on shore for fresh provisions and letters, had to undergo the usual catechizing by the well-known monoculous pilot of Tobermory, who poured forth a rapid stream of questions, suggestions, doctrine, reproof, and correction in this fashion:—"Wass you pelonging to that yatt? Whatt tunnitch is that yatt? What do ye caa her? Twunty tons is she? Ay, ay, she hass big spars for a twunty. Whar wass you? At Scavaig, of coorse, at Portree too ay, ay! Did you come pack py the wast? did you no? whatt for did you no? wass you feart? You should

have come roon' the island, plenty good harbours in Skye. D'you ken Jeemieson o' the Fiery Cross? an aafu' buddy Jeemieson. I wis wance to sea wi' Jeemieson. I thocht he would hev torn her aal to pieces. You are goin' sooth. Then you'll go pack py the Soond of Islay, mind that; keep wan third from Islay, and two thirds from Jura an' your aal right. This iss the Mish-nish Hotel—they are keepin' a good tram in the Mishnish. An' you are for away—well, goot pye—mind, wan third from Islay and two thirds from Jura."

"Mercy on us," said Andy as we pulled aboard, "what a spate of talk! Thank goodness we don't need a pilot."

"I am told," replied the Governor, "he is not a bad one for all that, and I daresay his volubility does not last. Human organs of speech could never maintain that torrent of interrogations for very long."

We started at half-past ten, spreading all sail to a light westerly breeze, which enabled us to make steady though slow progress down the Sound of Mull. Some of our party had found at Tobermory reasons for consigning to Tophet the public-spirited officials who extended the telegraph to these distant isles of the sea, as the calls of business had made themselves to be heard in that remote village, and the presence at home

of two of our number was demanded. It was therefore necessary to break up the coterie, or to shorten the cruise and go straight to Clyde, *viâ* the Crinan Canal. The latter course was determined on, and Loch Swen, which we had proposed to visit, left over till a more convenient season.

As we ran down the Sound the sky brightened all round and the wind freshened to a brisk topsail breeze. Off Duart we reached through the tide ripple, which would swamp an open boat in a few seconds, getting our decks thoroughly swept by the leaping waters which tumbled aboard of us at all points.

A lull in the wind gave us peace and quietness during dinner. As we rose from the table it revived and brought us as far as Sheep Island, when it abruptly died away, leaving us tossing in a confused jumble of a sea in company with a large yawl, also southward bound. Signs of wind were to be seen all round; occasional puffs reached us, filling our sails only for a moment; by-and-bye a seemingly true wind drew us away from the yawl, and before we had time to congratulate ourselves on our superior luck, we were as upright as a dart, and our neighbour was on our weather, passing us with a breeze in his canvas laying him down to the scuppers.

He was evidently going for the Sound of Islay,

and he was well on his way towards Garvelloch before we were fortunate enough to meet with an honest breeze at half-past four in the afternoon.

At Pladda we met a strong flood; but the breeze was fresh enough for us to stem it, and stood to us all the way down to Crinan, where we sent the boat ashore to warn the locksman of our desire to enter the canal at once.

As soon as the gates were opened, we doused all sail, rigged in the bowsprit, unshipped the whiskers, and ran into the lock under bare poles. Even with no canvas set the strong breeze took us ahead at a rate that made it difficult to check the yacht in the lock, and we gave the gate a good poke with our bowsprit end. As we rose on the in-rushing waters we were saluted by our Jehu of the previous season, who, with a wide grin informed us that "he knew us wheneffer he'll saa us in the Loch, and went at wance to drive in the powny from the hulls." Now, as he had made our acquaintance in a schooner and we were then inhabiting a cutter, honest Duncan's vision must have been uncommonly keen to have let him recognize us under the altered conditions. Perhaps his joy at seeing us again was not altogether unconnected with a prospective job.

The evening was too far spent for us to proceed along the canal; so making fast to the quay wall

in the basin, we stepped ashore, and rambled about the beach, listening to the lively strains of an excellent brass band on board a large steam yacht lying off the pier.

After an early breakfast we started in tow of Duncan's horse at eight o'clock next morning. Having a strong crew, we were not much delayed at the locks; but we could not make the transit of the canal in less than six hours, getting aground twice in the middle of it in eight feet three inches water. For driver we had Duncan's son, and this saved us an imperial pint of whisky, at least, the youth not having arrived at years of discretion.

As we left the canal at Ardrishaig, we got aground again; but, sending a line ashore to a score of lusty fishermen, they hauled us into deep water by sheer force, and, setting our staysail, we sailed into the offing, rigged out our bowsprit, and set all sail.

The wind was light, a dense fog closed over us, and the rain pelted on us in heavy showers. It was a wretched afternoon for sailing, and had time not pressed we should have thought it more wise to anchor, and dream the hours away until less rain and more wind tempted us to get under way again; but, as it was, we were bound to make a conscientious attempt to anchor that night within reach of a railway station, so we carried on.

One by one the bold mariners slunk under

hatches, till the Governor was left alone at the tiller. By the time we reached the Burnt Islands in the Kyles of Bute, the rain had found every joint in his armour, and it coursed in a thousand rills from his neck to his toes. In the East Kyle the darkness was intense, and until we opened out the gas lamps of Port Bannatyne and Rothesay, and the revolving light on Toward, we were by no means sure of our precise whereabouts.

As we passed Ardmaleish Point, a strong squall compelled us to douse our topsail, which was a large one, and with the boom well off and the topsail to leeward, getting it on deck was not so easy. Coming up with Toward, all hands were on the alert, looking out for the buoy on Toward Patch, said buoy being a much more formidable danger to the majority of vessels navigating these waters than the shoal it marks. We never saw it; nor, indeed, did we see anything, except the three lights, Cumbrae, Toward, and Cloch.

So dark was it that we could not pick up our own moorings, but holding on up Loch Long till we came on an anchor-lamp shining, we sounded, and finding ten fathoms, rounded to and let go. In the morning we found ourselves a couple of miles from our usual anchorage, and, making sail, we worked down to it, before the arrival of the morning steamer, which took off three-fifths of our party.

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