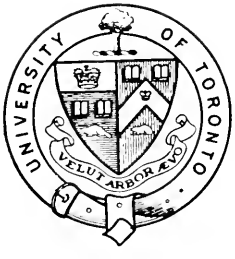


OCEAN RACERS

THE SAILOR'S WAY

Frontispiece

OCEAN RACERS

By

C. FOX SMITH

PHILIP ALLAN
MCMXXXI

Made and Printed in Great Britain
by The Garden City Press Limited,
Letchworth, Herts

CONTENTS

CHAP. PAGE

I. INTRODUCTORY - - - - - - - - 1

Swift ships of old time—The speed of ships in history —The four great phases of ocean racing—The scope of the present book—The nation and the merchant seaman—The historian's difficulties.

II. THE CLIPPER SHIP ARRIVES - - - 15

The Baltimore Clipper—The old *Polly*—The *Ayacucho* —*Alert* v. *California*—The *Ann McKim*—Racing across the Atlantic in the 1830's—The Chinese opium trade—The brig *Eamont*—The *Houqua* and her skipper—The bucko officer—John W. Griffith's *Rainbow*—Her ancestry.

III. TO THE LANDS OF GOLD - - - - - 31

1. TO CALIFORN-I-O! The gold rush of 1849—A protected trade—Humours and tragedies of the Gold Fleet—The *Rory O'More*—A great shipbuilder —Sail *v.* Steam—Neck and neck round the Horn— The *Sovereign of the Seas*—Some transatlantic records—The brig *Thomas Hanford*—Some fast "bluenoses"—Why Capt. Churchill scraped his pipe out—Two noted rivals—The *Great Republic*— Some "great ships" and their endings—The mystery of the *Kobenhavn*—The strange tale of the *Eclipse*.

2. SOUTHWARD HO! Gold finds in Australia—The *Marco Polo*—Beaten by the Blackwaller *Kent*— *Lightning* v. *Red Jacket*—*James Baines*—*Lincolnshire*— Queen Victoria visits the *James Baines*—With troops to India—The *Red Jacket* races the *Mermaid*.

IV. CHINA TEA - - - - - - - - 78

The China Seas in the 'Fifties—Pirates and other risks—American ships enter the British tea trade— *Challenger* v. *Challenge*—Some early British clippers— Liverpool ships in the tea fleets—The *Vision* races the *Cairngorm*—The *Robin Hood*—The great tea races of the 'Sixties—*Thermopylae* and *Cutty Sark*—The *Wild Deer*—The last of the tea clippers—The *Lothair*—The *Miako*—Racing among the early steamers.

CHAP. PAGE

V. RACING FOR THE WOOL SALES - - - 121

1. FAMOUS FLYERS IN THE AUSTRALIAN TRADE. The Queens of the high latitudes—Wooden and composite ships—*Omar Pasha*—*Star of Peace*—*Thermopylae* and her rival—*Heather Bell*—The iron clippers—Carmichael's ships—The *Golden Fleece*—The *Jason*—An unlucky voyage and some 'hoodoo' ships—Heap's *Theophane*—The Loch Line—A famous shipmaster—The *Ben Voirlich*—The *Loch Tay*—An eventful voyage—The *Benmore*.

2. RACING FROM NEW ZEALAND PORTS. The *Light Brigade*—The *West Land*—The *City of Auckland*—The *Crusader*, *Ocean Mail* and *Avalanche*—The *Otaki*—The *Rangitiki's* cat—The *Auckland*—The *Loch Awe*—The *Laira* and *Oban Bay*.

VI. THE SAILOR'S WAY - - - - - 183

The general traders—A changed order of things—Wooden clippers in the 'Frisco grain trade—The *Young America*—*La Escocesa*—The converted steamer—*Three Brothers*—The *Western Shore*—The *Senator*—The *Glenalvon* and *Glenesslin*—Wrecks on the Oregan coast—Some treasure yarns—*Cedric the Saxon*—The *Dawpool*—The four-masters—The *Pinmore*—The *Muskoka*—Law's *Sutherlandshire*—The *Swanhilda*—The *Armadale*—The *Gulf Stream*—The *Shenandoah* and Capt. 'Shotgun' Murphy—Potter's *Wanderer*—The *Falls of Garry*—The last grain race from the Pacific Coast—A few cross passages—The *British Ambassador*—The *Howard D. Troop*—The *Loch Torridon*—The *Wendur*—An Ocean race in the 'Nineties.

VII. CONCLUSION - - - - - - 232

APPENDICES - - - - - - - 235

INDEX - - - - - - - - 239

ILLUSTRATIONS

THE SAILOR'S WAY - - - - - *frontispiece*

A BRITISH FRIGATE BRINGING-TO AN AMERICAN SCHOONER - - - - *facing page* 16

CLIPPER SHIP *Red Jacket* - - - „ „ 76

FIGUREHEAD OF THE *Donald McKay* - „ „ 68

THE *Robin Hood* (TEA CLIPPER) - - „ „ 90

THE FAMOUS *Cutty Sark* - - - - „ „ 108

A CLOSE CALL - - - - - - „ „ 124

THE LAST BERTH - - - - - - „ „ 134

THE *Glenalvon* - - - - - - „ „ 184

THE *Glenesslin* - - - - - - „ „ 198

THE *Cedric the Saxon* - - - - „ „ 206

THE *Bracadale* - - - - - - „ „ 222

PREFATORY NOTE

MY acknowledgments are due to many kind friends who have helped me in the gathering of these memories of the old ships and old ways. It is impossible to mention all. Some are referred to in the course of the narrative: and I take this opportunity of thanking Captain J. O'Donnell, Mr. Samuel Boyd, Colonel J. H. Beazley, Captain D. McIntyre, Captain A. McKay, Captain T. S. Angus, Mr. J. Murray Tomory, Captain A. T. Pope, D.S.O., R.N.R., Captain F. W. Ellis, Captain E. S. Dunn and Mr. S. Gresty, for very valuable assistance: also the officials of the Imperial Merchant Service Guild in Liverpool and Glasgow. I am also indebted to Mr. K. Rigby Burgess, Mr. F. V. Smyth, and Mr. H. Visger (of St. Vincent, C.V.), for the loan of photographs. The picture of the *True Briton* is from a painting in the possession of the late Captain Spadaccini. May I also thank here the donor of the illustration which forms the frontispiece—one of the last apprentices to serve his time in a British square-rigger. I have mislaid the letter which accompanied the picture: but I hope this acknowledgment may come to his notice.

The following is a brief list of the principal literary sources referred to: Mr. Basil Lubbock's various books on shipping history, Mr. F. W. Wallace's exhaustive volumes on 'Blue Nose' shipping, *Some Famous Sailing Ships and their Builders*, by R. C. McKay, and Mr. Cutler's recent work on the American

clippers, *Greyhounds on the Sea*: also various issues of *Sea Breezes* magazine, which is doing such excellent work in preserving first-hand records of the old ships and to which I am more particularly indebted for the account of the *Loch Tay's* eventful voyage.

C. F. S.

OCEAN RACERS

CHAPTER I

Introductory

Since the floods come down an' the Ark was new,
An' Cap'n Noah signed on 'is crew . . .
There ain't been a ship 'as sailed the seas,
But someone's been there as said words like these:
'Oh, you orter 'ave seen my las' ship,'
For she was the gal to go,
Round ol' Cape Stiff in a 'undred days
From Cali-for-ni-o!
She was a beauty, she was a ship,
Fifteen knots was 'er usual clip . . .
You orter 'ave seen 'er carryin' sail,
W'en the eighteenth knot was over the rail!
Oh, she was a beauty, my las' ship—my ol' ship—my bes' ship—
A flier from stern to bow,
An' I'd give the 'arf o' my pay, God's truth,
To be back in that ol' ship now!

The Last Ship.

I

IT is the fashion nowadays, both among those who decry and those who applaud the ways of modernity in general, to regard the worship of speed as essentially a product of this present century. Yet, as a matter of cold fact, it is really nothing of the kind.

Somewhat paradoxically, perhaps, on the part of one of the slowest of God's creatures as regards his natural equipment, the desire for rapid movement is among the root instincts of the human race; and it is probable that there has been no age in the history of mankind when that desire has not been translated into action of one kind or another. Speed, after all, is (like every-

thing else) merely relative. The first skinclad denizen of the prehistoric world who contrived to catch a wild horse and get his leg across it was no doubt as great a wonder among his fellows as any breaker of records on the ocean beaches of to-day. And a future generation which has equalled or even improved a little upon Ariel's rate of progression will look back, not a doubt of it, with an immense superiority and pity, upon the outworn and snail-like modes of transit with which the twentieth century contented itself.

Assuredly, ever since man first became a navigator, swiftness has been to him one of the most desirable qualities in the craft which he created. How much this was so in the dim dawn of history we can but conjecture—what dugout canoes or coracles of hide were matched one against another, or how the pebbles flew when the contestants met on the beach to fight their battles o'er again. Who shall recount the record passages that were made by the ships of King Huram, or the turbans that were lost and won in the fleets of Queen Hatshepshu when they sailed to the land of Punt? But to the existence of such things the earliest literature of sea travel bears witness.

One may at least conjecture that it was the quality of swiftness that the Preacher had in his mind when he wrote of ' the way of a ship in the midst of the sea.' Homer speaks not once but a hundred times of the ' swift black ship ' of Odysseus ; and again of ' the swift bark that ran ever swiftly on her way ; nor could a circling hawk keep pace with her, of all winged things the swiftest.' Catullus, apostrophising some neglected old has-been rotting on the shore, in such words as have found an echo in the minds of lovers of

ships since the world began, shows that the delight of outsailing others was by no means unknown in the days of Imperial Rome.

'Behold,' he writes, 'this galley, my friends: fancy you hear her tell how once she was the fastest among ships, able to show her heels to any craft afloat, whether driven by oars or sails!'

In the days of Pliny it is recorded that Roman galleys engaged in the transport of grain from Alexandria to Italy made times which compare very well with those of the average tramp steamer. And an ingenious gentleman writing in an American newspaper not long since produced figures showing that one of these large oared vessels, provided the rowers kept it up day and night, could have made a passage across the Atlantic in the quite respectable time of thirteen days and a few hours. The calculation savours a little of those odd little paragraphs which tell us how many pairs of number nine boots, placed heel to toe, it would take to reach to the moon and back: but it is at least an amusing speculation.

The seamen of the 'tideless dolorous midland sea' still maintained the tradition of speed in the days of the Queen of the Adriatic, and the ships of Venice and Genoa were accustomed to make the passage from Naples to Palermo in seventeen hours: while later still, the swift lateen-rigged craft of the Turkish and Algerine corsairs were the terror of the peaceful slow-sailing merchantmen of the Northern nations.

Among the seafaring peoples of Northern Europe in early days there is ample proof that speed was looked upon as by no means a negligible factor. The Viking ships, the hulls of which have been discovered in recent

times at Gogstad and elsewhere show a distinct grasp of the art of fashioning a ship's underwater body so as to move quickly through the water: and the passage in the 'Heimskringlä' describing the building of the *Long Serpent*, points in the same direction. In those vessels, proportion of beams to length, as in the case of the Deal galleys, seems to have been the outstanding quality: and King Alfred, when he destroyed the Danish fleet in the Hamble River, did so in consequence of building his new ships longer than those of his opponents, which he was then able to outmanœuvre completely.

During the Middle Ages and even later, speed was, on the contrary, comparatively neglected as an essential factor in ships. For this there are at least two very obvious reasons. So far as fighting ships were concerned, the invention of gunpowder turned them into gun-platforms: hence, the great aim of the naval architect of those days was to give his vessel sufficient stability to be able to discharge her armament with some hope of hitting the desired objective. The mercantile vessel, at the same time, partly, no doubt, owing to the influence of the Hansa and of the Flemings, an influence still traceable in many of the words which form part of the vocabulary of the sea, became more and more a cargo carrier, round, capacious and full-bodied: and the cult of speed was for a time left very largely to those who used it for unlawful occasions, the Algerine corsairs and folk of a like kidney.

The struggle for sea power during the sixteenth century and onwards saw, however, a return to the early ideas of speed. In this connection, the coming of

the fore-and-aft sail had a very considerable influence. Up to that time, working to windward was all but unknown, and the superior handiness of the ships of the Tudor Navy marked yet another stage in the development of the wind-ship.

Throughout the campaigns of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries between the fleets of the various powers which contended for the sceptre of the seas, speed and handiness continued to be increasingly cultivated so far as vessels of war were concerned. The fast sailing of its frigates during the Napoleonic period was one of the most valuable assets of the French navy: and more than once the whole fate of the conflict between Britain and France depended upon the heels of a ship. Are not, indeed, the greatest of all the ocean races of history two which do not come within the scope of a volume devoted to the records of merchant shipping—that which saw its close in the battle thunder of Aboukir Bay, and that other, greater still, which culminated in the glory and tragedy of Trafalgar ?

All this while the merchantman continued to wallow slowly and leisurely on her way, the ready and helpless prey of pirate and privateer. There was little or no trade competition on the great ocean routes of the world. National monopolies—Dutch, French and British—saw to that: and it was not until the nineteenth century had entered upon its third decade that speed in commercial vessels began to be an important consideration.

2

A certain number of ships of a considerably faster type than had been hitherto employed had already appeared on the North Atlantic and in the opium trade in China, when the discovery of gold in California in 1848 gave a tremendous fillip to the construction of large and speedy cargo and passenger ships along the whole of the North American seaboard to meet the demands of the mushroom community thus created. Two years later a new gold rush to Australia opened another field to vessels of a similar type, and many of the famous and beautiful ships which were produced in the yards of the United States and British North America did their best to work in that trade.

With the opening up of the China ports to other nations through the repeal of the Navigation Acts in 1849, American vessels entered the tea trade between that country and England, and at once created an immense sensation by the speed—hitherto undreamed of—of their passages to London with the first teas of the season.

British shipbuilders, in the meantime, had already begun to evolve a speedier type of ship for the China trade than had been employed up to that time, and the American invasion was a further fillip to their enterprise and invention. The result was the British clipper ship, which was in no sense a copy of the American clipper, but a quite distinctive type, showing marked differences in many respects from the latter. The British ships rapidly regained their footing in the tea trade, and had definitely established a hold there

before the Civil War saw the disappearance of the keen and beautiful American flyers from the China races.

The coming of steam and the opening of the Suez Canal in due time sounded the knell of the tea clippers. But a new era of ship racing had already set in—that between the wooden, composite and iron clipper ships which loaded wool in Australia and New Zealand and sped homewards round the Horn hotfoot for the first of the London wool sales.

Here, too, the invasion of steam brought the day of the fast sailing ship to a close, and owners of sailing tonnage were compelled to look elsewhere for charters.

They found them for a time on the north-west coast of America, whence during the last thirty years of the nineteenth century the survivors of the clipper age, together with a whole fleet of big four-masted cargo carriers, raced round the Horn with the wheat of the Pacific slope.

But this in turn passed. It was the last of the real ocean racing among sailing vessels. Lumber and nitrates are of the class of cargo with which there is no occasion to be in a hurry, though right up to the end of the sail era, captains who had been brought up in the traditions of the wool and grain fleets were always ready to pit their commands against each other in individual and strictly unofficial contests of speed.

During the nineteen-twenties and onwards, a fleet of half a dozen or so of the old stagers—none of them, alas! under the ' ol' blood-an'-guts ' which most of them carried in their earlier years—have ' raced ' each year from Australian ports with grain to European ports. The newspapers, owing to the fact that sailing ships are now more or less ' news,' have spread them-

selves a good deal over these so-called races, and they have of course a sentimental interest of their own. But as a matter of fact, none of the ships taking part in them were ever known among sailormen as movers, and their passages, as might be expected with their cut-down sail plans and reduced crews, compare but poorly with those of the tall princesses of the real racing days.

3

It is the aim of this volume to gather together between the covers of one book records of some of the principal races between sailing-ships during, roughly, the period from the eighteen-forties to the early nineteen-hundreds. It perhaps goes without saying that it has been necessary to go over a certain amount of old ground. To do so is unavoidable. One cannot, for example, write about ship races and leave out the *Thermopylae*, the *Cutty Sark*, the *Lightning* and the *Red Jacket*, any more than one could write a history of England and omit the Battle of Hastings and the Spanish Armada. Wherever possible, however, I have preferred to stress the achievements of ships which have not so far received much attention from the chronicler, and with reference to the better-known ships I have been able in some cases to salve from oblivion a few fresh scraps of unrecorded information.

So far as the exploits of later ships are concerned, especially those engaged in the grain races from the Pacific Coast during the close of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, I have gone as

far as possible for my particulars to the men who actually knew the individual ships in question. It has not always been easy. It is astonishing how soon a ship's memory seems to pass away from the earth. Over and over again one comes across the same tale. Many of the old sailing-ship firms, if they did not disappear altogether, were absorbed into one or other of the big shipping combines, and the continuity of their tradition was broken. Old records were lost or destroyed when the move into new premises took place: records which would, very often, have proved invaluable to the future historian of shipping.

'I destroyed all my old log books,' said one old skipper to me. 'They were only lumbering up the place, and after I am gone there is no one who will take any interest in them.'

Well, perhaps he was in the right of it! These are days when the past is at a discount: when that rather cheap modern *cliché* of the 'bad old days' is on nearly everyone's lips, and an age bankrupt of money, of employment, of ideals and of political honesty, pats itself on the back on account of hot and cold water in every bedroom, and, even while it reverts for artistic expression to the phallic symbols of primitive savagery, thanks itself that it is not as its ancestors were. Perhaps, when the next two or three generations have followed their predecessors into oblivion, no one will want to know what manner of men, what manner of ships, they were which learned to turn the moods of the winds and seas themselves to serve the needs of humanity.

It would be strange, in a way, if it should be so. For it is to the sailor of the sail more than to any man on

earth, that this queer disastrous sort of muddle we call modern civilisation owes its very existence. More than to the soldier, the explorer, the statesman, the missionary, since without the restless spirit of the man with the salt drop in his blood, Europe might have remained for centuries, like India and China, busied with her own warring dynasties and creeds. Unlettered, ill fed, underpaid—the butt of the cheap ridicule and the still more devastating sentimentalism of writers and artists—he has yet been up to our own time, and even in it, an alien being, viewed with a profound indifference by the majority of his fellow-countrymen. It is a significant fact that, while at one time or another during the last century the wrongs of the prostitute, the child factory worker, the seamstress, the convict, the lunatic, all inspired the pen of the poet or the novelist, the seaman never found a literary champion, and it was left to an obscure country solicitor to take up his long-neglected cause at last.

And this indifference, indeed, persists to a great extent in our own day. Which of us, during the dark days of the Great War, could fail to be struck by the lack of sympathy shown by the general public towards the sufferings of our merchant seamen? I remember once being moved to point out to a comfortable dame, holding forth indignantly over the reported loss of a food cargo, that incidentally a couple of score of seamen's lives had been lost with it. 'Oh, sailors!' exclaimed the good lady. 'Well, I suppose it's wot they're paid for!' Nobody in these islands during the war years ever remotely felt the pinch of starvation. Yet it never seemed to touch the national conscience to any appreciable extent that men should be scalded, or

drowned, or die in fearful torment in open boats, in order that those at home might enjoy not merely the necessaries, but the superfluities of life. The death of one landsman during an air raid, drinking his beer in a pub., shocked the public imagination more than that of thousands of seamen could ever do.

Or, consider, again, the attitude of the man in the street, the immense indignation he manifests, if on the occasion of a loss of a passenger vessel any member of the ship's company is found in a lifeboat. 'A sailor,' is his comfortable dictum, as he travels businesswards in his railway carriage, 'should go down with his ship': which is about as sensible as saying that a person employed in a hotel or factory which happens to be on fire should decline to take advantage of the fire escape and commit a sort of suttee in the ruins. What though the seamen concerned are usefully employed in saving the lives of the helpless passengers in the boats? No! The passengers are to be set adrift to take their chance of sinking or swimming: and the whole of the ship's company are to await with a becoming heroism that death by drowning for which they receive so handsome a remuneration.

So, as I say, it is quite possible that in a few years' time no one will really want to know anything about those ships and men, so lately a part of the living present, but now, suddenly, in the twinkling of an eye, as it were, portions and parcels of the dreadful Past. Even so! Yet to those who have loved lovely ships it must still remain a pious duty to set up, for the sake of so much beauty and courage now perished from the earth, on the shores of a sea greater even than those they sailed upon, a white stone to their memory. . . .

4

This volume does not, of course, claim to be a complete record of racing at sea. It deals, for one thing, entirely with utility ships, and not with yacht races. And the racing which went on in certain trades—particularly among the Calcutta jute fleet—has only been touched on in passing, as also that in the numerous cross-voyages apart from the main routes of shipping.

Even so far as it goes, I don't suppose the tale is complete. Most likely it never will be. So much of it is already lost beyond recall—some of it discarded, as I have already said, as useless, more still gone down into the great deep in the memories of drowned men. I tried, during the putting together of these records, to get on the track of the skipper of a certain well-known ship which was making fast passages on into the present century. I got there, after a good many inquiries. He was lost with his ship, immediately after the new Board of Trade load-line regulations drove a coach-and-six through the life work of Samuel Plimsoll.

Of the American clipper races and the tea passages, information is fairly full. It is, paradoxically, concerning the ships nearer to our own day that information is so scanty and hard to come by: partly, of course, because the war took so heavy a toll of the men who served their time forty or fifty years ago.

Glancing through the yellowed files of old shipping papers, how often one comes across some such item as this:

To the Editor ——

'Dear Sir,

'In connection with your paragraph in a recent issue of your valued paper regarding the fast passage of the *So-and-So*, I beg to draw your attention to the performance of our ship *Such-and-Such*. . . . This appears to us to be quite as noteworthy as that of the *So-and-So*, and in our opinion constitutes something like a record.'

The very name of the ship, most likely, is forgotten. Perhaps she never was very much of a ship after all: perhaps only a lucky combination of circumstances, or some whimsical marine deity pushing her along from underneath, brought about that one fast passage of her career. Yet how eloquent those letters are of the little one or two ship concerns of the past: of dingy little offices with flies buzzing in their dusty wire blinds, where ancient clerks who had grown old in the firm's service pottered about over bills of lading and articles of apprenticeship, and enjoyed a chat with the tall-hatted skippers when they called to see their owner. The captain in his hat of state was a great man then. Fancy a captain of to-day ever being asked to dine with the managing director!

There is a great pathos about them, these scanty records of forgotten ships. Perhaps, as I have said, they were not much of ships. Yet designers and draughtsmen put a little of themselves into them. Some hundreds of artificers wrought upon them with hammer and adze. Merchants risked their wealth in

them. Sailors served in them, loved them, cursed them. And now nothing is left but a few lines in a fifty-year-old newspaper—like a name, hardly to be traced beneath the moss and lichen, on a neglected grave. . . .

CHAPTER II

The Clipper Ship Arrives

Trim and tight
For to trade and fight,
With a hard-boiled crew and a hard case skipper,
And a turn of speed
For to serve her need—
A handy, dandy Baltimore clipper!

JUST when the word ' clipper,' in the significance of a fast sailing vessel, came into use it is hard to say with any certainty. But it appears to be of American origin: for the first craft to which it was generally applied were the speedy little schooners and brigs of the New England coast, more especially those which hailed from the port of Baltimore.

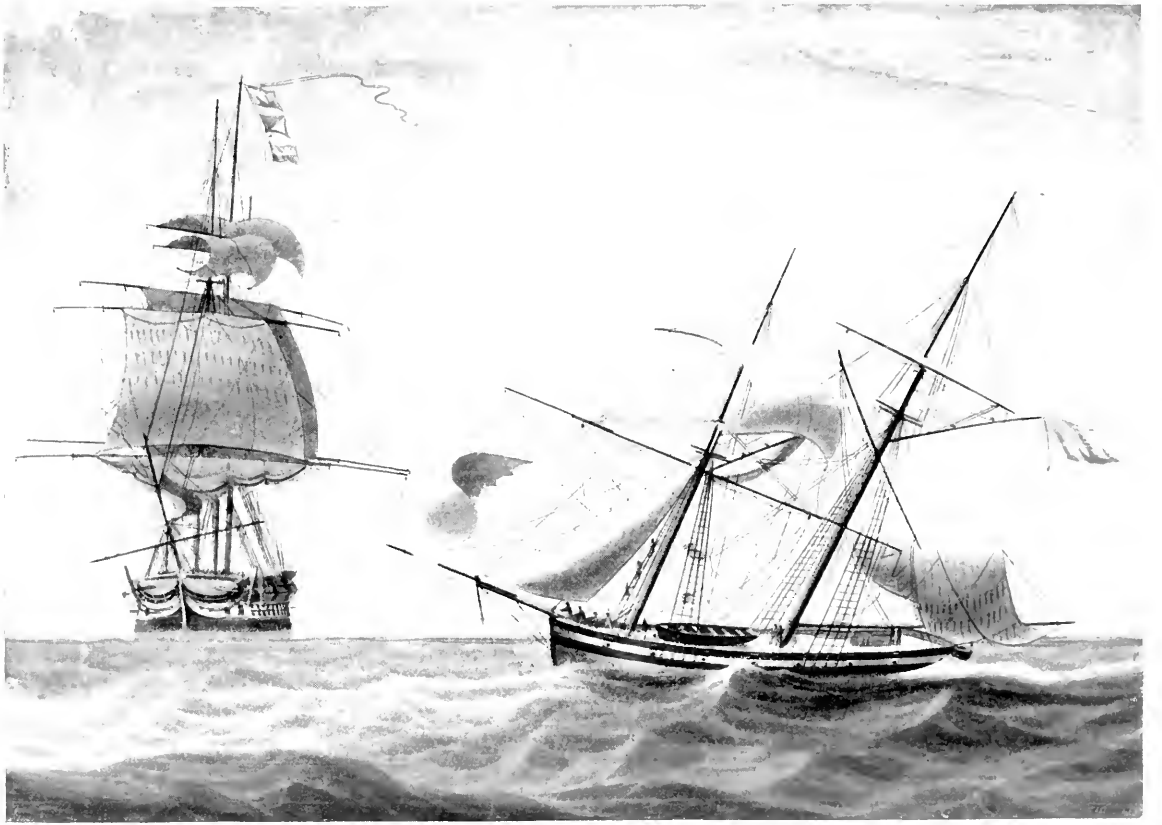
In these days when it is increasingly the fashion to belittle the profession of arms, and revile the calling of those who have in bygone generations defended their country against the forces of disruption and the designs of tyrants, it is worth while to recall how much the arts of peace owe to the arts of war. It is so in medicine and surgery: it is so in exploration and discovery: it is so, above all, in every branch of oversea transport.

The Baltimore clipper is a case in point, for she was essentially a war product.

Comment has already been made in passing in the foregoing chapter upon the extent to which the

design of ships was affected by the conditions prevailing during the French and American wars of the eighteenth century. The point is well worth a more detailed consideration: for it was to a great extent as a result of a long period of maritime warfare that American builders began to turn their attention to the construction of the speedy ships which were later to reach their perfection in the great Californian clippers of the eighteen-forties and onwards.

The type of vessel generally described as a Baltimore clipper was one definitely evolved to meet the requirements of a war upon commerce. Its prime purpose was to act as a convoy to slower ships: but under favourable wind conditions it frequently became the aggressor. Its essential qualities were speed, handiness, and light draught for coasting and river work. The true Baltimore clipper was invariably schooner or brig rigged, and bore very little resemblance to the later bearers of the name: flush-decked vessels, with very low freeboard, and a counter almost like that of a modern racing yacht. They carried an immense spread of canvas for their size, including a complete set of stunsails and other flying kites, and their masts were usually much raked. The bows, however, were of the traditional round design, with no signs of the concave lines characteristic of later models. They had their greatest breadth of beam forward, being somewhat the shape of a coffin, with the head end towards the bow. The illustration, after an aquatint by Huggins, of a British frigate rounding-to an American schooner, which is reproduced in this volume, gives an excellent idea of the type. This picture, by the way, is not without a special interest of its own, for it was once



A BRITISH FRIGATE BRINGING-TO AN AMERICAN SCHOONER
(From a water-colour by Huggins)

face p. 16

pasted inside the cover of a Blackwall midshipman's logbook at the time of the Crimean War.

Many of these smart little ships, after a successful career as privateers, became ordinary peaceful traders, while others pursued the less honourable calling of the slaver. One of the last to survive was the old *Polly*, which was afloat so recently as 1910, and may, for aught I know, be still going strong. The *Polly* was built in Massachusetts in 1806, and when war broke out in 1812 between Britain and America, was commissioned in the naval service. Her armament consisted of two ' Long Toms ' mounted fore and aft, and she carried a picked crew of twenty, armed with cutlasses and pistols. Two days after her departure from Marblehead on her first cruise, she captured a full-rigged ship after a brisk engagement, and before the end of the war, during which she was captured and re-taken, a score of prizes stood to her credit.

With the return of peace she resumed her lawful occasions, and continued to sail the seas for over a century, some of her voyages taking her far afield, into the stormy latitudes south of the Horn. In 1910 she paid a visit to New York for the purpose of having a tablet affixed to her by the Society of the Daughters of 1812. She appeared at that time to be still as seaworthy as ever, and a good many of her original oak timbers were yet *in situ*. On her way to New York she had a chance of showing her paces against one of the big ' baldheaded ' fore and afters of the most modern type, and the veteran proved an easy winner.

The Peruvian-built and British-owned *Ayacucho*, to which Dana refers more than once with so much

admiration in his *Two Years before the Mast*, seems to have been a good specimen of the Baltimore model. 'Nearing the anchorage at Santa Barbara,' he writes, 'we saw two vessels in port, a large full-rigged and a small hermaphrodite brig. The former, the crew said, must be the *Pilgrim*: but . . . upon nearer approach, her long, low sheer, sharp bows, and raking masts, told quite another story. "Man-of-war brig," said one of them; "Baltimore clipper," said others; the *Ayacucho*, thought I; and soon the broad folds of the beautiful banner of St. George were displayed from her peak.'

Racing between ships seems to have been a well-established custom on the California coast in Dana's day, to judge by his reference to the 'great dispute as to the sailing of our ship (the *Alert*) and the *Ayacucho*. Bets (he goes on to say) were made between the captains, and the crews took it up in their own way: but as she was bound to leeward and we to windward, and merchant captains cannot deviate, a trial never took place; and perhaps it was well for us that it did not, for the *Ayacucho* . . . was called the fastest merchantman that traded in the Pacific, unless it was the brig *John Gilpin*, and perhaps the ship *Ann McKim* of Baltimore.'

Elsewhere, in his account of the trial of speed between the *Alert* and the *California*, the same writer gives one of the liveliest descriptions of an ocean race in literature. 'The latter vessel,' says Dana, 'seemed desirous of a trial of speed, and our captain accepted the challenge, although we were loaded down to the bolts of our chain-plates, as deep as a sand-barge, and bound so taut with our cargo that we were no more fit for a race than a man in fetters; while our antagonist

was in her best trim. Being clear of the point, the breeze became stiff, and the royal masts bent under our sails; but we would not take them in until three boys sprung aloft into the rigging of the *California*, when they were all furled at once, but with orders to stay aloft at the topgallant mastheads, and loose them again at the word. It was my duty to furl the fore royal; and while standing by to loose it again, I had a fine view of the scene. From where I stood, the two vessels seemed nothing but spars and sails, while their narrow decks, far below, slanting over by the force of the wind aloft, appeared hardly capable of supporting the great fabrics raised upon them. The *California* was to windward of us, and had every advantage, yet, while the breeze was stiff, we held our own. As soon as it began to slacken, she ranged a little ahead, and the order was given to loose the royals. In an instant the gaskets were off and the bunt dropped. " Sheet home the fore-royal!—Weather sheet's home!—Lee sheet's home—Hoist away, Sir! " is bawled from aloft. " Overhaul your clew-lines," shouts the mate. " Ay, ay, Sir, all clear! "—" Taut leech, belay! "—" Well the lee brace —haul taut to windward! " and the royals are set. These brought us up again; but the wind continuing light, the *California* set hers, and it was soon evident that she was walking away from us. Our captain then hailed, and said that he should keep on his course; adding: ' She isn't the *Alert* now. If I had her in your trim, she would have been out of sight by this time.' The *Alert*, incidentally, seems to have possessed the failing common to many of the later clippers, of being a very wet ship forward. ' When she was going,' says Dana, ' as she sometimes would, eight or

nine knots on a wind, there would not be a dry spot forward of the gangway.'

The brig *John Gilpin*, mentioned in the first passage quoted, should not be confused with the later out-and-out clipper of the same name: Cowper's hero, for some reason, seeming to be a favourite with the namers of American ships. She was a very well-known ship in her day, and made a passage, which was a record at the time, of 56 days from Callao to China: but it is the *Ann McKim* which has sometimes been described as the direct forerunner of the fast clippers of eighteen-forties and onwards. She seems, as a matter of fact, to have been a vessel of the traditional Baltimore type so far as her lines were concerned; she was, however, the first full-rigged ship with a Baltimore hull, all the others being either brigs or schooners. Otherwise she differed very little from her predecessors, and certainly cannot be said to have inspired any revolutionary changes in ship design. She was, it is true, owned by the same firm to whose order the famous *Rainbow* was built, and it is possible that the *Rainbow's* designer, knowing the *Ann McKim* for a fast sailer, may have embodied some of her points in his new ship. But in many respects the Baltimore hull was entirely distinctive. Its low freeboard, rounded bows, and round underwater body had no counterpart whatever in the sharp, knife-like lines of the new design. In the Baltimore ship the proportion of beam to length was considerably greater, and in the former the greatest breadth was well forward instead of amidships or further aft still, as in the improved clippers.

During the eighteen-thirties, ships of a faster type were also beginning to make their appearance in the

North Atlantic passenger trade, and here too a certain amount of ship racing was going on, as evidenced by the following report in a contemporary (1836) Liverpool news-sheet.

Ship Race

> Twelve ships sailed from New York for Liverpool on the 8th instant. Among them were the packet ships *Sheffield*, Captain Allen, *Columbus*, Captain Palmer, and *George Washington*, Captain Holdredge, and several first-rate vessels, the *Star*, *Congress*, *Josephine*, etc. Heavy bets were laid on the respective ships at the time of sailing. The three packet ships having parted company, fell in with each other on the Banks of Newfoundland. Here they parted. The *George Washington* passed Holyhead on Saturday forenoon: two or three hours afterwards the *Sheffield* passed the same place. Both ships entered the Mersey in the course of the afternoon, after a run of seventeen days from port to port. The *Columbus* arrived yesterday morning. None of the other ships have yet appeared.

And again in 1837 we find the *Columbus* and *Sheridan* engaging in a race for stakes amounting to no less than $10,000, and a bonus of fifty dollars for the crew; the *Columbus* made the run in sixteen days, the *Sheridan*, of the Dramatic Line, arriving two days later.

A number of very fast little vessels, both British and American, also made their appearance in the early eighteen-forties in the Chinese opium trade. It is no

part of the scope of this volume to enter into the rights and wrongs of this branch of commerce. It was probably, not to put too fine a point upon it, neither more nor less than a glorified form of smuggling. But the most respectable merchants of Britain and America did not hesitate to engage in it, and from the shipping point of view it is undoubtedly both a picturesque and important phase of history. The trade attracted several noteworthy vessels, among them some of the first to be designed primarily with an eye to speed. This was desirable in an opium clipper for several reasons—first, because her business was illegal in the country where it was being carried on, secondly, on account of the competition between the firms engaged in it, and lastly, by reason of the danger from armed pirates which, knowing the value of her cargo, regarded her as a specially desirable victim.

In the British opium fleet, which included the famous *Falcon*, formerly Lord Yarborough's yacht, were several vessels from the famous yard of White and Son, of Cowes, among them being the *Eamont* and *Wild Dayrell*, the latter presumably called after the gentleman who threw the baby into the fire at Littlecote Manor, near Hungerford. The *Torrington* was built by Alexander Hall, of Aberdeen, whose ships were later to win such wide renown in the tea fleet. The American contingent included the schooners *Zephyr*, *Anglona* and *Ariel*, and the brig *Antelope*, the *Ariel* being the ship which nearly brought the career of the famous merchant-shipowner, Robert Bennet Forbes, to an untimely end by capsizing on her trial trip in Boston harbour. These little ships—they ranged between seventy and three hundred tons—were for

that period regarded as exceptionally fast, though they never attained the speed of the later racing clippers. Eight or nine knots on a bowline was considered a very good pace. They were also exceedingly handy. 'No ground was lost, we never missed stays,' writes Captain Lindsay Anderson, describing how the *Eamont* beat out of Amoy harbour, 'the *Eamont* came round like a top, and never lost headway when going about, her fore and aft canvas being in such excess of her topsail and top-gallant sail, which with the bowline of the forestaysail to windward, were the only sails aback in stays. She came round so quickly that the fore and afters were no sooner in the wind than they were drawing away full again on the other tack.'

This beautiful little vessel was built almost entirely of solid mahogany, and cost as much as an oak ship of ten times her size. She was schooner-rigged, and very heavily sparred, her main-boom being 110 feet in length. The description of her sails reads almost like a fairy-tale by comparison with the much-bepatched fine weather suit of canvas of a modern Cape Horner in the closing days of sail. No patches were allowed. Whenever a sail showed the least sign of wear, it was condemned and replaced by a new one, and the same rule held good with regard to rigging.

In the year 1844, two ships took the water from New York yards, both of which are claimants to the title of the first clipper ship.

One of these—the *Houqua*, built by Brown & Bell of New York, for Messrs. A. A. Low & Co.—was simply an improvement on the fast ships already engaged in the China trade. The man responsible for her design was a well-known merchant skipper, Captain N. B.

Palmer, of long experience, both in the Liverpool packet service and the Canton trade. He was an exceedingly capable ship-designer, as well as an able seaman and a shrewd man of business. Like most of the packet captains, he was a bit of a ' hard nut,' and Captain C. P. Low, who served under him in the *Houqua* as an officer, gives a lively picture of some of his idiosyncrasies.

' One day (writes Captain Low) when the ship was rolling fearfully the Captain put his head out of the cabin scuttle and asked how the weather was. I told him it was more moderate just then, and that I thought it would blow again at eight o'clock. He then said: " Mr. Low, shake the reefs out of the maintopsail, set the main topgallantsail and main royal, and let her roll over ship-shape and Bristol fashion with all her canvas on her."

' At eight it began to blow again, and the Captain put his head out of the scuttle and called out:

' " Mr. Low, take in the main royal and main topgallantsail, and close reef the maintopsail, and let her roll over and be damned to her! "

' He was very passionate. In calm weather he would come on deck with an old white beaver hat on, take it off and stamp on it, and damn the calm and everything else. But he never abused the men.'

In this last respect there can be no denying the fact that skippers like Captain Palmer were the exception, rather than the rule, in the American mercantile marine. There were humane American captains in plenty, and humane American mates, just as there have been any number of brutal officers in the ships of other nations, Great Britain's not excepted. There are

few more revolting stories in the annals of the seamy side of sea life than that of Captain Rogers of the *Martha Jane*, whose crime forms the subject of a peculiarly lugubrious ditty once popular in the foc's'le.

I suppose, if one were so minded, it would be possible to make out something of a case for Rogers. He had shipped a seaman who turned out to be dirty and a half-wit: and being naturally annoyed with his bargain, proceeded to man-handle the poor creature to such an extent that he unfortunately died. Anyhow, both he and his mate were well and truly hanged, no doubt to their very great surprise.

But, taking it by and large, America's treatment of the common seaman constitutes a grave blot on the brightest page of her maritime history.

The reasons are probably several. In California, as in Australia, during the early days of the gold rush, it was the usual thing for crews to desert wholesale to the diggings, leaving captains to scrape up a fresh crowd—generally by ' shanghai-ing '—wherever men could be got, and knock them into shape as best they could for the homeward passage. Plenty of desperate characters, moreover, shipped before the mast in order to get to the diggings: and, at the same time, in those heavily sparred and deeply laden ships, strict discipline was absolutely essential, not only for making a good passage, but for the very existence of the ship herself. So that there you have a combination of circumstances logically bound to give rise to a tradition of harsh usage.

It must also be remembered that very many of the men in the foc's'les of American ships were foreigners: and although it is not, strictly speaking, a sound reason

for pushing a man's face in with a knuckleduster, that he has had the misfortune not to be born a citizen of God's own country, a difference in nationality undoubtedly does not make for amicable relations between cabin and foc's'le. In this connection it is noticeable that in most of the well-known instances of mutiny, whether in British, American or Bluenose ships, the crews concerned were aliens. The horrible happenings in the *Flowery Land*, the *Lennie* and the *Veronica*, were cases in point.

Add to this the fact that the nervous strain on both officers and men was very great in ocean races, and further that the American shipmaster, curiously enough in so democratic a nation, lived in a state of splendid isolation, greater than that of the commander of an early East Indiaman or P. and O. mail steamer of our own day, and it is hardly surprising that the example of 'Bully' Waterman rather than that of N. B. Palmer or Lauchlan McKay should have been emulated by the captains of American vessels.

But it was probably, in the last resort, the administration of justice that was chiefly to blame. If the great 'Bully' Waterman, and one or two more of the same sort, had been well and truly hanged like Captain Rogers, things might have been very different in the American merchant service.

In this respect, conditions of service on board British ships probably had a good deal to do with promoting a friendly feeling between officers and men. The British apprenticeship system no doubt left a good deal to be desired. It certainly did in the closing years of the windjammers, when growing boys, whose parents had paid good premiums for them to learn the

duties of an officer, very often did the work of able seamen in undermanned ships, with the sole difference that the budding officer received practically no pay.

But it had at least one merit. An officer thus trained had been through the mill. He had lived to all intents the life of a seaman. In most ships the ' reefers ' were not officially supposed to mix with the foremast hands. But they did so a good deal, all the same: indeed, in the course of the day's work they could not help doing. And many of them learned more lessons in ' sailorising ' from some horny-handed, bent-fingered old shellback who could neither read nor write, than from the captain and mates, who in addition to their other multifarious duties, were expected to play schoolmaster to a parcel of mischievous young imps of apprentices.

Yarns about American hell-ships are numerous, and a good many are undoubtedly ' coloured up ' by the imagination of the narrators. Some, indeed, are all but incredible—men kept in poultry coops and made to pick up grains of corn like hens—others sent up to the masthead and ordered to salute the dawn by crowing! But the following incident, which happened on board an American ship going down the Hooghly, was told to me by a Branch Pilot, who actually witnessed it.

The pilot, as the ship neared the famous ' James and Mary ' shoal, turned to the man at the wheel and said, not by way of any complaint as to his steering, but simply out of regard for the especial danger of the spot—' Mind your wheel, my man, mind your wheel! ' He never regretted having spoken more. The skipper fairly went mad. He immediately sent the man away from the wheel and ordered him to take up a position in the mizen crosstrees, whence every quarter of an

hour he was to intone, after the style of the bellman of bygone days, these words, 'I'm a blank—blank—blankety son of a gun, and I can't steer!' And what was more the man obeyed without a murmur.

Now, in this case of course there was no physical violence employed. But to what a state of cowed submission must not a human being have been reduced to accept such a humiliation!

Yet another example. A Britisher who happened to have taken a second mate's berth in an American ship sailing from a Pacific Coast port had occasion to go below with one of the crew, a West Indian negro, and a very good sailorman. Hearing a sound close behind him, the officer turned sharply, as anyone might in a dark place at an unexpected sound. The old fellow at once began to tremble violently. 'Don' beat me, mistah, don' beat me!' he begged. 'I ain' done nuthin'!' This same ship carried a German cook, who used to come out of his galley if a new crew showed fight and lay about him with his dough-covered hands till his arms were covered with mingled flour and blood.

But to return to Captain Palmer and the *Houqua*, the little wooden model for which was the occupation of his leisure moments during a China voyage in the *Paul Jones*. She was, as I have already stated, a step forward from the stamp of ship already in the China trade—a flush-decked vessel of about six hundred tons, with high bulwarks pierced for sixteen guns, and a figure-head representing the well-known Canton hong owner after whom she was named. Her underwater body was modelled largely on that of the New York pilot boats which called up so much admiration on the

part of Captain Basil Hall. She soon proved herself a very fast and seaworthy ship, and that although she defied sailor superstition no less than four times during her maiden passage: for she was launched on Friday, towed down town on Friday, went to sea on Friday and reached Hong Kong on Friday.

There was nothing revolutionary in the design of the *Houqua*. But the *Rainbow*, which was launched at Messrs. Smith & Dimon's yard in January, 1845, was a good deal more in the nature of an innovation. Her designer, John W. Griffiths, had for some years been advocating certain theories as to the construction of fast ships, and these theories it was which were embodied in the new clipper. She was notable for several departures from the accepted standards of marine architecture which met with a mixed reception in shipping circles, and in some quarters with flat derision. The long narrow hull, the sharp underwater body, but above all the concave lines of her bow, were points over which conservative opinion indulged in a good deal of head-shaking. She would never stand up to a spread of canvas—she was a ship turned inside out—all these new-fangled notions . . . well, well, time would show!

