

**PRACTICAL CANOEING; A
TREATISE ON
THE MANAGEMENT &
HANDLING OF CANOES**

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Practical Canoeing: A Treatise on the Management & Handling of Canoes by Tiphys

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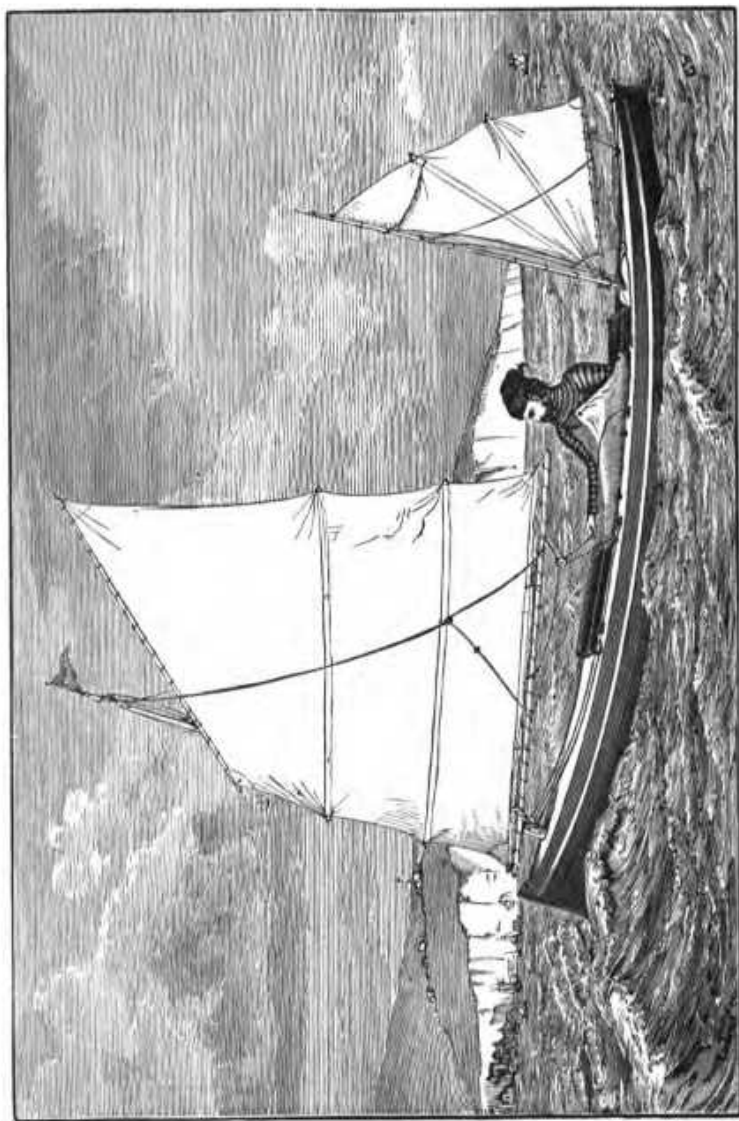
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TIPHYS

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CLOSEHAULED ON A FRESHENING BREEZE.

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By "TIPHYS."



"FORWARD."

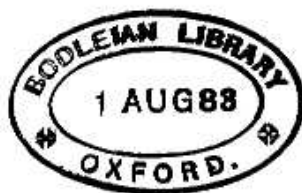
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PREFACE.

THIS little Book is intended to meet the wants of those who are taking up Canoeing for the first time, or who having Canoes, wish to fit them out for cruising. I have almost entirely avoided the subject of building, thinking it undesirable that beginners should attempt to build for themselves, which is likely to lead to disappointment. With very few exceptions, nothing is recommended which has not stood practical trial.

To the "Elder Brethren" of the paddle, if any such should be among my readers, I must apologise for stating positively some few things which may be regarded as debateable. It is impossible in a small compass to guard every statement by an "in my opinion." I have, however, endeavoured as far as possible to distinguish between my own views and those of others, and, where mine diverge from those generally accepted, have given my reasons as far as space would allow.

Wherever I have quoted the writings, or inventions of other Canoeists, I have endeavoured to acknowledge it. If in any case I have failed to do so, let it be ascribed to inadvertence, or to the fact that the same thing is often invented simultaneously by more than one person. My obligations to correspondents have been acknowledged in the text, except in a very few cases, in which silence on this point has been requested.

PRACTICAL CANOEING.

CHAPTER I.

CANOEING is one of the earliest of human inventions, and one of the most simple, inexpensive, and enjoyable amusements of the present time. No doubt by giving way to the modern tendency to make a canoe a kind of toy yacht, capable of nothing but what a twenty foot sloop could do more effectually, one may make jettison of cheapness and simplicity, and introduce an amount of difficulty and trouble which is fatal to enjoyment.

But, if this snare is avoided, nothing can beat the canoe. One day paddling among the lilies, perhaps in a stream too narrow for oars; on another spreading white sails to the sea breeze, and safely contending with the waves; now carried over obstacles, now housed in boat-house or shed, in a room of the inn, or in fact anywhere that there is room to swing the traditional cat; and again at anchor in the tide, or hauled up on beach or grass, she is herself the nightly home of her crew.

"But if canoeing has all these virtues," one is often asked, "how do you explain the fact that it is less practised now than formerly?" I will endeavour very shortly to answer this.

It is the fate of many pastimes to "die of their own too much." Comparatively simple at their first introduction, they are practised with success by the numbers whom their novelty

attracts. After a short time improvements, some real, some nominal only, are introduced, which add to the difficulty, and often to the expense, of the pursuit. This, occurring just as the effect of novelty has died out, goes far to reduce the numbers of those who practice the pastime in question to a few enthusiasts, the old hands finding themselves left behind by the "march of events," while outsiders are deterred from "taking a hand in the game," by the difficulties which have been introduced.

This has been to a very great extent the case with canoeing in England. At its introduction nothing was more simple. Even those who could not row found that the management of a canoe was within their power, and in it acquired at ease sufficient watermanship for ordinary purposes.

Then improvements began; in a short time it was found that sails would nearly double the travelling power of a canoe, and enable her to accomplish journeys in a day which would be hardly possible with the paddle, except to a man of extraordinary strength and endurance. For example, 120 miles have been travelled in a day and a night by a canoe under sail, a distance which few men would care to attempt "at a sitting" with a paddle. Sailing races were the next step in the progress of canoeing, and in a short time it was evident that whatever canoes might have gained by the results of time and experience, they were beginning to lose that simplicity which was their chief advantage at starting.

The three principal canoeing stations in the Kingdom are the Clyde, the Mersey, and the Thames. On the Mersey, local circumstances, and the wise regulations of the Club, have preserved the best qualities of a canoe, in portability, economy, and simplicity, though probably at some loss of efficiency for sailing. On the Thames, the use of separate classes for paddling and sailing, and lately, the removal of the Club Sailing Races to waters where no amount of weight is any disadvantage, have produced a paddling machine and a sailing machine, neither of which possesses the "points" of a canoe. On the Clyde a balance appears to have been struck between the other two,