

CHAPTER I

A VOYAGE IN A SAILING SHIP

SANDFORD FLEMING was by birth a Fifer ; that is to say he first saw the light, January 7, 1827, in the ' Lang Toun ' of Kirkcaldy, in the ancient Kingdom of Fife, the home of his forefathers for many generations. You will remember what Andrew Fairservice says in *Rob Roy*, ' Kirkcaldy, the sell o't, is langer than ony town in England '. His father was Andrew Greig Fleming, and his mother Elizabeth Arnot. He was named after his maternal grandfather Sandford Arnot, and after an uncle of the same name, a Sanskrit scholar of some renown then living in India. His mother's grandfather, one of the clan Cameron, fought at Culloden, and afterwards with seven others rowed Prince Charlie over to France. One of her uncles served under Wolfe at Quebec.

Fleming's earliest schooling was obtained at Kennoway, the home of his grandmother, under a Mr. Bethune, who some years later emigrated to Canada and became master of the High School in Montreal. Eventually he settled as a resident missionary on the north shore of Lake Erie between Caledonia and Port Dover. At this same Kennoway school Dr. Allan Pollok, one of the leaders of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, also commenced his education. Fleming's education was continued at the Kirkcaldy Burgh School, the same of which Carlyle had been master some twenty years or so before. About the age of fourteen he became a pupil of the well-known Scottish engineer and surveyor John Sang, with whom he remained until he left for Canada in 1845.

Of his boyhood days in the ancient seaport of Kirkcaldy we get random glimpses through the pages of a tattered diary, the first of a long series continued to the present day. ' My present plan ', he puts down in his diary, in a boyish