Whence did Griffiths derive his inspiration for the new type of vessel? Certainly, as we have seen, not from the *Ann McKim*. One story gives the credit to a model of a sampan brought home by Captain 'Bully' Waterman from Singapore. But Griffiths had already been expounding his new theories of ship construction since 1841, long before they found concrete expression in the *Rainbow*, and I am rather inclined to think that the *Rainbow* has here been confused with her successor,

the *Sea Witch*, in whose construction Waterman undoubtedly did take an active part. The Singapore sampan is descended, like most native craft, from a hollowed log, and undoubtedly in some respects—especially the position of its greatest breadth of beam—the clipper design has a certain affinity with it. There is, however, another source from which it is just as probable that John Willis Griffiths derived some of his theories.

During the first thirty or forty years of the nineteenth century, a steady trade went on between Boston and New York and the West Coast of North America. Hence, the dug-out canoes of the Indians of Vancouver Island must have been familiar enough to skippers in that trade, and through them no doubt to the creator of the *Rainbow*.

The native craft of the West Coast Indian was, of course, a dugout canoe, like the original sampan, and, in view of the Asiatic origin of the race, both were probably derived from a common ancestor. But in the Vancouver Island dugout the most striking feature of the Griffiths design is conspicuously present—namely, the concave lines which aroused so much discussion among shipbuilders and seamen, and were later adopted and improved upon by Donald McKay. A model of one of these native boats is to be seen in the Provincial Museum at Victoria, and strongly bears out the likelihood of the theory.

Anyhow, whatever her parentage, the *Rainbow* had arrived, and with her a new and remarkable phase in the history of fast ships.

CHAPTER III

To the Lands of Gold

Crack her on with all she'll carry,
What she won't she'll have to drag,
Was the way they used to work things
Underneath the Black Ball flag.

1. To Californi-o!

THE *Rainbow* and *Houqua* and their immediate successors soon became well known for their fast passages between Canton, New York and Boston. And it was not long before a new field was opened to them.

The development in fast ships could not have come at a more opportune moment for everybody concerned. Within a few years from the time when the new vessels left the stocks, an event was to take place which was to create an unprecedented demand for speedy shipping.

A great deal of rather silly and illogical stuff has been talked about the reason for the successful invasion by the American clippers of the China tea trade. Writers on the subject almost invariably state that this was made possible by our obsolete and stultifying Navigation Laws, and by the monopoly held up to 1850 by British ships.

On the contrary, a moment's thought will be enough to show that it was in one of the most highly protected trades that has ever existed—namely, that between the

Eastern and Western ports of the United States—that the fast American clippers attained their highest pitch of achievement. The whole thing, in point of fact, resolves itself into a matter of a lucky combination of circumstances. At the time when the China tea trade with British ports was thrown open to foreign competition, the Americans had a whole fleet of rapid sailers ready to enter the lists, just as in the case of the discovery of gold in Australia a few years later.

As one report after another of the wealth of the new Eldorado found its way into the newspapers, excitement from end to end of the United States rose to fever heat.

> Jump along, Jonathan, jig along, Jemima,
> California's full of gold, we'll all be rich as Lima

was the cry everywhere. All the shipyards on the coast were soon working at top speed. Unlike the hard woods used in British shipbuilding, the native American timber did not require the long seasoning process essential for oak and teak. Indeed, the probability is that in a good many cases it did not get as much as it needed. By no means all the ships that were put on the California run were of the standard of the McKay clippers. I remember seeing one of the wooden ships turned out by the United States Shipping Board during the Great War laid up in Liverpool. One of her crew assured me that you could see daylight between her planks. I daresay it was true: and it is likely enough that some of these hastily constructed Argos of the gold rush were much the same. At any rate, their short lives seem to suggest it.

It was not only new ships which were brought into the service. Old ones were hauled out of a well-earned

retirement and patched up to face the rigours of the Horn. Even wrecks enjoyed an unlooked-for resurrection from the sand of the Fundy beaches. There is more than a touch of romance about the story of the little *Rory O'More*, of 295 tons, which was rescued from the scene of her wreck on Anticosti Island, and sailed in the New Year of 1850 for California, with a skipper, James Brennan, who sounds as Irish as his ship. Her early history and the name of her builder are 'wropt in mystery.' But she must have been a mover, if all tales are true: for it is said that, having put into Buenos Ayres *en route* for supplies, she fell in with a whole fleet of Yankee clippers and beat them all into port. She was among the lucky ones. Many of the less fortunate took themselves and their hopeful companies of gold-seekers to the bottom of the cold Horn seas.

So far as passenger traffic was concerned, the clippers had to compete with two other possible routes to the goldfields. There was the overland route, with the risk of massacre by Indians or death by thirst and starvation in the waterless deserts of the West. And there was also the buccaneers' way by the Isthmus, which in those days had its special drawback in the way of fever. The essential thing was speed: and if the sea route could make a favourable showing in that respect, it was bound to attract a large proportion of passenger trade.

As regarded freights, on the other hand, the ships had it all to themselves, and merchants who could get in 'on the ground floor' with cargoes of the essentials of life for the mushroom communities created by the gold boom, probably laid the foundations of many more

enduring fortunes than fell to the lot of the lucky ones among the redshirted miners themselves. There was no Plimsoll line in '49, and ships left New York and Boston loaded until the scuppers were no more than a foot out of the water. A fast ship in those days coined money for her fortunate owners.

The times for shipbuilders, both good and bad, were auspicious indeed, when one of the greatest of all makers of noble ships attained to the prime of manhood.

Donald McKay, the grandson of an officer in the British Army who had emigrated to Nova Scotia from Ross-shire, is one of the few men who have brought to the art of building sailing-ships the authentic touch of genius. Many men there have been who have produced staunch, seaworthy, reliable and fast ships. To create a ship which is a work of genius has been the gift of a chosen few. Phineas Pett had it. Hood and Steele of Aberdeen had it. So had the designer of many of the Barclay Curle ships. And so, most assuredly, had Donald McKay.

Shelburne, where his father was a farmer, offered little scope for ambitious youth, and at the age of sixteen, young Donald betook himself to New York, where he worked, first as a labourer and later as a duly indentured apprentice, at Isaac Webb's shipyard on the East River—having given the customary undertaking, ' not to contract matrimony, play at cards or dice, nor haunt ale-houses, taverns, dance-houses, or play-houses.' The shipyard apprentices, despite these restrictions, enjoyed a spree once in a while, in which young McKay generally took a hand—but on the whole these restrictions probably troubled him little,

for his heart was where it remained to the end of his life in his chosen calling.

In course of time he became a fully qualified shipwright, and, while permanently under contract to no one firm, he found constant employment in that capacity with one or another of the leading New York shipbuilders. About this time he took unto himself a wife, Miss Albenia Boole. This remarkable lady was a member of a shipbuilding family and steeped in its traditions, with the result that, at a period and in a society when cooking and fine sewing were the chief feminine accomplishments, she was, it is said, able to enter into her husband's ambitions from a practical standpoint.

After a brief sojourn in the Brooklyn Navy Yard (where, it is rather amusing to note, some hundred per cent. Americans of the diehard type made the place too hot to hold him) he carried on business with two successive partners, Currier and Pickett, in conjunction with whom he built several of the staunch little packet ships which at that time carried on the business of the Atlantic ferry. It was during the latter of these partnerships that he became acquainted with the well-known merchant-shipowner, Enoch Train, who induced him to set up in business on his own account in East Boston.

During the eighteen-forties he turned out several notable packet ships for Zerega & Co., Grinnell, Minturn & Co., and Enoch Train's *White Diamond* Line. All this time he was keenly interested in John Wilson Griffith's new theories, but it was not until 1850 that he built his first out-and-out clipper ship—the *Staghound*, of 1,534 tons.

This vessel was even more of an innovation than the *Rainbow*. Her lines were extremely sharp—so much so McKay himself modified them in his next ship, the famous *Flying Cloud*, to which he gave a considerably fuller body.

The *Staghound* was very heavily sparred, and carried an immense spread of eight thousand yards of canvas. Her figurehead represented a hound straining at the leash, and it proved a singularly apt flight of the carver's imagination, for when she left the slips she literally leaped forward as soon as the shores were knocked out, and had it not been for the presence of mind of the master rigger, who snatched a bottle of rum and smashed it on her rapidly moving bows, she would have taken the water with no orthodox christening at all. And shipyard tradition, so far as I am aware, does not provide any ceremony for adult baptism.

The *Staghound* soon proved to be an even faster ship than most of her predecessors. Her maiden passage to San Francisco was not very fortunate, for she was dismasted six days out and had to put into Valparaiso under jury rig: but on the way over to China she beat by nine days Webb's well-known *Sea Serpent*, a very successful clipper which triumphantly defied the superstition as to the names of reptiles. But the famous *Swordfish*, of the same firm, soon turned the tables on her. The two ships left Canton for New York on the same day, September 25th, 1852, in the teeth of the monsoon. The *Staghound*, like most of the McKay cracks, was not at her best in the light airs of the China seas, and she was twenty-three days from Canton to Anjer. She arrived in New York ninety-five days out,

to find that her rival had already been in port five days.

The *Swordfish's* skipper had driven his ship for all he was worth. Like most of the early extreme clippers, she was abominably wet when racing, and her crew had a miserable time of it—so much so that they gave her the nickname of the 'Diving Bell.' What was more, the name stuck, and ever after she had a good deal of difficulty in getting a crew.

The name of *Swordfish* seems to have been a lucky one, for before Webb's clipper had begun her career a British ship which bore it was making fast passages between Liverpool and the Brazils. In October 1845, commanded by a very well-known Liverpool skipper, Captain 'Dicky' Groom, she went out to Pernambuco in twenty-seven days, and made the return trip in twenty-two, with her stunsails set the whole way across. Her average speed was 220 miles in twenty-four hours, leaving out five days when she was becalmed.

Financially, the *Staghound's* maiden voyage must have been exceedingly gratifying to her owners, for she earned $80,000, as well as paying the cost of her own building, in something under a year.

Her last race, in 1862, was of a different kind: for whereas in the contests already referred to she was pitted against keen and beautiful sailing craft like herself, she now matched her speed with that of one of those early square-rigged steamships which were so often challenged and beaten by sailing vessels under favourable weather conditions.

She sailed for London in the spring of that year, with a view to securing a charter for Australia. Lincoln's

inaugural address had just been delivered at the time, and James Gordon Bennett offered a handsome reward to the *Staghound's* captain if he could deliver a copy in London in advance of the regular mailboat.

The *Staghound* left on March 3rd, three days before the steamer *America*, which carried the mails. She arrived at Gravesend on March 18th, and her skipper was in the act of forwarding the address by telegraph to London while the *America's* captain was similarly occupied in Liverpool. It was, however, satisfactorily proved that the *Staghound's* message was in the telegraph office first, so sail had beaten steam on the post, or more correctly on the wire.

The famous clipper was burned at sea on her next voyage, while bound for 'Frisco with a cargo of coal from the Tyne, and the sole relic of her was the American ensign which she had borne so honourably.

2

In 1851 Donald McKay followed up his success with the *Staghound* with a ship which was to prove even faster, namely, the famous *Flying Cloud*, whose record time from New York to San Francisco was to remain unbeaten so long as sailing craft continued to use the great harbour of the West.

The new ship was launched on April 15th, 1851. She was originally ordered by Enoch Train, the well-known Boston packet owner, but before she was completed he sold her to Messrs. Grinnell, Minturn & Co., a step which he is said to have later bitterly regretted. Her name, for which George Frederick Train, after-

wards so well known in connection with early days in Melbourne, claimed the credit, was one of the most beautiful and appropriate ever bestowed upon a ship even in those days when hard-headed business men were not ashamed to wax poetic over the christening of their tall beauties. The *William P. Frye* type of name generally associated with the later American ships was not then so popular as it afterwards became, and such flights of fancy were frequently preferred as *Romance of the Seas*, *Seaman's Bride*, *Neptune's Favourite* and *Wings of the Morning*.

The *Flying Cloud*, commanded by a skipper of known ability, Captain Josiah Cressy, passed Sandy Hook on her maiden voyage on June 3rd, 1851. The wholesail breeze which sped her on her way very soon freshened to a gale, and, as generally happened in the case of a new ship, any weak places aloft quickly made their presence known. The log records the loss of the maintopsail yard and main and mizen topgallant masts, and a little later the mainmast was found to be sprung.

In the meantime, trouble was not lacking among the crew, and several men were put in irons for refusing duty. The trouble, as usual, broke out after a period of calms and light airs. It is rather an interesting fact that most of the well-known mutinies broke out on or near the Line: which seems to suggest that it was not the more strenuous and dangerous side of the sailor's life which he found irksome, but the continual round of irritating 'jobs o' work' which fell to his lot in the Tropics.

It was not very long, however, before the sprung mainmast again began to give trouble, and, as the log

observes somewhat naïvely, the men ' were let out of irons in consequence of their services being wanted.'

Cape Horn was rounded in thick snowy weather, the passage against the Westerlies having occupied seven days from the 50th parallel in the South Atlantic to the same latitude on the Pacific side.

During the run up the Pacific the log records a distance of 374 miles in twenty-four hours, and also mentions that eighteen knots of line during the squalls were not enough to measure the *Flying Cloud's* rate of speed. A contemporary writer gives the following account of her behaviour at sea.

' She ran about as fast as the sea, and sometimes, when struck by a squall, would dash into a lazy wave and send spray masthead high. Occasionally, she would fly up a point or more, and keeling over skim along the deep valleys between the lofty waves, and then, when brought to her course again, righten with majestic ease, and as if taking a fresh start would seem to bound from wave to wave, the sea the while curling in mountains of whitened foam along her sides.'

There seems to have been no more trouble with the crew, but Captain Cressy had to suspend his chief mate for persistent neglect of duty and ' cutting up rigging.' On August 29th the foretopgallant mast carried away, but a new one was at once set up, and two days later the great clipper entered 'Frisco Bay after a passage of eighty-nine days twenty-one hours, a record destined to be beaten only once, except by herself a year or two later, as long as ships sailed the seas. That was by the *Andrew Jackson*, which, under ' kicking Jack Williams ' of shanty fame, made the same passage in 1859-60 in eighty-nine days four hours. There has been much

argument ' about it and about ' concerning this record, but the logs of the two ships appear to establish the *Andrew Jackson's* claim beyond dispute.

This year also witnessed the maiden voyage of the famous *Challenge*, from which her owners, Messrs. N. L. & G. Griswold, expected such great things that they are said to have backed her to the tune of $10,000 to beat the rest of the Cape Horn fleet. The *Challenge* was a big powerful ship of two thousand tons, with a tremendous sail plan and the finest of lines: and she was commanded by one of the most famous of the hard-driving skippers, the renowned ' Bully ' Waterman. Several American writers, including the author of *The Clipper Ship Era*, have tried to whitewash Waterman's reputation. But it cannot be said that the result is convincing. When all the extenuating circumstances possible have been taken into consideration—when it has been admitted that some of the poor wretches dumped on board by the crimps were suffering from diseases all too common in seaports, that some of them were sullen and a few inclined to show fight—the fact remains, and is admitted by Waterman's apologists, that several men were killed by the captain and his mates during the passage, while others were so badly injured by kicks and blows that they could not crawl out of their bunks when the ship reached port. Most significant of all, the owners of the *Challenge* made no attempt whatever to come forward in their captain's defence.

His apologists make the most of the fact that at his trial in San Francisco, several men came forward to swear that they had sailed with him on more than one voyage, and found him the mildest of men, while

others stated that they had been passengers in the *Challenge* and had noted no ill-treatment out of the common. But San Francisco at that time teemed with men who would swear anything for a consideration, just as at a later date the crimps could always find ' bums ' who were obligingly ready to sign the ship's articles on behalf of any drugged or even dead men, and thus enable them to draw his advance.

The yarns which found currency for years afterwards in the foc's'les of ships the world over may well have been—probably they were—exaggerated. Such legends have a way of gathering accretions as time goes on. But there is no smoke without fire. Gilles de Rais may not have killed eight of his wives and kept them in a secret room: but he was none the less in sober fact not a pleasant person. A reputation like ' Bully ' Waterman's is not gained for nothing.

The best jockey is not the one who uses the whip most freely. Officers of the extreme ' bucko ' stamp seldom made the best passages. The *Challenge*, with a large proportion of her hands out of business, and the remainder cowed and sullen, failed dismally to realise the hopes of her owners. She arrived in 'Frisco on October 28th, 108 days out.

Another notable ship which entered the lists this year was the *N. B. Palmer*, built by Westervelt and Mackay, of New York, to the designs of the old gentleman of the venerable beaver hat whose name she bore. She was owned by Messrs. A. A. Low & Co., and her commander, Captain Chas. P. Low, was ' owners' kin.' Captain Low belonged to the best type of American shipmaster. Generally a humane man, he could be, as his log shows, severe when occasion

demanded. His wife usually sailed with him, and his ship was quite a little social centre in the ports she visited.

The *N. B. Palmer's* first trip to 'Frisco was one of 106 days, during which, however, she showed her quality by making a day's run of 396 miles: and Captain Low signalised his arrival by taking his ship up to the wharf under all plain sail.

Ships going over to China from California did so in ballast, there being no cargoes available: but the *N. B. Palmer* on this occasion carried freight in the shape of seventy-five Chinese bodies at seventy-five dollars a body—surely as queer an item as ever appeared on a ship's manifest!

This same year, 1851, also witnessed an exciting neck-and-neck race round the Horn between the *Raven*, of Boston, and the *Typhoon* and *Sea Witch* of New York. The *Sea Witch*, commanded by Captain Fraser, a former mate of Waterman's, was the first to leave, on August 1st: next came the *Typhoon*, a large clipper with a ' record ' Transatlantic passage to her name: and last of the three the little *Raven*, which sailed from Boston on the 5th of the month. It was a ding-dong race the whole way round. When they arrived off the Horn the *Sea Witch* and *Raven* were bunched together and slightly in the lead. But in the high latitudes the *Typhoon's* extra size told and she began to draw level. Up the Pacific the *Raven* and *Sea Witch* again picked up the lead, the latter hauling ahead, and it looked as if Waterman's old mate were going to bring in the winner. But chance, that fickle goddess whose little ways are especially noticeable where ships are concerned, ruled otherwise. How often that well-worn

monosyllable ' if ' creeps into the story of sail! If it had not been for this fog off the Golden Gate, or that long calm on the Line, or those contrary winds in the chops of the Channel, or in other words, if the sea hadn't been the unknown, incalculable sea at all, what passages would have been made! So it was with the *Sea Witch*. Going up from the Equator she fell in with a patch of calm and light airs, in which the hardest-driving skipper ever bred down East couldn't knock an extra knot out of his ship, and the *Raven* and *Typhoon* both made the Golden Gate before her: the time of the three being: *Raven*, 106 days ; *Typhoon*, 107 and *Sea Witch*, 110.

The *Flying Cloud* went across to Canton to load tea for New York, repeating on the way her day's run of 374 miles, and reached her home port in April, 1852, after a passage of ninety-four days from Canton. Her phenomenal performances made a tremendous sensation in the shipping world, and her proud owners had her log printed in gold on white silk for distribution among their friends.

Her next 'Frisco passage gave her a chance of trying conclusions with a noted rival in the shape of the clipper *N. B. Palmer*, built by Jacob A. Westervelt and commanded by Captain Charles Porter Low, a relative of the vessel's owners, to whom reference has already been made in an earlier page. The *N. B. Palmer* had already got the better of the McKay ship on the passage from Canton, so Captain Cressy was no doubt keen to get his own back on this occasion.

The *N. B. Palmer* overhauled the *Flying Cloud* off the Brazilian coast, 'beating her,' to quote Captain Low's autobiography, ' ten days thus far, and being only

forty days out I felt very proud of it. Captain Cressy hailed me and wanted to know when I left New York. I replied, " Ten days after you." He was so mad he would have nothing more to say. My ship was now at a standstill, and he was going ahead at full speed, and he ran ahead of me. Shortly after I filled away.'

Next morning the *N. B. Palmer* was twelve miles astern, and the weather being misty at the time the two ships soon lost sight of each other.

Old Stiff was in one of his most boisterous moods on this occasion, and after a long struggle with the Westerlies, the *Flying Cloud* made 'Frisco 113 days out. The *N. B. Palmer* did not appear until three weeks later, but in her case the ' if ' was not the winds and waves, but her obstreperous crew. In the figurative sense she had had an unusually stormy passage. Two of Low's mates had become casualties during the usual scrapping with the crew which went on in American ships, and before he fell in with the *Flying Cloud*, he had several men in irons. Finally, he had to put in to Valparaiso, whence some of the mutineers were shipped home to stand their trial for attempted murder, and a good deal of time was lost in shipping others in their stead.

The *Flying Cloud's* passage this time was by no means exceptional, and the *N. B. Palmer* should have stood a very fair chance of beating her if all had gone well.

The same year (1853) saw a record established for the Canton-New York passage which I believe holds good to the present time, the *Northern Light*, built by Briggs, of East Boston, making her home port seventy-six days out, having overhauled and passed the fast clipper *Contest* on the way.

In 1854 the *Flying Cloud* eclipsed her own California record. Sailing on January 22nd, 1854, on a cloudy morning of fresh breezes, she arrived in 'Frisco eighty-nine days and eight hours out, after a passage which was singularly free from trouble either aloft or among her crew. It is in connection with this passage that Lieutenant Maury writes as follows: 'Let a ship sail from New York to California and the next week let a faster one follow after: they will cross each other's path many times, and are almost sure to see each other on the way.'

The *Archer*, commanded by Captain Thomas, had left nine days before the *Flying Cloud*, and the two ships crossed the Equator at about the same longitude, the *Archer* leading. Off Cape Horn, however, the *Flying Cloud* overhauled and spoke her. The weather must have been unusually calm for those latitudes, for Captain Cressy invited his rival to dine with him. But with the latter it was a case of *Timeo Danaos*, and he reluctantly declined. The *Flying Cloud* then quickly went ahead and completed the passage several days before the *Archer*, in spite of the fact that the latter made a remarkable run of sixteen days from Cape Horn to the Line.

In 1863 the famous *Flying Cloud* was sold, like many of her contemporaries, to Mr. James Baines, of Liverpool, who put her into the Australian trade. She was commanded for a time during this part of her career by Captain Morgan, later in the Cunard steamship service, who had had an adventurous career, including capture during the American Civil War. Under the Black Ball flag the *Flying Cloud* continued to make good passages, and among her performances under Captain

Morgan's command was a run from Melbourne to the Scillies of seventy-two days, during which she logged 350 knots in a day of twenty-three and a quarter hours. Once, when running down the Easting somewhere about the 60th parallel, Captain Morgan noted in his log the presence of large quantities of kelp, which suggested the near presence of land, none, however, being indicated in the charts of the time. Later, the discovery of Dougherty Island proved his surmise to be correct.

On the break-up of the James Baines fleet, the old ship was bought by one of the founders of Smith's Dock Company, who had a penchant for old clippers, and also owned the famous *White Star* in her latter days. It must have been during this phase of her career that Captain Robert Ramsay in his recently published book of recollections mentions having a race with her into New York in Allan's fast little clipper *Gleniffer*, in which the latter had the best of it. But she must then have been pretty near her end. In 1874 she went ashore on the New Brunswick coast while trying to make the harbour of St. John in a fog: and although she was successfully floated and put on the slips for repairs, she proved to be so badly strained that she had to be burned for her copper.

Perhaps the most notable race ever sailed by American clippers was that which took place in 1852 between Messrs. Sampson & Tappan's McKay-built *Flying Fish* and four other Boston and New York vessels.

The *Flying Fish* left the stocks in September, 1851, six months after the *Flying Cloud*. She was a slightly smaller vessel in every way than her famous predeces-

sor, her measurements being as follow: length, 198 ft. 6 in.; breadth, 38 ft. 2 in.; depth, 22 ft.; tonnage, 1505. As usual, she was beautifully finished in every detail, and her figurehead was a realistic flying fish on the wing, glistening in gold and green.

On her maiden voyage, under Captain Edward C. Nickels, a very capable master who bore a name well known in American seafaring annals, she raced Webb's fast clipper *Swordfish*, also under a noted skipper, Captain Babcock.

The *Flying Fish* had a lead of four days at the Line, which she crossed nineteen days out, but at the 50th parallel on the Atlantic side the *Swordfish* had drawn level, and during the run round the Horn, the ships had each other in sight for some time. At 50 S. in the Pacific the *Flying Fish* had gone ahead a little, and was now slightly in the lead. But the *Swordfish* again went to the front, and, holding to, and increasing her lead all the way up the Pacific, reached 'Frisco ninety days out from New York, beating her redoubtable opponent by eight days.

The *Flying Fish's* next California passage was the occasion of the great trial of speed already referred to, when between October 12th and November 14th, 1852, no less than five of the fastest clippers afloat left New York and Boston, California bound. The first to sail from New York was the *Wild Pigeon*, on October 12th, followed by the *John Gilpin* on the 29th; then came the *Flying Fish* on November 1st, and last the *Trade Wind*, on November 14th. The *Westward Ho!* a new clipper designed by Donald McKay, left Boston on October 20th.

The *Wild Pigeon's* start did not serve her in good

stead, for she was held up by calms and contrary winds so that nineteen days after leaving New York she had only got as far as the 26th parallel. After that, however, she had a chance of showing her paces, and she crossed the Line on the thirty-second day out, rather too far to the westward, according to Maury's *Sailing Directions*, which counselled a wide sweep to the eastward in order to avoid the westerly currents off Cape San Roque.

In the meantime, both the *John Gilpin* and the *Flying Fish* had been coming rapidly astern, helped by more favourable winds, and the latter crossed the 5th parallel north of the Line only sixteen days from New York. But now her luck for a time failed her. Maury, in his long account of the race, displays a considerable annoyance with Captain Nickels for not showing sufficient respect for the *Sailing Directions*, and rebukes him in his somewhat stilted periods with much the air of a schoolmaster towards a small boy guilty of a false quantity. Putnam, of the *Wild Pigeon*, sailed carefully by theory, and one cannot help feeling that Maury would have greatly preferred him to be the winner of the race.

Nickels lost three days in the Doldrums trying to work to the eastward to clear Cape San Roque, and crossed the Line at about the same longitude as the *Wild Pigeon*. The *Trade Wind* followed twelve days later.

On November 24th, the *Flying Fish* was up with the *John Gilpin* on the 5th parallel south of the Equator, though the ships were thirty-five miles apart. In latitude 53 S. the *John Gilpin* had reduced the *Wild Pigeon's* lead by two days, and had also drawn a day

ahead of the *Flying Fish*. The latter, however, took the short route through the Straits of Le Maire, and thus gained three days on the *John Gilpin*.

The *Wild Pigeon* must have had a Finn, a parson or a dead body on board this voyage. Just off the pitch of the Horn she encountered a terrific gale against which she could make no headway at all for ten days. In the meantime, her two rivals were coming along with favourable winds, and the three ships entered the Pacific Ocean almost together, the *Flying Fish* and *Wild Pigeon* a day ahead of the *John Gilpin*.

They crossed the 35th parallel, still close together, and here the *Wild Pigeon* sighted the *Flying Fish* for the first time since leaving New York, her lead of three weeks, thanks to the whims of the weather, having been completely wiped out. The *John Gilpin* crossed the parallel on the same day, about thirty miles distant.

The *Flying Fish*, in the latitudes that suited her as well as her namesake, held her lead up to the Line, the *Wild Pigeon* hanging close on her heels, while the *John Gilpin*, not so well served by the winds, dropped astern.

At the Equator the *Flying Fish* was leading by twenty-five miles, and she and the *Wild Pigeon* crossed the Line together, the *Wild Pigeon* forty miles to the eastward. And here once more the influence of her Jonah, whatever it was, made itself felt, for she ran into another belt of baffling winds which enabled the *Flying Fish* to increase her lead and enter San Francisco a week ahead of her.

The *John Gilpin*, in the meantime, had made a tremendous spurt after crossing the Line, and was only fifteen days from the Equator to San Francisco. The *Trade Wind* arrived last of the New York ships, though

with a better passage to her credit than the *Wild Pigeon*: she had had an exciting time of it, having been on fire for eight hours.

The time of the four New York vessels was as follows:

Flying Fish ... 92 days 4 hours. Port to anchor.
John Gilpin ... 93 days 20 hours. Port to pilot.
Trade Wind ... 102 days.
Wild Pigeon ... 118 days.

McKay's new clipper *Westward Ho!* owned by Sampson & Tappan, which sailed from Boston on October 20th, arrived on February 1st, 103 days out. She had, however, the satisfaction of beating the *Flying Fish* by one day on the run across to Manila.

The *Westward Ho!* again raced the well-known clipper *Neptune's Car* to San Francisco in 1855, and arrived in 100 days 18 hours, beating the *Neptune's Car* by five hours, but since the two ships did not sail from the same port, the result was not really decisive. Going over to Hong Kong, the *Neptune's Car* won by an easy margin, but both ships had very light winds and made poor passages. The *Neptune's Car* is well known as the ship which was once brought into port by the captain's wife, Mrs. Patten, a young woman little more than a girl in years, who, with her husband raving with brain fever in his cabin and the mate in irons for insubordination, assumed the reins of command and navigated the ship herself to San Francisco. I find a parallel instance of the same kind which has not received so much publicity as Mrs. Patten's exploit, recorded in a brief paragraph in *The Times* in 1869, which reports the arrival of the brig *Chieftain* at New York from Calcutta.

Five weeks out the captain and most of the crew fell sick, and the skipper's wife, Mrs. Maguire, only twenty years of age, navigated the ship to her home port without assistance.

The *Westward Ho!* was sold to Peruvian owners in 1857, who employed her in the coolie trade between China and the Chinchas, and she spent the greater part of her later career in that sordid traffic, which was little if any better than the slave trade.

Three of the contestants in the great race round the Horn did not survive into the eighteen-sixties. The *Flying Fish* was wrecked in the Min River, the grave of so many splendid clippers, in 1858, and the *John Gilpin* was abandoned off the Horn in the same year, Captain T. S. Scott receiving a service of plate from the United States Government for his services in taking off the crew and eighteen passengers, whom he landed at Bahia. The *Trade Wind* was lost in collision in 1854; and the little *Wild Pigeon* went under the British flag in the 'sixties, and was abandoned in mid-Atlantic in 1892.

McKay's famous *Sovereign of the Seas* also took part in more than one spirited ocean contest of speed. Built in 1852, it was originally intended that she should bear the more prosaic name of *Enoch Train.* But the old gentleman in question was a great stickler for the proprieties, and elected to take offence because his name had been chosen for the new ship without his permission. It was accordingly changed to the more high-sounding appellation under which she gained her fame. She was of 2,421 tons, with a figurehead representing a marine deity blowing a conch, and she carried a tremendous crew of 103 hands; a striking

contrast to the thirty or so which made up the ship's company of one of the big Cape Horners of the 'eighties and 'nineties, still more to the eight A.B.s carried by one of the last of the square-riggers under the Red Ensign.

Her commander was Captain Lauchlan McKay, brother of the great Donald, who was not only an excellent seaman, but also knew how to maintain discipline without recourse to the traditional fist-and-boot methods of enforcing it. The new ship's maiden passage to San Francisco was not a very fast one, but the season was one of exceptionally stormy weather in the high latitudes, and she was partially dismasted. None the less, although she was 103 days on the way, she outsailed all the vessels which left about the same time.

Her arrival at San Francisco was made the occasion of a great popular welcome, and her crew warped her up to her berth to the strains of a new version of the ' forty-niners ' anthem:

> ' Oh, Susannah, darling, take your ease,
> For she has beat the clipper fleet,
> The *Sovereign of the Seas*! '

In 'Frisco, unfortunately, despite Captain McKay's humane methods, a large proportion of his imposing ship's company ' skipped ' for the diggings, and the ship started the next stage of her voyage with her complement cut down to the more modest figure of thirty-four. She went over to the South Seas for a cargo of whale oil, and thence back to New York *via* Cape Horn.

She left Oahu on February 13th, and on the 10th of the following month found herself in the track of the

Westerlies. 'Here,' runs Lieutenant Maury's official report on the passage to the Secretary of the Navy, 'began a succession of the most extraordinary day's runs that have been linked together across the ocean. From March 9th to March 31st, from the parallel of 48 S. in the Pacific to that of 35 S. in the Atlantic, during an interval of twenty-two days, that ship made 5,391 nautical miles: but that you may the more conveniently contrast her performance with that of railroad cars or river steamers, I will quote her in statute miles. Here, then, is a ship under canvas, and with a crew, too, so short, the captain informs me, that she was but half manned, accomplishing in twenty-two days the enormous run of 6,235 miles. During eleven of these days, consecutively, her daily average was 354 miles, and during four days, also consecutively, she averaged 398¾ statute miles. From noon of one day to the noon of the next, the greatest distance made was 362 knots, or 419 miles: and the greatest rate reported by the captain is eighteen knots, or twenty-one statute miles the hour. The greatest distance ever before performed from noon to noon on the ocean was 374 knots, or 433¼ statute miles, by the clipper ship *Flying Cloud*, on her celebrated passage of eighty-nine days and twenty-one hours to San Francisco in 1851, which yet stands unequalled. On the day of her great run the *Flying Cloud* made 4.46 degrees of longitude, that is, her noon to noon for that day was 24 hours 19 minutes 4 seconds. On the other hand, the *Sovereign of the Seas* made 8.44 degrees of longitude, her noon to noon being only 23 hours 25 minutes 4 seconds. Thus the *Flying Cloud's* run in 24 hours 19 minutes 4 seconds was 433¼ miles: and the other, 419 miles in

23 hours 25 minutes 4 seconds. Reducing each of these runs to the performance *pro rata* according to the log for twenty-four hours, we have for the former ship 427.5, against 427.6 by the latter. The *Sovereign of the Seas*,' he adds, ' undoubtedly excelled the *Flying Cloud* for the longest time at which she maintained a high rate of speed. She sailed 17,597 miles in seventy-nine days at an average of a fraction over 222 miles a day, thus keeping up an average of more than nine miles an hour during 1,896 hours.'

Out of this rather staggering array of figures the plain fact emerges that the new ship had fully realised the expectations of her builder. She had, of course, the advantage of the Westerly winds and currents: and the nature of her cargo was also all in her favour. A liquid cargo has always been popular with shipmasters, who consider that it gives stability, as in the case of the large shipments of bottled beer carried by the passenger ships to the East, whose name still survives in the familiar term ' India Pale Ale.'

Unfortunately, an interesting clipper match which was mooted the next year (1853), between the *Sovereign of the Seas* and Webb's fast clipper *Young America* for a stake of ten thousand dollars did not materialise. To some extent this was the outcome of the keen rivalry between the owners and builders of New York and Boston: but it has also been held to be something in the nature of a ' stunt,' as it would nowadays be termed, intended to put a little extra ' pep ' into California shipping, which was showing signs of languishing. Anyway, the *Sovereign of the Seas* was already booked for a passage to Liverpool, so the contest never came off.

She had a very successful run across the Atlantic of thirteen days twenty-two hours, her best day's work being 344 miles in squally weather with strong breezes, the ship, which was rather crank owing to faulty loading, rolling heavily and dipping her yardarms under. The *Dreadnought's* famous passage was still to come, so hers was the record at that date.

A number of British shipping men who were visiting Boston at the time on behalf of James Baines and other owners were offered passages in the clipper, but, since they had urgent business awaiting them in Liverpool, and thought the steamer more certain to land them in that port in time, they declined the invitation in favour of the Cunarder *Canada.*

The *Sovereign of the Seas* left New York on June 18th, the same day on which the *Canada* sailed from Boston. On June 25th she was leading by 240 miles, and beat the steamer into Liverpool by several hours. On her arrival she promptly hung out a large canvas sign with the legend in enormous black letters:

SOVEREIGN OF THE SEAS.

FASTEST SHIP IN THE WORLD.

SAILED NEW YORK TO LIVERPOOL RECORD TIME—13 DAYS 22 HOURS.

As a matter of fact, sailing times across the Atlantic eastward very often beat those of the early mail steamers, nor did it necessarily take a clipper to do it. It was on the run westward that the despised ' steam-kettle ' had the best of it, for even the smartest of the sailing packets were often more than three months on the way, and the condition of the unlucky saloon

passengers—to say nothing of the wretched emigrants, huddled in miserable, homesick, seasick heaps on the top of their possessions in the 'tween-decks—may be better imagined than described.

The old brig, *Thomas Hanford*, of 230 tons, is a case in point. She was launched three years before Trafalgar, and forty years later left Halifax on one Sunday and arrived at Queenstown on the next, beating by one day H.M.S. *Inconstant* with the 38th Regiment on board. She ought, according to tradition, to have made a bad passage, but for once the old sailor adage 'Sunday sail, no avail,' proved at fault. The same ship also took 320 passengers—packed like sardines they must have been—from Queenstown to St. Andrew, N.B., loaded a full cargo and was back at Queenstown inside forty-seven days. But she was not always so lucky, and she was once fifty days on passage from Queenstown to Halifax, having failed to make St. John, for which port she was intended.

These little workaday Western Ocean traders very often made surprisingly fast passages. In 1893 the barque *Ruby*, of Belfast, left Dundrum for Miramichi on October 29th, and arrived on Nov. 20th. She had to make a quick turn round if she was to get home that winter, for the ice was already forming on the Miramichi River, so she discharged her ballast in a hurry, loaded deals, and was ready for sea again on the 24th. She sailed on the 25th, the day before the river was frozen over, and arrived off Kilrush on December 9th, having taken only forty-one days to the round voyage.

The record westward time of a sailing-ship across the Atlantic is, I believe, that made by the *Howard D. Troop*, a steel four-masted barque owned in Nova

Scotia, which on her maiden passage in 1892, made a run of under fourteen days from Greenock to Sandy Hook. Although in one sense not a race, it was a race against time, for, owing to a delay by the builders in handing her over, she was left with the narrow margin of fourteen days in which to save her charter. However, save it she did, and with it £1,900 for her owners: indeed, Captain Parker, who commanded her at the time, always said she did it in twelve days.

Prior to the *Howard D. Troop*, the record was claimed for the wooden ship *Everest*, of 1,680 tons, built in Yarmouth, N.S., in 1878. She was commanded by a sail-carrying Yarmouth skipper, Captain Churchill, and is said to have run from Canada Dock, Liverpool, to Delaware Breakwater, in fourteen days, Captain Churchill picturesquely stating that he sailed in the wake of the New York mail steamer the whole way across, ' with his jibboom over her taffrail.'

Captain Churchill formerly commanded another Yarmouth vessel, the *St. Bernard*, some of whose closely-contested races with the *Bonanza*, also of Yarmouth, and her great rival, are described by a correspondent of the *Yarmouth Herald*.

The two ships left Quebec together timber-laden, and the *St. Bernard's* royals only came in once the whole way across. However, when the pilot came on board off Point Lynas, he brought the news that the *Bonanza* was already in port. Skippers had queer ways of letting off steam on such occasions. Captain Churchill's particular method was that of scraping the tobacco out of his meerschaum pipe, no matter how recently it had been filled. This he did when he heard the pilot's tidings, and then went below without uttering a word.

The same two ships had another race up St. George's Channel later in the same year, the *Bonanza* flying light with cotton from New Orleans, while the *St. Bernard* was down to her marks with general cargo. The *Bonanza's* royal yards were down on deck, since she was so crank that it was unsafe to carry them, and although the night was very squally, Capt. Churchill hung on to all his canvas, hoping to find by morning that he had dropped his rival astern. But Captain Webster of the *Bonanza* wasn't going to stand for that! Crank or no, it was a case of ' up aloft those yards must go,' even if they rolled her to blazes, and soon all three royals were set. The press of sail took her almost over the danger line, but she soon forged to the front, and took her tug well ahead of the *St. Bernard.* How many pipes of tobacco Captain Churchill scraped out over this little trial of speed is not recorded.

But after this little digression it is time to return to the *Sovereign of the Seas.*

On her arrival in Liverpool, she was bought by James Baines for his Black Ball fleet and passed under the British flag, Captain Lauchlan McKay relinquishing the command to his mate, Henry Warner.

Her new owner made effective use of Transatlantic methods of advertising, and shortly after he acquired the *Sovereign of the Seas* he offered to return fifty shillings a ton on her freight of £7 if she failed to beat any steamer then on the berth, either in Liverpool or London, among them being the *Great Britain,* then the very latest thing out in the form of that curious anomaly, a square-rigged steamship. The challenge was made good, and James Baines was not called upon to refund the money. His new purchase went out to

Australia in seventy-seven days, beating all the ships that sailed about the same time.

Captain Warner was an Englishman by birth who had served in American ships, and on the homeward passage he had occasion to resort to the time-honoured packet-ship methods. He had an ugly lot of hard cases from the diggings among his crew, who began to show signs of becoming mutinous, and since the ship was carrying a consignment of gold dust, prompt measures were called for. These consignments of gold must have been a source of great anxiety to shipmasters in those days, for it would not be a difficult matter for a gang of desperadoes who got wind of such a shipment to sign on as seamen—and that is generally believed to have happened in the case of the *Madagascar*, which disappeared mysteriously at sea a few years later. However, Captain Warner was ready for emergencies, and faced his mutinous crew with a cutlass in his hand, coming home with half the ship's company in irons.

Like most of these big American clippers, the *Sovereign of the Seas* had not a long life, for she was piled up on the Pyramid Shoal in the Malacca Straits in August, 1859.

A rivalry very similar to that between the *Cutty Sark* and the *Thermopylae* existed between the McKay clipper *Romance of the Seas* and the New York built *David Brown*. The *Romance of the Seas*, renowned for her handsome figurehead representing an early navigator scanning the uncharted seas, was commanded by a member of a well-known Boston seafaring family, Captain Philip Dumaresq. The name, according to the *Maritime History of Massachusetts*, is correctly pronounced ' D'merrick,' which would seem to indicate

that to ' spell one's name Tollemache and pronounce it Chumley ' is by no means a habit confined to the British aristocracy.

Captain Dumaresq, who might well have sat for the portrait of the ' captain with his whiskers ' in the old song, was one of the keenest of racing skippers, and never spared himself in the effort to make a passage. He had already done some lively racing in his previous command, the *Bald Eagle*, against the *Flying Childers* and *Jacob Bell*. On her first voyage to San Francisco, the *Romance of the Seas* left three days after the *David Brown*, but as frequently happened in the clipper races, the two sighted each other off the coast of Brazil, and for the whole of the passage they were never far apart. Both lost their jibbooms in the same gale, and finally they made 'Frisco on the same day, the *Romance of the Seas* reaching the anchorage first by a few hours.

The run across to China was again a close thing, but the Boston clipper once more had the best of it by an hour, having carried her main skysail the whole way over.

Unfortunately, the two ships now parted company, so that they had not the opportunity to test their sailing powers on the passage to England. The *Romance of the Seas* loaded at Whampoa, and arrived in London 102 days out, while the *David Brown* was 111 days from Shanghai.

It is a noticeable point about the McKay clippers that they seldom did very well in their China passages, whereas in the Westerlies, when they had the chance to make full use of their tremendous sail-plans, there was no holding them. No doubt that same immense spread

of canvas made them difficult ships to handle in light and baffling airs like those of the China seas.

Donald McKay's *Great Republic*, which as originally designed was the largest ship of her time, and indeed of any other, was never, of course, sailed in her full splendour. Lieutenant Maury predicted that she would be the fastest ship afloat: but the conclusion was a purely theoretical one, based upon mathematical calculations, and a practical test might have led to a quite different result from that anticipated. In point of fact, it is very doubtful whether McKay's 'great ship,' quite apart from the accident of her burning, would have been less of a disappointment than most of her kind. Many experienced shipmasters consider that the safety limit for sailing-vessels was somewhere about 3,000 tons, or even less, and the view is certainly supported to some extent by the fact that nearly all of those which greatly exceeded that figure met early and violent ends. Examples which come to mind are the *Preussen*, the five-master *La France*, one if not more of the big *Vinnens*, and lastly the huge *Kobenhavn*, which Ramage & Ferguson completed since the war as a training-ship for the Danish mercantile marine. I well remember seeing the last-named vessel anchored in Carrick Roads close to Hardie's old *Killeena*, also, of course, under a foreign flag, and no one would have thought at that time that the big new ship, plentifully supplied as she was with boats, and fitted up with every modern device, including wireless, would be the first of the two to go. Her end was a great tragedy. The Market Strand at Falmouth when she was there looked as if the old days of the grain fleet had come again, with all those fine fairhaired lads strolling along

the streets or trying their luck at the cockshies in the fair which was in progress at the time.

