

EXTRACT FROM
RACUNDRA'S FIRST CRUISE
ARTHUR RANSOME

Houses are but badly built boats so firmly aground that you cannot think of moving them. They are definitely inferior things, belonging to the vegetable not the animal world, rooted and stationary, incapable of gay transition. I admit, doubtfully, as exceptions, snail-shells and caravans. The desire to build a house is the tired wish of a man content thenceforward with a single anchorage. The desire to build a boat is the desire of youth, unwilling yet to accept the idea of a final resting place.

It is for that reason, perhaps, that when it comes, the desire to build a boat is one that cannot be resisted. It begins as a little cloud on a serene horizon. It ends by covering the whole sky, so that you can think of nothing else. You must build to regain your freedom. And always you comfort yourself with the thought that yours will be the perfect boat, the boat that you may search the harbours of the world for and cannot find.