The queer yarn from Tristan d'Acunha as to her having been seen drifting on the rocks there, apparently derelict, is very difficult to explain. Tristan, of course, would lie right out of her track from Buenos Ayres to Australia, and if she had been in collision with ice, as suggested, she would have drifted westward and not northward. If the ship seen were the *Kobenhavn* at all, a point which is in itself very doubtful, the only explanation seems to be that she had met with some mishap—possibly an outbreak of fire, or the explosion of the fuel cargo she carried for her auxiliary engines—which had caused her to be abandoned. Even so, it is hard to see why none of the boats should have reached land, or why her wireless should have failed to function. Ships out of control have, it is true, been known to wander about the face of the waters in the most extraordinary manner, and some of the currents indicated on the Atlantic charts might quite conceivably have brought her into the neighbourhood of the Tristan group. But on the whole the balance of evidence seems to point to a case of mistaken identity, and the probability is that the missing ship turned turtle through being struck by a sudden squall when she was under a heavy pressure of sail. There are a hundred and one contingencies which may result in the loss of even the most seaworthy and well-found of ships, and one of the queerest was that which once befell a ship called the *Eclipse* while on passage from Newcastle to San Francisco. The ship was struck by a meteorite which crashed right through the deck and so into the sea. The crew pumped for four days and four nights,

but to no purpose, and they finally took to the boats just in time before she foundered. They shaped a course as well as they could for the Sandwich Islands, which were the nearest land, and for fifteen days they were in open boats under the burning tropical sun, on an allowance of two biscuits and two gills of water per man. On the thirteenth day three men died, and their bodies were thrown overboard and instantly seized upon by the swarming sharks which followed in the wake of the boats. Another night and day passed, and at last, the following midnight, they sighted a small island, where the survivors, now in a pitiable state through exposure, hunger and thirst, were carried ashore on the shoulders of the kindly Kanakas.

2. Southward Ho!

Fresh discoveries of gold in 1851, the first at Bathurst in New South Wales, the second at Ballarat, in Victoria, created a yet greater demand for ships of the largest and fastest type. The population of Victoria grew from 70,000 in 1850, to 333,000 in 1855: and the task of carrying, not only the flood of emigrants, but also the food and merchandise required to supply their needs was one with which the resources of British shipyards were quite unable to cope.

Here was a still further windfall for the American shipbuilder, who, with several years' experience of the construction of clipper ships, and an ample supply of raw material ready to his hand, was ready to take full advantage of the smiles of Fortune. The whole seaboard of North America rang night and day with the

drub of the shipwright's mallet and the stroke of the lumberer's axe, and slips were hastily set up in every creek from Martha's Vineyard to the Bay of Fundy: some of them little more elaborate than those that cradled the ship of Leif the Lucky in which he sailed to Vineland the Good.

It was not long before the leading shipping firms of Liverpool were buying tonnage at high prices from the principal builders along the western Atlantic shore. Among them were Mr. James Beazley, whose fleet included the fast vessels *Star of the East* and *Miles Barton*: Messrs. Pilkington & Wilson, the forerunners of the present White Star Line: the Fox Line, owners of the famous *Blue Jacket*: and last but not least the enterprising Mr. James Baines, who led the way with his famous *Marco Polo*, that astonishing ugly old waggon of a ship, built for the leisurely business of 'timber droghing' out of Quebec, which all but missed ever getting launched at all, and whose passages to Australia and back under the Black Ball house-flag were a nine-days' wonder in the world of shipping.

On her first voyage to Australia under the flamboyant Captain 'Bully' Forbes, she raced the mail steamer out to Melbourne and beat her by a week: and on her return to Liverpool, after completing the round trip in less than six months, she displayed, after the go-ahead advertising fashion her owner had learned to use across the water, a large canvas sign with the words:

MARCO POLO, THE FASTEST SHIP IN THE WORLD.

The various lines all had their own special sailing

days, usually about a week part, so that there was not the close racing among the emigrant clippers that there was later in the time of the wool fleet. The *Marco Polo*, however, was matched against other ships on several occasions, and once she raced with, and had to give best to, Green's smart little Blackwall frigate *Kent*. They both left Port Phillip on December 4th, 1854, and never handed their topsails all the way from the Horn. It was a light weather passage most of the way, which always suited the Blackwallers, accustomed to the variable winds of the Eastern seas; the remarkable thing about the *Marco Polo* was that they suited her just as well, for even the fastest of the McKay clippers were never at their best except in strong breezes. Yet here was this great heavy-looking lump of a ship stealing along with hardly any wind at all as easily as one of the graceful little ships built ten years later for the China tea trade. There's no doubt of it, there was something almost uncanny about the *Marco Polo*, and one cannot help thinking that there must have been 'big medicine' in some of the wood the Wrights put into her. However, the *Kent* was too fast for her, arriving off Hastings eighty-four days out, while the *Marco Polo* entered the Mersey a day later.

Five years later, the two ships again tried conclusions together. The *Blue Jacket*, of the Fox Line, was also in the race this time, the ship which was later abandoned on fire off Cape Horn, her figurehead being cast up months later on Rottnest Island, Western Australia.

The *Kent* beat both the big clippers by several days. Her victory was probably due to the superior navigation of her commander, Captain Clayton, and more

particularly to his thorough knowledge of the ways of circular storms. What a Blackwall skipper didn't know about cyclones wasn't worth knowing, in a manner of speaking, for in the East India trade, where most of them had served their time, such phenomena were part of the day's work.

The three racers ran into a cyclone in the South Atlantic, not far from the island of Trinidad, famed for its pirate treasure, and the *Kent's* captain, steering to the northward of the storm centre, picked up a fair breeze on its edge, which took her romping gaily ahead, while her two rivals, on the opposite course, were struggling along against contrary winds. Once in the lead, she kept pegging away steadily, Blackwall fashion, and however the big Americans might reel out the knots in the Westerlies, they could not make up on her. She arrived eighty-three days out, well ahead of them both.

In 1854 there were built for the rival firms of James Baines and Pilkington & Wilson, two of the most celebrated of the American clippers, namely, the *Lightning* and the *Red Jacket*. The latter's name was not, as might be thought, given her in honour of the 'men of the thin red line,' but of an Indian chief of that name—the same, probably, who figures in Mr. Kipling's story, *Brother Square-Toes*, and the original garment referred to was quite possibly the one presented to his ancestors in the days of the early settlement of Virginia. An Indian chief in full panoply of paint and feathers formed her figure-head.

The *Red Jacket* was designed by Samuel A. Pook, the creator of the *Surprise* and *Gamecock*, and while she was

admittedly one of the fastest of them all, she was also one of the most beautiful. In her lines and her general appearance she showed a certain kinship to the graceful proportions of the lovely clippers which were later built in the yards of Aberdeen and the Clyde—a kind of bird-like lightness, very difficult to put into words, which gave them, even in repose, a look of life and latent power.

The *Lightning* was the first of Donald McKay's ' big four,' the others being the *James Baines*, *Champion of the Seas* and *Donald McKay*, built for the Black Ball emigrant service. She was thus described by John Wilson Griffiths, the pioneer of clipper ship design, who saw in her the fulfilment of his pet theories. ' No timid hand or hesitating brain gave form and dimension to the *Lightning*. Very great stability; acute extremities; full short midship body; comparatively small deadrise, and the longest end forward, are points in the excellence of this ship.' The *Lightning* was of 2,083 tons, 243 ft. in length from knightheads to taffrail, 44 ft. in breadth, and her depth of hold was 23 ft. Her ends fore and aft were extremely fine, and her lines showed a daringly marked concavity, which so much shocked some conservative-minded Liverpool shipwrights who thought ships, like women of the period, looked better well-furnished forward, that they had them filled in with a false bow, which, however, the Forties soon made short work of.

The great Donald was as touchy as artists always are about having his work tinkered with, and he waxed exceedingly wroth over the sacrilege of the Liverpudlians. All the same, he seems to have himself decided against the concave lines of the *Lightning* later on, for

FIGUREHEAD OF THE *DONALD McKAY*
(at St. Vincent, C. V.)

face p. 68

the experiment was not repeated in nearly so extreme a form.

The *Lightning* left Boston for Liverpool on February 18th, 1854, while the *Red Jacket* sailed from New York on the 17th, so that they made something like a race of the passage over. The *Red Jacket's* commander was the well-known Captain Asa Eldridge, formerly of the packet *Roscius*, who knew the Western Ocean's little ways inside out. He was later lost in the Collins liner *Pacific*, which disappeared with all on board while on passage from Liverpool to New York in January, 1856. What happened to her was something of a mystery, for no trace of her or of her 180 passengers and crew was ever found. The season, of course, was much too early for ice, and the likelihood is that either she struck a submerged wreck, ripped her bottom out and went down like a stone, or else that she turned turtle while carrying a good deal of sail. The latter is quite likely, for most of the early steamship captains preferred sail to steam in their hearts, and the weight of their engines must have made these vessels very stiff in a seaway.

The *Lightning* was in charge of the redoubtable ' Bully ' Forbes, already very much elated and full of himself as a result of his achievements in the *Marco Polo*. Captain Lauchlan McKay accompanied him in an advisory capacity. Representatives of the Boston Methodist Church made a trip in her as far as the harbour entrance, and it is to be hoped that Captain Forbes did not give them a sample of his sea-going vocabulary. What their feelings would have been if he had invited them to accompany him to ' Hell or Liverpool ' must be left to the imagination.

A passage across the Atlantic in February is not usually exactly a picnic, but it gave these two powerful clippers a good chance of trying themselves out in weather of the same sort that they were to encounter running down the Easting on their Australian voyages. ' Strong breezes with snow '—' snow storms '—' high cross sea and rain '—are among the entries in the *Lightning's* log: and on March 1st a run was recorded of 436 miles in twenty-four hours, in a strong southerly gale with the lee rail under water. The log was hove several times during this run, when she was found to be making 18 to 18½ knots.

Honours, however, were easy: the *Red Jacket*, though her best day's work was 419 miles against the *Lightning's* 436, ran over two thousand miles during the last six days of her passage, averaging 336 miles a day, a record which has only once been beaten, and that by the *Cutty Sark* in the eighteen-seventies.

The *Red Jacket* arrived in Liverpool on March 4th, having made the passage in thirteen days and one hour, and the *Lightning* put in an appearance eighteen hours later.

And here let me say—though I am aware I am treading on exceedingly dangerous ground in doing so—that I remain a hardened and unregenerate sceptic about these phenomenal day's runs of the *Lightning's*. I do not for a moment suggest any intention to deceive. But the fact remains that these records all date from the days of the hand log; and the deduction is inevitable that the coincidence is not unconnected with the unreliability of that instrument.

After this maiden trip, though both of the contestants did plenty of racing with other ships, I do not think

they were ever matched against each other. In 1856 the *Lightning* had an interesting race into port with her sister ship, the *James Baines*. She overhauled her in latitude 29 N., the *James Baines* having had a wearisome passage of alternating calms and heavy cross seas. There was of course a great deal of excitement on board when it was known what ship it was that had been sighted, and the passengers—who, like all passengers, probably, since the beginning of Time, were as keenly interested in the result of the race as if they were personally responsible for it—crowded along the *Lightning's* rail hanging out derisive rope-yarns and offering to report her sister in Liverpool. The two vessels were in company for the whole week, when the *James Baines* fell astern, and finally both reached Liverpool within twenty-four hours. The *Lightning's* passage was much the shorter, but their speed since they met showed that there was very little to choose between the two clippers in similar weather conditions. The *James Baines* was very unlucky with her winds in the early part of the passage, and 'ghosting' was always a Black Baller's weak point.

Such entries as the following are very frequent in the *Lightning's* logs throughout her career:

'The clipper ship *Blackwall* was sighted right ahead of us, and at 10.30 we had the satisfaction of overhauling her. At 7 p.m. she was barely visible on the horizon.' The *Blackwall* was not, however, a fast ship. I find her making a passage of 102 days from Sydney in 1851, when one of her passengers had in his possession a nugget of pure gold, weighing twelve ounces, and called by its proud owner 'Punch's head,' from its likeness to that gentleman.

The *Lightning's* encounters with the Blackwallers were not, however, always so fortunate: for in 1859, Wigram's little *Lincolnshire*, of just over 1,000 tons, built at the historic Blackwall Yard in 1858, beat the bigger ship out to Melbourne by a couple of hours, having made the passage in seventy-eight days, this including a run of seventeen days from London to the Line, which must come very near the record.

The *Lincolnshire* was one of the many Blackwallers which could move and keep on moving without making any very sensational day's runs: while as for a piece of canvas spread in the rigging with some such legend as ' The Fastest Ship in the World '—well, one of the courtly gentlemen who commanded these ships would have dropped dead of apoplexy on his own poop at the very thought of such an outrageous piece of bad form! Several of the *Lincolnshire's* outward passages to Australia were well under the eighty days. Once she beat Green's fast *Anglesey* in a run of seventy-three days, and she twice had a close race home with one of the famous Aberdeen clippers. One of these was the *Kosciusko*, which vessel, however, was the winner by five days. Later in the same year she was matched against the famous *Star of Peace*. The two ships left Melbourne in company, but parted after a couple of days, and never sighted each other again during the whole of the run home. The *Star of Peace* anchored in London River eighty-one days out, and the *Lincolnshire* arrived early the next morning.

The *James Baines* and *Lightning*, together with a third ship of the fleet, the *Champion of the Seas*, found themselves contending again in a more serious race, with far greater issues at stake than the *amour propre* of their

owners and masters and the gratification of their passengers.

It was a race against time. The Indian Mutiny had broken out in June, with all its attendant horrors, and troops were being hurried to the scene of action with all speed. Haste was of the essence of the contract, and the British Government wisely chartered the largest and fastest ships they could find to meet the need of the occasion.

The *Lightning* sailed from Gravesend, having on board the 7th Hussars, and was thrown open to public inspection while in the river. The *Champion of the Seas* and *James Baines* arrived at Portsmouth early in August, and the day after their arrival received a visit from Queen Victoria, who was at Osborne at the time.

A contemporary newspaper account describes the occasion as follows:

> 'The clipper ships, *James Baines*, Captain McDonnell, and *Champion of the Seas*, Captain McKirdy, arrived at Portsmouth on Monday morning from Liverpool. No ships that ever entered Portsmouth Harbour created so much curiosity among men-of-war's men as these great merchantmen. High and low have been aboard to visit them, and the Port Admiral, Sir George Seymour, expressed his unqualified astonishment at examining the speed logged by these mercantile clippers. The *James Baines* will take in nearly 1,000 of the 97th and other troops, and the *Champion of the Seas* a like number of the 20th Foot and other regiments on Thursday for India. . . .
>
> 'These ships being now within convenient reach

of the court at Osborne, Her Majesty on Tuesday morning communicated her desire to the naval and military commanders-in-chief at Portsmouth that the embarkation of the troops might not take place until she had inspected them and the ships destined to carry them. Accordingly, information was given to Captain McDonnell, of the *James Baines*, and Captain McKirdy, of the *Champion of the Seas*, of the Queen's intention. Each captain got his ship in order for the inspection, and made every preparation to receive Her Majesty. . . . At 5.45 the royal steam-yacht *Fairy*, Captain the Hon. Joseph Denman, having on board the Queen, the Prince Consort, the Princess Royal and Prince Alfred, arrived off Portsmouth Harbour, and at 6 the Royal party landed at the new King's Stairs.

'The 54th Regiment were posted from the Pitch-house Jetty to the Sheers Jetty, alongside of which the *James Baines*, *Lady Jocelyn* and *Champion of the Seas* were moored. Her Majesty, having visited the *Lady Jocelyn*, was conducted to the *James Baines*: she was received by Captain McDonnell, and Mr. T. M. McKay, the owner, at the gangway, and conducted by them over this noble clipper. She ascended to the poop and took a view of the great length of deck, thence descending to the troop deck, and walked round it, perhaps the most wonderful and unexampled 'tween-deck Her Majesty ever visited, which appeared to excite her lively surprise. On taking her leave, Her Majesty expressed herself much gratified by her visit. She had no idea there were such vessels engaged in the merchant service, and complimented Mr. McKay and the captains individually

on the size and equipments of the *James Baines* and the *Champion of the Seas* generally.'

The reference to Mr. McKay as 'the owner' is a little obscure. Presumably he was a partner of James Baines, but it is a little surprising that the great little man himself was not present in person on so important an occasion. If he had been, perhaps, who knows? Her Majesty might have called for a capstan bar, and dubbed him 'Sir James,' like Drake of old, on the deck of his own ship!

The *Lightning* made the best passage of the three, going out to Calcutta in eighty-seven days. Both the others arrived 101 days out. They were spoken on their way by the ship *Oneida*, when the *James Baines*, according to an account in the *Illustrated London News*, 'presented a most magnificent appearance, having, in addition to her ordinary canvas, studdingsails, skysails, and moonsails set and drawing, in all thirty-four sails, a perfect cloud of canvas: the troops all well and cheering lustily as the vessels passed each other.'

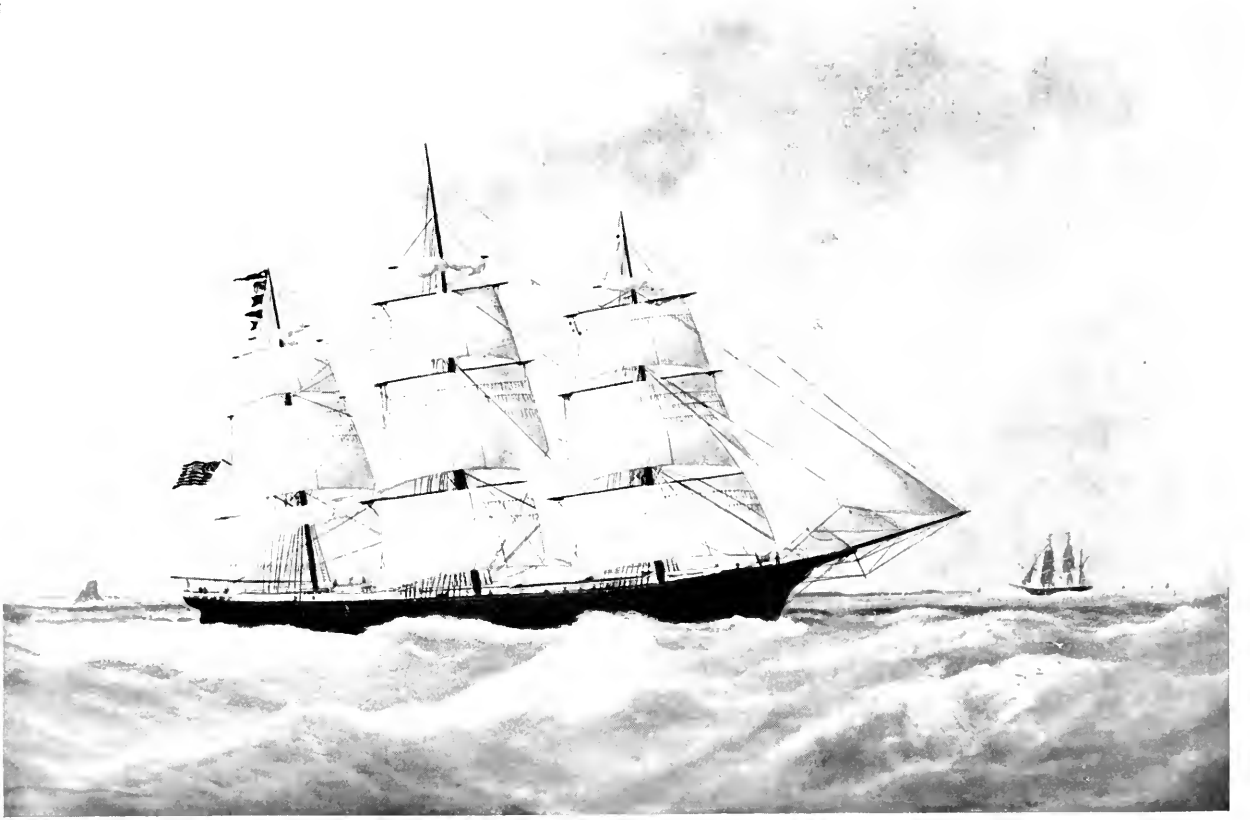
It was on her return passage from Calcutta that the *James Baines* took fire in Huskisson Dock and was scuttled there, her remains being used in the construction of the old landing stage.

In 1861 the *Lightning* was still at her old game overhauling and passing ships, and the log of one of her passengers to Australia in that year contains the characteristic entry: '8 a.m. A large ship ahead of us: we are gaining on her fast. We signalled but could not make her out. 4 p.m. Left her behind.' The *Lightning's* mate at that time seems to have been a bit of

a bucko, for a sailor, we are told, let a pot of tar fall from the crojick yard and spoiled a lady's dress, for which he was kicked and put in irons. Was it, one wonders, the lady's dress or the mate's deck which aroused so much indignation? The following day ' the mate told one of the sailors to go aloft, and because he did not, the mate used him so brutally that the rest of the sailors would not work for some time after.'

During this passage the *Lightning* took a long time—thirty-three days—getting up with the Line, and in about 9 S. latitude she sighted two ships, one of which she spoke. This ship was the *General Wyndham*, bound from London to Sydney, out thirty-two days. If this meeting had happened three years later, the *Lightning's* old captain, ' Bully ' Forbes, would have had the doubtful pleasure of seeing the ship he had commanded in his heyday passing him by at sea.

The *Red Jacket*, on her first voyage to Australia, raced a new clipper built by John McDonald at St. John, N.B., the *Mermaid* of 1,233 tons. The *Mermaid* sailed a day before her, and Beazley's *Miles Barton* the same day. The first six weeks of the passage light winds mainly prevailed, in which the *Mermaid* had the best of it, and on June 15th she was well in the lead. The *Red Jacket* went as far south as the 52nd parallel to find the strong Westerlies which Captain Reid wanted to shove his big clipper along, and here, in spite of the danger of ice at that time of the year, she was only seventeen days from longitude 34.44 E. to 139.35, and on seven days her run was over three hundred miles. Her time for the whole passage was sixty-nine days from Rock Light to Port Phillip Heads,



CLIPPER SHIP *RED JACKET*
(Photographed from the original oil painting by Edouard Adam, Le Havre, 1854, in the possession of F. V. Smyth, Esq.)

face p. 76

the *Mermaid* arriving five days later, seventy-four and a half days out.

The only one of the famous McKay quartette which had a long life was the *Donald McKay*, which ended her days as a hulk at the Cape Verd Islands, where her figurehead is, or was quite lately, still preserved. The *Lightning* and *James Baines* both perished by fire, and the *Champion of the Seas* foundered off the Horn in the 'seventies. The *Red Jacket*, after her narrow escape from being lost in the ice in her first passage from Australia, survived for many years as a coal hulk at Gibraltar, and was only broken up quite recently.

CHAPTER IV

China Tea

' By the old Pagoda Anchorage (it's many years ago!)
A sight it was to see then with their decks like drifted snow . . .
The ships so brave and beautiful that never more shall be,
By the old Pagoda anchorage when clippers sailed the sea—
Racing home to London River—
Crack her on for London River—
Carry on for London River with her chests of China tea! '

I

THE China tea trade, during the 'fifties and 'sixties of the last century, was one which made special demands both upon the ships and the men engaged in it.

In the first place, the charting of Chinese waters was still far from complete, notwithstanding the admirable work which had been done by several survey ships, and there were still plenty of hidden risks—like the Brunswick Shoals in the Canton River—waiting to confer a lasting, if unenviable, fame upon whatever unfortunate ship might discover their existence by the simple but convincing method of feeling around for them with her keel. Nor were the natives of the country particularly helpful to the ' foreign ' devil in this respect. ' Coker Rock, in Amoy Harbour, with only four feet on it,' says the *China Pilot*, that invaluable work, ' is marked by a large stone, with a staff erected on it: but (he adds) it seldom remains more than a

few days.' It is probable enough that human agency has something to do with the disappearance of the staff. The Chinese longshoremen, like those of Cornwall and Norfolk in bygone days, regarded a wrecked ship as a special gift of Providence, and strongly resented attempts to interfere with its due bestowal on the part of officious persons.

The China seas are narrow, studded with islands, and full of currents and hidden dangers. Gales, accompanied by what sailors term 'dirty weather,' are frequent during the south-westerly monsoons, the time when many of the tea clippers had to make their way down the China Sea to Anjer Point; while in the north-easterly monsoon typhoons, the most terrifying of all forms in which nature can manifest her power at sea, are by no means rare occurrences. 'To be able to prognosticate these tempests,' observes our friend the *China Pilot*, 'would be very useful to navigators . . . but in reality typhoons are seldom preceded by any certain sign or indication.'

But it was not only the ordinary perils of navigation that the China skipper had to be prepared to encounter.

The Chinese in those days were what they still remain, inveterate pirates. A ship which got ashore was nearly always picked as bare as a bone in a few days or even hours by a horde of pigtailed plunderers, while a vessel becalmed or even at her moorings in harbour was liable at any moment to be attacked by raiding junks or sampans. Plenty of true tales are told of those days which are as exciting as any fiction, as witness the story of the *Etienne*, recounted in a recent magazine article.

The *Etienne* was a German barque of about 365 tons, on passage from Hong Kong to Tientsin; she had on board a consignment of opium for the latter place, carried a large crew and was well-armed.

A couple of days out the wind fell away to nothing, and the ship, with stunsails set, could only steal along at the rate of about one knot. Dusk found her off Mirs Bay, not a pleasant spot in which to be becalmed, since it was a well-known rookery of pirates. A number of vessels could be seen drawn on the beach, and the ominous shapes of the stinkpots at their mastheads proclaimed their unlawful calling as plainly as did the Jolly Roger at the masthead of the seventeenth-century buccaneer.

These stinkpots were among the Chinese pirates' favourite weapons. Indeed, the ingenious Chinaman may almost claim in them to have invented the earliest form of chemical warfare, as well as the mariner's compass and the theory of watertight compartments. They were large earthenware vessels hoisted up to the mastheads, whence they could be let down with a run on to the deck. The breaking of the earthenware released a reeking fluid which gave off choking masses of sulphurous smoke.

It was fairly certain that the pirates would attack at dusk, so preparations were made to give them a lively reception. Muskets and cutlasses were served out, and the crew ordered to man the rails: while surprise packets were prepared for the raiders, should they succeed in boarding, in the shape of broken glass scattered on deck, the raw material for which was provided by some bottled beer which was among the cargo.

In due time the expected attack came. Three lorchas, crowded with men and driven by long sweeps, put off towards the ships. They opened fire at four hundred yards, but their marksmanship was poor and all the shots fell short, except one from a twelve-pounder, probably looted from some previous victim, which knocked a splinter off the *Etienne's* mast.

The fire was returned with good effect, but as the lorchas evidently intended to attack on all sides at once, it was impossible to prevent them from boarding; the defenders accordingly retired to the rigging to await developments.

These were not long in coming. Over the rail the Chinese came swarming, their yells of triumph rapidly changing to howls of pain and surprise as their naked feet came into contact with the broken glass, and proceeded to storm the rigging.

With the captain in the mizen top was the ship's one passenger, a warder from Hong Kong prison who was spending his leave in a sea trip. As the pirates leaped into the shrouds, it was seen that they were led by a white man, whom the warder at once recognised as one of his former charges, a seafaring man named Kelly, who had escaped while serving a life sentence for murder.

Kelly at once demanded where the opium was stowed, but the only response he got was a curt 'Get out of that, or I'll shoot you!' To dislodge the defenders would take time, and time meant the possibility of a rescue, so he retreated to search the ship for the precious brown cakes which were his main objective.

Looting was in full swing when a gun was heard which announced that help was at hand. Presently the

gunboat *Raccoon* was sighted rounding the point into the bay, and the pirates immediately tumbled pell-mell into their boats and pulled for shore for dear life. One of them was sunk by a shot, whereupon the others threw up the sponge and surrendered. The wasps' nest was fired out, and the renegade Kelly cheated the gallows by dying of his wounds in Hong Kong.

With all these varied risks to consider, then, sailing a tea clipper was an anxious business: far more so, on the whole, than a Californian or Australian voyage. What skipper, even to-day, ever really feels easy in his mind till he is out of soundings: and a very large proportion of these China passages was spent in them. One of the principal terrors of the sea—that of ice—the China ship was indeed practically free from, and so far as her deep water passages were concerned, she had not to face the rigours of Cape Horn or the stern wrestle with the Roaring Forties. But she had plenty of variety in the way of weather to contend with, all the same. 'Flyin' Fish sailor,' the Cape Horner might dub the teaship seaman: but the Indian Ocean hurricanes, the gales and typhoons of the China seas, the short, steep, vicious swell of the Agulhas Bank, and the furious storms of the Bay, were there to prove his mettle as well as that of the ship he sailed in. It was a trade which called for, and elicited, the highest degree of efficiency both in ship and man.

2

Up to the year 1844 only comparatively small and few ships were engaged in either the American or the

British tea trade. In that year the Americans began building vessels of a larger type for the Canton-New York-Boston run, but it was not until 1850 that American ships loaded tea for England.

Actually the first to do so was a little barque called the *Jeanette*, which made a fairly long passage from Whampoa. But her right to be regarded as a pioneer passed unnoticed when, on December 3rd, 1850, the clipper *Oriental* entered the West India Docks, only ninety-seven days out from the same port. It was evidently a favourable year for making passages, for the *John Bunyan*, owned by the Aberdeen White Star Company, and built by one of the pioneer British yards, that of Hood, of Aberdeen, came home in ninety-nine days, and a British vessel, the *Reindeer* of 328 tons, commanded by Captain Anthony Enright, later the *Lightning's* most successful commander, was the first ship to arrive with the new season's tea. The premium of £1 per ton on the first tea cargo of the year had not then begun to be paid, but Captain Enright received a present of a chronometer from his owners as a recognition of his little ship's performance.

The *Oriental* was built by Bell of New York for Messrs. A. A. Low of that city, and her first skipper, that remarkable old gentleman Captain Nat. B. Palmer, had, as in the case of the *Houqua* and *Samuel Russell*, a good deal to do with her design. Like the two ships referred to, the *Oriental* was not of the much-discussed concave type advocated by John Wilson Griffiths, and adopted, though only for a time, by his friend and enthusiastic disciple, Donald McKay. Captain Palmer knew the China seas inside out and upside down, and his ships did much better in the tea trade

than the McKay type—the latter, on the contrary, being unsurpassed in Cape Horn passages and on the Australian run.

The invasion of the tea trade by the big American clippers took the British shipbuilder by surprise, and for a time the newcomers had things all their own way. Nevertheless, the British yards had been steadily developing a faster type of vessel for China voyages, though, up to the eighteen-fifties, these were all under 600 tons or thereabouts. Alexander Hall, of Aberdeen, was already turning out the predecessors of the fast ships which were to make the name of the Granite City known on all the seas of the world; among the best-known of his early clippers being the *Stornoway* and *Chrysolite*, the latter commanded by the famous 'Yankee' Enright. But the tea trade had held out no inducement for the building of large ships like those which the gold rush demanded, so that when the big American vessels entered the field, they held it for a time against the best British competition.

The year 1852 was notable for an event which has given rise ever since to as many heated arguments as the races for the America's Cup—namely, the so-called race between Messrs. R. & H. Green's new ship *Challenger* and Webb's big extreme clipper *Challenge*, formerly commanded by the notorious 'Bully' Waterman.

This was one of those singularly unsatisfactory and inconclusive affairs, like the *Cutty Sark's* race from China with the *Thermopylae*. In point of fact, it can hardly be regarded as a race at all, nor does there seem to be any evidence that Richard Green ever looked upon it as such: and the yarns which have persisted

to this day to the effect that the loser was to be forfeited to the winner, and so forth, are almost certainly without foundation.

The two ships did not sail from the same port. They were very unevenly matched, and as a matter of fact to sail a race with a ship of the *Challenger's* tonnage, Green's clipper would have required a handicap to meet her on equal terms: so that a hardheaded business man, however patriotic, was not likely to make a virtual present of a new ship to an odds-on competitor.

The *Challenge*, as might have been expected, made a slightly shorter passage than her little rival: but the smaller ship had no reason to be ashamed of her performance.

The following are the times as given in ' Lloyd's List ':

Challenge:
Sailed from Whampoa August 4th.
Arrived Sunda Straits September 12th.
Arrived Gravesend November 19th.
Passage 107 days.

Challenger:
Sailed from Shanghai on July 28th.
Arrived Anjer September 4th.
Arrived Gravesend November 17th.

The figures given in Mr. Basil Lubbock's *China Clippers*, showing the two ships as leaving Anjer on the same day, are characterised as ' fictitious ' by a recent American writer. They are, as a matter of fact, taken from an article which appeared in the quarterly, *Naval*

Science, in 1874, the writer of which presumably had some ground for his statement, though it does not appear to be correct.

In any case, the result of the race, if such it can be termed, was if anything a dead heat, when the *Challenger's* long beat to windward from Shanghai is taken into consideration. Moreover, the even more significant fact has been rather surprisingly overlooked in the heat of the *Challenge-Challenger* controversy that the British clipper beat all the ships sailing from Shanghai about the same time, including such formidable competitors as the *Nightingale* and the *John Bertram*. The *Nightingale*, leaving three days after the *Challenger*, did not arrive in London until December 10th, while the *John Bertram*, which sailed on August 3rd, did not put in an appearance until January 10th, 1853. The latter ship was a terrifically long time on the way from Shanghai to Anjer—from August 3rd until October 18th—which rather looks as if she had met with some mishap between those points, and had to put in to refit.

The *Challenge* later passed under the British flag, and about 1867 went out to Bombay in seventy-one days, being then owned by Captain Joseph Wilson, of Sunderland, and named *Golden City*. She was lost off Abervrache, on the French coast, early in the 'seventies.

A good many larger British ships were now entering the lists, and in 1853 Alexander Hall built the *Cairngorm* for Messrs. Jardine, Matheson & Co. This ship, under a very able skipper, Captain Robertson, who came to her from the *Stornoway*, did much to re-establish the prestige of British shipowners in the tea trade,

and her first voyage she led the whole of the Shanghai fleet to London. This was a good year for British ships. The *Challenger* was a close second, beating the famous *Nightingale* for the second time, and winning a considerable amount in stakes on the race, sometimes estimated as high as £4,000. Mr. Lubbock also mentions the *John Bertram* as a participant in this race, but I find no record of her in the China passages for that year. However, the *Challenger* secured a very noteworthy ' scalp ' when she beat the *Nightingale*, which, as well as being a much larger ship—1,066 tons against the *Challenger's* 700—was an exceedingly fast sailer both in the Australian and the China trade, and had more than one ' record ' to her name. Of the Whampoa contingent the Americans had the best of it, the *Architect*, of Baltimore, being the first home after a passage of 107 days.

Many writers have expressed regret that the British builders did not take up the challenge of the American Navigation Club to match an American against a British clipper for £10,000. On the whole, they were probably doing the wisest thing in leaving it alone. At that time no large clipper ships had as yet been built in British yards, whereas vessels of the size suggested—800-1,200 tons—had been turned out steadily from American yards for many years. Hence any British competitor would of necessity have been something of an experiment, and to have accepted and lost such a challenge, would have had a very bad effect upon British shipping prestige.

Yet another close international race was that in 1856 between the clipper barque *Maury* and the pioneer iron clipper, *Lord of the Isles*, built by Scott of Greenock.

Both ships left Foochow on June 10th, and were several times in company on the way home. They arrived at Gravesend almost together, the American barque a few minutes in the lead: but Captain Maxton, of the *Lord of the Isles*, had the better tug, and thus actually docked ahead of his rival.

The year 1859 saw the last serious bid made by an American vessel to be first with the season's teas in London River. Grinnell & Minturn's famous *Sea Serpent*, noted for her gleaming green and gold figurehead, left Foochow with a double crew, all out to win the honours of the race. She made a close thing of it with the *Ellen Rodger* and the first *Fiery Cross*, which had left ten days before him. It was a gallant effort but it just failed. Captain Whitmore, the American skipper, in his eagerness to secure a victory for his country, left his ship in the Channel and travelled up to London by train, hoping in this way to enter her first, only to find that the *Ellen Rodger* had arrived two days previously.

It was the American's last notable appearance in the racing. The ships which had created no little flutter in British dovecotes a few years before, and induced the Jeremiahs of which this country always seems to possess rather more than her share to predict the speedy eclipse of her commerce, were getting strained and waterlogged, and could not deliver their fragrant cargoes in good condition. No new ships came forward to fill their places. A slump had followed the boom of the eighteen-fifties, and America had other preoccupations. A few clippers still lingered on in the China seas, but they no longer commanded the high freights of a decade before, and were glad to fill their

holds at £2 or £3 a ton. Before many years had passed they had dropped out altogether, and the British clippers had the trade as completely to themselves as in the days before the repeal of the Navigation Laws.

3

During the later years of the tea trade so much public interest was directed to the performances of the London-bound tea fleets, that the fact is often lost sight of that Liverpool ships played fully as important a part in the earlier races. The *Chrysolite*, owned by Messrs. Potter of that port, has been already mentioned, and another vessel whose exploits have been somewhat unaccountably overlooked by most writers on the subject is the little *Vision*, which Alexander Hall built for Mr. James Beazley in 1854.

The *Vision*, which was named after a well-known racing cutter owned in Preston, was very strongly built, with four layers of diagonal planking. On her maiden voyage she loaded a full general cargo of Manchester goods in Birkenhead dock for Hong Kong. From that port she went on to Whampoa, where she filled up with the new season's tea, and arrived in the Mersey after a round trip of seven months and thirteen days. Her bills of lading were filled in at £7 per ton and endorsed ' one pound extra if the first ship home,' and she succeeded in winning the extra pound, beating the very fast little Baltimore ship *Architect*.

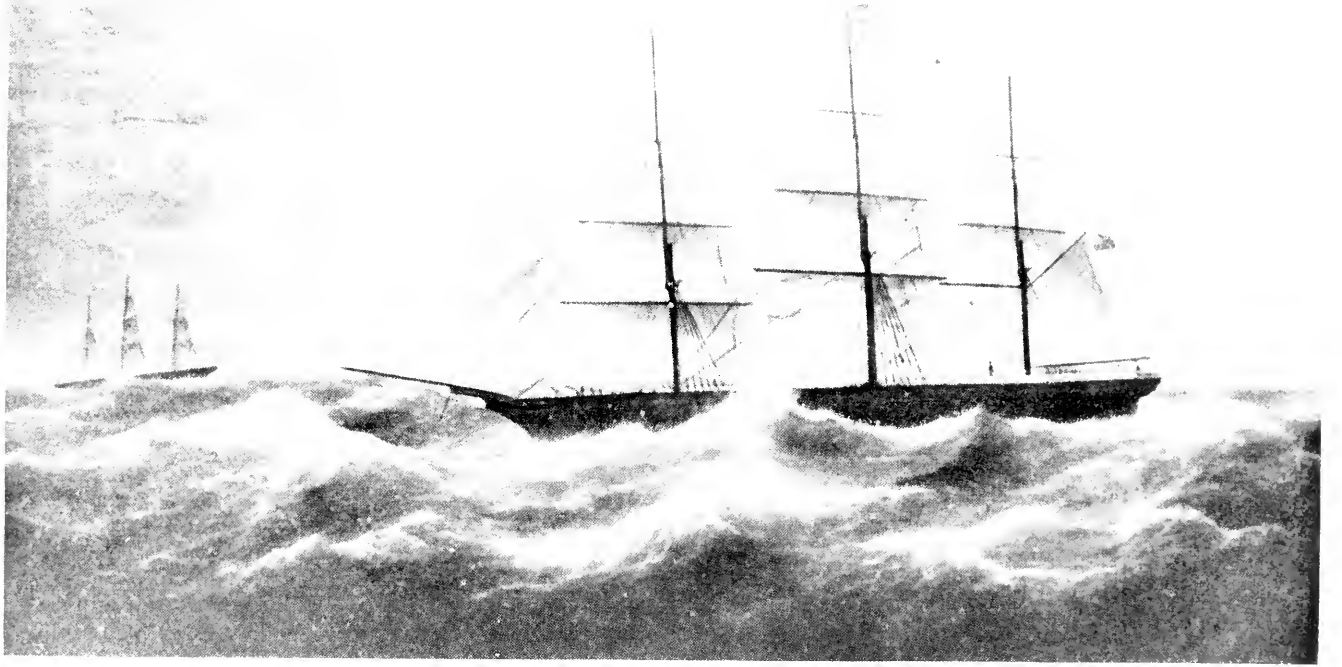
On her second voyage she went up to Foochow for her tea cargo, and while beating down the China Sea against the south-west monsoon sighted Jardine,

Matheson & Co's. *Cairngorm*, which had loaded at Whampoa, off Direction Island, near the coast of Borneo. From there to the ' chops of the Channel ' the two were constantly in company, sighting each other no less than seventeen times. Both vessels carried canvas for all they were worth, on one occasion the *Vision* having twenty-nine sails set to the *Cairngorm's* thirty, the latter's spread including the ' Jamie Green,' seen more often in the China trade than anywhere else.

In the Channel they parted company, the *Cairngorm* heading for London while the *Vision* turned northwards to her own home port. As soon as she signalled her number off Holyhead, a Liverpool tug which was in waiting off the Great Orme came alongside with Customs officers and representatives of the tea consignees. Off came the hatches without delay, and samples were taken. The tug then steamed off for Liverpool, where a special train was ready, and the *Vision's* tea was actually on the London market twenty-four hours before the *Cairngorm* entered the Thames.

Unluckily, the stout little ship's life was a very short one, for she was wrecked in the Min River the following year.

Mr. Beazley also owned the well-known *Robin Hood* of 852 tons, which, like the *Vision*, came from Hall's yard in 1854, and was a consistently fast sailer. On her first outward passage to China, the *Robin Hood* logged 1,200 miles in four consecutive days, and is once recorded as having reeled off 364 sea miles—419 land miles—in twenty-four hours, which comes very near the *Flying Cloud's* best time. Under the command of Captain Cobb, later of Killick & Martin's *Wild Deer*, and afterwards of Captain J. Darlington, she made



THE *ROBIN HOOD* (TEA CLIPPER)
(From a painting in the possession of the Beazley family)

face p. 90

passages from Foochow of 116, 100 and 102 days, and was finally run down in the Channel in 1864. The *Friar Tuck*, of 662 tons, which Hall built for Mr. Beazley a year after the *Robin Hood*, does not seem to have made any notable passages, but she brought her owners £15,215 in profits during six voyages. She was lost in St. Mary's Bay, Scilly Isles, and her figurehead, representing the jovial friar of Robin Hood's company, is one of the chief ornaments of the melancholy sculpture gallery of Tresco Abbey.

Also associated with Liverpool, though in a different sense, were perhaps the most famous of all the early British clippers—namely, the two beautiful ships which successively bore the name of *Fiery Cross*. In both cases the connection with the Mersey was through their builder, Chaloner: they were owned in Glasgow, and usually sailed between Chinese ports and London. This builder always seems to me something of a mystery. If he could build ships like the two *Fiery Crosses*, why did he never build any more ? They were enough to set any builder in the first flight at a bound. Perhaps he was like one of those poets famed for a single song, or for a single splendid passage amid a weary waste of mediocrity, like that wonderful word-picture, full of the sound and thunder of the sea, which starts forth so amazingly out of the stilted verbiage of Thomson's ' Seasons ':

> Where the Northern Ocean in vast whirls
> Boils round the naked melancholy isles
> Of furthest Thule, and the Atlantic surge
> Pours in among the stormy Hebrides——

Anyway, whatever the reason, the two *Fiery Crosses* remain their creator's solitary achievement.

The first had but a short life; indeed, she made but four voyages before she was wrecked, outward bound, in 1860. But it was a life full of performance. Out of her four voyages one was the fastest of the year made by a British ship, another won her the premium for the first arrival, and in a third she was the runner-up for second place, only two days behind the winner. She made her best time in her first voyage, when, starting fairly late, she missed the worst of the monsoon coming down from Foochow, and arrived under 100 days out.

The inheritor of the name, however, whose sail plan, reproduced from the original in possession of one of her captains, is here reproduced by courtesy of Mr. Gilbert Floyd, had a very long life, and outlasted nearly all her contemporaries.

Her career in the tea trade was one full of excitements. She was fortunate in having as her skipper during a great part of her life Captain Richard Robinson, one of the few Englishmen—he hailed from Cumberland—to win renown as a China clipper commander, and the *Fiery Cross's* story is perhaps fuller of close finishes than that of any other ship in the fleet, as might be expected when she was in the hands of one of the keenest racing masters in the history of the merchant service

Her first voyage from Foochow in 1862 placed her at once in the front rank. Five of the leading ships left within five days of each other, between June 11th and June 14th: the little *Ellen Rodger*, commanded by the redoubtable Captain Keay, Beazley's *Robin Hood*, the famous *Falcon*, Steele's first tea clipper, under a very 'skeely skipper,' Captain Maxton, and the *Flying Spur*, owned by Jardine, Matheson & Co., and com-

manded by Captain Ryrie, who had a proprietary interest in the ship, and, according to Mr. Basil Lubbock, never really drove her for all she was worth.

The *Fiery Cross* and *Flying Spur* sailed the same day, and the Liverpool-built champion reached London on September 23rd, twenty-three days before her rival arrived at Falmouth. Next came the *Falcon*, which had left three days before the *Fiery Cross*, and docked sixteen days later, with the *Ellen Rodger* hard upon her heels. The *Robin Hood* made Liverpool on October 14th, after a passage of 125 days.

Her second passage, the first under Captain Robinson's command, again secured her the premium for the first arrival. The *Flying Spur*, which reached London two days later, actually made the shorter passage of the two, and the story of how she was beaten on the post has its humorous aspect.

A tug came alongside in the Downs and offered to take the *Flying Spur* into dock for £100.

'Too much, too much,' said cautious Captain Ryrie, 'say £75, and the job's yours.'

'All right,' came the reply from the tug skipper, 'if you don't take us, Captain Robinson ain't far astarn of you, and he'll be glad of the chance.'

'That's as may be,' retorted Captain Ryrie, still 'fumbling,' and scenting an attempted bluff, and off the tug fussed off down Channel in search of another tow.

It was a case, so far as Captain Ryrie was concerned, of 'penny wise, pound foolish': for, sure enough, back surged the tug presently with the *Fiery Cross* in her wake, the latter's crew no doubt hanging out rope yarns in mockery of her too-cautious rival, and already

blowing in fancy the month's extra pay, that fell to the lot of the winning vessel's foc's'le, in the anticipated delights of Sailortown.

The following year the race might be summarised as '*Fiery Cross* first, and the rest also ran.' She came home in 104 days from Foochow, and, as well as winning the premium for the third time, beat all the London ships by twenty to thirty days. The only one of the fleet whose time was anything like hers was the little barque *Ziba*, which got home to Liverpool in 106 days.

1864 saw her engaged in a neck-to-neck race with a new rival. This was Findlay's beautiful Aberdeen-built *Serica*, whose name, by the way, correctly pronounced as 'America,' was that which appeared on the old maps of China. The *Serica's* master was every bit as keen a racing skipper as Dick Robinson himself, and the newcomer signalised her entry into the field by carrying off the premium, beating the *Fiery Cross* by five days and the *Flying Spur* by twenty-five.

The following year the *Fiery Cross* won on the post for the second time. She had left Foochow at the same time as the *Serica*, and the two hung on each other's heels all the way down the China Sea, the *Serica* reaching Anjer a day in the lead. Several times during the passage they spoke each other again, and arrived off St. Catherine's Light at almost the same moment.

Here the *Serica* went ahead, and with Beachy Head on the beam she was two miles in the lead. But the race wasn't won yet.

Either by sheer good luck or because Captain Robinson had a sort of sixth sense by which he could detect the presence of tugs as a terrier smells out rats, he was the first to pick one up, with the result that he was

able to make the London River a tide ahead of his rival. Incidentally, the tug was responsible for a good deal of money in the form of stakes finding its way into the pockets of the *Fiery Cross's* supporters.

4

The tea races had now come to be regarded as an annual sporting event, which excited as keen an interest among people who probably did not know which end of a ship went first as the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race among the general public nowadays. As for the shipping and mercantile houses immediately concerned in the result, they were a ferment to excitement as the time approached when the leading ship might be expected any day to enter the river, and a plentiful crop of black eyes among the office-boys of the various firms indicated the prevailing tensity of feeling.

And from the sporting point of view this is hardly surprising. Here was a race over a distance of sixteen thousand miles whose finish, very often, was as close as that of a yacht race, decided sometimes, as we have seen, by a matter of hours or even of minutes. The narrowness of the times was never equalled in any other trade, and affords convincing proof of the perfection alike of sail-plan and handling to which these wonderful little ships had been brought. Every one was a racer, a thoroughbred from truck to keelson, and the race might for once fitly be described as the Derby—or, perhaps, since ships are feminine, the Oaks—of blue water.

The story of the great race of 1866 is one which has been told many times already, and the lithograph of the three leaders in the Channel is perhaps better known than any other marine picture ever painted. But the tale is still one to stir the blood.

But first for a few words about the port from which most of the tea fleet now sailed. The American ships had generally loaded at Whampoa on the Canton River, and left rather late in the year. But during the 'sixties the chief centre of the trade was the recently opened treaty port of Foochow Foo, some thirty-four miles from the entrance of the River Min. Like all the Chinese rivers, the Min was by no means easy to navigate. Rocks and shoals abounded, and its bed, owing to the scour of the tides and currents, was continually changing. Its scenery is magnificent, and the entrance, dominated by the lordly peak of Ku-shan, visible many miles out at sea, has been compared to that of the Rhine. But from the mariner's point of view it is less attractive, and the simple and unadorned phrases of our friend the *China Pilot*, perhaps give a better idea of it than any amount of descriptive writing.

' The entrance ' (we read) ' is formed between sand-banks which extend seven miles from the land, and are partly dry at low water. The northern range of banks terminated to the eastward in a detached rocky patch named Outer Min Reef, two peaked heads of which show at the last quarter ebb. . . . During the survey of 1841 the navigation of the river, fourteen miles below the city, was obstructed by piles of stones and stakes, which had occasioned great detriment by preventing the flow of the tide, and causing the sand-banks to accumulate and shift; and as it is one of those

rivers where changes may be looked for each season, a stranger had better obtain a pilot. . . . When the north sands of the entrance begin to dry, there are scarcely sixteen feet on the bar. At low water springs they dry about three feet: at neaps they do not show. In fine weather, the north and south breakers appear from half-ebb to half-flood, and the Outer Knoll, which has only seven feet on it, seldom until after the last quarter; but in bad weather a line of breakers extends from the Outer Knoll across to the north bank, and a continuous line from the south breakers to Black Head. . . .

Again, 'the first of the flood sets in from the north-east, and running with great strength through numerous small channels . . . sets across the entrance of the river. . . .

'Kinpai Pass is dangerous to strangers, particularly at or near spring tides, for then the violence of the current produces eddies among the rocks, that occasionally cross the channel, and render the vessel totally unmanageable, even in a fresh breeze; it therefore should never be taken without a pilot or personal knowledge, and then at slack tide. The Wolverine Rock, with thirteen feet over it, lies S.W. by W. from the north extreme of Kinpai Point. . . . The Vixen Spit S.W. of it three cables.

'The passage north of the Middle Ground is considered the best. The danger of this passage is in passing the northern shoulder, which forms a sharp angle of the bank, with only one foot on it at low water springs, and four fathoms close to, from this point to the opposite shore the distance is only one and a quarter cables.

'Passing the ferry-house on the port hand the Tongue Shoal is reached, steep-to, having seven feet of water near its northern extreme. Between Half-tide Rock and Tintao the bottom is very irregular.

'Proceeding upwards, the river narrows at the Mingan Pass. About three-quarters of a mile above Mingan, and on the same side of the river, is Couding Island, off the east point of which H.M.S. *Scout* grounded on a rock at the end of a ledge projecting twenty-five yards from the islet, with seven feet near its extreme.

'At the upper or south end of the gorge, and on the east bank of the river are Spiteful and Flat Islands, which must be left on the port hand. The Spiteful Rock shows at low water—it is part of a rocky ledge projecting about thirty yards from the island.

'Leaving the River Min, in dropping through the Mingan Pass with the ebb tide, it will be necessary to guard against a dangerous eddy setting from the point above Couding Island on to the Scout Rock,' and finally, 'on leaving the River, take care that the set of the tide across the Channel between Rees Rock and Sharp Peak Point does not force the vessel on the shoals on the north side of the channel.'

It will be seen, therefore, that the position for a navigator, either entering or leaving the river, was rather like that indicated by the old Lancashire coachman, who, when consulted by his mistress as to which of two moorland routes they should take, invariably made the same answer:

'Well, Miss Meary, tha sees it's like this. As which road tha goos, tha'll wish tha'd goan t'other.'

So that it is hardly matter for surprise that quite a

number of the tea ships left their bones in the Min. Among these were the famous *Oriental*, the pioneer of the American invasion, the gallant little *Vision*, the magnificent *Flying Fish*, two other Americans, the *Golden Racer* and *Wild Duck*, and Green's *Childers*, not to be confused by an American vessel, the *Flying Childers*, named, of course, after the famous racehorse: while Baring's *Norman Court* had a narrow escape so late as the eighteen-seventies of ripping her keel out on a hitherto unsuspected pinnacle rock.

The tea fleet's usual anchorage was off the Pagoda Rock, near the south point of Losing Island, and dry at low springs: and here, in the early days of June, 1866, there were gathered together a dozen or so ships which, for perfection of the shipwright's craft, for the skill of their captains and mates, and the high quality of the crews which manned them, have probably been never excelled, if indeed ever equalled, in the whole history of navigation. There was the veteran *Falcon*, Steele's first tea clipper, always a consistent passage-maker, though, owing to the fact that she generally sailed rather late and also that she was pitted against a very formidable rival in the *Fiery Cross*. The *Fiery Cross*, too, was there, with her fiery skipper, Robinson, in command, and the *Flying Spur*, her most dangerous competitor on several occasions and more than once runner-up for the premium. There was the *Serica*, which beat the fleet on her maiden passage and made a dead heat of it in 1865 with the *Fiery Cross*, the *Taitsing*, from Connell's famous Glasgow yard, also owned by Findlay, and the *Belted Will*, whose name indicated her Cumbrian origin; Rodger's *Taeping*, a beautiful and speedy ship, and all her triumphs yet

before her. And last, but by no means least, was McCunn's *Ariel*, one of the most lovely of all those lovely little vessels which, dainty and aristocratic in every detail as any millionaire's yacht, were yet able to face the fury of the dreaded typhoon and the boisterous wooing of the Westerlies for, in many cases, half a century and more.

The *Ariel*, *Serica*, and *Taeping*, were all of the composite type of construction—that is, teak or oak planking on iron beams and frames—which enjoyed a brief reign before the out-and-out iron clippers came in. The composite ships were, most of them, very fast and amazingly durable, as their after histories prove. All the fleet were tremendously sparred for their size. The *Ariel*, for instance, of 1,058 tons, carried a seventy-foot mainyard, compared to the eighty-four foot spar of the *Port Jackson* of twice her tonnage, and this was further extended upon occasion by stunsail booms to an additional twenty or thirty feet. She, like all the others, spread a regular assortment of ' flying kites,—ringtails, save-alls, Jamie Greens, watersails, and what not—whose names, to say nothing of the methods of setting them, are rapidly becoming quite forgotten. Has anyone, by the way, ever identified the original Jamie Green who first set that particular sail? Or does it—like the Blackwall hitch—derive its name from the famous Poplar yard? Most of the contestants in the '66 race still carried the big single topsails which are the most striking point of difference between all the ships built since the days of the Van der Veldes up to the eighteen-sixties and those of the latter part of the nineteenth century, the *Ariel* being a notable exception. Artistically, perhaps, these big sails with

their broad surfaces were more to be desired, and from the practical point of view some racing skippers preferred them. But so far as the seaman was concerned there can be little doubt that the innovation was heartily welcomed. None of the patent devices for shortening sail—such as Howe's and Cunningham's—were ever popular with sailormen; and the task of furling one of those bellying, bulging bags of trouble in a gale of wind must have been one of the toughest jobs they had to handle, even in times when 'labour-saving appliances' had not begun to be thought of.

The captains of the ships thus matched against each other were worthy of their charges. Many of them, naturally, since so many of the ships were built north of the Tweed, were Scotsmen. Keay, of the *Ariel*, was already old in experience of the China seas—a Scot of the shrewd, 'canny' type, with a gleam of native humour evidenced in the eyes, whose network of crows' feet bore testimony to much scanning of stormy seas. M'Kinnon, of the *Taeping*, formerly of the *Ellen Rodger*, and Innes of the *Serica*, had also won their spurs in the tea races: while Robinson of the *Fiery Cross*, a stalwart Cumbrian, whose ancestors may well have been Border raiders or Isle of Man smugglers in days gone by, upheld the Southron's honour. Robinson's name was one to conjure with among the seamen of his day, and an old skipper who was then a young apprentice still recalls the thrill of pride he experienced when his own captain and Robinson exchanged visits in a Chinese port, and he, as stroke of the gig, enjoyed the privilege of being at close quarters with the great man. Robinson, by the way,

later went into steam, and became captain of Maxton's early 'kettle' *Galley of Lorn*.

The *Ariel* was the first ship to complete her cargo. On May 28th she left her moorings and dropped down clear of the anchorage, ready to start towing in the morning. She hove up her anchor in the early hours of the 29th, and near Sharp Rock the tug *Island Queen* began to go ahead. The set of the tide at this point, referred to in the *China Pilot*, here made itself felt to such purpose that the tug took a wide sheer to port and refused to answer her helm, whereupon, since the *Ariel* ran a considerable risk of getting on to the shoals if she held on to her, Captain Keay let go his mudhook in a hurry. The tide was now running out fast, and the *Ariel*, drawing as she did in loaded trim eighteen feet and some inches, while at low water, as we have seen, there was only sixteen feet on the bar, was reluctantly compelled to remain at anchor even after the tug was again in hand. The *Fiery Cross*, in the meantime, had also finished loading and got away, and now towed past her stationary rival just in time to save the tide, and gain a clear twelve hours' start. The night set in thick and dirty, and though Captain Keay was biting his nails with impatience to be off, the pilot would not take the risk of going to sea in the darkness, and he had, perforce, to restrain his eagerness till daylight.

At nine in the morning the clipper was at last in tow again, and crossed the bar without more trouble, with the *Serica* and *Taeping* close on her heels. The *Ariel* suffered yet another delay through the upsetting of the boat which should have taken off her pilot, necessitating a wait while another was signalled for:

but by noon all three racers were heading for Anjer, passing the White Dog Islands, a favourite haunt of pirates, the Warning Rocks, standing out boldly amid the surrounding tangle of reefs and shoals, and the familiar milestone of Turnabout Island, before the dark and rainy nightfall hid them from each other's sight.

During the first few days the *Ariel's* watches were constantly at work rearranging chests of tea, casks of beef and pork, and coils of hawsers, so as to get the trim of the vessel precisely to the Old Man's liking. Incidentally, the skipper's sleeping-cabin was filled with cables and chests of tea, so that if he had wanted to go to bed he would have had a hard job to do so. However, racing clipper captains usually turned in, when they did, all standing on the chart-room settee, and slept like a dog with one eye open, so probably Captain Keay felt little inconvenience in this particular instance.

The *Taeping* and *Ariel* were again in sight of each other on June 2nd, and the following day both they and the *Fiery Cross* passed the Paracels Islands, upon whose dangerous rocks and shoals the turbulent seas raised by the south-west monsoon could be seen breaking in foam.

On Saturday and Sunday, June 9th and 10th, the *Taeping* and *Ariel* were once more in company, and the latter signalled the news that she had passed the *Fiery Cross* two days previously. 'We are in all probability the leading ship so far,' wrote Captain Keay in his diary: but he congratulated himself too soon, for the *Fiery Cross* actually passed Anjer, the first stage on the long homeward road, two days ahead of the whole China fleet.

The ships were now free at last of the island-sown and confined waters, of the China seas, and could spread their wings in good earnest. In the S.E. trades all flying kites were set, and the skippers ' carried on ' to their heart's content. Splitting sails and snapped stunsail booms were the order of the day, but the crew still found time for the endless ' sailorising ' jobs which were part of the day's work for the ' flying fish ' sailor: setting up and rattling down, putting in rovings, attending to chafing gear, while ' Chips ' busied himself with bits of fancy rope-carving for the gangway ladder, and ' Sails ' considered the cut and set of sails with a particularity worthy of a Savile Row tailor.

All four of the leading ships were now showing their paces: on June 24th the *Fiery Cross* reeled off 328 miles, and on June 26th, a day of fresh trades and a high southerly sea, the *Ariel's* day's run was 330 miles. Both the *Taeping* and *Taitsing* were over the 300 mark, and *Serica's* best run was 291 miles. After Mauritius was left behind light winds prevailed for a time, alternating as the Cape was neared with occasional squalls and thunderstorms. The *Ariel* crossed the Cape meridian only a few hours after the *Fiery Cross*, the *Taeping* following at an interval of twelve hours; the *Serica* was three days behind, with the *Taitsing* bringing up the rear five days later.

Three days after the *Ariel* and *Taeping* had both drawn level with the *Fiery Cross*. The *Serica*, in the meantime, was rapidly reducing the distance which separated her from the three leaders, and, aided by favourable winds, passed St. Helena a matter of hours ahead of the *Ariel*. The *Taeping* had now established

a lead of a day over the *Fiery Cross*, with the *Taitsing* still five days behind.

The three leading ships crossed the Line practically together, though out of sight of each other, on August 4th, and five days later the *Taeping* and *Fiery Cross* fell in with each other and were in company for over a week. The north-east trades, as the *Ariel's* log shows, were very poor, and the *Fiery Cross*, in 27 N. lat., when she might reasonably have expected to be bowling along under all plain sail, was becalmed for twenty-four hours. The *Taeping*, which was in company with her, managed to get a breeze and soon dropped her rival astern.

The *Ariel* had now gone well ahead, while the *Serica* and *Taitsing* were drawing up on the leaders, and at the Cape Verde Islands the *Ariel* was one day ahead, with the *Taeping*, *Fiery Cross* and *Serica* all in a bunch together, and the *Taitsing* seven days behind the *Ariel*.

The variable and baffling weather, which had prevailed all the way from the Line, now gave way to fresh westerly breezes, before which the straining ships, with everything set, sped neck and neck for soundings. The *Ariel* was the first to lift the Bishop Light, keeping his lonely vigil over the reefs of Scilly, whose names are the names of ships, in the small hours of September 5th, and she signalled her number off the Start just after noon.

A ship had been keeping company with her since dawn at some little distance which, from the amount of sail she was carrying, the *Ariel's* captain guessed to be the *Taeping*, and he crowded on all his flying kites in order to maintain his hard-won lead. The *Ariel* hove

to for her pilot at four in the morning of the sixth, followed by the *Taeping* a bare hour later.

'Congratulations, Cap'n,' sung out the pilot, as he put his leg over the *Ariel's* rail, 'your ship's the first home this year.'

'Don't be too sure,' replied the cautious skipper; the race, as he well knew, was not yet won.

The two ships surged past the Foreland in charge of their pilots, the *Taeping* still sending up flying kites in the hope of establishing a lead at the last minute, but the *Ariel* was still ahead when she took her tug. The *Taeping's* tug, however, was the better of the two, and she reached Gravesend first and finally docked twenty minutes before her rival, the two ships coming to an amicable arrangement as to the division of the spoils. The *Serica*, in the meantime, had been racing up Channel at the same time, keeping towards the French coast, and entered the West India Docks only an hour and a half after the *Taeping* had hauled through the gates higher up the river.

The *Fiery Cross* all this time had not been able to make up the twenty-four hours she had lost while becalmed in lat. 27 N. Hence she met the full force of a Channel gale, which the winners just escaped by the skin of their teeth, and had perforce to anchor in the Downs until daybreak on September 8th, thus arriving thirty-six hours after the other three. The *Taitsing* put in an appearance three days afterwards.

The passages of the four ships thus were: *Ariel*, *Serica*, and *Taeping*, 99 days; *Fiery Cross* and *Taitsing*, 101 days, all against the south-west monsoon, and with exceptionally poor trades both north and south of the Line.

The race of 1867 was almost as close, though its finish was not so spectacular. The *Taeping*, now commanded by a skipper from Norfolk, Captain Dowdy, was again the first arrival after a passage of 102 days. But the honours of the year went to the new ship, *Sir Lancelot*, sister ship to the *Ariel*, which arrived on September 22nd, only 99 days from Shanghai. *Sir Lancelot's* chances were improved by the fact that she was commanded by Captain Robinson: another Cumbrian, Captain Kirkup, formerly Robinson's mate, had succeeded to the command of the *Fiery Cross*, which also made a very good run, 112 days from Foochow. The *Ariel's* passage was the same as the *Taeping's*, 102 days. The latter was fresh from her record outward passage of just under eighty days to Hong Kong, during which her best day's work was 340 miles, by observation and reckoning, made while running down the easting in about 42 S. She took the Ombay passage to avoid the north-east monsoon, which, although the longer route in point of distance, probably saved her a few days.

The following year saw the *Ariel* once more heading the fleet, after a finish almost as gruelling as that of the more famous 1866 contest. She docked at one in the afternoon on September 1st, after a run of 97 days, in the course of which she experienced a terrific buffeting on the Agulhas Bank. The *Spindrift*—later to break her owner's heart by running ashore near Dungeness—also came home in 97 days, with *Sir Lancelot* a dead heat for second place.

The year 1869 was notable for the appearance on the scene of the famous Aberdeen White Star clipper, *Thermopylae*, one of the fastest, and perhaps quite the

most beautiful ship ever built in a British or, indeed, in any yard. This perfect little vessel was the creation of Hood, of Aberdeen, to the designs of Bernard Waymouth, and she marked the high-water mark of that wonderful builder's achievement. Her great beauty is the point upon which most people who knew her, or who even saw her, like the lady in the song, ' passing by,' agree in dwelling. There are still old sailormen left who remember her, for her long life lasted into the twentieth century. And always the burthen of their reminiscence is the same. ' Ah, she was a beauty, she was.'

She entered the lists with the tea clippers fresh from the staggering achievement of her maiden passage—sixty-three days (anchor to anchor) from London to Melbourne, thence to Newcastle, N.S.W., finishing up by going from Newcastle to Shanghai in twenty-eight days. Her captain, Kemball, who had come to her from the *Yangtse*, was well versed in the ways of the China Seas, so some keen passage-making was looked for, and the expectation was not disappointed. The new champion was the first ship home, making the passage in ninety-one days; *Sir Lancelot*, which had left a fortnight after her, arrived twelve days later, her time being eighty-nine days.

The next was about the last of the great tea races. Fourteen ships sailed from Foochow, the *Thermopylae*, *Sir Lancelot*, and *Taeping* among their number: while the Shanghai contingent included a notable new entrant in the shape of John Willis's famous *Cutty Sark*, a ship which has, during recent years, been written and talked about *ad infinitum*; and, indeed, as some will have it, *ad nauseam*. ' To hear people talk

Photo by *K. R. Burgess*

THE FAMOUS *CUTTY SARK*
(in Falmouth Harbour)

face p. 108

about the *Cutty*,' an old shellback once complained to me, 'you'd think there never was another ship built. Now *my* old ship was every bit as good as her, but you never hear *her* mentioned!' For that reason I do not propose to do more here than give a brief summary of her great race with the *Thermopylae* in 1872, her second and last tea passage. Her first, 107 days from Shanghai, looks very close on paper to the *Thermopylae's* time of that year. But it must be remembered that on that occasion she sailed at a much more favourable season than the Aberdeen ship, after the first weight of the south-west monsoon was over, so that the two ships were, therefore, still to meet fair and square.

The race started well, both leaving on the same day and passing Anjer nearly together, the *Thermopylae* a trifle in the lead. It looked as if the finish might be equal to the ding-dong close of the 1866 race. Unluckily, however, the *Cutty Sark* lost her rudder while approaching the Cape meridian during a westerly blow in lat. 34 S.—in the very same waters where a precisely similar misadventure befel Sir James Lancaster's *Dragon* two and a half centuries earlier. Captain Moodie was a sea dog of the old school, who had learned his trade where Drake learned his, in small craft in the stormy North Sea; he was of the same stuff as the Elizabethans, and set to work forthwith to repair the damage, which he did after the loss of six precious days. But though he made a gallant attempt to overhaul his rival, he had lost too much time, and was practically out of the race. The result of the first real match between the two ships was thus singularly inconclusive, and only served to increase what might almost be termed the bitter rivalry which

lasted under successive captains so long as they remained in the same trades.

A good deal of interesting individual racing also went on among the ships which for one reason or another were never in the running for the premium. Among these may be classed the *Wild Deer*, built by Charles Connell of Glasgow in 1863, the same year in which the better-known *Taeping* was launched by Steele, of Greenock, for the following details of whose passages I am indebted to Captain T. S. Angus:

'On her first voyage outward bound the *Wild Deer* had the misfortune to lose her foremast in the North Atlantic, and had to put in to Lisbon for a new mast; the delay caused by this threw her out of any chance of competing with the other clippers in carrying home the new season teas during the whole of her career in the China trade.

'Composite built, of 1,016 tons register, she was a very handsome vessel, with all the fine finish of hull and on deck which those two Clyde builders, Steele and Connell, used to put into the vessels they turned out. With fairly high bulwarks, and topgallant bulwarks above her main pin rail, and a short poop and topgallant forecastle, she rather lacked the yacht-like appearance of the beautiful flush-decked clippers built by Steele and some other builders.

'The ship left on her first voyage with three Cunningham's patent reefing topsails, the refit in Lisbon gave her a heavy wooden foremast with an old-fashioned single fore topsail, with the usual three rows of reef points; and when I joined the ship in London in April 1866 she had been fitted with double main topsails, so that she had the somewhat unusual rig of

double main, single fore and Cunningham's patent mizzen topsails.

'I was taken on board by an uncle and introduced to Captain George Cobb, a well-known man in the China trade, his previous command having been the clipper *Robin Hood*.

'The East India Docks in those days were a sight to be remembered. The ship was loading for Shanghai in the inner corner of the Export Dock, close alongside of us was the celebrated *Challenger*, a little black-painted ship. On the south side of the dock were Green's and Wigram's fine frigates: in the Import Dock Thompson's Australian White Star ships, and many other fine vessels, not one steamer. The forest of tall masts on a fine morning, many with sails loosed to dry, was an inspiring sight to a youngster about to start on his first voyage.

'We left London on April 16th, went out to Shanghai in 104 days, and were 107 days on the passage home, arriving on Boxing Day, both very good passages.

'Our second voyage was again to Shanghai and back; outward we were delayed at Anjer by having to land Captain Cobb seriously ill, he died shortly after landing, and was replaced by a Dutchman from Batavia, a very good class of man. Again we lost two days by the ship stranding on the two-and-a-half fathom bank south of Gaspar Straits, but she was fortunately got off without any damage, as dry docking at Shanghai showed us.

'Leaving Shanghai homewards the captain decided to go by the Eastern passage; we had very light winds passing the Philippines, and on getting through Gilolo Passage, the Captain took the unusual course of

going North of Java through the Java Sea and Straits of Sunda, instead of getting into the Indian Ocean via Timor; a most unfortunate choice, as it spoiled the passage, but on getting away from Anjer we had good luck, crossing the S.E. trades the ship ran 312, 312 and 327 miles on three successive days, and finally reached the Downs in sixty-eight days from Anjer.

'On arriving in London from this, my second voyage, the *Wild Deer's* lower masts were shortened three feet, and with double topsails now on the main we started for Shanghai again with another captain. We had a very ordinary passage out and left again for London at the end of July 1868. We had a good run from Woosung through Formosa Channel to about Lat. 23° N., where we struck the S.W. monsoon; on the second day after, while close hauled, a ship crossed our bows on the other tack which proved to be the *Douglas Castle*, a smart little ship of 678 tons, which had left Shanghai about a week before us, but had bad luck with her winds through Formosa Channel. We lost sight of her for some days, but were again in company when near the Tambalan Islands, when we got the first breaths of the Java Sea S.E. monsoon. This was delightful sailing; smooth sea with light working breeze to which we were both close hauled. On the night before going to Gaspar Straits the *Douglas Castle* got away from us as our Captain hove the ship to for some hours so as not to get too close to the islands north of Gaspar before daylight. At daybreak we filled away again, with the *Douglas* some six or eight miles ahead of us. We then saw another ship getting under weigh from near Billiton Island, where she had been at anchor for the night; this turned out to

be the *Peter Denny*, owned by our Company, from Fu Chow to London. Early in the forenoon the *Douglas* kept away for the Macclesfield Channel, the most Westward of the three passages through Gaspar. About noon we passed through the Clements or middle Channel, leaving *Peter Denny* working to windward to get through Stoltz Channel, which would save her having to tack on passing into the Java Sea. It was lovely to see how smartly that ship was put round on each tack, in much less time than it took us to do it and get filled away on the next board. After we got clear of the Straits both ships were out of sight for the rest of the day. About 10.30 that night we sighted and passed the Brothers Islands in the moonlight, duly reported by the Chief Officer to the Captain who was asleep on the cabin skylight; I was apprentice of the watch and heard that report made. We turned in at midnight and paid no attention to a stir which took place on deck in the middle watch. When we came on deck at 4 a.m. the chief was astonished to find the ship with courses hauled up, royals in and the ship hove to; on asking the second mate what was wrong, he said the captain woke up about 2 a.m. and asked him if he had seen the Brothers, he had not, as we passed them in the first watch, so the ship was hove to. The Chief at once went to the Captain who had no recollection of the report made to him. Another ship had passed us while we were hove to, one of our friends, as it turned out. No time was lost in squaring away again, but at daylight the passing ship was hull down ahead of us. As we drew near Saint Nicholas Point in the forenoon we saw our two friends becalmed close in with the Java coast. We had no need to communi-

cate with Anjer, and having a light breeze, we went through the Straits North of Thwart-the-Way and Krakatoa, and left the two ships astern. When just past Prince's Island we, in turn, lost the breeze and the *Douglas* came creeping up on us with a light breeze and all stunsails set on one side, then a light S.E. breeze came along and the *Douglas* was so close on our quarter we could hear her men singing out as they took in stunsails and trimmed the yards to it. After dark the breeze freshened into the fine, steady trade-wind and away we went. Next morning we had our two friends one on each quarter, they gradually widened out on each side apart as the day wore on. Next day both were out of sight and we saw no more of them till off the Cape Coast; in baffling winds we spoke the *Douglas* who reported having seen the *Denny* the same day. After rounding the Cape we had good S.E. trades, and on getting through the Doldrums good N.E. Had some three days beating against an East wind in the Chops of the Channel, till when off the Lizard the wind came into S.W. and we had a fine run up Channel. Got a pilot off Dungeness who reported having seen and heard nothing of the other two ships. Got a tug off the North Foreland, and had just made fast to a buoy off Gravesend when the *Douglas Castle* passed us and hailed us: "*Peter Denny* close astern."

'So ended a very fine race over a distance of nearly 13,300 miles.'

Of a number of other famous clippers, all of which were well to the fore in one or another of the great races, space permits of no more than mention—the *Titania*, dainty as her name, a very fairy queen among

ships, who spent many of her later years thrashing to and fro round the Horn in the Hudson Bay Company's service, and made what for some years was the record to Victoria, V.I.; the *Leander*, one of the finest-lined ships ever built, and incidentally one of the wettest; the fast iron clipper *Hallowe'en*; and Baring's lordly *Norman Court*, who, after a life full of incident and peril, piled herself up one wild night near Holyhead, where her beautiful figurehead, after a family portrait, still adorns a seaside garden.

4

The *Cutty Sark* has been often described as ' the last of the tea clippers,' a title which is not, strictly speaking, correct. True, she was built in the first place for the China trade, but she only remained in it for two voyages, and her greatest achievements were in the Australian wool fleet.

The last sailing vessel actually built for the tea trade was, I believe, the *Lothair*, built on London River, at Walker's Deptford yard for the well-known firm of Killick & Martin.

At the time of her launch the Thames shipbuilding trade had been greatly depressed for some years, so the event was hailed as an augury of better times in store. She took the water in July, 1870, amid the cheers of a large crowd of spectators, and the launch was followed by a big luncheon, presided over by Mr. Walker, at which many leading shipping people were present.

Her dimensions were: length 195 ft., breadth 35 ft. 6 in., tonnage 793, and she was composite built, her

planking being entirely of teak. The London shipwrights had gone all out to show what they could do, in the hope of winning back their laurels from the Clyde, and her finish and workmanship were perfect in every respect. She was also looked on as a very up-to-date vessel, a good deal ahead of her time as regarded labour-saving devices.

She was, of course, named after Disraeli's hero, and a letter was read from the great statesman at the luncheon, in which he excused himself on the score of public engagements, and nominated Sir John Hay, M.P., to act as his representative.

The *Lothair's* first master was Captain Peacock, and on her maiden voyage, under a young and energetic master, she broke the record for the voyage from Yokohama to New York, arriving 102 days out, and beating, says the *New York Herald*, ' a large fleet for the same destination that sailed about or before the same day.'

On her second voyage she had a narrow escape of coming to an early end. A week after leaving Foochow, near the entrance of the Kii Channel, she encountered the full force of a cyclone, and while running it out, hove to under a mizen staysail, a terrific gust struck her. The ballast shifted and over she went right on her beam ends. There was nothing for it but cutting away the main and mizen masts, and the ship then righted herself and was got before the wind. The next seven days were spent rigging jury masts, and as the crippled ship was hobbling along ten days later, a steam frigate or corvette was sighted. The *Lothair's* ensign was flying upside down, but either it was not seen, or if seen was disregarded: anyway, the stranger

adopted the Levite's role, and passed by on the other side. Fortunately, no more storms were encountered, and the little ship reached Yokohama without further misadventure.

Captain Peacock had his wife with him on this occasion, and only two days before the typhoon struck the ship, their first baby's little body had been buried in the China Sea.

The *Lothair* completed her refit in ten days, her new mainmast being a splendid Kiaki spar, and she lived to make many passages in the trade between New York and the Far East, including one of eighty-two days (also a record) from Amoy.

Later, she followed most of the tea clippers into foreign registry, and it is possible that she may still be afloat.

There was also a very fast little barque, the *Miako*, of about 600 tons, owned by Killick & Martin, which, like the *Lothair*, was chiefly known in the New York trade. She was launched at Pile's famous Sunderland yard in the spring of 1869, and on her first voyage under a Captain Anderson, made a run of twenty-seven days from Yokohama to San Francisco.

The *Miako* was of the genuine tea clipper stamp, with a short foc's'le head and long poop flush with the main rail, and she carried a big spread of canvas for her tonnage.

During the eighteen - eighties she was sold to T. Roberts & Co., of London. In 1890 her captain died in Mauritius, and a Mr. Ellis, mate of a barque called the *Zelinda*, who was in hospital there at the time, succeeded to the command. The new skipper seems to have been a bit of a passage-maker. As the

new skipper's former ship hailed from Halifax, he was presumably a 'Bluenose,' anyway, for the *Miako*, having loaded a cargo of sugar, went to Melbourne in 26½ days, which was claimed as a record for that passage.

At Melbourne she took in a cargo of wool for Boston, and made a race of it with a big American skysail-yard barque, the *Benjamin F. Hunt*, and Willis's *Coldinghame*, the latter being Captain Woodget's last command before he left the sea after the *Cutty Sark* was sold. There was a modest stake of $100 up for the first ship to arrive.

The *Miako* passed Cape Horn thirty days out, and was another thirty days climbing the hill to the Equator. Then she started to rattle out the line to some tune, and made a run of 2,200 miles in nine days. The South Shoal lightship was sighted at 4 in the afternoon on March 10th, and the *Miako* docked in East Boston the following day. She had covered the 14,300 miles between Melbourne and Boston in 83¼ days, which is also said to be a record. The *Coldinghame* arrived nineteen days later, and the *Benjamin F. Hunt* eight days after her.

Her next passage was from New York to Natal. She sailed on May 7th, and for thirty-nine days ran close-hauled on the port tack without starting a sheet or halyard, and reeling off a steady 170 miles day after day, and arrived in Natal 57 days out.

Here she loaded a light cargo of beans for Mauritius, sailing on July 22nd, and covered the 1,800 miles between that port and Mauritius in twelve days; two-thirds of the distance, 1,200 miles, being covered in four consecutive days. Towards the close of the

eighteen-hundreds she was sold to Spanish owners, who re-named her *Asuncion*, and some years later again changed both her owners and her name, being now called *Isla de la Palma*. She finally vanishes from the register in 1913.

The tea racing lingered on through the eighteen-seventies, but it was only the shadow of its former glory. The opening of the Suez Canal and the coming of steam conspired to sound the knell of the sailing clippers. A good many both of the owners and captains—among the latter the famous Captain Richard Robinson—realised the way things were going and went into steam. Hence it is hardly surprising that the racing tradition was inherited by the early steamers, *Oopack*, *Glenogle*, *Glengarry*, and others.

No doubt the steamboat races lacked the beauty of the clipper contests, but they were exciting enough for those immediately concerned, with firemen and stokers working like sweating demons, weights on the safety-valves, and the flames and smoke pouring from their funnels. Some of them, too, were extremely fast. The *Stirling Castle* made a passage from Shanghai of twenty-six days or thereabouts, but her engines were so powerful that in a very few years they literally shook the ship to pieces.

By the time the eighteen-eighties came in the last of the sailing tea fleet had been driven into other trades and those of them which had not left their bones somewhere on the long sea road to the East were trudging the round of the ports, like princesses in exile, in search for any and every charter that offered.

It was the end of a great age: and although it is

rather an overstatement to say that romance passed from the sea with the China clipper, the signs of the times already, with her disappearance, definitely pointed to the ultimate displacement of the white-winged racers by their more prosaic rivals of the piston and the screw.

CHAPTER V

Racing for the Wool Sales

Fare you well, you Sydney girls, time for us to go!
The Peter's at the fore truck, and five thousand bales below,
We've a dozen shellbacks forrard, and a skipper hard as nails,
And we're bound for old England and the January sales.

1. Famous Flyers in the Australian Trade.

I

IN this country, at all events, the doings of the ships in the Australian trade during the 'seventies and onwards never appealed to the imagination of the general public, as did those of the China tea fleet. But in Australia it was different. A very large percentage of the population were still people who had cherished memories—pleasant or unpleasant, exciting or profoundly uneventful—of passages out in just such ships to the land of their adoption, and to them the arrival of a ship from Home never failed to bring an answering thrill.

And there is an interest attaching to these Colonial clipper ships which is especially their own. Homeward and outward bound alike, they were the queens of the high latitudes. Theirs were the stern delight, the stern endurance, that the seaman knew who met hand-to-hand the rigours of the Roaring Forties, those great provers of the mettle of ships and men. True, there was no premium for the first ship home with a wool

cargo, nor was there that spectacular urgency about their passages which belonged to the days of the gold rush. But speed was a decided factor in the trade just the same.

A vessel which could be relied on to make a passage, barring accidents, so as to arrive in time for the first series of London wool sales, could always command a higher freight and a more favourable charter than her lower sisters. Hence, a captain noted for his good passages, might confidently look for the smiles of his owners and those of Fortune; and, it may be added, *vice versa.* But the sporting element, the desire to match ship against ship, was also present—and out of this arose such keen rivalries as that between the *Cutty Sark* and the *Thermopylae.* Ships loading together usually made a race of it, and plenty of betting on the results went on at both ends of the course.

It is strange to reflect that in a few years' time the phrase 'running the Easting'—or, as the shellback generally had it, 'the eastern'—down, will probably be all but meaningless to the majority even of seafaring men. Yet to the generation just passed or passing away it stood for a great deal. As a ship began to leave behind the barefoot days of the south-east trades, the decks hot to the foot, the gleam of flying fish in the sun, the many coloured arch of spray, like a beckoning mirage glistening always just before the vessel's bow, a growing keenness in the wind's edge suggested the increasing proximity of the Antarctic icefields. And now a spirit of preparation made itself felt. The worn and patched sails which had done duty in the tropics were unbent from the yards, and the new and strong canvas, upon whose bolt-ropes and cringles

the sailmaker, squatting cross-legged on the hatch with palm and needle, had been working all through the hot weather, strengthening them against the coming strain, sent up in their stead. Oilskins and seaboots were brought out and overhauled in the dog-watches by those who were fortunate enough to possess them. The models, the sennet mats, the bottled ships, the making of which had been the recreation of the long evenings running down the Trade, were stowed away. No more 'sailor's pleasure' now! The sea chests, like everything movable about the decks, were lashed securely to stand the ship's tossings amid the great seas of the South. The smell of the coffee from the galley took on an added attractiveness in the 'gravy-eye' watches. The very music of the wind droning through taut rope and swelling sail had a new note, a deeper harmony than the drowsy hum of the Trade.

And now the ship began to feel the weight of the Westerlies in earnest. A couple of apprentices were sent aloft to furl the royals. Cold green seas began to spill over the rail, and soon the vessel was running with the lee side constantly under water. The half-deck was a foot deep in water, and the occupants of the lower berths had a dismal time of it. An extra hand was sent to the wheel. The Arctic birds—Cape pigeons, mollyhawks, and the stately albatross—began to skim and hover in the clipper's wake. The Forties were here!

It was a time of cold, of intense discomfort, of hard, unceasing, mankilling work for all on board, of continually flooded decks, of quenched galley fires, of nights perpetually broken by the hoarse shout of 'All hands!'

yet withal a time of a stern joy and pride in the matching of man and the ship of man's creation against the great forces of the winds and seas.

2

Up to the eighteen-seventies the ships on the 'Colonies run' as the old shellback always called it, were mostly wood and composite built vessels, of 500 to 1,000 tons, and generally of a more powerful type than the tea clippers, as the conditions of their service demanded.

Perhaps the finest of these early ships were those owned by the Aberdeen White Star line, and built by Hood of that city. Notable among them were the *George Thompson*, the *Centurion*, and the *Thyatira*; the *John Bunyan*, which was making good passages in the tea trade during the 'fifties, the *Wave of Life*, and the well-known *Star of Peace*. This last ship had a great reputation both for speed and good looks. In 1854 was built the *Omar Pasha* of 1,124 tons. Like the ladies called 'Pretoria' and 'Mafeking,' her name gives away her age at once, for she was christened in honour of the Turkish general of that name, about the time of the Crimean War. She carried a big spread of canvas, including a main skysail, and proved a very fast little ship. Her career opened with an outward passage of seventy-three days from the Downs to Sydney, but the following year she beat her own time by going out to Melbourne in seventy-one days, this in spite of having been held up in the Channel by the same gale which saw the end of the ill-fated steamer *Royal*

A CLOSE CALL: WIGRAM'S *TRUE BRITON* AND A BOSTON CLIPPER
(From a painting)

face p. 124

Charter. Running down her Easting she averaged 250 miles a day. In 1862 she was seventy days from Melbourne to the Start, and three years later made still another passage under eighty days—seventy-eight days from Plymouth to Hobson's Bay.

In 1866 she sailed a very close race with Money Wigram's Blackwaller *True Briton.* Both ships left Melbourne on the same day, August 22nd; the *True Briton* was a few hours ahead, and going up to the Horn, which she passed twenty-three days out, she increased her lead to two days. The south-east trades were very light, but this suited the *Omar Pasha* down to the ground, for, like all Hood's ships, she was a regular witch for keeping moving when most ships could hardly make any steerage-way at all; and by the time she reached the Line she was five days to the front. She was still leading when she arrived in the Channel, and let go her anchor in the Downs seventy-three days out: and a few hours later the pilot stepped on board the *True Briton* with the news that the *Omar Pasha* was already off Deal. Captain Wawn, however, kept on towing all through the night, and succeeded in docking a few hours before his rival, but since the *True Briton* had had a few hours' start at the beginning of the passage, honours were easy. In fact, from pilot to pilot the Aberdeen ship had the best of it by several hours.

Two years later the *Omar Pasha* had a narrow escape from being lost in the ice in the high latitudes, while homeward bound from Australia. She had been running for some hours in darkness among the growlers, shortened down, and when daylight came a tremendous ice-barrier was sighted stretching away

before her. Captain McKay was running along the edge of the ice till nightfall—bergs of all kinds of fantastic shapes and sizes, with here and there inlets of water between them—and when darkness fell he hove to in a patch of open water to wait for morning.

Things now went from bad to worse, for when day dawned it was blowing one of those gales with thick fog which are the bane of the navigator among ice. About noon the fog lifted a little, just enough to reveal a gleaming mass of ice close to leeward. It was a hair-raising moment, and if Thompson's little green clipper had not been so amazingly handy a ship she must have struck. As it was she cleared the berg by a matter of feet, and fragments of ice tinkled down on her deck as her main yard arm scraped against it.

The wind was now blowing a gale from the south-west, and Captain McKay judged it the lesser of two evils to keep his ship moving and run before it. A double look-out was posted, and the second mate stood by ready to lend a hand in shoving the helm over in an emergency, while the *Omar Pasha* kept on steadily at about ten knots. All night she still held on thus, amid squalls of rain and sleet, the water breaking on the unseen bergs all round her, and several times grazing her sides against large masses of floating ice. This lasted off and on for nearly a week, a truly nerve-racking experience for all on board; however, she got safely through at last and completed her voyage without more trouble.

But she had escaped one of the sea's greatest perils only to fall a victim to one even more dreaded. In 1869, twenty-nine degrees north of the Line, while on

passage from Brisbane to London, wool laden, her cargo was found to be alight. Every effort to check the flames was in vain, and at last passengers and crew had to take to the boats.

Captain Grey, R.N.R., who commanded her at this time, was an officer well known for his smartness, and he always went in for having everything on board ship-shape and Blackwall fashion. Gun drill and boat drill were carried out every week, so that the boats were all in good order, instead of being, as very frequently happened in an emergency at sea, leaky and stuck to the skids with paint, and everyone got away from the burning ship in safety. A couple of hours later there was an explosion in the hold, and she sank stern first, thousands of rats being visible clinging to her bows as they rose out of the water just before her final plunge.

The crew and passengers were picked up by a little Italian barque with a crew of eleven. Naturally, such a sudden influx was rather a strain on her commissariat, but she was able to fall back on her cargo of oranges, and it was a case of ' eating more fruit ' until a larger vessel hove in sight.

Thompson's *Star of Peace* was an equally good passage-maker, and her record includes four outward runs of under eighty days to Sydney. Mr. Basil Lubbock mentions a painting of her carrying double topsails. This must have been a later modification of her original rig, since double topsails did not come in until the eighteen-sixties, and there is a water-colour drawing of her which shows her with the big single sail usual at the time of her launch.

She was matched more than once against notable

opponents. In 1864 she left Melbourne on the same day as Money Wigram's Blackwall frigate *Lincolnshire*, an exceedingly fast little ship with a long string of fast Australian passages to her credit. The two vessels sailed on November 8th, and were in company for a couple of days, after which they never sighted each other again until they met in London River, the *Star of Peace* arriving eighty-one days out and the *Lincolnshire* the day after.

The *Lincolnshire* had previously beaten the *Lightning* out to Melbourne, and a year or two later the *Star of Peace* ran a very close race with the McKay champion. She left Melbourne in company with the *Lightning* and the *George Thompson*, the latter also of the Aberdeen Line, and the three ships arrived in the Channel simultaneously. The *Lightning*, being the largest ship, was the first to take her tug, and docked an hour or two ahead of the *George Thompson*; the *Star of Peace* put in an appearance the next morning, so that all three docked within twenty-four hours.

I have read somewhere that the Oriental names borne by some of the Aberdeen White Star ships were given with a view to attracting Jewish merchants. But I confess I rather doubt it. Jews are far too shrewd and hard-headed where business is concerned to be caught by chaff quite so easily as that, and if Jewish shippers hurried to send their goods by the Aberdeen clippers it was more probably because they knew them to be fast and reliable vessels than out of any sentimental consideration of the kind. In fact, the story sounds like a typical bit of sailor gossip, of the kind I remember hearing once with reference to the classical names of certain well-known Liverpool

ships: ' The owner, 'e's got a son wot's been to Oxford College, an' I reckon 'e thought 'e'd make some use of all the book-learnin' 'e'd got there! ' As for the names themselves, they are most likely traceable to a religious tendency on the part of one of the owners, the *John Bunyan*, already referred to, and the *Christiana Thompson*, both seeming to indicate a partiality for the *Pilgrim's Progress*.

The *Jerusalem*, wherever her name came from, was certainly a very fast ship. The late Captain C. Crutchley in his reminiscences recalls being passed by her in the Channel in Killick & Martin's tea clipper *Omba*, which, he says, was ' shamefully outsailed.' ' We were going ' (he writes) ' up Channel with a fine southerly wind that was about abeam, but we were a bit tender, and could not usefully under those conditions carry all the sail we should have wished. The *Jerusalem* passed us to windward under all plain sail, and we felt the beating badly, for we could not carry our royals without burying the lee side to the detriment. No sailor,' he adds, ' but hates seeing another ship go by him.'

The *Aviemore* was the last wooden ship built for the Line. She also had a remarkable turn of speed, and made some very fast passages under the well-known Captain Mark Breach, later of the *Patriarch*.

But the most famous of all these wooden and composite clippers is, of course, the *Thermopylae*.

Of her, as of her contemporary the *Cutty Sark*, I have written a good deal elsewhere, so I will content myself here with a brief summary of the principal achievements of both ships in the Australian trade.

Thermopylae

Passages to Australia.

1868-9 63 days, London-Melbourne (maiden passage). Best day's runs: 303, 314, 324 miles, in strong S.W. and S. winds; 305, 310, 312 miles, in the Forties, with strong N. winds; 320 miles, in a strong S.W. gale, lat. 43 S.; 330, 326, in strong N. wind, lat. 42 S.

1870-1 65 days London-Melbourne

1871-2 73 days ,, ,,

1874-5 70 days ,, ,,

1875-6 72 days ,, ,,

1882 73 days Lizard-Sydney

Passages from Australia.

1879-80 81 days Sydney-London

1882 77 days ,, ,,

1884 78 days Sydney-Prawle Point

1887-8 79 days Sydney-London

Lizard to the Line

1877 16 days

1882 17 days

Shanghai to Victoria, B.C. (*barque rig*).

29 days (beating the mail steamer).

Cutty Sark

Passages to Australia under 75 days.

1872 69 days Start-Melbourne

1874 74 days London-Sydney

1877-8 68 days ,, ,,

1886 73 days (951 miles in three days)

1893 80 days Antwerp-Sydney (best day's run, 353 miles)

Passages from Australia

1883-4	82 days	Newcastle, N.S.W.-London
1884-5	80 days	„ „ „
1885	72 days	Sydney-Downs; Horn to Line 20 days
1888	70 days	Newcastle-Dungeness

It is interesting to note that the passages made by these little composite clippers, some of them after they had seen twenty years' hard driving, were never surpassed by any of the later iron ships.

In my possession is an old blue-back chart of the South Atlantic, once the property of the captain of the tea clipper *Fiery Cross*, and upon it is marked a dotted line from the Horn to the Equator with the words 'Track of the *Heather Bell*, 1856.'

The record has vanished from the charts by now, and the little ship herself went long since to her well-earned rest.

The *Heather Bell* was a ship of just under 500 tons, built for the Orient Line in 1855 by Alexander Hall, of Aberdeen, two years after the famous *Orient*, nameship of the Line. The passage so long recorded on the charts was made during her homeward run from Melbourne in 1856. Soon after leaving Hobson's Bay she encountered strong easterly gales, against which she was twenty-six days beating up to the Horn. Then her luck turned, and she ran up to the Line in twenty-one days, a record which held the field until it was lowered by the *Cutty Sark* on her 1885 passage from Sydney to London. Mr. Basil Lubbock also mentions a run of sixteen days from the Horn to the Equator by the *Thomas Stephens*, but he gives no date for this.

Presumably it was when she came home from 'Frisco in ninety-nine days in the early 'eighties.

North of the Line the *Heather Bell* was again very fortunate in her Trades, and was off the Start just under twenty days—another record for that section of the passage. Her total time from Melbourne to the Start was sixty-seven days, and in one week she ran 1,885 miles.

She was still going strong under Australian ownership thirty years later, and though her seams opened up so that she leaked like a sieve in a gale of wind, she could still show a turn of speed on occasion. During a passage from Sydney to Adelaide with a cargo of coal she was in company with the barque *Kingdom of Saxony* for some time, but finally showed her consort her heels and reached the Semaphore two days before her. She was commanded by a hard-driving skipper, and the crew spent most of their time at the pumps. The probability is that she was strained at her launch, for a man who sailed in her has stated that she had always a name for being leaky: some ships seem to have carried a leak through a long life just as some people manage to get along with groggy hearts without feeling much inconvenience.

From Port Adelaide the little ship went to Newcastle, N.S.W., with tin ore, and for a time she was in company with a steamer belonging to her old owners, the Orient Line, making thirteen knots. Her rigging was in pretty bad shape, and her spars were probably the same that were in her when she was launched, so that the skipper's bold carrying on gave her mate some anxious moments. Once she had a narrow escape of piling herself up on Cape Everard in a south-westerly

gale, but the Old Man hung on grimly to his canvas and managed to claw her off in time. No harm was done except the carrying away of the weather main royal sheet, and the sheet was repaired, and the sail set again without delay.

'We passed every vessel going up the coast. Nothing could look at us,' thus a seaman, who served in her at this time. When she arrived at Newcastle she sailed right up to her moorings, making about eight knots; as soon as her anchor was let go the cable snapped, and she all but collided with a big Glasgow ship which was anchored near by.

A few years later she was still making good passages, having recently beaten steamboat time between Brisbane and Sydney, and could reel off a steady twelve knots on occasion. She was finally broken up at Sydney in 1894.

3

There would be plenty to tell of the fast passages made by other famous wooden and composite ships, if space permitted—the *Orient*, *City of Adelaide*, *Torrens*, *Sobraon*, *St. Vincent*, and a host of others. But it is time to pass on to the iron clippers which during the 'seventies and 'eighties were built for the Australian trades by such firms as Hall & Hood of Aberdeen, Potter & Royden of Liverpool, Barclay, Curle & Connell of Glasgow, and Harland & Wolff of Belfast.

There are, I am aware, some people who profess to see no beauty in an iron ship. But this, I must confess, fond of the old things as I am, always seems to me

something of an affectation; for if one were to carry this sort of preference to its logical conclusion, one should equally dislike the iron beams which formed part of the structure of the composite ship, and even the copper fastenings of the wooden clippers: or going back further still, object to any metal fastenings at all, and find the ideal of beauty afloat in the Polynesian dug-out or the kayak of the Eskimo. But, joking apart, there can be no doubt that some of the world's very finest, swiftest and most beautiful sailing craft were to be found among the iron clippers which, together with such veterans as the *Jerusalem*, *Cutty Sark*, and *John Duthie*, made up the Australian wool fleet of the eighteen-seventies and onwards. There were the *Samuel Plimsoll*, *Salamis*, *Patriarch*, which carried on the old traditions of Aberdeen smartness and cleanness; the old *City of Agra*, which sailed for so many years under the command of that great old veteran, Captain Thomas Young; the *Bens* and *Lochs* of the Glasgow Shipping Company, better known as the *Loch* Line; Nicol's *Cimba*, Rose's *Mount Stewart*, Devitt and Moore's *Collingwood* and *Rodney*, and a whole fleet besides. And of these the ships which sailed under the house-flag of Messrs. T. Carmichael & Co., of Glasgow, were quite in the first flight.

All the ships owned by the firm were seen in Sydney or Melbourne at one time or another, as well as the two best known on the Colonies' run, the *Thessalus* and *Mermerus*.

The *Golden Fleece*, name-ship of the Line, was built, like all her sisters, by Messrs. Barclay, Curle & Co., at their Greenock yard. I doubt if that famous firm ever turned out an ill-looking ship. They were worthy

THE LAST BERTH : THE WOOL CLIPPER *MOUNT STEWART*
(about to be broken up at Nantes)

face p. 134

successors to the tradition of beauty and seaworthiness in conjunction of such builders as Hood and Steele. And they never, perhaps, built better than when they created the *Golden Fleece*, *Jason* and *Mermerus*—a noble trio!

The *Golden Fleece* was launched in 1869. She was of 1,257 tons, with single topgallantsails, and crossed a skysail yard at the main. All masts and spars were painted white, the rule in Carmichael's fleet, and when in cargo trim looked most graceful. 'She could do everything but talk,' one of her old skippers said of her. She was a ship that held men's hearts.

She towed round from Glasgow to Liverpool, where she loaded general cargo for her maiden passage to Calcutta, leaving the Mersey on September 2nd, 1869. The passage was a long one, since she had to beat the whole way up the Bay of Bengal in the teeth of the north-east monsoon.

She lay in Calcutta about a month, discharging and loading. Calcutta in those days presented one of the finest sights in the world as far as shipping was concerned, tier upon tier of the noblest sailing vessels ever built moored four abreast, extending for several miles along each bank of the famous river. There were to be seen such champions as Corry's *Star of Greece*, with the silk houseflag presented to her by the Greek ladies of Calcutta flying proudly at the main, Nourse's and Sandbach, Tinne's pretty little coolie ships, Green's Wigrams, and Somes's Blackwallers, with their almost naval smartness, and, later, the big fourmasters like the *Palgrave* and *Ditton*. And talking of the *Palgrave* reminds me that both she and the *Golden Fleece* were among the ships, the steamer *Great Eastern* being a

third, which were said to be built to the same measurements as Noah's Ark. The fact that three ships of totally different size are said to have complied with them seems to indicate a certain vagueness in the Biblical specifications.

The *Golden Fleece* left Calcutta with a full cargo for London, and had very good weather on her homeward passage, which gave her a good chance to show her paces. She was fitted with stunsails wherever they could be carried, and she must have been a picture to stir the hearts in the south-east trades, rolling down to St. Helena with flying-kites set wing-and-wing alow and aloft. During this passage she was in company for some time with a number of other ships, including the *St. Lawrence* and *Omba*. The first-named was a frigate-built Blackwaller, the last of T. & W. Smith's famous fleet, and had, I think, no very great name for speed: but the *Omba* was Killick & Martin's crack vessel, and to beat her into port by several days, as the *Golden Fleece* did on this occasion, was no despicable achievement.

Later in her career she raced the *Argonaut*, also of Carmichael's fleet, on the latter's first passage home from Calcutta; both ships left the Hooghly within twenty-four hours of each other, and arrived on the same day, the *Golden Fleece's* time being 96 days against the *Argonaut's* 97.

Her best performance in the wool trade was a passage of seventy-two days from London to Sydney.

The *Jason*, like the *Golden Fleece*, came from Messrs. Barclay, Curle's yard, and resembled her in many respects, carrying single topgallantsails and main skysail. Like her, she towed to Liverpool to load for her

maiden voyage, taking in a general cargo for Melbourne for Ismay, Imrie & Co. She was regarded as a very large ship for that time (1,511 tons), and some people considered her too big to be a paying proposition in the Calcutta trade. Her arrival in Liverpool was quite an event in shipping circles, and the newspapers devoted long articles to her excellences of build and design.

The new clipper sailed on June 10th, 1870, with a full list of saloon passengers as well as about sixty second and third class in the after 'tween decks. Light winds and calms prevailed as far as the Equator, so that the first part of the passage was slow, though whenever she got a breeze for a time it was easy to see that, given a fair chance in the way of weather, she would soon prove herself as fast as her builders had hoped.

Her captain was one of those who knew how to hang on to his canvas upon occasion, and the *Jason* carried her stunsails right down into the Forties. She ran down her easting a long way to the south'ard, passing fairly close to the desolate and sea-beaten Crozets, where more than one shipwrecked crew has had to eke out a precarious existence until sighted by some passing vessel. The three-hundred mark was very often touched during this part of the passage, and once she logged a thousand miles in three days, in the usual easting weather of mountainous seas and winds of gale strength.

In Melbourne, as in Liverpool, the new beauty created quite a sensation. She lay at Williamstown Pier alongside Heap's *Marpesia*, also a new ship, and her especial rival for looks and general smartness.

' Ships was ships in them days '—and all hands took an almost personal pride in the appearance of their own vessel. Paint and varnish were in perfect condition, yards squared to the n-th, and it would have been a poor sailor indeed who—however much he might grouse about doing it—would have been willing for his ship to go into port dirty and neglected-looking.

The *Jason* had a long wait for her wool cargo home, hence she had got very foul by the time she sailed, and her passage—100 days—was nothing out of the common.

Her next passage was to Calcutta with general cargo: she anchored at Saugor after a splendid run out of seventy-two days from Dungeness. This was the record at the time, and I believe I am right in saying it has never been beaten, and only equalled once, by Williamson & Milligan's *Cedric the Saxon*, which will be met with again in another chapter.

In Calcutta she loaded a general cargo for London, and made a good passage of ninety days, thirty-six days from St. Helena, arriving before several fast ships which left a week or ten days ahead of her. ' During the whole time I was in her,' so writes an old seaman who served his time in her, ' I never saw anything but what she passed,' and she was among the few who could hold their own with the *Cutty Sark* with whom she was in company once for several days in the south-east trades.

The beautiful ship's end was stark tragedy.

Very much has been written about ' hoodoo ' ships, so-called, and in nine cases out of ten the legendary ' hoodoo ' will be found on closer investigation to have precious little in it. I do not think it is true to say that

sailors are—or rather were—any more superstitious than their contemporaries on dry land. The old shellback's usual attitude towards the Unknowable was an odd sort of mixture of half-humorous scepticism, with an admission that it was just as well, all things considered, to be on the right side so far as Luck was concerned. But the average foc's'le hand of sixty or seventy years ago was unlettered, and tradition lives longest among men of that type. 'Sailorising' was more in his line than what he spoke of—not contemptuously, but with a sincere and simple respect—as 'book larning.' Moreover, foc's'les were great places for gossip, and once a ship had established a reputation for a 'hoodoo,' the yarn grew and grew.

A good many of these so-called unlucky ships first got their name from nothing more than a series of accidents on a maiden voyage which, as anyone knows, is precisely the time when such accidents are most likely to happen. John Willis's *Blackadder* is a case in point. Her unfortunate first voyage was due to nothing more mysterious or romantic than defective ironwork aloft which led to her dismasting. She certainly had a few misfortunes apart from that, but they were no more than happened in the lives of pretty nearly every ship afloat, with a few very lucky exceptions: and, in point of fact, she was quite a fast and useful vessel, and had a particularly long and comparatively uneventful life after the first chapter of accidents. The *Blackadder*—written as two words—has, by the way, been quoted in support of the theory as to the baleful effect of the names of crawling things when applied to ships: that explanation of her 'hoodoo' won't hold water, for her name has nothing to do with

adders, being taken, like that of Willis's other ship *Whiteadder*, from a stream in her owner's native Border country.

Corry's beautiful jute clipper *Star of Russia*, another reputed ' hoodoo ' vessel, started the legend by losing a whole watch overboard through a piece of bad steering, which assuredly had nothing to do with the ship. It gained still further after a passage she made from 'Frisco in the eighteen-eighties, though here again, as will be seen, the fault was not hers at all. Captain J. G. Little, who served in her from 1885 to 1887, and to whom I am indebted for particulars of this voyage, says that under Captain John Simpson, who commanded her when he first joined, she was a remarkably lucky and happy ship; so much so that some of the foc's'le crowd had stuck by her for several voyages—a very unusual thing in those days—and the bosun, an old Blackwall rigger, had been in her for nine years.

In 1887, however, Captain Simpson left the *Star of Russia* to take over the command of Messrs. Corry's first steamer, and the happy days came to an end. The new commander was a man of a very different stamp. He had begun his career in the *Stars*, but had later served as an officer in two of the hardest of all the hard-case Yankee packets, the *Gatherer* and *Harvester*. Now, as everyone knows, the convert is always the most fanatical of persecutors: and this Yankee bucko by adoption came back under the Red Duster full to the teeth of the red-hot ideas of discipline by belaying pin and knuckle-duster he had acquired in those two highly undesirable schools.

During her first passage from London to 'Frisco

under the new skipper, the *Star of Russia* lost four men killed from aloft while undergoing a course of the process known as ' working up,' and the sailmaker was jerked overboard from the crojick sheet through the sail taking charge in a gale of wind off the Horn. There was someone or another in irons almost every day, and as soon as the ship berthed in 'Frisco the whole crowd cleared off in a body, including three apprentices who managed to keep clear of the crimps, and worked at a variety of jobs, scene-shifting at the Bella Union Music Hall, beer slinging, laying tram lines, and anything else that came handy.

The ship was laid up in 'Frisco for five months, unable to get a crew, and the captain, having had, it was shrewdly suspected, pretty sharp orders from the owners, had to eat a certain amount of humble-pie to get his runaway boys back again.

Three more men were lost on the passage home, and at the end of the next voyage the ' bucko ' skipper got the sack. He finished up running a water boat at Capetown, and, his eyesight beginning to fail, he walked overboard one night and was drowned. As for the old ship, she had an exceptionally long life, and ended her days under sail as the ' flagship ' of the Alaska Packers' fleet on the Pacific Coast. It was not until 1928 that she shared the melancholy fate of so many of the old square-riggers, being hulked at Noumea, New Caledonia.

After this digression it is time to return to the *Jason* and her last tragic voyage, whose many misfortunes, scepticism and common sense notwithstanding, call to mind those which befell Greek *Argo* herself, homeward bound from Colchis with the witch Medea on

board. I rather fancy Medea was the first recorded woman passenger, and she is probably the origin of the immemorial belief of the undesirability of women on board ship. That belief was one of those which died very hard, and it was not only held among the foc's'le hands. A captain assures me that he once, in his young days, refused a berth, attractive in every way, simply and solely because the skipper's wife sailed with him. Incidentally, the wife of the *Jason's* captain was on board, and no doubt many a head was wagged over the fact in waterside pubs after the event.

'Wimmen's all right in their place, *an' that ain't on board ship.*'

In 1892 the *Jason* left Barry Dock, bound for Zanzibar. But shortly after sailing she was damaged in a collision and had to put back to port for a refit. In due course she sailed again, this time for Calcutta to load jute for Boston, and lost a man overboard during the passage out. That was the first of many tragedies. In Calcutta one of her apprentices went ashore to visit some friends with a boy from the *Phasis*, a sister ship which was moored close by off the Maidan. He stayed rather late, and never turned up on board. Some days later his dead body was taken out of the river. It was thought that he had hired a 'dinghy wallah' to take him off the ship, and that he had been knocked on the head with a bamboo after refusing to pay the exorbitant fare the boatman demanded.

The *Jason* sailed about a week before her sister ship, and going down the Bay of Bengal ran into a cyclone. The *Phasis* encountered the same storm, but got off with the loss of all three lower topsails: but the *Jason* was dismasted, and had to hobble as best she could

into Mauritius under jury rig. The captain had both his legs broken by a falling spar, and the cabin was flooded out, the skipper's wife having to be housed for'ard for the rest of the way.

At Mauritius the captain and his wife went home, and a new master, Captain McMillan, came out from England to take his place. The ship duly completed her refit, in the course of which the mate fell from aloft and was killed, and sailed for Boston. She had not been long at sea, however, before her jute cargo was found to be swollen, and she had to put into a South African port to restow it. Thence she made what promised to be a good run to Boston, at which port, however, she was fated never to arrive.

Off the American coast she ran into a gale from the south-east with thick weather and a high sea, some miles to the south of her position as shown by dead reckoning, and on a dangerous lee shore. She was shortened down to three lower topsails, but after a gallant struggle to get to leeward of Cape Cod she was driven in a blinding snowstorm on the rocks of that ironbound coast, with the loss of all on board but one apprentice named Evans.

It is a rather curious coincidence that the *Phasis*, her ' chummy ' ship in Calcutta, should later have made a very unfortunate last voyage.

She sailed from Newcastle, N.S.W., where, having been unable to get a wool cargo, she loaded coal for Sourabaya, by way of Torres Straits. At Sourabaya she found cholera raging, so the crew had to turn to, all intercourse with the shore being forbidden, and get the cargo out of her into lighters. Although the cholera was warded off, dysentery broke out on board,

and an apprentice, who had been at work all day scraping the ship's side, lay down one evening when tea-time came in his bunk, and was dead before midnight. On August 19th, 1897, she left Sourabaya in ballast for Manila, the weather being dull and drizzly with poor visibility, the very worst kind for those rock and shoal strewn waters. A few hours after the skipper had remarked to the man at the wheel that she must be abeam of the Royal Charlotte Shoal, an ominous grating noise along her keel brought the watch below on deck with a run, to find her hard and fast upon it. The night was pitch dark, with a strong breeze and fine rain falling, and the ship had driven right on the rocks.

There was nothing for it but to take to the boats and wait for morning, the last to leave the ship being one of the apprentices, a red-headed youth of noble lineage, who could not tear himself away from the cabin stores which he had no doubt frequently raided before without a farewell visit. When daylight came a rising wind was grinding the *Phasis* mercilessly on the reef, and the captain decided to leave her to her fate. Some pigeons which he had on board were set free, and as the boats pulled away from the wreck they could be seen flying round her and settling on the yards.

A course was set for the coast of Borneo, about a 150 miles distant. That day and the following night were very stormy, and the boats had to lie to sea anchors with oilbags out, while an additional damper to the spirits of the shipwrecked crew was provided by a horde of hungry sharks which jostled each other round the boat, and had to be beaten off with

stretchers and boathooks; but the following day all were safely picked up by the steamer *Libelle*.

Carmichael's *Siren* and *Thessalus* were also occasional, though not regular visitors to Colonial ports, and among the latter's Australian passages are seven of less than eighty days. She was also well known on the Pacific Coast, and her passage of ninety-six days from Astoria is one of the fastest on record.

The *Mermerus* was the only one of the fleet which spent practically all her life while she remained under the British flag in the Australian trade. She was one of the fastest in that day of fast ships, in fact, she and the *Salamis* were probably the swiftest of all the iron clippers. Her record includes runs of seventy-eight, eighty, eighty-one and eighty-four days homeward, seventy-two, seventy-four, sixty-eight, and sixty-six days outward bound, and she seldom, if ever, made a poor passage.

She was launched in May 1872, and was loaded for Melbourne in the Mersey early in August of that year by the White Star Line. Her rig differed slightly from that of the *Golden Fleece* and *Jason*. She carried double topgallant yards, and she also crossed three skysails, which she carried during her first two or three voyages. Like the *Jason* she was greatly admired on her arrival in Liverpool, and held a regular reception on the waterfront, and when she docked in Melbourne it was the same tale again. She was always a beautifully kept ship and very smart. The Carmichael fleet had, of course, painted ports, black topsides and white hulls, and it was a lengthy business smartening them up to go into port, since the painted ports made the ' slap-dab ' part of the programme a very particular matter.

People who sailed in her always spoke of her with a special affection. 'Although I only made the two first voyages in her,' writes Captain D. McIntyre, son of her first commander, who sailed with his father as third officer, 'yet whenever I happened to be in either Sydney or Melbourne when she was lying in either port, I never failed to pay a visit to her. Whoever chanced to have sailed in her was always proud of it.'

For over twenty years she went to the old road to and fro, to and fro, 'London general' out and wool home. She must have known every milestone on that salt highway as well as the coaches knew Hartford Bridge Flats, or Winterslow Hut, or the 'George' at Salisbury: Gravesend and its powder buoys, Ushant flashing its beam through the spindrift, Fernando Noronha, with its conspicuous chimney-shaped rock, Trinidad, the Crozets, Port Phillip Heads, the Snares, the Antipodes Islands, Cape Horn, the Western Isles, the Bishop, blinking his welcome through the murk of a January gale. And the West India Docks, where she forgathered with her sisters, may well have been as familiar to her as his pet corner in a wayside inn to a traveller of the roads.

In 1873 she went out to Melbourne in seventy-two days; sinking the Lizard Light on July 6th, she arrived on September 16th, two days after the Aberdeen clipper *Jerusalem*, which had sailed a week before her. On the homeward run she reached London, ninety-three days out, the same day as the iron *Miltiades*, one of the fastest of the Aberdeen White Star fleet, which had left three days ahead.

The following year she went out to Sydney, taking her departure from the Start on April 14th, and arriv-

ing at Port Jackson on June 27th. Willis's fast clipper *Hallowe'en* had left the Start behind on April 9th, and reached Sydney on June 22nd, the same day as the old *Jerusalem*, which was off Plymouth on April 5th.

The *Mermerus* did not load wool this season, but took a cargo of coal across to 'Frisco, making the trans-Pacific run in fifty-six days. There she took in wheat for the United Kingdom, making the homeward passage in 104 days.

After this digression from her usual round she returned in 1875 to her favourite stamping ground like a giant refreshed, making the run from the Tuskar to Melbourne in sixty-eight days. This time was only equalled that year by two other ships—the beautiful *Thermopylae* and the iron *Salamis*, one of the four fastest vessels in the fleet at that time. Her homeward passage was ninety-three days, the *Loch Vennachar*, which was the only ship to start within a week of her, beating her time by five days.

Her outward run in 1876 was the best of her whole career, and the fastest for the year. Leaving Gravesend on June 25th, she passed the meridian of the Cape on August 6th, and arrived off Port Phillip Heads on August 30th, only sixty-six days out. The ship whose sailing day was nearest to hers was again one of the Glasgow Lochs, the *Loch Maree*, one of the fastest of Aitken, Lilburn & Co.'s fleet, and she did not put in an appearance till four days later. This year, for some reason, she was again out of the wool racing.

Her time in 1877 was seventy-five days. This year she made a pretty close race of it with Heap's *Theophane*, the latter being off Holyhead the same day that the *Mermerus* took her departure from the Start. The

Carmichael clipper arrived at Melbourne on September 13th, two days before her rival.

Homeward bound, she made the best wool passage of the season: eighty days from Melbourne. The *Salamis*, which sailed on the same day, did not make London River until a week later, and the *Sir Walter Raleigh*, a very fast ship which had an outward run of sixty-seven days to her name, left the day before the *Mermerus* and arrived on March 1st, seventeen days after her.

She went out in 1878 in eighty-three days—it was a year of rather long passages for several of the fast ships—and made the run home in eighty-four. The *Loch Maree* and *Miltiades* were again her nearest rivals, both sailing within the same week. The *Loch Maree's* was the best of the three by one day, but the *Mermerus* had the consolation of beating the *Miltiades* by five days.

In 1879 her outward passage was one of the four best of the year: the big *Sobraon* was first with seventy-four days, and a newcomer to the wool trade in the shape of the dainty little tea clipper *Titania* came next with seventy-five. The *Aristides* and *Mermerus* both made the same time—seventy-seven days. Her homeward run was one of the few that season which were under three figures, and she beat the *Sir Walter Raleigh* and a ship called the *Cynisca* by ten and thirty-two days respectively.

The following year she once again had a chance of trying her speed against that of her two former rivals, the *Miltiades* and *Sir Walter Raleigh*. The *Mermerus* left Dungeness on May 14th, while *Sir Walter Raleigh* was off the Start on the 17th, and the *Miltiades* had already taken her departure from the Lizard on the 6th of the

month. *Sir Walter Raleigh* this time made the best passage of the three, arriving sixty-seven days out. She made very good time running down the easting, once covering over 2,000 miles in a week. The *Miltiades* came next, her time being seventy-one days, and the *Mermerus* third with seventy-three: the latter's point of departure, however, being Dungeness, her run was really about the same as that of the Aberdeen ship, when the run down Channel is taken into account.

Homeward this year she made a close race of it with the *Ben Voirlich*. Both ships sailed on November 5th, but the *Mermerus* arrived in London on February 4th, three days ahead of the famous Glasgow clipper. The Aberdeen White Star's ' flagship,' the *Aristides*, docked the same day, having made the passage in seventy-nine days, the best record for the year.

Her wool passage in 1885 was one of her longest, 109 days, but the following year she made up for it by coming home in seventy-nine days, the best run of the year from Melbourne, beating her old rival *Sir Walter Raleigh* by three days, and adding another scalp to those in her locker by defeating the *Aristides*, which left three days before her and did not turn up in London for a fortnight after her arrival.

Years were no doubt beginning to tell their tale upon her by now, for her passages at this time show a tendency to grow longer. But she could still move upon occasion, and on into the eighteen-nineties she was still making outward runs to Australia under eighty days. Barclay Curle's ships were as notable for their longevity as for their beauty, and the *Mermerus* was no exception to the rule. She passed under the

Russian flag, and right on into the twentieth century was still making good passages, including one of sixty-nine days from Adelaide. Finally, she ran aground in a fog when leaving the Baltic lumber-laden for Australia, and was so badly damaged that she was sold for breaking up.

4

There were probably few ships better known both in Liverpool and in Australian ports than those of Joseph Heap's 'Thames and Mersey Line,' renowned wherever seamen congregated for their jaw-cracking names—*Antiope* (pronounced to rhyme with 'dope,' please!), *Eurynome* (to rhyme with 'home'), and *Theophane* (to rhyme with 'plane').

These ships had a special round of their own. The firm which owned them were rice millers, so the ships usually ran out to Australia with passengers and cargo, whence they went over to India, often with horses, finishing up by loading rice at Rangoon.

Hence, of course, they never loaded wool home, but on their outward passages they were frequently matched against the crack clippers of the fleet. And they proved themselves in many instances to be notably fast sailors.

Perhaps the best known of them was that amazing veteran, the *Antiope*, a ship with as many lives as a cat, which was wrecked and refloated and afterwards beat a steamer, and has not, I believe, quite used up the last of her allotted nine, but is still serving as hulk in some sweltering African river. I used to know the

old *Melanope*, also a hulk, in Victoria, B.C.—a pleasant sort of way, I have always thought it, given a harbour like Victoria, for an old ship to finish up her days. The *Marpesia* was, I think, accounted the fastest of the fleet at one time, but she had to give place in this respect to the *Theophane*, whose outward passages to Australia were nearly as good as those of the *Mermerus*, against which redoubtable opponent she showed her paces on more than one occasion.

She was built in 1868, like the *Antiope*, by J. Reid and Sons, of Port Glasgow, whose ships seem to have an astonishing habit of long life. The same firm was, I think, also responsible for the ancient *Else*, ex *Daphne*, which was in the splitwood trade under the Finnish flag until quite lately, and deposited her bones in the Baltic a few years ago at the respectable age of somewhere about sixty. These early iron ships were like donkeys, they never seemed to wear out, and but for the accidents inseparable from a seafaring career there would probably be some hundreds of them still going about their lawful occasions every bit as seaworthy as ever.

The *Theophane's* maiden voyage was a triumphant début, for she went out to Melbourne in sixty-six days, and that in spite of a rather protracted stretch of variables north of the Line, during which she only covered five degrees of latitude in six days. The log of this passage shows her to have been a steady mover rather than a sensational one. She was only three times over the 300 mile mark, all being below 40 S. latitude, but possibly, being a new ship, she was not unduly driven.

On her second passage she left Liverpool in charge

of two tugs on a fine blowy morning, with a strong north-westerly breeze making white caps on the muddy surface of the river. As the ship rounded New Brighton she met the full force of the wind and sea, and before she had got far along the Crosby Channel one of the towing hawsers broke, so that she was left with only one tug to complete the tow. The second boat managed to hang on until Formby Light-vessel was passed, when the *Theophane* was able to set some canvas and square away for Holyhead.

In the meantime the wind and sea were such that it was quite impossible to lower a boat to take off the pilot, so there was nothing for it but to carry him along. It was not until seventeen days later that a French homeward bounder was sighted, which hove to in response to the *Theophane's* signal, when the involuntary passenger was duly transferred. He was landed at a French port, and reached home after a month's absence, having, fortunately, quite enjoyed the trip. Cases have, however, been known when pilots have been carried much further than that—indeed, I believe that in one or two instances they have been taken out as far as Australia.

The *Theophane* took out about twenty saloon passengers and about seventy in the steerage, and she had a very good passage, arriving in Melbourne seventy-five days out.

Homeward bound from Rangoon with her rice cargo, she had to beat down the Bay of Bengal just after the south-west monsoon broke, and soon after she rounded the Cape it began to blow a hurricane from the north-west. The *Theophane* was running under bare poles, braced sharp up, when a ship was

sighted about two miles distant, which proved to be the *Bowfell*, a Cumberland-built ship owned by Messrs. Brocklebank, laden with tea and also bound for Liverpool. The two ships were near enough to exchange signals, so they put it up to make a race of it home. Before long, however, ' crack ' went the *Bowfell's* jibboom, so she was out of the race for the time being. The two racers again sighted each other just before reaching St. Helena, but again parted as night came on. Yet again they were in company to the north of Ascension, and finally once more off the Irish coast. They kept together all the way up the Irish Sea, but as the *Theophane* drew too much water to get over the Mersey Bar at low tide, she had to heave to opposite the Skerries Light until the tide served. The *Bowfell* was just being docked as she passed up the river the next morning.

It was during this homeward passage that the devastating discovery was made that the ship was out of tobacco, and thereafter the *Theophane*, usually a fairly happy ship, was the most miserable vessel in the world. Once again, by a coincidence, it was a French ship that came to her assistance, and it may be imagined how anxiously all on board hung on her answer to the appeal. Fortunately, she had enough of the fragrant leaf to appease the *Theophane's* cravings, and the change that came over the spirit of the ship was almost magical. Hardly a voice was lifted at brace or halliard. There were no songs in the dog watches, only scowls and curses everywhere, which were especially directed towards the steward, who was held to be in some way to blame for the shortage. ' Nothing smoked,' as the foc's'le put it, with grim humour, ' but

the galley chimney.' Mutiny has been bred by sources no less trivial.

The *Theophane* was lost in 1891, off the West Coast of South America, coal-laden from Newcastle, a passage which proved fatal to many of the old brigade. 'I cried when I read about it,' an old sailorman said, who had served in her.

5

And there were, of course, the Glasgow Lochs—those big, slashing, painted port clippers, so many of which came to violent ends: *Loch Maree*, *Loch Ness*, *Loch Garry*, fast and fine ships which were often matched against the best of the wool fleet; *Loch Ard*, *Loch Long*, *Loch Sloy* and *Loch Vennachar* of tragic memories; the later four-masters, *Loch Moidart*, *Loch Carron*, *Loch Broom*, and *Loch Torridon*, who, under her well-known skipper, Captain Pattman, will be met with later breaking records in the Pacific: and, last but not least, the famous 'Bens' of the same line—*Ben Nevis*, *Ben Cruachan*, *Ben Venue* and *Ben Voirlich*.

The ship last-named, commanded by a very well-known master, 'Bully' Martin, was among the swiftest of them all. How Captain Martin came by the doubtful compliment of his nickname is something of a mystery. It suggests on the face of it one of those flamboyant and rumbustious personalities, full of strange oaths and armed with a perennial belaying-pin—who figure in nine out of ten of the sea novels of the present day. Captain Martin was nothing of the kind. I have been told by another captain who knew

him that he felt the implication of the sobriquet very keenly. 'He was no bully,' says a man who served under him in the *Ben Voirlich*: and he goes on to describe him as a strict and rather aloof type of shipmaster—red-haired, very regular in all his ways, 'every hair of his head a rope-yarn, and every drop of his blood Stockholm tar.' His invariable 'rig,' when at sea, would no doubt horrify the kind of modern officer who is a stickler for uniformed smartness, and likes to imitate to some extent his naval brethren. Skippers in those days were highly individualistic in their garb. The tall hat, of course, was the official insignia of command ashore—that and a neatly rolled umbrella. But on board they indulged their personal tastes in ways which were sometimes surprising. Captain Woodget, of the *Cutty Sark*, always sported a Scotch cap: some wore bowlers, some 'saw-edged' straws. There were captains in carpet slippers, captains in elastic side boots. There was even one who indicated his agricultural leanings—further manifested in the shape of a regular poultry ranch on deck—by clothing his nether man in breeches and gaiters, as if he had actually carried out the proverbial advice to 'sell a farm and go to sea.' 'Bully' Martin's get-up, which never varied in the slightest, was as follows: black tail-coat, cloth peaked cap, 'boiled shirt,' with white peaky collar, and black tie. At sea he generally left the deck at 8 or 8.30 p.m., and appeared again—unless occasion arose to call him in the meantime—at 7.30 in the morning, always following the same route, first going to the standard compass on the main deck, thence on to the poop.

He was not one of those fussy, domineering skippers,

who can never let his officers alone, but always trusted them implicitly; and while not an easy man to approach with an individual ' grouch,' he was always ready to give a reasonable hearing to anything in the nature of a general complaint from the foc's'le crowd.

Once, after it had been ' all hands ' during most of the night, the men returned to the foc's'le cold, wet and hungry, at eight in the morning, to find only coffee and biscuit for breakfast, their weekly ' whack ' of butter and marmalade being finished. The foolish virgins accordingly went aft in a body to lay the case before the Old Man, who talked to them like a Dutch uncle on their lack of thrift, and sent them for'ard again unsatisfied.

There was nothing for it but to make the best of a bad job, so they set to, not without plenty of growling, on the hard tack and coffee—when in came the steward with seven pounds of ' Harriet Lane ' for each watch. ' Harriet Lane,' it should be explained, was the merchant seaman's term for tinned meat, the naval equivalent being ' Fanny Adams,' both names derived from the method employed by notorious criminals of disposing of their victims' bodies.

Captain Martin was the sort who could not bear to see another ship pass him at sea. One morning running down the Trades a ship was sighted to leeward, evidently overhauling the *Ben Voirlich*. About six o'clock the wind hauled round a little. The man at the wheel was keeping the ship as near her course as possible with the royal clew just lifting, when the mate ordered: ' Keep her off a point—keep her full! ' and the other ship immediately began to drop astern.

A little later, at his accustomed hour, the Old Man

appeared as usual at the break of the poop, went to the standard compass, and then ascended to the poop, when he at once noticed that the ship was off her course and sailing ' full and by.'

' What's this, Mister? ' he demanded. ' Why has the course been changed without asking me? '

' Well, sir,' said the mate, ' that ship yonder looked like overhauling us an hour or two ago.'

' That's all right,' said the skipper, after a glance to leeward, ' keep her full! ' And before long the ship in company was out of sight astern.

Once when Captain Martin was signing on his crew there was a good deal of depression in the shipping industry, and about 700 men were hanging about the Shipping Office waiting for berths. The ship's articles and the agreement as to provisions were read over as usual, a ceremony which, as a rule, is got through about as quickly as swearing witnesses in a court of law: but for once the victualling agreement was gone through in detail, and the men did not fail to notice that the half-pound allowance of flour customary at that time was only to be served out twice a week instead of three times.

In due course the ship got away to sea, and they found the flour forthcoming three times a week just as usual.

Now, the sailorman is—or was—the most jealously conservative of men, and any departure from custom, especially where his dietary was concerned, was viewed by him with the deepest suspicion no matter how much he might appear to be the gainer by it. I once heard of a skipper who almost caused a mutiny by substituting preserved potatoes for some orthodox item on the

foc's'le bill of fare. Perhaps the crowd thought there was sure to be a snag in it somewhere. It was a case of 'Timeo Danaos' with them where the powers that were came in. And so it was about the extra half-pound of flour. They talked and they talked, and at last three of the hardest cases in the ship expressed their intention of going to the Old Man and demanding an explanation.

Off they went aft, and the spokesman of the party duly put his question.

'H'm!' said the Old Man. 'Aren't you satisfied, then?'

'Yes, sir,' was the reply. ''Tain't that, ezackly. But we only signed on for flour twice a week, and we're gettin' it three times. And we wants to know *why*!'

'All right, my man,' rejoined Captain Martin, drily, 'since you want to know, I'll tell you. I put the allowance as low as I did just to see how little you would take.'

The *Ben Voirlich* had more than one narrow escape during her career, but perhaps the nearest shave she ever had was when running the easting down in 1885, outward bound to Melbourne. During the night the ship had been running under two lower topsails and reefed foresail, and at eight bells in the first watch the order was given 'All hands reef the foresail.'

About four bells in the forenoon watch the ship was pooped by a heavy sea which filled her decks up fore and aft, and brought the watch below tumbling out in their shirts. A second green sea followed the other on board, just for'ard of the break of the poop, and the fore and aft bridge went over the side. With it also, sad to relate, went all that was mortal of a large fat

pig, which had been killed the night before and hung up under the bridge, as well as all the crew's visions of succulent scraps of fresh pork by way of change from salt junk and harness beef. The harness casks had already gone when the first big sea came over, so that the allowance even of their unpalatable contents bade fair to be somewhat meagre for the rest of the passage.

For a while you could not see the *Ben Voirlich's* decks for water, but a heavy roll to starboard cleared her to some extent. The second-class passengers were accommodated in a house on deck, and Captain Martin, fearing that the house might be swept away, ordered them to go into the foc's'le, but the sight of the flooded decks was too much for their landsmen's nerves, and they flatly declined to budge.

As soon as possible, all hands set to work to furl the fore lower topsail and goosewing the main, but it was a four hours' job before it was finished. But at last it was done, the wheel, which had been smashed by the sea, temporarily put into commission again, and the *Ben Voirlich* once more stood away for Melbourne, which she reached without further mishap a month later.

I have seen it mentioned that Captain Martin did not like passengers. Well, perhaps not! I doubt if any sailormen ever really did—even those urbane and polished gentlemen whose presence at dinner is such a social attraction in our big luxury liners. And even the title 'Bully' carried little meaning where passengers came in. 'Bully' Forbes certainly enjoyed scaring them: but his former mate, Captain Bragg, who enjoyed a like distinction, was evidently popular

in that capacity, for in 1855 I find that 'the passengers of the *James Baines*, from Australia, at the termination of the voyage, presented him with £60, for his attention during the period they were on board that vessel.'

The *Loch Tay*, another of the early ships of the fleet, was also commanded at one time by a master of the same name, Captain T. C. Martin, and she had an experience not unlike that just recorded of her, in July 1897, when outward bound from Glasgow to Adelaide.

She dropped her tug abeam of Skulmartin Light, and her passage was a fairly uneventful one, with moderate trades both sides of the Line, until she was in 41.44 S. running down her easting.

On July 9th the weather began to grow stormy, and by four in the afternoon the ship was running before violent squalls of wind and rain from the west, shortened down to fore and main lower topsails, and shipping it green fairly often. The following day the wind went down again and sail was made: but during the small hours of Sunday, the 11th, the gale came away from the north once more, and by four the *Loch Tay* had to heave to under a lower maintopsail.

The gale steadily increased in fury. The roaring of the wind was deafening, and the spray torn from the waves filled the air like a fine mist. At eleven o'clock a terrific squall threw the ship on her beam ends, with the starboard topgallant rail completely under water. The saloon and the captain's cabin were flooded knee-deep, and when the ship rolled he was up to his waist.

The wind and sea went down a little towards evening, and the glass rose, so the ship was squared away under a little canvas. The next day, however, the

wind hauled into the north-east, and soon it was blowing as hard as ever.

About half-past one in the morning it suddenly dropped, and the barometer at the same time fell to 28.40. It was now evident that the ship was in the calm centre of a circular storm, one of the most terrifying experiences a seaman can meet with. All round her the sea was rising up in great confused heaps, and breaking on all sides, while the wind was so light that she could not hold a course, but continually fell off and filled her decks with water. The ship's movements were sudden and surprising. At one moment she would drop suddenly into a hole, and the next she would quiver and leap like a horse taking a fence.

Captain Martin had now two courses to choose from. Either he could stay where he was and run the risk of being dismasted, or try to bring the ship to the wind and make northing. Following the advice of most masters experienced in the ways of circular storms, namely, to keep the ship moving, he ran her until he could run her no longer, though her movements were so sudden and violent that the men could hardly keep their feet on deck.

As soon as he could he squared the ship away and steered E.N.E. The *Loch Tay* was still shipping large quantities of water, and there were several minor casualties on board. An apprentice had his arm hurt, and one of the hands was cut and bruised, and the Old Man attended to their injuries in the saloon, splashing about up to the knees in water.

About seven in the morning a tremendous sea broke on board amidships, filling the decks so that only the masts and the topgallant forecastle were visible above

water. Pouring aft, it smashed the front of the poop clean in, washing the steward into one of the cabins, where he was jammed for over an hour. Chips was caulking down the lazarette hatch at the time, and he, too, was sent adrift, and brought up in one of the cabins. A chest of forty lifebelts went over the fore-and-aft bridge rails like a matchbox, and tons of water poured into the hold through a large ventilator, about three feet square. Beds, blankets, everything that could be found, were stuffed into the hole, the vessel shipping heavy seas the whole time, so that those at work were in constant danger either of being sucked into the hold or washed over the side. However, at last the hole was stopped, and a sail nailed on top, after which things looked a little more hopeful.

'By now,' to quote Captain Martin's own words, 'the sea was running very high, and the ship dipped forward, till her fore-top was level with the horizon. The sea was much more true, and she did not do so badly, and it was a grand sight, with all my trouble, to see her ride on the top of one of those big seas.'

The havoc on board was indescribable. Chairs, tables, crockery and the cabin piano were all charging about under the poop in wild confusion. Charts, books, instruments, were all gone. The skipper was left with nothing but what he stood up in, and he had even lost his sea-boots and sou'wester during the struggle to make the ventilator secure. After a while, however, one of the crowd came for'ard to say that the foc's'le had had a tarpaulin muster for him, which, he says, 'I accepted gratefully.'

The gale abated a little during the night, and the skipper went for'ard to lie down, his own quarters, of

course, being quite untenable. He was troubled a good deal with cramp through working in the water, and the men stripped him and gave him a good rub down.

Next morning, at daybreak, all hands turned to and started to clear up the mess, and by two in the afternoon the front of the poop had been temporarily blocked up with planks. The next job was to clear out the cabins—' What a sight! ' exclaims the Captain. ' Crockery, knives and forks, pieces of a sextant, and a chronometer, all broken to bits. Odd boots and shoes, charts and books, all torn to shreds. When the men were clearing the starboard boat they found some of my clothing, and also a box containing meteorological instruments, jammed amongst the wreckage. The clothes were last seen by me in a drawer in my cabin.'

The next consideration was how to make Adelaide. All the captain's navigating instruments, as well as those of the mates, had been lost or broken, and the charts were nothing but sodden masses of pulp. However, with the aid of an old sextant, a Burdwood's Table and an old Epitome, produced by one of the crew, and a couple of watches lent by the cook and an apprentice, he managed to work out the ship's position by dead reckoning, navigated her for nearly three thousand miles, and made his landfall off Cape Borda on the night of July 28th, only fifteen miles south of her supposed position. Between Cape Borda and Althorp Island the ship was hove to for the night. After she had come through so much the Captain did not feel inclined to risk losing her by trying to take her through the Straits without chart. The following afternoon saw her safely anchored at Adelaide, having

made, in spite of all, a fast passage of seventy-nine days from Glasgow.

Yet a third Captain Martin (his initials being T. H.) commanded the *Loch Fyne*, when she was lost with all hands, none ever knew how and when, on a voyage from Lyttelton with wool in 1883. Whether any of the three, or all, were related, I do not know: in any case the coincidence is worth noting.

The last of the famous *Lochs* disappeared from the seas some years ago, though several survived as hulks, and may do so still. Among these was the *Loch Ness*, which not long since—like the *Thermopylae*—suffered the indignity, or honour, whichever way you like to take it, of being used as a gunnery target. The *Loch Tay*, also was doing duty as a hulk at Adelaide quite recently, and was reported to be in pretty good condition, so she may last a few years still.

6

The various ' Lochs ' and ' Bens ' are more than a little confusing. As well as the ' Lochs ' belonging to Aitken & Lilburn, chartered at one time or another to Shaw, Savill's, the New Zealand Shipping Company, and elsewhere, there were also some owned by J. and R. Wilson, of Glasgow, and D. & J. Sproat, of Liverpool, which I think had nothing to do with the Glasgow fleet. Among these were the *Loch Fleet*, *Loch Urr*, *Loch Trool*, and others: and I believe the *Loch Linnhe*, which has been a frequent visitor to London during recent years with Baltic splitwood, was one of the Liverpool contingent, though she has been often

'featured' in the papers as 'the last of the famous Glasgow "Lochs".' Like most of the others, the *Loch Linnhe* was originally ship-rigged; she has now no square yards on the mizen, and she carries a peculiar double gaff-topsail, like the French 'Richelieu,' rather an ugly sail to look at.

Then, in addition to Watson's 'Bens'—the *Ben Cruachan*, *Ben Voirlich* and *Ben Nevis* were chartered by Aitken & Lilburn from that firm—there was a wooden *Ben Nevis* sailing out of Liverpool in the 'fifties, Rae's ships—pretty hard-run by all accounts, too—*Benlee*, *Bengairn*, and others: and the *Benmore*, belonging to Messrs. Nicholson & McGill, who also owned several other '-mores,' among them the *Cairnsmore*, known for a very fast passage to Bombay, and the *Kylemore*, which will be met with in a future chapter.

The *Benmore*, though very well known in Australian ports, was never, I think, in the wool trade. She was a very similar ship to Heap's *Antiope* and *Marpesia*, and, like them, was built by Reid at Port Glasgow. She was always specially noted for her smartness, whence she derived the unofficial title of *Nicholson's Yacht*. Her skipper for many years was a Scot, both by name and nationality. When a Scot is not of the traditional 'canny' type, he is generally as impetuous as any Irishman, and the red-haired captain of the *Benmore* had all the dash and daring of a Border raider.

As originally rigged, the *Benmore* had double topgallant yards, but Captain Scott preferred the Liverpool fashion of the single sail. It was 'All hands' whenever topgallantsails had to come in: and although these big sails were regular devils to reef

or furl in a gale of wind, they undoubtedly shoved the ship along better than when the canvas area was divided.

The quality of Captain Scott's seamanship is proved by his handling of the *Benmore* during his last voyage as her master. She was bound from Dunedin to Brisbane half-loaded, and off Cook's Straits found a north-westerly gale blowing. But Captain Scott was not to be denied, and beat the whole length of the Straits against it in thirty-six hours, under whole topsails and reefed courses.

It was only about a week later that Captain Scott died, his body being sealed up in a coffin and taken on to Brisbane, where he was buried.

His successor in the command of the *Benmore* was her mate, Mr. Joys, who had formerly been in Carmichael's wool clipper *Argonaut*; he proved himself well able to keep up Captain Scott's tradition, and on her homeward passage the *Benmore* overhauled John Willis's *Blackadder* and the Shaw Savill liner *Pakeha*, dropping the latter astern in four hours. ' She would sail like the wind,' Captain Joys used to say of her, ' heave to like a duck, and run till all was blue ': and during this passage she often rattled the log-line out at the rate of sixteen knots to the hour.

Poor Captain Joys came to a very sad end, for he afterwards went into steam and was in command of the Moss Line vessel *Edith Cavell*, when she went ashore on the coast of French Guiana. Captain Joys and his Chief Engineer both survived the ordeal of a French prison in the tropics, but it had been too much for a man who had weathered all the storms of the free seas, and although he was released in due course and

received compensation for his sufferings, he died within a short time.

In 1898, under a Captain Edwards, the *Benmore* went out to Sydney from New York in eighty days, arriving ten days ahead of the *Earl of Zetland*, which sailed the same day. She also gave the dust of the road to Devitt & Moore's big *Illawarra*. Shortly afterwards she was sold foreign, but it was not until 1926 that she put into New York leaking and was sold to the shipbreakers.

2. Racing from New Zealand Ports.

There was never, perhaps, quite so much public interest shown in the ships which raced from the various ports of New Zealand as in the champions of the China tea and the Australian emigrant and wool fleets, perhaps because no sensational occurrence such as a gold rush brought that country into the limelight.

Nevertheless, there were several very fast and beautiful little vessels which sailed regularly from Dunedin, Wellington and Port Chalmers and other New Zealand ports with the annual wool clip. Some of the well-known Black Ball and other passenger clippers also went out to New Zealand with emigrants, among them being the McKay-built *Chariot of Fame* and the *Light Brigade*. The latter was formerly the American *Ocean Telegraph*, built by Curtis, of Medford, to the design of Samuel Pook, who was also responsible for the famous *Red Jacket*. She had a number of very fast passages to her name under the Stars and Stripes, including two of fifty-six and fifty-eight days from Callao to New

York, and in the eighteen-sixties made several runs out to New Zealand with troops and emigrants. Her best time was eighty-six days to Auckland in 1864, during which passage she was in company for several days with the *Matoaka*, and finally left her astern.

The holder of the sailing record from London to Dunedin is Shaw, Savill & Co.'s *Westland*, which went out in 1888 in sixty-six days land to land. She left London on the evening of April 13th, and slipped down Channel close-hauled on a south-westerly breeze. Ushant 'slammed the door on her' on the 18th, and a good trade carried her down nearly as far as the Equator. She picked up the south-east trade a little to the north of the Line, which she crossed twenty-three days from London. The trades left her in lat. 20 S., and were succeeded by northerly and north-westerly winds which lasted right up to the realm of the westerlies. She ran down the easting far to the southward, about the 50th parallel, and favourable winds from the north and north-west again took up the tale and carried her past the Snares and the Nuggets. She reached Dunedin on the morning of June 25th.

Six weeks later she left Lyttleton with a full cargo of wheat, and arrived at Falmouth for orders on November 6th. She stayed in the beautiful west-country harbour six days, the bumboats no doubt doing a roaring trade, before she received orders for London. There she loaded 600 tons of cement for Glasgow, where she took in general cargo for Dunedin again.

She left the Tail of the Bank on December 21st, but head winds kept her beating on and off between the Clyde and Wexford for five days, and the pilot had to eat

his Christmas dinner on board. The New Year came in with strong gales from west and nor'west, and on January 6th the north-east trades were picked up, only to give out rather soon, being followed by a period of variables which lasted until she was up with the Line. Good south-east trades, again succeeded by a period of variables, took her down to easting weather, and she reeled off a steady 240 miles a day until she sighted Cape Saunders on March 9th, having completed the round voyage to England and back in six months and twenty-three days, including all detentions in port.

The *Westland* again made a record round voyage in 1894. She ran out from Start Point to the Solanders in eighty-five days, including several daily runs of more than 340 miles: then from Dunedin she went on to Bluff for a wool cargo, where she lay six months. The long wait in the southern harbour must have made her pretty foul, nevertheless she ran from Bluff to the Horn in sixteen days, eight hours, and signalled the Lizard on the sixty-eighth day out, her passage including a period of nine days during which she was becalmed in the tropics. She was the last of the twenty ships which made up the wool fleet to leave, and reached home before the first of them. The New Zealand Shipping Company's *Wairoa* left Bluff an hour ahead of the *Westland*, and the latter had discharged her cargo and was towing to sea again fully loaded when she met the *Wairoa* just arriving. The *Wairoa* was usually the tortoise of the Company's fleet, but on this occasion she had made one of her best runs, ninety-one days.

The *Westland* continued to make good passages to

the end of the chapter, but the persistent legend of her record passage from Astoria will be dealt with in another place.

One of the best known of the earlier ships in the New Zealand trade was the smart little composite *City of Auckland*, built for and owned by Messrs. Stewart & Simpson, of London, her first skipper, Captain Ashby, having a share in her. She never made any very sensational passages, eighty-one days from the Channel in 1870 being her best outward run, but when homeward bound in 1877 she had a stirring race from the Horn with Patrick Henderson's *Timaru*, also homeward bound from Dunedin under a well-known sail-carrying skipper, Captain Taylor.

The *City of Auckland* had a narrow escape of being in collision with ice on the way from Auckland to the Horn. She ran right into the thick of it in a dense fog, and for the next three hours it was all round her. A good deal of ice had been reported that season in the high latitudes, and two ships went missing, it was believed from that cause, so that with night coming on it was an anxious time. But luckily the fog suddenly cleared, and open water was seen on all sides.

The *Timaru* was sighted off the Horn, and soon afterwards the race nearly came to an untimely end. The *City of Auckland* had been carried eight or nine miles out of her course by the ocean currents, with the result that she passed to leeward instead of windward, as had been expected, of a rocky group of islets, and only cleared the breakers by a matter of 250 yards.

As soon as she got out of the latitude of Cape Horn, the *City of Auckland's* skipper started to crack it on for all he was worth. All sorts of ' flying kites ' were set

down to a 'Jamie Green' under the jibboom, and the ship climbed the hill with her lee rail under water whenever it breezed up a little.

The south-east trades proved very poor, but their north-easterly brethren did their best to atone for their shortcomings, and played Old Harry with the skipper's fancy canvas. Most of the time, however, she carried all plain sail, even when it blew half a gale, and there was plenty of work for the sailmaker's palm and needle. One very high sea which swept the ship fore and aft filled the foretopmast staysail right up, and tore the canvas clean out of the boltropes.

Off the chops of the Channel it was blowing a hard gale from the eastward, and about twenty-five ships had been gathered together by the wind, and lay shortened down and hove to, waiting for a chance to proceed towards London. It was not until the third day that it was possible to make sail and begin the beat up Channel, and in Torbay a large ship with painted ports was sighted standing in on the starboard tack.

'That's the blushin' *Timaru*,' said a keen-sighted A.B., scanning the stranger under his hand.

'*Timaru* nothing,' quoth the mate, levelling his glasses as he spoke, 'the *Timaru's* crowd are in London long ago, you may bet your life, and their pay spent by this time.'

But the *Timaru* it was, all the same, and so far the race of over six thousand miles bade fair to be a dead heat. The wind off Portland dropped away to nothing, and both ships lay becalmed until a couple of tugs hove in sight. As usual, towage being, of course, paid for according to tonnage, the bigger ship got the

best tug, and the *Timaru* hauled into the South-west India Dock just in front of her rival, the *City of Auckland's* jibboom over the *Timaru's* poop.

The *City of Auckland* came to grief on Otaki Beach, one of the danger spots of the coast before it was adequately lighted, bound out with emigrants and a cargo of railway iron. There was something like a panic among the passengers, and had it not been for the skipper's resolute demeanour lives would probably have been lost. As it was, everyone got safely to land, but the beautiful ship herself went to pieces.

Perhaps the most notable race that ever started from a New Zealand port was that in which five ships took part, representing the three leading firms trading to that country.

The contestants were Messrs. Shaw Savill's *Avalanche*, the New Zealand Shipping Company's *Ocean Mail*, *Otaki* and *Rangitiki*, and Patrick Henderson's *Crusader*, the last-named a particularly beautiful little ship built in 1865 by Connell & Co., of Glasgow. From 1871 to 1897 the *Crusader* made twenty-eight round trips in the New Zealand trade, and on only two occasions did her outward passages run into three figures.

The *Avalanche* and *Ocean Mail* both sailed from Wellington, the *Crusader* from Lyttleton, and the *Rangitiki* and *Otaki* from Port Chalmers, all leaving about the same time in March 1877. The *Avalanche* and *Ocean Mail* were held up for a time in Wellington Harbour by a southerly buster, but got away the next morning with a fair wind. Off the Chatham Islands they were becalmed for a time in company, and Captain Watson of the *Ocean Mail* did a bit of ship visiting. A number

of albatrosses happening to be cruising round the becalmed ships, some of them were shot, and their skins presented to the ladies, of whom there were several among the *Avalanche's* passengers.

Some of the old shellbacks shook their heads over this deliberate flouting of the time-honoured belief, dating back to Shelvocke's voyage of circumnavigation, that the slaying of an albatross brings misfortune in its train. And sure enough it wasn't long before the ill-luck began to work, the *Ocean Mail's* boat being stove in against the *Avalanche's* side.

It wouldn't have mattered much if it had stopped at that. But not long after the two ships had parted company the *Ocean Mail* ran ashore hard and fast in a south-westerly gale on French Reef, an outlier of the Chatham Islands. It was afterwards stated that the disaster was due to a faulty chart, according to which the ship's course would have taken her north and east of the group, but it later came out that the skipper had not kept his dead reckoning by log, and both he and his mate were ' for it.' So perhaps it is hardly fair, after all, to blame the wreck on the albatross shooting.

Everyone got safely ashore, and the captain, finding it impossible to get near the wreck owing to the surf, sold her ' as she lay,' including a wool cargo valued at £78,000, for something under a thousand, a proceeding which called forth a storm of protest from all the inhabitants of the Chathams with the exception of the lucky bidder.

In the meantime the *Avalanche* held on her course, all unknowing the disaster which had befallen her late consort, and off the Horn she overhauled the *Crusader*, and quickly dropped her astern.

But in ship racing, if anywhere, the saying holds true that he who laughs last laughs longest. The day after, the *Avalanche* was caught aback in a squall, her wheel smashed, and her canvas—she was carrying a good deal at the time—blown to ribbons. Contrary winds and heavy seas kept her from making much progress for fourteen days, and when the pilot boarded her at last he brought the news that the *Crusader* had arrived thirteen days previously.

In the meantime, the *Otaki*, which had left the day after the *Crusader*, had made an exceptionally good run home. After being becalmed for five days after leaving port, she had very good winds the whole way, and made her number off the Lizard in sixty-three days land to land. The *Rangitiki*, the last of the five, arrived eighty days out, two days after the *Avalanche*.

All the same the *Rangitiki* was a very fast ship on occasion. She was built by Samuelson, her original name being *Scimitar*; she was said to have logged nearly 3,700 miles in thirteen days, and was runner-up to the *Westland* for the record passage to Port Chalmers. Her best run was in 1876, when she overhauled and passed the Brazilian mail boat under both sail and steam, and carried her main skysail all the way from Plymouth to Tasmania. She ran down her easting between the fifty-second and fifty-third parallels, in strong westerly gales and thick weather, encountering a good deal of ice, and no doubt her three hundred emigrants had a somewhat hectic time.

Two years earlier, under her original name, she went out to Port Chalmers in seventy-one days from Plymouth. She carried a large number of emigrants, and unfortunately twenty-six children died during the

run out. There were also four births on board, and one marriage. A captain in those days had a good many duties, as well as those of navigating the ship, and this passage the *Scimitar's* skipper was kept unusually busy.

Sailors are generally very fond of cats, and even if they are not they view them with a superstitious respect almost equal to that shown to them by the ancient Egyptians.

Once when the *Rangitiki* was loading at Napier, a cat jumped on board from a wool lighter, and established herself as a member of the ship's company. Sooth to say, she was not a very attractive incarnation of the goddess Pasht, and although her presence was tolerated, she was not a very desirable shipmate from the point of view of cleanliness. One day the steward found her in his room, and she was so startled that she jumped through the scuttle, the second mate, who was on deck at the time, seeing her floating away astern.

He told the Old Man about it at breakfast, but to his great surprise got a good wigging.

'T'ck, t'ck!' said the skipper. 'I'm surprised at you, Mister! You should have lowered a boat and picked the poor thing up.'

That very night it came on to blow big guns, and the anchor began to drag. At nine o'clock in the morning the second anchor was out and she was still dragging, when a mountainous sea broke over her, filling her decks with water and carrying away the after end of the deck-house beside which the captain and the second mate were standing. The second mate managed to grab hold of something when the sea came on board. But Captain Pottinger was less lucky. He

was found a few minutes later floating in the scuppers with a broken neck.

And while I am on the subject of luck, it is certainly something of a coincidence that both the ships which were concerned in the albatross episode at the Chathams should have come to a violent end.

The *Avalanche* sailed again for Wellington on September 10th, but her passage, like the *Ocean Mail's* homeward one, was destined to come to a premature conclusion. Off Portland, on a dark, dirty night of wind and rain, a large American ship, the *Forest Queen*, crashed into her just aft of the main-mast, and within a few minutes the *Avalanche* took her last plunge. Many of her crew and passengers were drowned in their bunks, and the rest were left struggling in the water, except the mate, and two seamen who had managed to scramble on board the other ship.

The *Forest Queen* was also badly damaged, and although three of her boats were launched, no more survivors were picked up. Two of the boats were swamped during the night, and the American skipper and the three survivors of the *Avalanche* were the only four saved out of a hundred and twenty souls in the two ships.

In 1875 the *Otaki* and *Crusader* were again matched against each other, the *Crusader* leaving Gravesend three hours after her rival. It was a year of poor trades, and neither ship made a fast passage, though the *Otaki* logged 3,000 miles in twelve days in the high latitudes. They both arrived at Lyttleton on February 8th, ninety-eight days out, the *Otaki* still maintaining the precise lead of three hours she had had on leaving Gravesend.

Another well-known racer of Shaw Savill's fleet was the *Auckland*, one of six beautiful little iron clippers—the *Dunedin*, *Invercargill*, *Canterbury*, *Auckland*, *Nelson* and *Wellington*—built in 1874 by Robert Duncan for Patrick Henderson. Three years later, when the amalgamation took place, they came under the Shaw Savill house-flag.

The *Auckland* never made any record passages, though she had a turn of speed when the wind was to her liking, and showed it on several occasions when she was matched against other vessels. Her best point of sailing, according to a former apprentice, was on a bowline, her worst with the wind right aft.

In the eighteen-eighties, under a Captain James, she was outward bound to Melbourne, when in the Doldrums she picked up the Aberdeen clipper *Aristides*. The two ships were in company off and on for a fortnight, when the *Aristides* went ahead: but later, in strong south-east trades, the *Auckland* came up on the Aberdeen crack at dusk and overhauled her just at midnight. There was a lot of excitement on board both ships. 'Report you in Melbourne!' yelled the *Auckland's* crew as their ship drew ahead: but the 'ghosting' powers of the Aberdeen ship had yet to be reckoned with, and when the *Auckland* reached Melbourne she found her rival already in port, having arrived four days ahead of her.

In 1889 the *Auckland* loaded at Lyttleton for London, together with the *Marlborough*, also owned by Shaw, Savill & Co., and Nicholson & McGill's *Kylemore*. The *Dunedin* loaded at Port Chalmers at the same time and all four ships sailed close together. The passage promised to be quite a sporting event. The four

skippers put up a £50 sweep, and everyone on board had something on the result.

The *Marlborough* and *Dunedin* were both fated to make no port but that of missing ships, and the fate of the former ship has been the subject of much controversy, which I have already discussed at some length elsewhere.

About a week out the *Kylemore* and *Auckland* were in company, and remained so off and on all the way home. Off the Western Islands it was blowing a dead muzzler from the north-east, and had been doing for weeks, and there was a regular fleet of ships, including many of the best-known Australian wool clippers, held up there. The *Auckland* worked her way right through them, passing several of the famous passage-makers, and picked up a nice breeze which carried her nearly up to the Channel under all plain sail.

About 300 miles from the Lizard she fell in with a tug, but the weather was so bad that she had to go at half-speed to make her coal last out. Off the Nore a ship was sighted coming up astern in tow of the famous Liverpool tug *William Jolliffe*. It was the *Kylemore*, and she just beat the *Auckland* into dock on the tail of the tide.

The record from the Old Country to Auckland is held by the *Loch Awe*, one of several fine ships built by Barclay, Curle & Co., for J. & R. Wilson, and chartered by the Loch Line of Glasgow. Here follows the account of her passage from the ship's log, as given in the Auckland newspaper by the chief officer.

'The *Loch Awe*, with 369 immigrants on board, left Gravesend on April 6th, 1874, at 4 p.m., and parted with the pilot on the 9th. We crossed the Equator on

April 30th, passed the meridian of the Cape on May 22nd, and ran down the easting in lat. 45 S. with strong south-west to north-west winds. The main topsail came in for the first time on May 29th, in lat. 45.18 S. We passed the longitude of Cape Leeuwin on June 8th in lat. 45.10, and were abreast of Tasmania on June 13th, being within thirty miles of Ruric Rock at 10 p.m. On the 14th we fell in with a very heavy south-east gale, and at three a.m. on the 15th the ship took a very heavy roll and filled the port lifeboat, which carried away the davits, taking with them the topgallant and main rails. From thence the weather became better, the wind settling into a steady south-east breeze, which carried the ship to within ten miles of the North Cape. The Three Kings were sighted on June 19th at 1 p.m., the passage from land to land being thus made in the unprecedented time of sixty-nine days four hours. The ship experienced south and south-east winds down the coast, and anchored in Auckland Harbour after completing the voyage in seventy-six days six hours. From Tristan d'Acunha into port we occupied only thirty-seven days, a time probably never approached by any other ship. The log shows an average daily run during this time of 247 nautical miles, the highest record for the day being 330 miles on June 8th. During one week, from the 4th to June 10th, the *Loch Awe* ran the extraordinary distance of 2,159 miles, representing an average of 308 miles a day.'

The *Loch Awe's* bearded skipper, Captain Weir, drove his ship for all he was worth; he liked passengers all right in their proper place, which, so far as the married couples, women and children were con-

cerned, was under hatches when he wanted to do a bit of cracking on. The single men he allowed to take their chance. Running the easting down in a fast clipper was all very well for the sailorman. He had its excitements as well as its dangers. But for the passengers it was a different matter. Down there in the *Loch Awe's* saloon and 'tween-decks, they must have thought a thousand times, listening to the racket on deck, that their last hour was come: and it is hardly surprising that they had some sensational tales to tell when they got into port.

The *Loch Awe* lasted right into the War days, when she was sunk with some loss of life by a German submarine; she was under the Norwegian flag at the time, having been renamed *Madura.*

Two other ships came very near lowering the *Loch Awe's* record. Clink's fourmaster *Vanduara* went out in 1885 in seventy-seven days, and in 1876 a Liverpool ship, owned by Joshua Bates, the same who was Samuel Plimsoll's principal opponent in his fight for the load-line, and bearing the remarkable name of *Merwanjee Framjee*—what, I wonder, did the foc's'le make of that?—arrived in Auckland seventy-six days and some hours from Gravesend.

Yet another exciting contest was that which took place in 1891 between the barque *Laira*, a little ship of 500 tons built by Pile of Sunderland in 1870, and the *Oban Bay*, which Russell & Co. built for Hatfield, Cameron & Co.'s Bay Line.

Both ships finished loading wool at Oamaru at the same time, and since they were to sail practically together, plenty of betting went on among the respective ships' companies. The *Oban Bay* was the first to sail,

and the *Laira* was further held up for some time by contrary winds, thus giving her bigger rival a clear ten days' start. When she got away, however, she made a very good run of twenty-two days to the Horn, and soon picked up the south-east trades. Strong, steady breezes took her as far as lat. 15 S., where she ran into a belt of calms, and for some days her crew had the usual wearisome round for some days of hauling yards whenever there was enough wind to snuff a candle. Here the *Laira* picked up the *Oban Bay*, which had struck the same calm patch, and the morning after she was sighted the *Oban Bay's* skipper pulled over to the *Laira* to ' bum ' some stores of which he was running short.

The ships were in company for several days, only making fifteen or twenty miles in the twenty-four hours, but parted at last in a squall which blew up so suddenly that it put the *Laira* on her beam ends and carried away some of her canvas before there was time to secure it. The *Oban Bay* put her helm up, and running before the wind, was soon lost to sight.

The north-east trades did not last long, and the *Laira* soon ran into yet another calm belt. Here she had at any rate one bit of good luck, for the skipper, who was taking advantage of the calm to do a bit of fishing, made an unlooked-for catch in the shape of a floating pitchpine log—very handy as a spare spar to replace the main topmast damaged in the recent squall.

She had the *Oban Bay* in sight again off the Western Isles, whence favourable winds carried the *Laira* up to the chops of the Channel.

One of those dense fogs came down off the Lizard,

in which so many ships, after braving successfully all the perils of the outer seas, have come to their end on that iron-bound coast. The *Laira* could do nothing but lie to and send forth melancholy blasts on the old cow's horn, which were answered from some unseen ship close at hand. When the fog lifted, there was the *Oban Bay* lifting on the swell less than a mile away, and the *Laira's* skipper took the chance of returning Captain Gourlay's call in the tropics.

During the night a breeze sprang up, and the two ships again lost sight of each other. But the fog again closed down off St. Catherine's, and here the *Laira* had the good fortune to pick up the big tug *Zealandia*. The little *Laira* was a very easy tow for her, and off she went towards the Downs at a great rate.

Here the *Oban Bay* was once more sighted. She had had the best of it during the run up Channel, but for once the smaller ship had the best tug, and the *Laira* surged triumphantly past in the *Zealandia's* wake, her crew hanging out the customary rope yarns as she forged ahead. The *Laira* won the race by a tide, and her crew had a nice haul in winnings to add to their pay.

The passage was by no means a fast one—110 days being the *Laira's* time, and the *Oban Bay's* 120—but to the participants at least the race gave a number of thrills every bit as good as those experienced by any tea clipper's crew in the palmy days of sail.

The performances of other noted ships on the New Zealand run—especially the *Turakina*, formerly *City of Perth*, the *Invercargill*, and the *Ben Venue*, under her racing skipper 'Mad' McGowan—must, owing to reasons of space, perforce be omitted.

CHAPTER VI

The Sailor's Way

Oh, it's of a tall Cape Horner,
  Loaded deep with 'Frisco grain,
On the last lap of her voyage
  Round the world and home again. . . .
With her three years' rust upon her,
  And her sailors sick for home,
And the Fastnet's blink of welcome
  Out across the lonely foam.

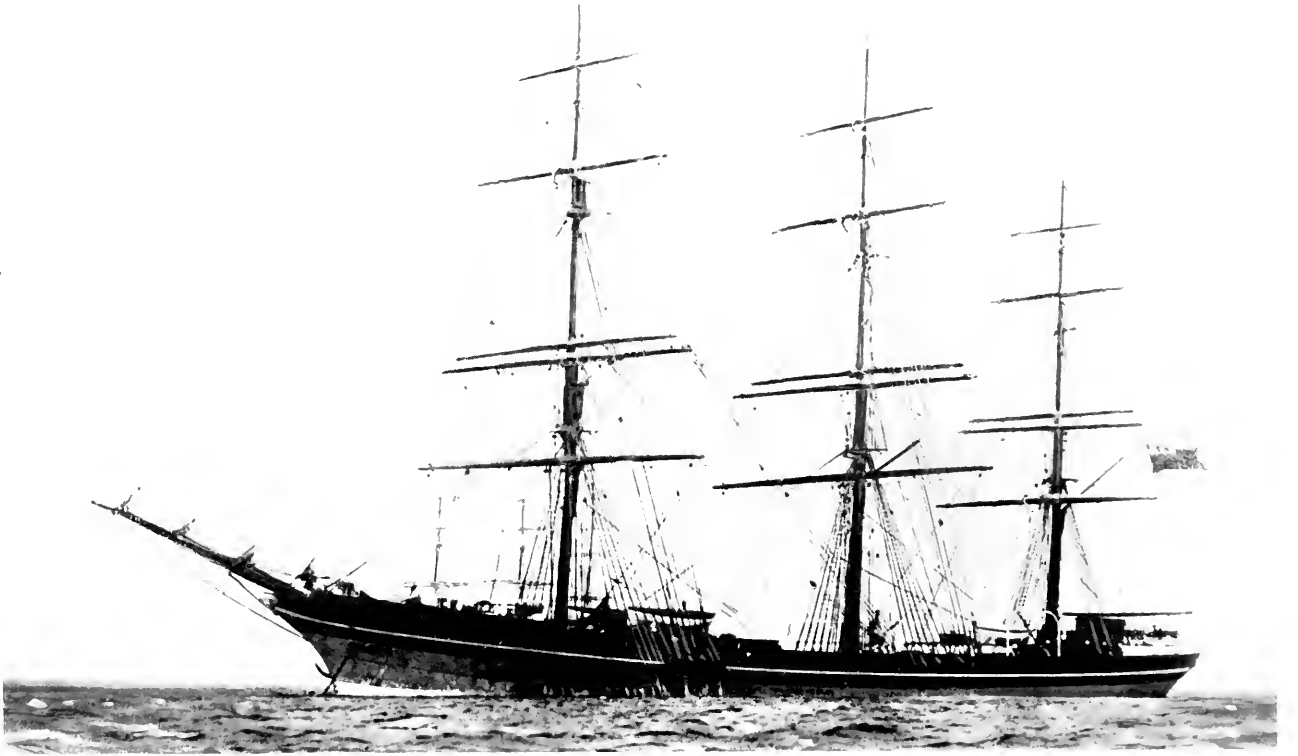
I

THE sailing fleets which during the last quarter of the nineteenth century carried the grain of the Pacific slope round the Horn, were made up to a great extent of vessels of a different type from those which had gone before them. They included, it is true, a number of the wool and jute clippers of the 'seventies, driven from their old stamping grounds by the ruthless competition of the steamship. But for the most part they were ships of a more modern order, evolved to meet the growing stress of competition and the changing requirements of a changing world.

It was the day of the big 'general trader,' as opposed to the ship built for, and regularly engaged in, special voyages. Cargo capacity and economy in working, were now the two main points which the builders and owners of sailing tonnage had to bear in mind. Ships

were no longer built to sail, but to carry. Their hulls were longer, deeper, straighter-sided: and although, as will be seen, many of these modern vessels had an astonishing turn of speed now and again, the fine lines of the out-and-out clipper belonged definitely to the past. With the changed type of hull went also a marked change in rig. ' Flying kites ' had practically disappeared from the seas: only a very few ships, such as Nourse's coolie fleet, ever set a stunsail after the eighteen-eighties came in. Many were bald-headed, that is to say, they crossed nothing above topgallant-sails. Barques, either three or four masted, were increasingly numerous, taking the place of the three-masted full-riggers, in which sail had perhaps touched its highest point of beauty. The long jibboom was also replaced by the short spike bowsprit which, by contrast with the noble tapering spar which ' bent like an iron hoop ' to the strain of the mighty jibs of old, gave the modern four-posters a somewhat blunt-nosed appearance. Wire standing rigging set up with screws had, of course, long since superseded the old deadeyes and lanyards, and Manila rope had taken the place of the old stiff hemp, which was so difficult to handle, and was always given to jamming.

And if the ships were different, so also were the crews which manned them. The rigid economy which became more and more necessary if the wind-driven ship was to live upon the seas brought many changes in its train. Fewer hands were carried, in spite of the fact that the ships were double or treble the size of those of the past. Many of the big fourmasters which were beating round the Horn in the 'eighties and 'nineties, great, powerful, heavily-sparred vessels of two to three



Nautical Photo. Agency

THE *GLENALVON*

face p. 184

thousand tons burthen, carried only about half the crews of tea or wool clippers of half their tonnage. Wages were down: and crews, above all, were different in quality. The sailorman was no longer the all-round sea craftsman he had once been. Wire rope and screw rigging had altered all that. 'Sailorising,' as the old-fashioned shellback termed the hundred-and-one little jobs which came his way in a wooden and composite clipper, was all but forgotten except by the survivors of the old order of things. True, 'hands variously employed' was still one of the stereotyped phrases of the sailing ship's log-book. But the employment was of a different kind. Holystoning, sand-and-canvasing, polishing bright work, tarring and slushing down, were there in plenty. But where were now all the stripping, serving and setting up rigging, the parcelling and splicing, the making of sennet, and the rest of the multifarious occupations which filled up the hours of the clipper ship seaman? Here and there some hoary-headed bosun or Chips or toothless and bald sail-maker recalled the days when he was shipmates with rope parrels. But as a rule there was no one before the mast who could use a palm and needle. Foreigners, too, were present in ever-increasing numbers. It was no uncommon thing to find a ship sailing out of 'Frisco or the nitrate ports without a single Britisher in her foc's'le. The work of the ship fell more and more on the apprentices, upon whose labours (all but unpaid), as well as upon the premiums their parents paid that they might learn the duties of officers, the hard-pressed owners had to depend to make their vessels a paying proposition. It was in a way, I suppose, as bad a system of training as it could possibly be; indeed, it could

hardly be called a system at all. Yet to what sort of men it produced, the seas, sown with British dead in the Great War, bear silent testimony.

In spite of changed conditions, the tradition of ship racing died very hard among skippers and mates bred in the palmy days of the clipper fleets, and right on into the era of the modern cargo carriers, ' built by the mile and cut off by ship lengths,' as the saying went, there were plenty of strictly unofficial trials of speed going on out of all the ports, wherever windjammers came together. The truth was that a man used to command fast ships could not bear to see another vessel go by him at sea. The captain of the *Lord Palmerston*, outward bound to Calcutta, when his ship was passed by the *County of Inverness*, sat down on the cabin skylight and cried. ' I was black ashamed,' was his explanation of his emotion afterwards, ' to see her go past me like that! ' And the habit of mind was one which they sometimes carried into shore life. Old Captain Woodget of the *Cutty Sark* was a terror for cracking on in any sort of vehicle up to the end of the chapter, and I have seen him fairly foam at the mouth if anything ventured to overhaul him on the King's highway!

But the racing was for the love of the thing. Material rewards, such as premiums, were things of the past, and in the eighteen-nineties the captain of the first wool ship to arrive only got £50 by way of bonus: while a skipper who indulged his sporting propensities at the expense of spars and sails might look for no very cordial reception when he next met his owners. In the German nitrate fleets the captains got handsome premiums as a reward for fast passages, and Captain

Mighell, of San Francisco, presented each of his skippers with a suit of clothes for a trip of less than thirty days up to the Sound and back. A suit of clothes —picture, if you can, the bewhiskered magnificoes of the tea fleets saying 'Thank you' nicely for a suit of reach-me-downs!

It has become something of a platitude to say that the romance of the seas departed with the clipper ships. Like most platitudes, when one comes to look into them, it is a good deal less than half true.

The closing era of the sailing ship was a hard, in many ways a sordid, yet for all that an epic one. Those great iron and steel cargo-boxes, the general traders, ran the easting down to Australia, or hammered round the Horn against the westerlies, loaded down with pig-iron or rails or Portland cement or Cardiff coals, then over to Newcastle for coal again, and finally back round the Horn crammed to the coamings with grain or nitrates or tinned salmon. They battered their way through the sea where the clippers rode them like horses. They were like half-tide rocks in heavy weather. Captain W. J. Wade writes of the Liverpool ship *Crown of Italy*, in which he made a voyage from Melbourne with wheat, 'she was the wettest ship I ever sailed in. It was a positive danger to traverse that ship's decks with even a moderate sea running, as she would ship green water and dash men off their legs without the slightest warning. It seems almost incredible, but it is a positive fact that for nearly six weeks after leaving Melbourne the mainsail was never set, and very seldom anything more than the topsails on the mainmast—simply because the captain, who knew the ship only too well, was afraid we might not

be able to man the gear to take them in if it came on to blow suddenly.

'The main hatches were protected by four-inch planks laid down close to each other, running fore and aft, with other planks lying across them, and the whole secured by chains to special ringbolts fitted in the decks on each side of the hatch. If it had not been for this protection, I am sure nothing could have saved the hatches from being smashed in by the terrific seas which used to break aboard in the waist with monotonous regularity, and fill the decks flush with the rails. By means of extra skids on the same level as the boat skids, with planks bolted down to them, a bridge was formed to enable the crew to get fore and aft and work the braces, etc., and several times I have seen them swept about even at that height above the decks.'

A hard, bitter, man-killing life—yet a kind of sombre splendour gleamed through it, even as through the mud and blood of the Flanders trenches. The tea clipper was in her glory rolling down to St. Helena, a cloud of sail, the wool racers exulted in the wrestle with the Roaring Forties. But it was Cape Horn—'ol' Stiff' of a thousand bar-room yarns—which was the chief milestone on the windjammer's last long road. 'Around the Horn and home again, for that's the Sailor's Way,' so went the old sea-song—and the words were true.

2

A few survivors of the American clipper ship era found a home for a time in the early years of the Californian grain trade, one of the best known of

which was Webb's once-famous *Young America*, the ship which, built so long since as 1853, was matched against Donald McKay's *Sovereign of the Seas*. In the early 'seventies she took part in quite a number of keenly contested races to and from the Pacific coast.

Her chief rival was a little ship called *La Escocesa*, the *Scottish Lady*, built at Dundee in 1869, and owned by Messrs. Balfour, Williamson & Co., of Liverpool. *La Escocesa* was a fast little vessel, which had made a passage across the Atlantic of ten days and some hours. But she had not the speed of the *Young America*, and her captain lost heavily through repeatedly backing her to beat her.

In 1871 she made a passage of 124 days from San Francisco to Queenstown, Nicholson & McGill's *Benmore* beating her by eleven days. On her next outward passage, however, her time was 131 days—not very fast, it is true, but still the same as that of the *Young America*, and that was enough for her skipper.

This was the first of a long series of matches between the two ships. Both of them loaded wheat for Liverpool, and Captain Evans swore by his ship's ability to beat the Yankee. The *Young America* again came in first, after a run of 105 days. The old McKay veteran *Glory of the Seas*—which finished up not long since as a cold storage ship in Puget Sound—was 112 days on the road, and *La Escocesa* 122.

On her next outward passage, *La Escocesa* left Liverpool on October 7th, 1872, and her American rival sailed five days later. Captain Evans drove his ship all out, down to the Horn and up to the Line on the Pacific side in eighty-three days, and his hopes of victory rose high. But here his luck failed him. North

of the Line he had poor winds all the way to the Golden Gate, while the *Young America* romped up to 'Frisco in sixteen days from the Equator, thus completing the passage in ninety-nine days, eleven days in the lead.

But Captain Evans wasn't beaten yet. On the other hand, the rivalry between the two skippers became keener than ever, and when they sailed for England on the afternoon of February 27th, 1873, a tugboat crowded with their respective supporters accompanied the ships as far as the Heads to see the start of the long ocean race. The betting was five to one on the *Young America*, though Captain Evans had backed his own ship for a good deal more than the conventional new hat, and it is said that as much as £50,000 changed hands on the result.

Again, neither ship made a specially good passage, but the *Young America* was once more the first to arrive, her time being 106 days as against the *Escocesa's* 119.

The poor little *Scotch Lady* was sunk in the Mersey at the start of her next voyage, but she was afterwards refloated, and under the name of *Star of Chile* ended her days as one of the fleet of square-riggers owned by the Alaska Packers Company. She was finally converted into a barge in 1927.

Yet another famous ship on the 'Frisco run was the converted steamboat *Three Brothers*, which started her career as the *Vanderbilt* on the Atlantic ferry, and after a period in the steam during which she was considered to be one of the fastest vessels afloat, took on a new lease of life as the biggest sailing vessel in the world.

She was presented to the Federal Government by Commodore Vanderbilt, and spent some time chasing

the elusive *Alabama*; after the War she was sold to the brothers Howes, who renamed her after themselves, took the engines out of her and rigged her as a three-masted ship.

The *Three Brothers* proved herself amazingly fast, and with her great size and tremendous sail plan—she loaded 5,000 tons of grain, and carried 16,000 yards of canvas—commanded by a well-known hard 'case,' Captain Cummings, she made some great passages both eastward and westward. On her first voyage as a sailing ship she was just under 109 days to Falmouth, beating the *British King*, which sailed about the same time, by three days. Her best run was 104 days to Liverpool in 1877, when she beat the British ships *Patterdale*, *Langdale* and *Benmore*, and the American *Charger*. In 1882 she tried conclusions with the White Star ship *Dawpool*, but she had a lot of trouble with her crew, like so many ships with bucko officers, and arrived 138 days out.

In 1875 she raced an interesting rival in the shape of the *Western Shore*, one of the few square-riggers built on the Pacific seaboard.

Might-have-beens are always rather fascinating, and it is strange to reflect on the lost possibilities of the Pacific Coast for shipbuilding, with its immense resources of raw material for the industry, which resulted from the coming of the iron ship. If the demand for wooden tonnage had lasted for fifty years longer, how much of the spruce and Douglas fir since made up into doors, floors and window-frames might have had a very different and far more eventful destiny!

The *Western Shore* was a ship of 1,188 tons, built at North Bend, Oregon, in 1874. She cost $80,000 to

build. Labour, of course, was scarce and dear, but lumber was cheap, so what her builders lost on the roundabouts they made up, so to speak, on the swings.

She left 'Frisco on her maiden passage in February 1875, and made a very good run of 104 days, including forty hours spent off Mersey Bar waiting the tide. On her return trip she beat both the *Three Brothers* and the latter's rival, the *British King*, by twelve and twenty-two days respectively. During the passage she ran 3,240 miles in eleven days, an average of 294 miles a day. She then went up to Astoria to load wheat. She was only forty-eight hours on the way up the coast, beating on the way the mail steamer *Oriflamme*, and arriving a couple of hours ahead of her.

Another Western-built vessel was the *Wildwood*, built at Port Madison in 1871. Jacob A. Westervelt, the builder of the *Sweepstakes* and *Contest*, was the originator of the scheme, having been impressed when visiting the West by the immense possibilities of Puget Sound lumber from the shipbuilder's point of view. For some reason or other, however, he withdrew from the project, but the ship was finished, and after a long but undistinguished career was lost in Alaskan waters in 1899.

3

The fastest run ever made from a British port to San Francisco was, I think, the *Senator's* outward passage in 1889, when she went out in eighty-nine days, and was presented with a silk ensign by her owners in commemoration of her exploit. I have also seen it

stated that a barque called the *Archibald Fuller* went out in the same time as the *Senator* in the 'seventies, commanded by a Captain Kite who was known by the obvious nickname of 'Flying' Kite, but this I have not been able to verify.

Outward passages round the Horn against the westerlies were, of course, generally longer than those on the homeward run, owing to the time which was often lost waiting for a slant of wind, though not many ships were quite so long about it as the Italian barque *Oriente*, which, in 1896, was more than fifty days beating off the pitch of the Horn. There is an old saying among sailors 'more days, more dollars,' but, dollars or no, her crew must have had a bit too much of a good thing for once.

More than one ship has had so much difficulty in getting round that she has been obliged at last to go 'east about,' and make a complete circuit of the globe to reach her destination. I happened to refer once in a newspaper article to a well-known instance of the kind, drawing forth an indignant letter of protest from a sceptical reader who wanted to know what I took the public to be, if I expected them to swallow a yarn like that.

The *Senator* was a ship of 1,900 tons, built in Sunderland for Messrs. T. & J. Harrison, and afterwards owned by the Liverpool firm of C. E. De Wolf. She is described by Captain Wilson, who knew her well, as 'a big, able, heavy-rigged ship,' remarkable for her breadth of beam, 50 ft., which enabled her to stand any amount of hard driving and strong winds. The fact that she was a very poor mover in light winds is shown by a very long passage—198 days—she made in

the late 'nineties from Punta Gordia, Florida, to Yokohama. At first she tried to go through the Flores Strait, but had baffling winds, and finally gave it up and went by the Bali Straits, Celebes and Macassar; here again she had a lot of calms and there was not much chance to get anything out of her.

She had a very fine cabin, adorned with busts of senators above all the panels, and it is to be hoped that the contemplation of their placid countenances proved soothing to the skipper's nerves as the ship crawled on her way through the tropic seas. She also had a donkey boiler and two steam winches, and the former proved very useful once in 1896 or 1897, when her fresh water tanks were broken on a passage from Puget Sound to Durban with lumber. A sailing ship's donkey, however well it might look on paper, was not invariably such a valuable possession, and I have heard of at least one instance when neither a donkeyman nor a supply of coals was carried.

'The best sailing I ever saw her do,' writes Captain Wilson, who was in the ship as chief officer from 1898 to 1900, 'was across the North Pacific, round from Yokohama to Royal Roads, V.I., for orders. We were 200 miles from Cape Flattery, twenty-seven days out from Japan, and had some good day's runs. I well remember her logging sixteen knots in the hour by a good reliable log. Her skipper, Captain Johansen, was laid up at the time, and I was trying a pet theory of my own, namely, that she would both run and steer better under fore lower and upper topsails and foresail, and main and mizen lower topsails, than she did with more sail on the main. It proved to be right, but the skipper, coming up to the companion, mildly sug-

gested that he thought I was carrying too much sail.'

She loaded a full cargo of canned salmon at Steveston, in the Fraser, and just after losing the north-east trades in the Atlantic fell in at daybreak with Green's old *Superb* on her beam ends, with her starboard bulwarks gone, and the Norwegian flag flying upside down.

The crew had already been taken off by Potter's *Seafarer*, but it was decided to have a shot at salving the old ship. The *Senator's* mate, taking five men with him, accordingly tackled the job. He had no chronometer, parallel rulers or dividers, only a half chart of the North Atlantic, and a compass he took with him. Rulers and dividers he made himself. They rigged a jury mast aft and got the ship on an even keel with a rag of canvas on her, and brought her safely into Gibraltar in a little over forty days. She survived to fall a victim to a German submarine after half-a-century afloat.

The *Senator* was later commanded by Captain Sutherland, whose wife sailed with him, a kind and homely woman, always very good to the occupants of the half-deck. She died at sea, during a passage from South Africa to Australia. Before her death she asked that her grave should not be the sea, so the captain had a coffin made and buried her in the ballast, and she was finally laid to rest in the cemetery at Newcastle, N.S.W. The *Senator* later went to Brazilian owners, and was still afloat in 1910.

Two very fast ships which were also under De Wolf's house-flag were the *Glenesslin* and *Glenalvon*, neither of them real clippers in the strict sense of the word, but

consistent passage-makers with a notable turn of speed once in a while.

The *Glenalvon* was built at Greenock by Messrs. Russell & Co., and was the holder of the sailing ship record from the United Kingdom to Victoria, B.C., on the strength of her passage in 1896. She loaded general cargo in Liverpool, and sailed the same day as the *Howth* from that port, also bound for Victoria. The two ships parted company shortly after sailing, and the *Glenalvon* saw no more of her rival, reaching Victoria an easy winner, 120 days out. The previous record was held, it is interesting to note, by the ex-tea clipper *Titania*, which under the Hudson Bay Company's flag successfully defied for so many years the seas and winds of the Horn, and made the same passage in 130 days.

In 1907, commanded by a Captain King, the *Glenalvon* made another good passage from Antwerp to Puget Sound in 127 days. She left Antwerp on July 20th, and was lucky with her trades in the Atlantic both north and south of the Line. A good slant carried her quickly round the Horn, and climbing the slope in the Pacific she had strong southerly gales which suited her down to the ground: with the wind on the quarter and everything drawing she rattled the line out at times faster than a steamer.

Among her other passages were: Liverpool to Rio 34 days, Kobe to Los Angeles 22 days, Liverpool to Esquimalt 113 days—the last-named beating her own record of 120 days to Victoria. A contemporary newspaper report credits her with having run 397 nautical miles in twenty-four hours, and over 300 miles a day for five consecutive days, obviously a mistake.

Possibly, as Mr. Basil Lubbock suggests, there may be an error of a '3' for a '2.' On the other hand, the figures may refer to an easting run, calculating the degrees of longitude as sixty miles instead of forty—a little misapprehension which is sometimes believed to account for the numerous 'record' runs of the wooden clippers.

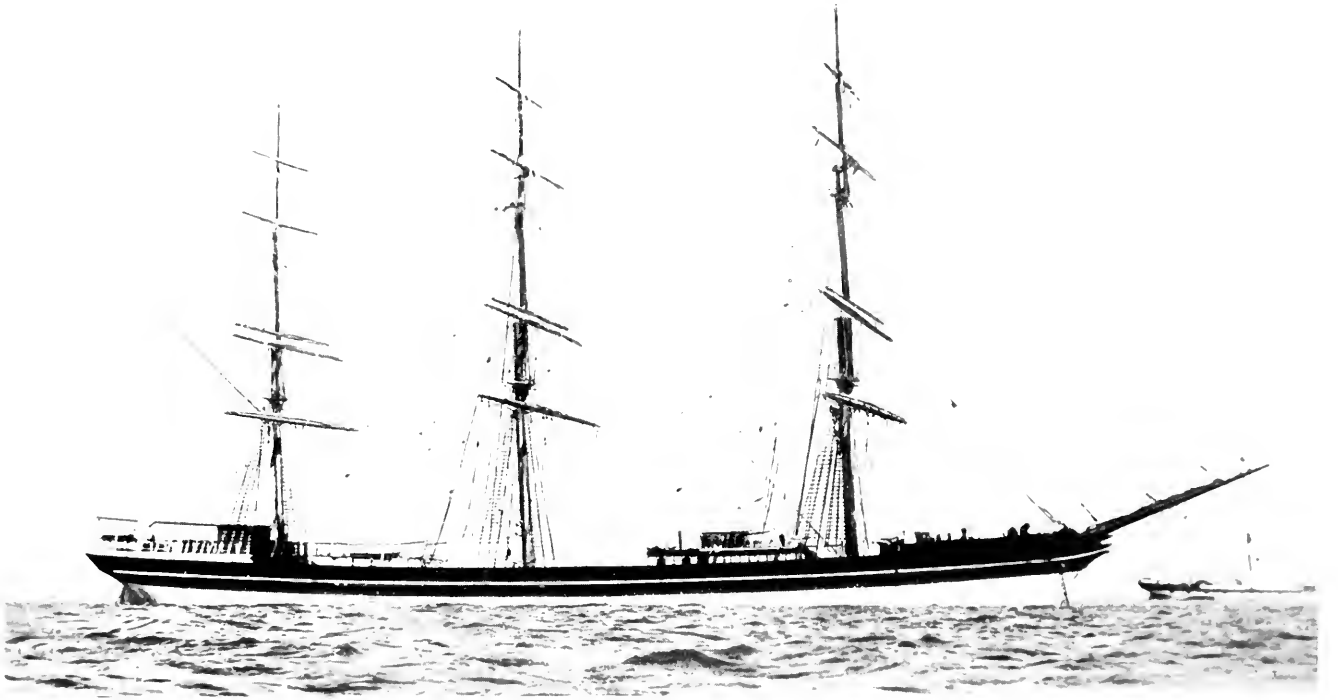
The *Glenalvon* was a big cargo carrier in addition to being a fast ship, and in 1907 she loaded the largest cargo of lumber—nearly two million feet—ever carried in a sailing vessel.

The *Glenesslin*, of 1,644 tons, was built in 1885 at Messrs. T. Royden & Co.'s Liverpool yard, being the last sailing vessel ever built there. She was a very good-looking ship, which always had a name for smartness, especially under Captain Pritchard, who commanded her for over seventeen years. On her maiden passage she went out to Algoa Bay in fifty-two days from Cardiff, and in 1899 went from Portland to the same destination in seventy-five days, with 2,650 tons of flour and wheat. This, according to the South African papers, was ten days above the previous record. Like so many of the iron ships, she seemed to grow better the older she got. In 1901 she loaded at Geelong for Coronel, going across to that port in thirty-six days, and then up to 'Frisco for a wheat cargo. She sailed at the same time as eight other ships, their skippers having the usual sweep on the result among themselves, while there was keen betting both in 'Frisco and in Liverpool. The *Glenesslin* was the winner, beating her nearest opponent by seventeen days. The starters in the race were the usual scratch collection, some fast, some quite the contrary, but

fast or no, it was a poor skipper who wouldn't back his own ship's chances. The names in the papers at the time were as follow: the *Dovenby*, *Foildale*, *Mooltova*, *King Edward*, and *Celtic Monarch*, all British ships, and the *H. B. Babcock*, and another, Americans. The *Dovenby* was a little ship owned by Peter Iredale, in which the late Captain Fearon served his time. There was also a *Dovenby Hall* in the register at the same time, commanded by a notorious skipper of the 'Bully' type. The *Foildale* is presumably the *Foyledale*, a very fast sailer which made a run from Hiogo, Japan, to Tacoma, of thirty days, claimed to be a record. She was later lost under tragic circumstances during a 'norther' at one of the nitrate ports. Of the *Mooltova* I know nothing. The *King Edward* was a barque built at Port Glasgow in 1891, which in 1911 made a passage of seventy-seven days, under the Finnish flag, from Rotterdam to Callao. The *Celtic Monarch* was not as a rule a fast passage-maker—she, too, had a tragic history—but it was claimed on her behalf that she made a record run from 'Frisco (about eighty days) which, however, does not seem to be correct.

The following year the *Glenesslin* went out from Liverpool to Hobson's Bay in seventy-seven days with general cargo and 1,000 tons of railway iron for the Victorian Government. She must have been pretty stiff running the easting down, but Captain Pritchard stated on arrival that she had run a thousand miles in four days, good enough going for a ship thus loaded.

Captain Pritchard's wife always sailed with him, but the baleful influence of a petticoat on board does not seem to have been felt in this instance, and there



Nautical Photo. Agency

THE *GLENESSLIN*

face p. 198

was no woman present when she finally came to grief at the mouth of the Columbia River, where so many fine ships have come by their end.

The North Pacific Coast is not unlike that of Cornwall in more ways than one—in its mild climate, so greatly extolled by the ' booster,' in its many rocks and reefs, and lastly in its frequent fogs: and the Columbia River is one of its chief danger spots.

The *Glenesslin* arrived off Tillamook Head from Santos, Brazil, on September 30th, 1913. She was commanded by Captain Owen Williams, an experienced shipmaster who had sailed the seas for twenty years without accident. The voyage to Santos had been rather an anxious one, and the Captain never had his clothes off the whole way. He always slept in the chart-room, and every night his orders were to call him every hour if the weather was bad, and every two hours if it was fine: and one day the second mate remarked to the sailmaker, ' I don't know when the Old Man sleeps. He is always awake when I call him.'

She came in toward shore at 1.30 a.m. on October 1st, with a light wind. The ship tacked to the westward until eight that morning. She was making about five knots. At 8.30 the skipper took observations as usual, and at noon got the latitude with his own chronometer, which put the ship twenty miles off land. This was correct according to the time the light was sighted, though the ship's chronometer gave her five miles more sea-room.

The captain remained on deck until 12.45 when he went into the chart-room to lie down, telling the second mate to call him at two. The flood tide was making at the time, and the ship going along at about

five knots. At two o'clock he intended to go about to the westward until midnight, coming in on the next tack to fetch the Columbia lightship, and enter the river on the next flood tide. The weather was hazy at the time, and visibility poor, and Captain Williams did not want to lose sight of the land in case the fog should become thicker.

A little after two o'clock the mate put his head in at the chart-room door and said ' Ten minutes past, Sir,' only to return in a few minutes with the announcement: 'She's getting very close in.' The urgency in his voice brought the skipper, who was lying down ' all standing,' on deck with a jump, and he at once saw that the position was desperate. Right ahead loomed the rugged slopes of the Neah-kah-nie Mountain, upon the tangle of rocks at whose base the Pacific surf was breaking.

He immediately ordered the helm to be put up, and all hands to be called. The ship made a gallant effort to answer, but there was a strong current running towards the shore and she did not pay off as quickly as usual. If she had had ten minutes longer she would have cleared the danger. As it was, she struck as she came round and remained fast.

' I told one of the men to see if there was any water in her,' continues the captain's account of the disaster, ' and he came running back with the news that she was already half full.' The starboard lifeboat was lowered, but as soon as it was out of the davits it was smashed to pieces by a big sea, and the crew got safely ashore by means of a line from the bow to the rocks.

The skipper was the last to leave, coming ashore half an hour after everyone else had gone, and the

beautiful ship which had served her masters so long and faithfully was soon pounded to scrap iron by the relentless Pacific surf.

Perhaps the most dramatic of the many wrecks at the mouth of the Columbia was that of the *Cadzow Forest* in 1896. She arrived off the Bar in company with another ship, the *Cambrian King*, and the two skippers backed their mainyards, hove to and held a conversation through their megaphones while they waited for the pilots to come off.

In due course the pilots came on board and the ships squared away to make the entrance. Just then a sudden squall came away off the land, and in the rain and fog they lost sight of each other. The *Cambrian King* was driven out to sea, and did not get into Astoria for nine days, expecting to find her late consort already in port. But she never appeared, and no sign of her was ever found. She was carrying a good deal of canvas at the time the squall struck her, and it was generally thought that she had capsized at once.

The prevailing fogs were also responsible for the loss of the barque *Peter Iredale*, which went ashore in 1906 while trying to make the Columbia River at Point Adams, and whose bones are still to be seen sticking up out of the sands. In her case there was no loss of life, but the *Lupatia* was less fortunate. She ran on the rocks in the night close to the spot where Tillamook lighthouse now stands. The lighthouse was in process of construction at the time, and one of the men working on it sighted a ship's port light and heard someone shout 'Hard aport!' However, no more was heard, so it was thought that the ship had seen her danger in time to get clear of the rocks.

In the morning the top of a ship's masts among the breakers were all that remained to show that a tragedy had occurred during the hours of darkness, and a mongrel sheepdog puppy which was found running about the beach was the only survivor of all on board.

There are at least two perfectly good treasure yarns relating to wrecks on this part of the coast, which may be recommended to the attention of those who cannot afford the correct equipment of a schooner, with one-legged cook and blasphemous parrot complete.

One of them is fairly recent, and refers to the loss of the *Brother Jonathan*, some time in the 'sixties. She was wrecked on what is now called 'Jonathan Rock,' with money on board destined for the pay of the soldiers and Government officials at Vancouver, Washington, and the amount is estimated with a delightful vagueness at anything between a quarter of a million and a million dollars.

Attempts have been made from time to time to recover the treasure, but without success, and highly-coloured yarns have been published of a deep sea diver who went down in search of it, and on returning to the surface refused to tell what he had seen, and could not be persuaded to make another attempt. The sober truth probably is that he saw nothing at all, the most excellent reasons for abandoning the enterprise.

The other treasure story, regarded as a story, is a much better one.

Some time in the late seventeenth century, a ship laden with loot from Mexico and South America was wrecked at the foot of Neah-kah-nie Mountain. The Indians watched the crew toiling up the steep mountain side with a heavy chest, which they buried, having

first, according to pirate custom on such occasions, killed a negro and buried him atop of it: and a writer in a Portland paper mentions 'pieces of beeswax which came off the vessel, bearing the date 1679' as well as mysterious hieroglyphics on the rocks near the place of the wreck.

Now, I hate to cast doubt on a good yarn, but I confess that to me those pieces of beeswax which have lasted two centuries and a half sound a little like the Glozel finds. However, plenty of people have evidently believed in the treasure, for the face of the hillside is literally riddled with the workings of the hopeful hunters. No one has ever found anything: so it is more than likely either that some sceptically-minded Indian decided to take a chance on the nigger's ghost, or else, more probably still, that the buccaneers themselves returned in due course to take it away. Pirates took a lot of risks to get their treasure, and it has always struck me as curious that (unless they happened to get drowned or hanged in the interim) they should have been in the habit of leaving it lying about the surface of the globe like so many absent-minded old ladies.

4

There were few Liverpool ships better known to sailormen in the'seventies and 'eighties than Williamson, Milligan & Co.'s Waverley Line, the ships of which all took their names from Scott's novels, and the iron fullrigger *Cedric the Saxon* was probably the pick of the fleet.

She was built by John Reid & Co., of Port Glasgow, in 1875, and her measurements were as follows:

Length	259	ft.	8	in.
Beam	40	,,	1	,,
Depth	23	,,	6	,,
Midship depth	24	,,	0	,,
Tonnage	1,619 nett.			
	1,705 gross.			

She carried double topgallantsails and a skysail at the main, and is described by one of her masters as a remarkable model with hardly three frames alike in the midship section, having a ' tumble home ' like an old wooden line-of-battleship, so that when she was lying with her rail level with a quay a plank had to be run out for anyone to step ashore.

She was an exceptionally fast ship, with a splendid entrance and a bow flanged like that of a yacht. At the time she was built the æsthetic aspect of ships, apart from the luxury passenger vessel, was beginning to fall into disuse. The bulwarks painted in delicate colours and picked out with bunches of flowers—the wealth of carving about the poop railings, the mottoes, the tea buckets, the cabin with its panelling of bird's-eye maple, and its massive sideboard—all were gone or going. Even the elaborately carved figureheads were beginning to give place to the simplest of female figures representing nothing in particular, or a mere bit of fancy scrollwork with yellow paint instead of gold. But the builders of *Cedric the Saxon* gave her many of the decorative accessories of a bygone dispensation. Her figurehead was a lifelike representation of the Thane of Rotherwood, in armour and with spear in

hand, and the capitals of the teak pilasters at the break of the poop were formed of carved heads of Cœur de Lion, Friar Tuck, and other characters from *Ivanhoe*.

Captain A. T. Pope, D.S.O., R.N.R., who served in her as mate and master from 1888 to 1891, writes regarding her speed: 'While I was in her we made no fast passages, but frequently logged thirteen knots for several consecutive days and fourteen for lesser periods, these speeds being patent log showings at deep loaded draught': and Captain Sir Arthur Rostron, who served his time in her, says that he has known her make 'seventeen knots, and no fuss about it.'

During her early years she made several remarkable passages in the Calcutta jute trade and on the Colonies run, including one from Liverpool to Calcutta of seventy-two days, tying for the record with Carmichael's *Jason*, and another of twenty-six days from Calcutta to the Semaphore; other performances were eighty-four days to Melbourne and eighty to Sydney.

She entered the 'Frisco grain trade in the early 'eighties for the first time, and although she never made any very speedy passages, she participated in some very keen racing.

She sailed from San Francisco on October 1st, 1885, commanded by Captain McNair, her master on the occasion of her memorable Calcutta passage, with 2,319 tons of wheat. The big Belfast-built four-master, *W. J. Pirrie*, left the same day, with 3,864 tons, the largest grain cargo ever loaded at San Francisco at that date. Three days later the *City of Lucknow* also sailed with 1,800 tons of flour. This ship, of course, was one of Smith's fast little Glasgow 'Cities,' built by

Barclay, Curle & Co., originally in the Calcutta jute trade, but then being displaced by the big vessels of the *Palgrave* and *Liverpool* type. The *City of Lucknow* had already made her mark in the grain fleet, having beaten half a dozen ships home the previous year.

All three of the contestants being fast ships, and sailing so close together, a great deal of interest was taken in their performances, and there was more than £1,000 on the race in bets, as well as countless suits of clothes and silk hats.

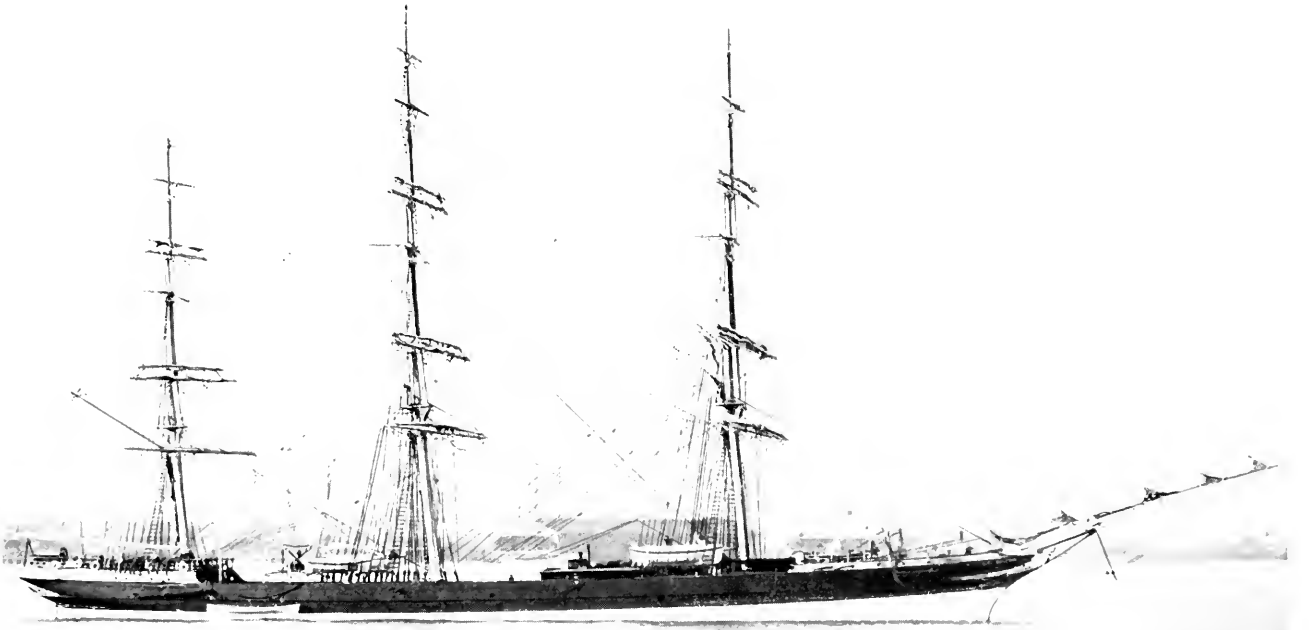
The *City of Lucknow* again proved the winner, arriving in Falmouth Harbour ninety-nine days out. The *Cedric the Saxon* reached Queenstown seventeen days later.

In 1888, however, she beat the fleet on the run home by some ten days, including the *Eaton Hall* and the *Pegasus*. The *Eaton Hall* was owned by the firm of Balfour, Williamson, the latter a cousin of one of *Cedric the Saxon's* owners, and there was a good deal of friendly rivalry between the two.

The *Cedric the Saxon* was still going strong right into the 'nineties, when she went out to Melbourne in seventy-five days, her best passage on that run. In 1896 she left New York with a cargo of case oil for the port where the lost ships go.

She was one of the ships men love. 'I was very proud of the *Cedric*,' says her old captain, 'and my pen runs away when I think of her.'

Most people, no doubt, think of the White Star Line nowadays in terms of luxury liners, the Floating Dock at Southampton, and regiments of stewards carrying washing ashore by the ton.



Photograph lent by *Capt. A. T. Pope*

THE *CEDRIC THE SAXON* IN SAN FRANCISCO

face p. 206

But during the latter part of the last century there was a whole fleet of fine sailing vessels under the familiar red house-flag with the five-pointed star, and perhaps the best known of these was the ship *Dawpool*, of 1,697 tons, built, like all the Company's ships, both sail and steam, at Harland & Wolff's famous Belfast yard.

Her race in 1882 with the famous *Three Brothers* has already been mentioned, and in 1888, commanded by the late Captain Fearon, she went out to Melbourne with general cargo from Liverpool in eighty-one days.

She left on June 14th, and arrived in Melbourne on September 3rd. Like so many of the big powerful modern ships, easting weather was the sort that suited her the best, and in the 'forties she reeled off 5,168 knots in twenty-one consecutive days, an average of 10.4 knots—' Not a bad record,' is Captain Fearon's comment, ' for a ship that did not pretend to be a clipper.' Her biggest day's run during this time was 290 knots in twenty-four hours, as will be seen for the figures for the twenty-one days, given in the Appendix from a diary kept by Captain Fearon.

From Melbourne she went on to Calcutta in ballast, where she loaded general cargo for New York, returning from that port to Calcutta with case oil. In Calcutta she dry-docked, and received a good coating of white lead and tallow. This Captain Fearon considered was largely responsible for the two very good passages she made immediately afterwards. He thought it much superior to any of the patent compositions, whose great virtue was that they dried quickly, thus enabling ships to get out of dry-dock as soon as possible.

The *Dawpool* sailed from Calcutta on December 29th, 1889, with a cargo of gunnies, going south of Australia and New Zealand, and arrived at San Francisco on April 8th, 1890, 101 days out. Here she loaded wheat for Liverpool, and left on June 4th, in company with the *Parthenope*, Heap's fast iron clipper. They towed to sea together, and set sail at the same time, but thanks to the white lead and tallow the *Dawpool* very soon began to draw ahead. The two ships were very evenly matched, so the race promised to be, and proved, very interesting. By daylight the next morning only the *Parthenope's* royals could be seen right astern, and the *Dawpool* did not sight her again during the whole of the passage, arriving at Queenstown on September 9th, and at Liverpool on the 8th, after a passage of ninety-nine days. The *Parthenope*, a very fast sailer sometimes, which went out to Melbourne in 1877 in seventy-seven days, did not turn up until a month later.

A table from Captain Fearon's diary will be found in the Appendix, showing her daily runs for the whole passage, from which it will be seen that, while she never made any sensational times—her best was 250 miles in the twenty-four hours—she kept plugging at it steadily the whole way, averaging 165 miles.

Messrs Nicholson & McGill's *Benmore* left 'Frisco a month after the *Dawpool*, and arrived 106 days out. Next year, in the Atlantic, about 6 degrees south of the Line, she overhauled the *Dawpool*, and her skipper hailed Captain Fearon, with the remark, ' You're not doing so well this time, Fearon! ' The *Benmore* was, of course, considered the faster ship, so Captain Fearon, when they parted company, asked her captain to

report him in Liverpool, and the *Benmore* was soon out of sight ahead. In the Doldrums the *Dawpool* picked her up again, but as soon as the north-east trade came along she once more hauled ahead.

The *Dawpool* duly arrived in Liverpool, and as soon as Captain Fearon called at the office he was ushered into Mr. Imrie's private room.

'What do you think, Captain Fearon?' said Mr. Imrie. 'I met Mr. Nicholson this morning, and he mentioned that the *Benmore* had just arrived at Queenstown, and reported speaking the *Dawpool* in the Atlantic. He said, "Where's your *Dawpool* now?" "Not far away, I expect," I said—and half an hour later I got a telegram, "*Dawpool* passing Holyhead."'

The *Benmore* was a bit of a clipper, and her captain could not make out how the *Dawpool* had managed to beat him. Captain Fearon afterwards heard that her skipper always used to shorten sail at night, which might account for it. If so, he could not have been the same hard-driving Scot under whom she made some of her best passages.

The following year — 1892 — the *Dawpool* again loaded at 'Frisco, and on July 23rd, in lat. 53 S., came in for a big blow from the south-west. The seas were so high that it was not safe to run before them without danger of being badly pooped, so Captain Fearon decided to heave the ship to. The foresail had just been hauled up preparatory to furling it, when the mate had occasion to send one of the apprentices aft to fetch something he wanted. The boy, as he passed the main hatch, noticed that it was stove in. He at once reported it to the captain, who at first could hardly believe him, but the evidence of his own eyes

soon confirmed the boy's tale. A heavy sea had evidently crashed aboard right amidships, and smashed the hatch clean in, and such had been its force that it had even broken the wooden fore-and-aft beam.

It was now midnight, and the *Dawpool* was continually shipping great green seas which were pouring into the stove-in hatch. The first thing to do was to stop the opening, so the foresail was left hanging in the gear, and all hands set to work to get the gap covered temporarily with a sail. No sooner was the canvas spread over the hole, however, than crash! came a tremendous sea on board, and both sail and men went washing in confusion along the deck. They picked themselves up and tackled the job again, and again the same thing happened: but at the third attempt the sail was successfully secured, when the foresail was furled and the ship hove to.

The *Dawpool* was afterwards sold to German owners, and named *Willkommen*. In 1917, under the Norwegian flag, and still classed 100 A1, she was sunk by a German submarine off Tory Island.

5

It is curious to reflect that when the first of the big four-masters came out, in the 1870's, they created quite a sensation in shipping circles, and when the *County of Inverness* went to 'Frisco in 1878, she got something in the nature of a public reception. These ceremonies are quite a feature of the Pacific Coast ports—they date probably from the days of the '49 gold rush—and they occasionally have their humorous

side. I remember once in Victoria standing on the Outer Wharf when a whole crowd of enthusiastic boosters were waiting to receive in state a new Australian liner making her first voyage.

Rubberneck coaches were in waiting to take the passengers for a drive round the city, and as soon as the ship got within earshot a voice boomed out to her through a megaphone:

'We want to show you all the attractions of our beautiful city!'

Promptly came a voice in reply from the approaching ship:

'We've got a better city of our own at home!'

One of the fastest of these ships was J. D. Clink's *Pinmore*, a four-masted barque built by John Reid of Port Glasgow in 1882.

The *Pinmore* was 'baldheaded,' that is, she set nothing above her topgallantsails, but there must have been something speedy about the lines of her hull, for her passages both out and home were consistently good.

In 1893 she took part in a close race with four other ships which left 'Frisco the same day or near it—the *City of Athens*, *Lord Templemore*, *Bowdon* and *Lochee*. Apart from the *City of Athens*, which was one of Smith's fleet, and, like all the rest, a fast sailer, they were a pretty undistinguished lot, and the *Pinmore* won fairly easily. The time was 114 days, the *City's* 121 days, the *Lord Templemore's* 121½, and the *Lochee's* 122. The *Bowdon* never finished the course. But the real honours were with the *Chinsura*, an old Brocklebank ship owned by Hughes & Co., of Menai Bridge, which left 'Frisco thirteen days after the five racers, and arrived

at Queenstown on the same day as the *City of Athens*, after a run of 111 days. Old ships came to some very queer ends. But nobody, probably, could ever have guessed how the *Chinsura* would finish up, for she finally became a Polish training ship under the mellifluous name of *Lwow*—a future which would have sounded as improbable before the War as a pleasure cruise off the sea-coast of Bohemia.

The *Pinmore's* best grain passage was in 1895, ninety-five days 'Frisco to Queenstown. The *Stronsa*, one of Sandbach, Tinne's pretty little ships designed for the coolie trade, also made a rapid passage this year, and the following is taken from her abstract log.

She sailed on Saturday, March 9th, and had moderate weather and variable winds up to 24 N., when she picked up the north-east trade and had a good run nearly to the Line, which she crossed fifteen days out. Good south-east trades lasted to lat. 25 S., and in 39 S. her log records ' a heavy gale of wind lasting on and off for twelve days . . . ship rolling heavily and shipping large quantities of water.' She rounded the Horn, bearing ninety miles distant, forty-four days out, and took the south-east trade in 23 S., which carried her to the Line. The Equator was crossed on May 13th, and the north-east trade stayed with her as far as 34 N., after which she had variable winds to land, sighting the Old Head of Kinsale at six in the morning of June 16th, fifteen miles distant, ninety-nine days out.

The *Pinmore* was abandoned at sea in 1901 while on passage from Santa Rosalia to Portland, but she was salved and continued under the Red Duster to the end. She was sunk by the German raider *Seeadler* in

1917, while bound from Buenos Ayres to the Channel. The German skipper had served in her some years before, and if he had the heart of a sailor it must have gone hard with him to send so gallant an old ship to the bottom.

Another fast four-poster, and next to the *Pinmore* perhaps the most consistent maker of good passages in the grain fleet, was the Nova Scotian owned *Muskoka*, an iron four-masted barque built on the Tees in 1891. The following is a list of her best passages.

1897. Astoria to the Channel, ninety-nine days (Metropolis 103 days).

1898. Cardiff to Hong Kong 86 days.

This was at the time of the Spanish-American War, when the U.S. Government wanted coal for their ships in the Far East in a hurry, and chartered fast ships to carry it. The *Metropolis* went out at the same time in ninety-one days.

1900. Astoria to the Lizard 111 days.

This year one of the Bank Line, the *Cedarbank*, made the best passage, 103 days, the *Rickmer Rickmers* came next with 108, and one of the fastest of the Scottish Shires, the *Clackmannanshire*, was one day better than the *Muskoka*.

1901. Astoria to Queenstown 102 days.

This was the time when she had a great race home with three other ships which left the Columbia River about the same time: the German *Herzogin Sophie Charlotte*, the *Marion Lightbody* (both four-masted barques), and the full-rigger *Ardencraig*. The German vessel was a sea-going training ship run by the North-German Lloyd, and carried a crew of eighty-four husky young Teutons, so the *Muskoka* had to go all out

to beat her. Her skipper, Captain Crowe, did some pretty hard sail carrying in the real Bluenose tradition, and for weeks at a time never started a halyard. She was up with the River Plate fifty days out, and but for an exceptionally long hold-up in the Doldrums should have made a record passage. Her best day's work was 332 miles. As it was, she distanced all the rest, and on a fine April morning the lusty cheers of her crew as her anchor rattled down in Cork Harbour announced her triumphant arrival.

Captain Crowe, who had been her only skipper up to that time, retired not long afterwards, and went into the salvage business at Portland, Oregon. In 1912 he took on the job of getting off a German barque, the *Miami*, which was stranded on the Nehalem beach, fifty miles south of the Columbia. The intention was to try to float her off with the help of tugs, but before they arrived a heavy swell began to roll in from the south-west, and Captain Crowe thought she might go off of herself. Accordingly, the ship's donkey engine and a logging engine that had been installed on board were manned, and started to heave away on the hawsers. The backwash brought the ship off with unexpected suddenness, and the slack of the hawsers could not be got in quickly enough, with the result that she broached to, rolled yardarms under, and finally drifted on to the beach, where she lay on her side with her masts towards the shore. The German captain and two seamen held on to the weather bulwarks till dawn, and they had just been taken off when the *Miami* gave a convulsive roll, righted herself for a few moments, and then plunged into the deep hole scoured under her by the surf.

Captain Crowe and fifteen men were drowned, and their bodies were never recovered. His cherished command survived him by some years, and ended by sinking in deep water at Antofagasta when under the Norwegian flag.

6

Some of Law's Scottish 'Shires'—good-looking, well-kept barques and full-riggers, with the usual Glasgow painted ports—were among the last sailing ships under the British flag. Perhaps the fastest ship in the fleet was the *Sutherlandshire*, which, under two very well-known skippers, made a succession of fast runs in the 'Frisco trade and elsewhere.

The *Sutherlandshire* was built by Russell & Co., of Greenock, in 1882, and under her first master, Captain Peattie, she took part in more than one keenly-contested race. One of her best was in 1885, when she was matched against the *Gretna* and the Aberdeen White Star clipper *Pericles*. The latter ship was, of course, exceedingly fast, like all her sisters, having been built by Hood, of Aberdeen, for the Australian wool trade, in which she and Duthie's *Brilliant* were strong rivals.

The *Sutherlandshire* had finished loading and was anchored in the Bay, when Captain Peattie, who was at breakfast in the saloon, saw through the port a ship which he recognised as the *Pericles*, coming up astern. There were a couple of apprentices on the forecastle, and Captain Peattie hailed one of them. 'Tell Captain Webster I am coming after him,' he said: and the lad just waited until he thought Captain Peattie

was out of earshot to fire off the customary offer, 'Report you in Queenstown!'

The *Sutherlandshire* overhauled the *Gretna* in the South Pacific, where the two ships were twelve days in company, and off the Horn a vessel was sighted on the starboard beam which was soon made out to be the *Pericles*. She also remained for three days in company, and at last the ships parted, each steering a different course.

After this the three racers did not sight each other again, though they must have been pretty close together the whole way up the Atlantic. The *Sutherlandshire* arrived 110 days out, the *Gretna* following three days later, and the *Pericles* a day later again.

The betting at the start had been all in favour of the *Pericles*, and Captain Peattie did not risk much on his own ship's chances. But a pleasant surprise was in store for him, when a few weeks later a banker's draft for £30 reached him, from a 'Frisco supporter who had made a good haul as a result of the *Sutherlandshire's* win.

Her next captain was Captain David Nicoll, one of the best-known skippers and finest seamen sailing out of Glasgow, and although he was not of the fire-eating 'crack-on-and-bust-'er' type, he could take risks on occasion, as the following incident shows.

Before going to the *Sutherlandshire*, Captain Nicoll commanded the *Berwickshire*, and after going out to Cape Town from London with a general cargo he sailed from that port to New Caledonia to load nickel ore.

He made his landfall just west of Noumea, and decided to work through the barrier by Domby Pass. This was decidedly a ticklish job for a ship under sail,

and in ballast trim. In fact, the only vessel said to have done it before was a French training ship, much smaller, and of course with a much bigger crew.

The *Berwickshire* had the usual signal flying for a pilot, but she was more than half-way through the reefs when one put in an appearance. He immediately wanted to run back, as the wind was adverse, and enter by the usual channel, some distance to the southward. But Captain Nicoll would have none of the suggestion, and decided to carry on himself through the reefs and let the pilot take over the ship inside. She went through safely and in fine style, much to the pilot's astonishment.

In 1894 the *Sutherlandshire* went home from Portland, Oregon, in ninety-nine days. The year was a good one, and several fast runs were recorded. The *Port Patrick* made the best, ninety-eight days to Queenstown, and the *Ross-shire* and *Colony* were both 106 days on the water. All four ships arrived together on April 12th.

She again loaded at Astoria in 1897, the best passage of the year being made by the big Belfast ship, *G. W. Wolff*, which was 110 days to Bristol. Next came the *Brynhilda*, with a run of one more day, with the *Sutherlandshire* and *Havila* third with 114 days.

This *Brynhilda* was one of two very fast iron ships owned by Carmichael of Nova Scotia, which in 1905 made a very fast passage of thirty-eight days six hours from Chico Bank, Buenos Ayres, to Adelaide Semaphore. Her average speed was 257 miles a day, and she made several day's runs of more than 300 miles.

Her sister *Swanhilda* was also a very fast vessel, and, moreover, she was one of those ships which seem to have a knack of running up against unusual happen-

ings. Some ships, like some people, are just the opposite. They keep slogging around the seven seas year after year. Sometimes they make a fair passage, sometimes a poor one—they never break records, nor on the other hand do they shock the underwriters by turning up suddenly after they have become practically uninsurable. They get bad weather, they get good weather, never anything out-of the-way sensational, one way or the other. And when they have finished, there seems to be nothing whatever to say about them.

Others, on the contrary, stuff all sorts of excitements into comparatively short lives, and this *Swanhilda* was one of them. Among her performances was a passage of sixty-seven days from Wallaroo with a wheat cargo, under a skipper of the old Bluenose stamp, Captain Fraser, and another of twenty-three days, claimed as a record, from Japan to San Francisco. On another occasion she was matched against Sewall's big *Shenandoah* in a race across the Atlantic, but they both encountered such fierce gales after leaving the Channel that their passage ran over thirty-six days.

One of her queer experiences was when she sailed from Newcastle some time in the late 'nineties—I have not the exact year—and signed on a man who produced a master mariner's certificate. About this time there had been several mysterious disappearances in Newcastle of men who had made appointments to meet someone to discuss a business proposition and had never been seen again. One of these men was a master mariner, and it was afterwards found that the man the *Swanhilda* had signed on was the murderer. His method had been to induce his victims to go out with

him to a lonely place to inspect a supposed mining proposition, when he calmly knocked them on the head and plundered them.

The *Swanhilda* was later wrecked on Staten Island under peculiarly tragic circumstances. Her captain had recently married, and his wife sailed with him on a honeymoon trip. They were cast up on the beach, locked in each other's arms, and the horror of the tragedy drove one of the survivors insane.

In 1899 the *Sutherlandshire* sailed a close race from New Caledonia with Roxburgh's iron four-master *Armadale*, of 1,960 tons. The *Armadale* left New Caledonia for the Clyde five days ahead of Law's ship, and the two fell in with each other and were in company for a time north of New Zealand. The *Sutherlandshire* then went ahead, and arrived at the Tail of the Bank the day before the *Armadale*, after a passage of ninety-six days.

The *Armadale* was an iron barque built by Alexander Stephen & Sons, of Linthouse, and although not strictly a clipper she was a fine model. Captain Duncan took her from the slips, and commanded her for fourteen years. He took a great pride in his ship, and under him she was always kept in spick-and-span condition. She was best known in the Australian trade, in which she made several good passages. The following is a record of her best runs:

London to Melbourne, 80 days.
Melbourne to London, 81 days.
Liverpool to Melbourne, 97 days.
Melbourne to Liverpool, 91 days.
Fredrikstad to Melbourne, 97 days.

Melbourne to Fredrikstad, 99 days.
Calcutta to London, 107 days.
'Frisco to Falmouth, 117 days.
New Caledonia to Glasgow, 103 days.

The *Sutherlandshire* was lost on Java Head in the early nineteen-hundreds, and Captain Nicoll's wife, who sailed with him, was drowned. Captain Nicoll himself was ill for some time through a poisoned leg, and on his recovery was appointed to the barque *Gulf Stream*, then under the Shire Line house-flag. She left Glasgow in 1912, bound to Puget Sound. It was the year of the new load line, which at a stroke of the pen wiped out much of Samuel Plimsoll's life work, a fatal date in the annals of the sailing ship. A few months later the *Kinross-shire*, another of Law's ships, sailed from the Tyne, also bound by way of the Horn. She met with very severe weather in the South Atlantic, gale succeeding gale from the latitude of Cape Frio until she was south of the Falkland Islands. There she had to put back to Port Stanley; the cargo had shifted, and a part of it had been jettisoned, while the lazarette was wrecked and most of the provisions rendered useless by the salt water.

Captain McKay, of the *Kinross-shire*, had formerly been Captain Nicoll's mate, and all this time he had felt very anxious as to the safety of his old skipper and the *Gulf Stream*. As the ship entered Port Stanley, one of the apprentices, a nephew of Captain Nicoll's, went aloft to report what ships were at the anchorage, hoping, as did Captain McKay, to see the *Gulf Stream* among them. But the familiar painted ports were not there among the vessels which had taken refuge in

that welcome haven of the storm-tossed and disabled sailing ship. The *Gulf Stream* had made her last landfall.

7

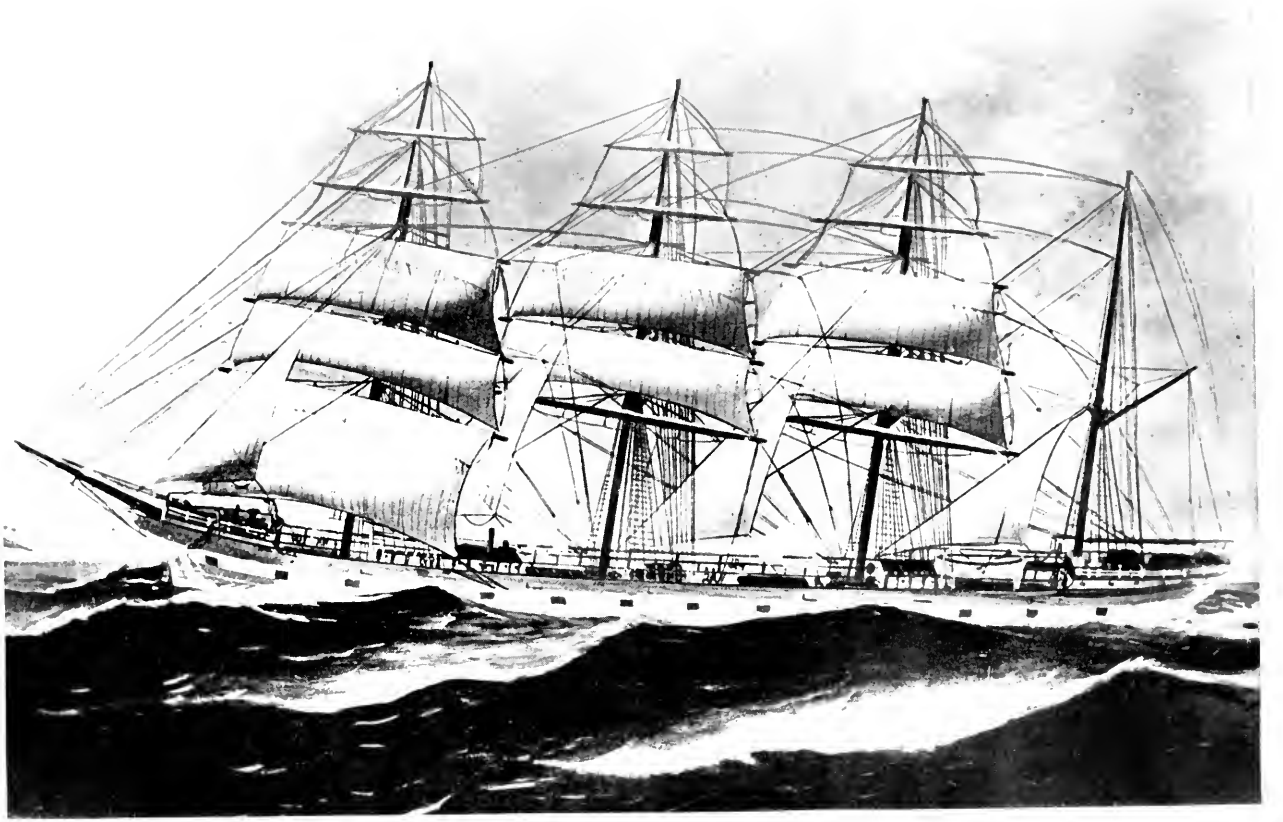
The *Shenandoah*, to which reference has just been made, was one of three wooden ships, the *Shenandoah*, *Susquehanna* and *Roanoke*, built and owned by A. Sewall and Co., of Maine. The *Roanoke* was never a fast vessel, but both the *Susquehanna* and the *Shenandoah*, great ugly lumps of ships though they were, made good passages, more especially the last-named under her Irish-American skipper Captain Murphy, known for some reason by the nickname of 'Shotgun.' Captain Murphy rather prided himself on being a 'hard case,' but he was one of those whose bark was worse than his bite. Some of these down-east skippers decidedly fancied themselves in the rôle of 'Nicholas B. Satan,' and did their best to keep it up. He could not bear to see another ship go past him, and big ship though the *Shenandoah* was, she was surprisingly weatherly and did a lot of racing. On her maiden passage she was matched against another fast down-easter, the *S. D. Carleton*, and beat her by three days to Havre. She then loaded a cargo of French pebbles for New York, but owing to gales off the Channel did not make that port for thirty-six days. From New York she went round to 'Frisco, and had a close race with Soule's *Tam O'Shanter*, commanded by another of the 'Nicholas B. Satan' type, Captain Peabody. Both ships sailed on the same day, and the winds being unusually

light they carried their canvas all the way round the Horn, and arrived off the Golden Gate together, 115 days out. Off San Francisco there was a good deal of fog, in which Captain Peabody got his tug first and slipped in ahead of the *Shenandoah*.

The big four-master next loaded nearly 5,000 tons of wheat and barley for Liverpool, and arrived 115 days out. Potter's *Wanderer* reached Liverpool a day before her, having sailed eight days ahead. This was, of course, the ship which has gained an unexpected renown as the subject of Mr. Masefield's pen. 'I don't know why Masefield wrote about the *Wanderer*,' I have heard more than one old sailorman say. 'I knew her, she was an ugly, clumsy ship. The *Seafarer* was far better worth making a poem on.' Certainly, her portraits do not make her out very attractive, with her short spike bowsprit, and the raised midship section which seems somehow out of place in a sailing ship. Roxburgh's *Bracadale* ran the *Shenandoah* a dead heat.

These passages were by no means the best of the year—1892. It was an unusually good season, and there were no less than six ships which arrived under 100 days out. The *Falls of Garry* made the run in ninety days, or eighty-eighty land to land; she covered 6,000 miles during the first thirty days of the passage, and several times logged 285 miles. The *Ennerdale* came home in ninety-three days, the *Alcinous*, of Carmichael's fleet, in ninety-four, and the *Knight of St. Michael* in ninety-eight, while the *Dawpool's* time was ninety-nine.

This passage of the *Falls of Garry* is, I believe, the record, though the Workington-built *Andelana*, which



THE *BRACADALE*

(Sister ship to the *Armadale*. From a painting in the possession of Mr. J. Murray Tomory)

face p. 222

came from 'Frisco to Brow Head in eighty-nine days a year later, ran it pretty close. The record from Astoria is held by Hogarth's *Machrihanish*, which, in 1892, made a run of ninety-one days with a cargo of tinned salmon. The *Westland's* seventy-nine-day passage is a myth. The only run recorded by her from Astoria is 100 days in 1889. I also find a mention of a ship called the *Caitlock* which ran from Astoria to Queenstown in eighty-three days, but this I have not been able to verify.

In 1913 the British ship *Boadicea*, Captain Jones, and the German *Goldbek* under a Captain Kaletsch, sailed for Cork with wheat from the Columbia River. They both left on the same day—January 6th—and the only thing remarkable about the race was that it ended in a dead heat. It was nothing of a passage—the time was 135 days—but it is worth mentioning for two reasons. One, as I have said, is that two ships should have covered 16,000 miles of ocean and arrived within an hour of each other. The other is the fact of its melancholy significance as the last of the Pacific Coast grain races.

8

If the principal trade routes of the ocean may be described, the warp of the complicated web of oversea shipping, the various cross passages which linked them together might equally well be termed its weft, and much might be written about their history did time permit. Here, however, a brief mention of a few must suffice.

There was that great run of the *British Ambassador* in 1888, for example, thirty-nine days from 'Frisco to Newcastle, N.S.W., at an average speed of over seven knots. She raced on that occasion with six other ships, several of them noted for speed. The *Jubilee* came next with forty days, then Williamson, Milligan & Co.'s *Kenilworth* with forty-one. The *Port Jackson*, *Beecroft*, and *Queen's Island*—later the *Strathdon* of the Aberdeen White Star line—were all forty-four days on the road.

The *British Ambassador* was a wonderful old ship. She was built by Potter & Hodgkinson, of Liverpool, in 1873, for the British Shipowners Company of that city, whose chairman was the late Mr. James Beazley, and cost £42,000 to build. She had fitted royal masts, not poles, and her mainyard was 108 feet long—a tremendous spar. She had also a very good name under her popular skipper, Captain Banks, for treating her men well, both as regarded food and housing. The crew occupied a 'Liverpool' house on deck, and the apprentices' quarters were also much better than usual. She had a long life of fifty-five years, during which she met with none but the usual minor mishaps inseparable from a career at sea, and was at last sold for breaking up for £2,300.

Then there was the run of the *Howard D. Troop* across the Pacific, under her redoubtable Bluenose commander, Captain Irvine A. Durkee, of twenty days from Yokohama to Astoria. The abstract log of the passage is as follows:

Date.	Lat.	Long.	Miles.	Remarks.
Sept. 6				Got under way 6 a.m., light E. wind: pilot left at 2 p.m. Light baffling airs.
7	34.31 N.	140.20 E.		Light wind and calm: heavy S.E. swell. Distance sailed, 50 miles.
8	35.40 N.	142.40 E.	134	Light N.E. and S.W. winds, S.E. swell.
9	37.12 N.	145.32 E.	150	Moderate S. and S.E. winds and fine.
10	38.21 N.	149.13 E.	205	Fresh breeze, thick fog, S. and S.E. winds.
11	39.37 N.	151.22 E.	125	Moderate S.E. wind and fine; heavy S.E. sea.
12	41.21 N.	156.13 E.	256	Strong S.E. to S.W. wind with rain.
13	42.09 N.	162.29 E.	297	Strong S.W. wind, thick fog and rain.
14	42.14 N.	166.42 E.	180	W., N. and E., fine, rain, and fog.
15	42.58 N.	171.28 E.	209	Wind E., S.E. and S., thick fog.
16	42.44 N.	178.20 E.	312	Strong southerly gales.
*17	42.31 N.	176.09 W.	243	Strong southerly gales, with hard squalls.
17	43.30 N.	171.31 W.	210	Wind W., moderating, and canting northerly.
18	44.09 N.	165.25 W.	250	Wind N.W., S.W., and S.
19	45.10 N.	163.13 W.	120	Wind S., W., N.N.E., and E.
20	45.22 N.	157.14 W.	260	Strong southerly winds, thick fog.
21	45.24 N.	148.44 W.	351	Strong S.S.W. wind, with rain.
22	46.08 N.	141.09 W.	312	Strong S.S.W. to S. wind.

* Date line.

Date.	Lat.	Long.	Miles.	Remarks.
Sept.				
23	46.36 N.	136.00 W.	238	Wind shifted to W., N.W. and N.N.W.
24	46.36 N.	136.00 W.	220	N. wind and fine.
25	46.36 N.	127.04 W.	165	Light N. and N.E. wind and fine.
26	8 a.m. made Columbia River lightship, 10 a.m. pilot came on board: noon got tugboat: 2 p.m. anchored off Astoria.			

Among other passages of the *Howard D. Troop*, as well as her Transatlantic record westward, mentioned in an earlier chapter, is one of eighty-two days from Sydney to London wheat-laden. She later, under the name of *Annie M. Reid*, formed one of the fleet of the Rolph Coal and Cement Company, which, with the exception of the Alaska Packers Company, was almost the last concern operating sailing vessels out of a North Pacific port, and under their flag she went from Honolulu to San Francisco in thirty-three days.

The record between Newcastle and San Francisco is, I believe, held by a German ship, the *Christine*, which went across in forty days. The *Loch Torridon* in the 'nineties made a notable passage of forty-five days between the same ports: and in 1896 I find Captain Whitson, of the *Wendur*, *Loch Torridon's* great rival, writing to the *Chilean Record*, as follows:

'Have just broken three records—eighty-one days Fredrikstad to Melbourne, twenty days Cape Town to Melbourne, averaging 295 miles a day, twenty-nine days Newcastle to Valparaiso.'

Lastly, here is an account of an interesting impromptu race across the Pacific from Newcastle to Acapulco. The ships concerned were the *Pass of Leny*, one of several big steel ships built by R. Duncan for Gibson

and Clark, of Glasgow, and a St. John-built skysail yarder, the *Erin's Isle*, owned by De Wolf, of Liverpool. I am indebted for the story of the race to Captain F. W. Ellis, who was in the *Pass of Leny* at the time.

'We had just finished loading coal at Newcastle,' he writes, 'and lay moored to a buoy close to the harbour entrance. At a neighbouring buoy, also ready for sea, lay the full-rigged ship *Erin's Isle*. She was a Bluenose ("built" only) crossing three skysail yards, and had every appearance of being a mover. Like us, she was bound for Acapulco, and the two skippers very soon agreed to make a race of it.

'We had already had a taste or two of our Old Man's driving tendencies, and we guessed that we should see some cracking on when we got to sea. Not that we minded, far from it. On the contrary, I believe we looked forward to the race every bit as keenly as the skipper, if not more so.

'The *Erin's Isle* slipped her buoy on Saturday, and towed clear of the anchorage, then spreading her white wings she was soon lost to sight. On Monday we followed suit, and I swear the old barkey was glad to feel the sea under her once more, so cheerily did she dip and sway to the breeze that piped through the rigging. Topsails, topgallantsails, and royals were mastheaded one after another to the strains of a lustily rendered halliard shanty, and soon every stitch of canvas was set and drawing, and the land rapidly dropping astern. As usual, in a ship leaving port, there was plenty of work to do, and it was four in the afternoon before the word was given—"All right, Mister—set the watches"—and the routine of our little sea world had once more properly begun.

'The windjammer's route across the Pacific was not, of course, that which would be followed by a steamer. First of all we made southing as far as 50 S. latitude, then started to run the easting down before the big seas and howling westerly gales that prevail in those waters, most of the time under reefed foresail and main upper topsail. We knew the Old Man meant to go all out to beat the Bluenose, so we expected some real deep sea sailing, and we got it. We were kept continually at it shaking out reefs, sweating up, and reefing again, with the albatrosses and mollyhawks for our constant companions. The Old Man seldom left the poop while we were in these latitudes, and when he did he would generally say to the mate or second mate: "Don't start anything, Mister! Call me if it blows harder, or if there is any change!"

'But all things come to an end, even at sea, and at last the time came when the *Pass of Leny* turned her nose to the north. Dry decks were again the order of the day, and so we forgot the storms, the bitter cold and the driving spray of the high south latitudes. The albatrosses, mollyhawks, and Cape pigeons turned back to the wild and watery wastes which were their home. Oilskins and seaboots were dressed and put by. Once more we were able to sleep on deck, and more than one savoury breakfast of flying fish came the way of those who kept awake during the night watches.

'Near the Line we ran into a belt of calm. Whistle for a wind as we might, not a breath came. The heat was stifling. Christmas Day found us right on the Equator, but it was not much of a holiday for us. We spent it hauling yards round to catch every tiny puff of wind, and occasionally standing by the royal

halliards for a sudden squall, accompanied by a deluge of rain. However, we celebrated the day in time-honoured sea fashion, with a tot of grog and the usual plum duff, the sort only wind-jammer cooks could make, and only shellbacks eat.

'However, we got a wind at last, and once more reeled off the knots again under all our canvas, our hopes as to the result of the race rising high again. But alas! it was not long before we ran into yet another calm belt, in which we lay for a fortnight without making any steerage way whatever.

'One afternoon watch, while we were thus becalmed, a number of black objects were sighted, which were made out on observation through glasses to be turtles asleep on the water. There was still no sign of a breeze, so the skipper gave permission for a party to go away after them, and we very soon had thirty fine turtles lying helpless on their backs in the bottom of the boat. We lived like City aldermen as long as they lasted, on turtle soup and turtle steaks, in fact, we got heartily sick of it. Still, it was a change from salt junk. It was not often one got a chance of seeing one's own ship in mid-ocean, and the sight was very impressive. Noble though she looked, as she rose and fell lazily on the swell, with her shapely hull and lofty masts and yards, she yet seemed surprisingly small in that wide expanse of sea and sky, where she was the only thing to break the solitude.

'We kept on drifting a little and taking advantage of every little catspaw, and at last made the land and anchored for the night just outside the land-locked harbour of Acapulco. We had hoped for a tug, but there was none there, so we had to kedge up to the

anchorage, which was pretty warm work in the tropical heat. All this time we were anxiously looking out for any sign of our rival, and when the harbour at last lay open before us, up went our caps into the air and a rousing cheer came from every throat on board. Good old *Pass of Leny*! She had won the long ocean race, sixty-three days out from Newcastle, not at all bad time when it is remembered how long she had lain becalmed.

'A week later, when our sails had been unbent and we had started to discharge our cargo, a ship was sighted, which by her three lofty skysails we knew to be the *Erin's Isle*, and we hoisted our biggest ensign and mastheaded our best house-flag as she kedged up to her moorings. It had been a great race: and when the two ship's logs were compared, it was found that they had crossed the Line on the same day, thirty miles apart.

'According to sailing ship custom, some of the *Pass of Leny's* crowd were sent on board the *Erin's* Isle, and with the extra help she was quickly moored. Of course our men did not forget to indulge in plenty of leg-pulling over the result of the race, but we very soon found that the crew of the *Erin's Isle* were a very spiritless lot. The reason was not far to seek. They were kept under by sheer terrorism, in which all the officers and the afterguard took a part. Blows and kicks were commonplaces on board, and knuckle-dusters were freely used. Firearms were often exhibited, and no doubt would have been used on the slightest provocation.

'We, in the *Pass of Leny*, would stand no bullying from our own mates, and we cared still less for black

looks from theirs. So our shantymen gave voice loud and long, and the mate of the *Erin's Isle* came in for a number of choice compliments improvised by the soloist. One verse which went with a rare swing was:

> So here's to our captain where'er he may be,
> He's a friend to us sailors on land or on sea,
> But as for this chief mate, the dirty old brute,
> We hope when he dies down below he will scoot.
> *Chorus.* Singing roll, roll, bullies, roll,
> For the Liverpool girls have got us in tow.

The mate gave us some terribly black looks, and neither he nor we were sorry when it was time for us to return to our own ship, which we did to the strains of " Leave her, Johnny, leave her," with still more personal references thrown in.'

CHAPTER VII

Conclusion

IT is no part of my intention to describe in any detail the races—so-called—which have taken place since the War between the little fleet of sailing ships carrying wheat from Australia. This, for obvious reasons—chief among them being that these ships and their doings have already received their full share, and rather more than their share, of publicity.

Books—some good, some bad—have been written about them. Films have been made about them. And each year the Press comes out with sensational headlines about ' clipper ships racing for the Channel.' Why, there isn't a clipper among the lot of them! And as for their passages, take them all round, they are such as would have made a skipper of the real old racing sort throw his dinner at the steward and cuss the ship from the Lizard to the Leeuwin!

The pity of it all is, that it gives the general public such an utterly false impression of what sail really was. Some few of the ships taking part in these ' races '—especially those owned by Captain Eriksen, of Mariehamn, a genuine enthusiast for the survivors of sail—are as well kept as a sailing ship in these days could ever hope to be. But others are the reverse, and most are cruelly hard-run and hopelessly undermanned—one of the last British square-riggers went to sea with eight

seamen and *no* sailmaker. People read about them in the papers, and are inspired, perhaps, to go to the Docks and see them for themselves: with the result that they come away saying sadly, 'What! Is that what the vaunted days of sail were like? That dirt, that beastliness, that neglect, that mankilling labour? Then the sooner they are dead and buried the better!'

It is as if one were to haul out of the back recesses of a mouldy stable some ancient barouche in which hens have been roosting for a generation or two, hitch it to a couple of broken-kneed cabhorses with an incomplete set of harness eked out with string, and then proclaim it abroad as a specimen of the horse-drawn vehicle.

Two races between smaller utility craft still survive, which may be briefly mentioned here. One is that between representatives of the North Atlantic fishing fleets of which Mr. Kipling's *Captains Courageous* gives so lively a picture. I have been told that there is a regrettable tendency for the 'pot-hunting element' to creep in here, and that some of the entries are fishing craft, like the wives in modern novels, 'in name only.' Then there is the Thames Barge race which takes place every year in Sea Reach below Gravesend. This is a bona-fide contest between genuine working barges. It dates from the eighteen-sixties, and it is more than likely that the vogue of racing among the big ships inspired the barges to emulation. The clippers are all gone, but the barges keep it up as keenly as ever. Long may they do so!

From the purely sporting standpoint ocean racing

appears to be enjoying a steadily increasing vogue. Some of the events so called really only begin where the great races of the past left off: but others are really sailed on blue water, and the Transatlantic Race arranged by the American Cruising Club and the Ocean Racing Club continue to attract entries in growing numbers, as do the Fastnet Race and those across the Channel and the North Sea.

But ocean racing, as it was understood in the days of the clipper ships and their immediate successors, is now definitely a thing of the past. It lives only in faded newspapers, in the memories of old men growing yearly fewer, and in the yellowed pages of old log books, from whose terse phrases rise up a hundred pictures of sights now vanished for ever.

A ship off the Tuskar—the tug just dropping astern and the canvas growing on her yards like blossoms opening on a Maytime bough—rolling down to St. Helena under all plain sail—flying like a driven leaf before the winds and seas of the far south—beating round the Horn in the teeth of the westerlies, or lying hove to under a rag of canvas with the seas pouring over her like water over a weir—becalmed on the Line, her idle sails drooping like flags over a tomb, her skipper biting his nails with impatience as he whistles for a wind—surging up Channel hotfoot for home in the rose and pearl of dawn. Sights never more to be seen by the eye of man—the ocean racers of the past.

THE END

APPENDIX I

THE following figures, showing the comparative degree of fineness of some representative ships, may help to indicate the development of the extreme clippers during the 'sixties. They are arrived at as follows: the factors used are the inside under-deck length of the ship multiplied by the breadth and depth, which gives a long narrow, shallow solid, from which the model or shape of the ship is to be cut out. The under-deck tonnage of the ship at 100 cubic feet per ton is to be divided by this solid in cubic feet. The result will be a fraction, large or small, according as the ship is full built or fine built. Thus, if in cutting away the solid block to the shape of the ship exactly one half of the material is removed, the fineness will be represented by the decimal fraction ·50, suppose only one quarter is cut away the decimal fraction will be ·75. This is not the Naval Architect's exact 'Block Co-efficient,' but when the same rule is used for each different ship it gives a very fair idea of their fullness or fineness of build. It will be noticed that the *Challenger* is quite a fine-lined ship for her date.

Wigram's *Suffolk*, built	1857	·70
T. & W. Smith's *St. Lawrence*	1861	·73
Challenger	1852	·63
Falcon	1859	·64
Wild Deer	1863	·67
Taeping	1863	·67
Fiery Cross II	1860	.62
Ariel	1865	·61
Sir Lancelot	1865	·63
Maitland	1865	·64
Titania	1866	·58
Spindrift	1867	·57
Leander	1867	·57
Thermopylae	1868	·59
Cutty Sark	1869	·57
Lothair	1870	·61

I am indebted for the above interesting note to Captain T. S. Angus.

APPENDIX II

Ship *Dawpool*, 1,697 tons Reg.

Copy of a rough diary kept by the late Captain T. C. Fearon.

Day's runs, August 1888, between the Cape of Good Hope and Melbourne, average speed 246 miles per day for twenty-one days —of twenty-three hours, thirty-six minutes, 10·4 knots.

	258
	232
	220
	176
	290
	290
	228
	242
	276
	256
	276
	200
	280
	204
	252
	252
	262
	220
	264
	260
	230
Total ..	5,168 miles

APPENDIX III

Ship *Dawpool.*

Copy of a diary kept by the late Captain T. C. Fearon.

Distance sailed between San Francisco and Liverpool. Sailed from San Francisco June 4th, 1890, arrived in Liverpool September 11th, 1890. Total passage ninety-nine days.

165	106	215	110	238	80	164	115	150	222	1,648
202	116	189	192	161	104	162	120	110	176	1,744
180	142	172	150	220	112	192	70	120	80	1,986
166	177	174	202	136	215	202	65	94	120	1,976
184	191	210	240	206	100	213	50	110	108	1,664
137	205	250	211	236	220	187	148	140	75	1,501
127	196	228	243	80	146	172	212	94	34	1,838
159	184	242	240	65	142	181	220	116	130	1,418
164	207	216	158	162	170	183	228	156	170	1,290
164	220	90	230	160	212	182	190	200		1,115
1,648	1,744	1,986	1,976	1,664	1,501	1,838	1,418	1,290	1,115	16,180

Total distance 16,180 miles, being an average of 163½ miles per day, for the whole passage.

T. C. FEARON,
Master.

INDEX

Aberdeen White Star Line, 83, 124
Alabama, 191
Albatross, superstition, 173
Alcinous, 222
Alert, 18 *et seq.*
Algerine corsairs, 3, 4
Algoa Bay, record passage to, 197
Allen, Capt., 21
America (s.s.), 38
Andelana, 222
Anderson, Capt. Lindsay, 23
Anderson, Capt., see *Miako*
Andrew Jackson, 40
Anglesey, 72
Anglona, 22
Angus, Capt. T. S., 110
Annie M. Reid, see *Howard D. Troop*
Ann McKim, 18, 20, 29
Antelope, 22
Anticosti Island, 33
Antiope, 150
Archer, 46
Archibald Fuller, 193
Architect, 87
Ardencraig, 213
Argonaut, 136, 166
Ariel (tea clipper), 100 *et seq.*
Ariel (American), 22
Aristides, 148, 149, 177
Armadale, 219
Ashby, Capt., see *City of Auckland.*
Astoria, record passage from, 223
Asuncion, see *Miako*
Auckland, 177 *et seq.*
Australian trade, 64 *et seq.*, 121 *et seq.*
Avalanche, 172 *et seq.*
Aviemore, 129
Avacucho, 17

Babcock, Capt., 48
Baines, Mr. James, 46, 56, 59, 65, 67
Bald Eagle, 61
Baldheaded ships, 184
Bal our, Williamson & Co., 206
Baltimore clippers, 15 *et seq.*
Banks, Capt., see *British Ambassador*
Barclay, Curle & Co., 34, 134
Bates, Joshua, 180
Beazley, Mr. James, 65, 89, 224
Beecroft, 224
Belted Will, 99
Ben Cruachan, 165
Benjamin F. Hunt, 118
Bengairn, 165
Benlee, 165
Benmore, 165 *et seq.*, 189, 191, 208
Bennett, J. Gordon, 38
Ben Nevis (iron), 165
Ben Nevis (wood), 165
Ben Venue, 182
Ben Voirlich, 149, 154
Berwickshire, 216
Blackadder, 139, 166
Blackwall, 71
Blue Jacket, 65-6
Boadicea, 223
Bonanza, 58
Boole, Miss Albenia (Mrs. Donald McKay), 35
Bowdon, 211
Bowfell, 153
Bracadale, 222
Bragg, Capt., 159
Breach, Capt. Mark, 129
Brennan, Capt. J., see *Rory O'More*
Briggs (American builder), 45
Brilliant, 215
British Ambassador, 224
British King, 191
British Shipowners' Company, 224
Brocklebank Line, 153
Brooklyn Navy Yard, 35
Brother Jonathan, 202
Brown & Bell (American builders), 23, 83
Brynhilda, 217

Cadzow Forest, 201
Cairngorm, 86, 90
Cairnsmore, 165
Caitlock, 223
California gold rush, 6
California passages, 38 *et seq.*, 188 *et seq.*
California (American brig), 18
Cambrian King, 201
Canada (Cunarder), 56
Canterbury, 177
Carmichael, T. & Co., 134
Cats, superstition as to, 175
Catullus, 2
Cedarbank, 213

Cedric the Saxon, 138, 203 *et seq.*
Celtic Monarch, 198
Centurion, 124
Challenge, 41, 84 *et seq.*
Challenger, 84 *et seq.*, 111
Champion of the Seas, 68, 72
Charger, 191
Chariot of Fame, 167
Chieftain (brig), 51
Childers, 99
China Pilot, The, 78 *et seq.*
China trade, 6, 21 *et seq.*, 78 *et seq.*
Chinsura, 211
Christine, 226
Chrysolite, 84, 89
Churchill, Capt., see *St. Bernard*
Cimba, 134
City of Agra, 134
City of Athens, 211
City of Auckland, 170
City of Lucknow, 205
Clackmannanshire, 213
Clayton, Capt., 66
Clink's fleet, 180, 211
Cobb, Capt. G., 90, 111
Coldinghame, 118
Collingwood, 134
Colony, 217
Columbus, 24
Congress, 21
Contest, 45, 192
County of Inverness, 186, 210
Connell (builder), 99, 110
Cressy, Capt. J., 39 *et seq.*
Crowe, Capt., see *Muskoka*
Crown of Italy, 187
Crusader, 17 *et seq.*
Currier, 35
Cutty Sark, 70, 108, 115, 130-1, 134, 138, 186
Cynisca, 148

Dana, R. H., 17 *et seq.*
Darlington, Capt. J., 90
David Brown, 60
Dawpool, 191, 207 *et seq.*, 222
Deal galleys, 4
De Wolf, C. E. & Co., 193, 195, 227
Ditton, 135
Donald McKay, 68, 76
Dougherty Island, 47
Douglas Castle, 112
Dovenby, 198
Dovenby Hall, 198
Dowdy, Capt., 107
Dragon, 109
Dramatic Line, 21
Dreadnought, 56
Dumaresq, Capt. P., 60
Duncan, Capt., see *Armadale*
Duncan, R. (builder), 177, 227
Dunedin, 177
Durkee, Capt. Irvine A., see *Howard D. Troop*

Eamont, 23
Earl of Zetland, 167
Eaton Hall, 206
Eclipse, 63
Edith Cavell (s.s.), 166
Edwards, Capt., see *Benmore*
Eldridge, Capt., A., 69
Ellen Rodger, 88, 92 *et seq.*
Else, ex *Daphne*, 151
Ennerdale, 222
Enright, Capt. A., 83, 84
Eriksen, Capt., 233
Erin's Isle, 227 *et seq.*
Etienne, 80-1
Eurynome, 150
Everest, 58

Fairy (Royal yacht), 74
Falcon (yacht), 22
Falcon (tea clipper), 92 *et seq.*, 99
Falls of Garry, 222
Fearon, Capt., see *Dawpool*
Fiery Cross (1), 88, 91
Fiery Cross (2), 92 *et seq.*, 99
Findlay (owner), 94
Flowery Land, 26
Floyd, Mr. Gilbert, 92
Flying Childers, 61, 99
Flying Cloud, 36, 38 *et seq.*, 44 *et seq.*
Flying Fish, 47 *et seq.*, 52, 99
Flying Spur, 92, 99
Forbes, Capt. J. N. ('Bully'), 65, 69, 76, 159
Forbes, R. B., 22
Forest Queen, 176

Fox Line, 65
Foyledale, 198

Galley of Lorn (early steamer), 102
Gamecock, 67
Gatherer, 140
General Wyndham, 76
George Thompson, 124, 128
George Washington, 21
Glenalvon, 196
Glenesslin, 196 *et seq.*
Glengarry (early steamer), 119
Gleniffer, 47
Glenogle (early steamer), 119
Glory of the Seas, 189
Goldbek, 223
Golden City ex *Challenger*, 86
Golden Fleece, 134 *et seq.*
Golden Racer, 99
Great Britain (s.s.), 59
Great Eastern (s.s.), 135
Great Republic, 62
Green, R. & H., 72, 84
Gretna, 215
Grey, Capt., R.N.R., see *Omar Pasha*
Griffiths, J. W., 29, 68
Grinnell, Minturn & Co., 35, 38, 88
Griswold, N. L. & G., 41
Groom, Capt. R., 37
Gulf Stream, 220
G. W. Wolff, 217

Hall, Alexander, 22, 84, 86, 89
Hall, Capt. Basil, 29
Hallowe'en, 115, 147
Harland & Wolff, 207
'Harriet Lane' (slang term), 156
Harrison, T. & J., 193
Harvester, 140
Havila, 213
Heap's 'Thames and Mersey Line,' 150
Heather Bell, 131
Herzogin Sophie Charlotte, 213
Hogarth (owner), 223
Hood (builder), 34, 83, 108, 215
Hoodoo ships, 138 *et seq.*
Hooghly (river), 27
Houqua, 23, 31
Howard D. Troop, 57, 224
Huggins (painter), 16

Illiwarra, 167
Inconstant (H.M.S.), 57
India Pale Ale, 55
Innes, Capt., 101
Invercargill, 177
Isla de la Palma, see *Miako*
Island Queen (tug), 102
Ismay, Imrie & Co., 137

Jacob Bell, 61
James Baines, 68, 172 *et seq.*, 160
Jamie Green (sail), 90, 100
Jardine, Matheson & Co., 86
Jason, 137 *et seq.*, 205
Jeanette, 83
Jerusalem, 129, 134, 146, 147
Johansen, Capt., see *Senator*
John Bertram, 86, 87
John Bunyan, 83, 124
John Duthie, 134
John Gilpin (brig), 18, 20
John Gilpin (clipper), 48 *et seq.*, 52, 61
Jones, Capt., see *Boadicea*
Josephine, 21
Joys, Capt., see *Benmore*
Jubilee, 224

Kaletsch, Capt., see *Goldbek*
Keay, Capt., 92, 101 *et seq.*
Kemball, Capt., 108
Kenilworth, 224
Kent, 66
Killeena, 62
Killick & Martin, 90, 115
Kingdom of Saxony, 132
King Edward, 198
Kinrossshire, 220
Kirkup, Capt., see *Fiery Cross* (2)
Kite, Capt. ('Flying'), see *Archibald Fuller*
Knight of St. Michael, 222
Kylemore, 165, 177

La Escocesa, 189 *et seq.*
Lady Jocelyn, 74
La France, 62
Laira, 180 *et seq.*

Langdale, 191
Law's Shire Line, 215
Leander, 115
Lennie, 26
Libelle (s.s.), 145
Light Brigade ex *Ocean Telegraph*, 167
Lightning, 67 *et seq.*, 128
Lincolnshire, 72, 128
Little, Capt., see *Star of Russia*
Liverpool, 206
Loch Awe, 178 *et seq.*
Lochee, 211
Loch Fleet, 164
Loch Fyne, 164
Loch Line, 134, 154
Loch Linnhe, 164
Loch Maree, 147, 148
Loch Ness, 164
Loch Tay, 160 *et seq.*
Loch Trool, 164
Loch Urr, 164
Loch Vennachar, 147
Lord of the Isles, 87
Lord Palmerston, 186
Lord Templemore, 211
Lothair, 115 *et seq.*
Low, A. A. & Co., 23, 42, 83
Low, Capt. C. P., 23, 42
Lwow, see *Chinsura*

McDonald, John (American builder) 76
McDonnell, Capt., 73-4
Machrihanish, 223
McGowan ('Mad'), 182
McKay, Capt., see *Omar Pasha*
McKay, Capt. A., see *Kinrossshire*
McKay, Donald, 34 *et seq.*, 62
McKay, Capt. L., 26, 53
M'Kinnon, Capt., 101
McKirdy, Capt., 73-4
McMillan, Capt., see *Phasis*
McNair, Capt., see *Cedric the Saxon*
Madagascar, 60
Madura see *Loch Awe*
Maguire, Mrs. (brig *Chieftain*), 52
Marco Polo, 65
Marion Lightbody, 213
Marlborough, 177
Marpesia, 137, 151
Martha Jane, 25
Martin, Capt ('Bully'), 154 *et seq.*
Martin, Capt. T. C., see *Loch Tay*
Martin, Capt. T. H., see *Loch Fyne*
Masefield, Mr. John, 222
Matoaka, 168
Maury, Lieut, 46, 49, 54, 62
Maury, 87
Maxton, Capt., 88, 92
Melanope, 151
Mermaid, 76
Mermerus, 134, 145 *et seq.*
Merwanjee Framjee, 180
Metropolis, 213
Miako, 117
Miami, 214
Mighell, Capt. (owner), 187
Miles Barton, 65, 76
Miltiades, 146, 148
Min (river), 96 *et seq.*
Moodie, Capt., see *Cutty Sark*
Mooltova, 198
Morgan, Capt., see *Flying Cloud*
Mount Stewart, 134
Murphy, Capt. ('Shotgun'), see *Shenandoah*
Muskoka, 213 *et seq.*

N. B. Palmer, 43, 44
Nelson, 177
Neptune's Car, 51
Neptune's Favourite, 39
Nicholson & M'Gill, 165
Nickels, Capt. E. C., 48
Nicoll, Capt. D., see *Sutherlandshire*
Nightingale, 86-7
Noah's Ark, 136
Norman Court, 99, 115
Northern Light, 45

Oban Bay, 180 *et seq.*
Ocean Mail, 172
Omar Pasha, 124 *et seq.*
Omba, 129, 136
Oopack (early steamer), 119
Oriental, 83, 99
Oriente (bq.), 193
Orient Line, 131
Oriflamme (s.s.), 192
Otaki, 172

Pacific (s.s.), 69
Pakeha (s.s.), 166
Palgrave, 135, 206
Palmer, Capt. N. B., 21, 28, 83
Parthenope, 208
Pass of Leny, 226 *et seq.*
Patriarch, 129, 134
Patten, Capt., 57
Patterdale, 191
Paul Jones, 28
Peabody, Capt., 221
Peacock, Capt., see *Lothair*
Peattie, Capt., see *Sutherlandshire*
Pegasus, 206
Pericles, 215
Peter Denny, 113
Peter Iredale, 201
Pett, Phineas, 34
Phasis, 142
Pickett, 35
Pile (builder), 117, 180
Pilkington & Wilson, 65, 67
Pinmore, 211 *et seq.*
Polly (schooner), 17
Pook, Samuel A., 67, 167
Pope, Capt. A. T., see *Cedric the Saxon*
Port Jackson, 100, 224
Port Patrick, 217
Potter, Messrs., 89, 222
Pottinger, Capt., see *Rangitiki*
Preussen, 62

Pritchard, Capt., see *Glenesslin*
Rae's fleet, 165
Rainbow, 20, 29 *et seq.*
Ramage & Ferguson, 62
Ramsay, Capt. R., 47
Rangitiki, 172 *et seq.*
Raven, 43
Red Jacket, 67 *et seq.*, 76
Reid, Capt., 76
Reid, John & Co., 204, 211
Reindeer, 83
Rickmer Rickmers, 213
Roanoke, 221
Roberts, T. & Co., 117
Robertson, Capt., 86
Robin Hood, 90, 92, 111
Robinson, Capt. R., 92 *et seq.*, 99 *et seq.*
Rodger (owner), 99
Rodney, 134
Rogers, Capt., 25
Rolph Coal and Cement Co., 226
Romance of the Seas, 39, 60 *et seq.*
Rory O'More, 33
Roscius (packet), 69
Ross-shire, 217
Rostron, Capt. Sir Arthur, see *Cedric the Saxon*,
Roxburgh, Messrs, 219
Royal Charter (s.s.), 124
Royden, T. & Co., 197
Ruby, 57
Running the Easting down, 122 *et seq.*
Russell & Co. (builders), 180
Ryrie, Capt., see *Flying Spur*

St. Bernard, 58
St. Lawrence, 136
Salamis, 134, 145, 147, 148
Sampson & Tappan, 47
Scimitar, see *Rangitiki*
Scott (builder), 87
Scott, Capt., see *Benmore*
Scout (H.M.S.), 98
S. D. Carleton, 221
Seafarer, 195, 222
Seaman's Bride, 39
Sea Serpent, 36, 88
Sea Witch, 30, 43
Seeadler, 212
Senator, 192 *et seq.*
Serica, 94, 99 *et seq.*
Sheffield, 21
Shelvocke's Voyage, 173
Shenandoah, 218, 221
Sheridan, 21
Simpson, Capt., see *Star of Russia*
Siren, 145
Sir Lancelot, 107 *et seq.*
Sir Walter Raleigh, 148, 149
Sobraon, 148
Soule (owner), 221
Sovereign of the Seas, 52 *et seq.*, 59, 189
Spindrift, 107
Sproat, D. & J., 164
Staghound, 35 *et seq.*
Star, 21

Star of Chile, see *La Escocesa*
Star of Greece, 135
Star of Peace, 72, 124, 177
Star of Russia, 140
Star of the East, 65
Steele, A. (builder), 34, 110
Stephen, Alex. & Son, 219
Stirling Castle (early steamer), 119
Stornoway, 84, 86
Strathdon (*Queen's Island*), 224
Stronsa, 212
Superb (Green's), 195
Surprise, 67
Susquehanna, 221
Sutherland, Capt., see *Senator*
Sutherlandshire, 215
Swanhilda, 217 *et seq.*
Sweepstakes, 192
Swordfish (American), 36, 48
Swordfish (British), 37

Taeping, 99 *et seq.*
Taitsing, 99 *et seq.*
Tam O'Shanter, 221
Taylor, Capt., see *Timaru*
Thames Barge Race, 233
Theophane, 147, 150 *et seq.*
Thermopylae, 107 *et seq.*, 129-30, 147, 164
Thessalus, 134, 145
Thomas, Capt., 48
Thomas Hanford (brig), 56
Thomas Stephens, 131
Three Brothers, 190
Timaru, 170 *et seq.*
Titania, 114, 148, 196
Topsails, double, 101, 110, 127
Torrington, 22
Trade Wind, 48 *et seq.*, 52
Train, Enoch, 35, 38
Train, G. F., 38
True Briton, 125
Turakina, 182
Typhoon, 43

Vancouver Island native craft, 30
Vanderbilt, see *Three Brothers*
Vanduara, 180
Veronica, 26
Victoria, B.C., passages to, 115, 196
Victoria, H.M. Queen, 73
Viking ships, 3
Vinnen fleet, 62
Vision, 89 *et seq.*, 99

Wade, Capt. W. J., 187
Wairoa, 169
Walker (builder), 115
Wanderer, 222
Warner, Capt., 59
Waterman, Capt. Robert, 26, 29, 41 *et seq.*
Wave of Life, 124
Waverley Line, 203
Wawn, Capt., see *True Briton*
Waymouth, Bernard, 108
Webb, Isaac (builder), 34, 84
Webster, Capt., see *Bonanza*
Webster, Capt., see *Pericles*
Weir, Capt., see *Loch Awe*
Wellington, 177
Wendur, 226
Western Shore, 191
Westervelt & Mackay (builders), 42, 192
Westland, 198 *et seq.*, 223
Westward Ho!, 48, 51-2
Whiteadder, 140
White & Son (builders), 22
White Diamond Line, 35
White Star Line, 65
Whitson, Capt., see *Wendur*
Whitmore, Capt., see *Sea Serpent*
Wigram, Money & Co., 72
Wild Dayrell, 22
Wild Deer, 90, 110 *et seq.*
Wild Duck, 99
Wild Pigeon, 48 *et seq.*, 52
Wildwood, 192
William Jolliffe (tug), 178
Williams, Capt. Jack, 40
Williams, Capt. Owen, see *Glenesslin*
Williamson, Milligan & Co., see *Cedric the Saxon* and *Kenilworth*
Willkommen, see *Dawpool*
Wilson, Capt., see *Senator*
Wilson, J. & R., 164, 178
Wings of the Morning, 39

W. J. Pirrie, 205
Women at sea, superstition regarding, 142, 198
Woodget, Capt. R., 118, 155, 186

Yangtse, 108
Yarborough, Lord, 22
Young America, 55, 189
Young, Capt. Thomas, 134

Zealandia (tug), 182
Zelinda, 117
Zephyr, 22
Zerega & Co., 35
Ziba, 94