HE
746
S79s

State Street Trust Company,
Boston

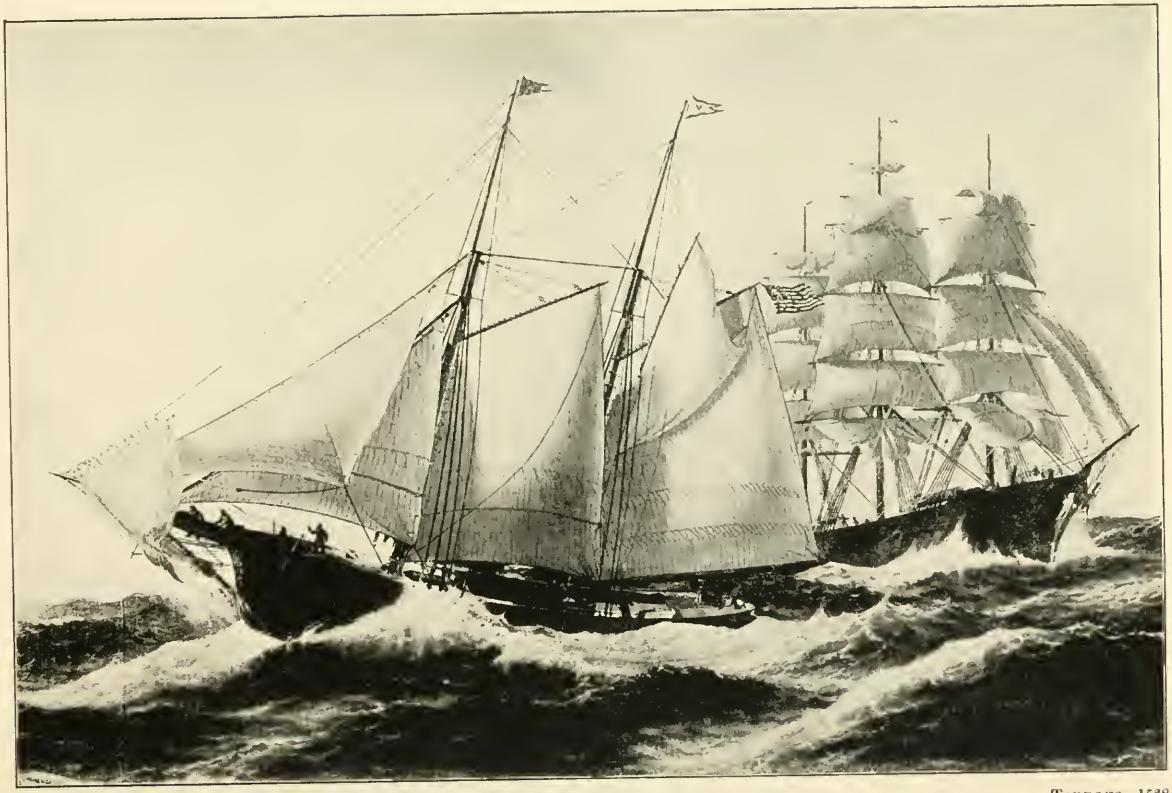
Some Ships of the
Clipper Ship Era

THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

GIFT OF

COMMODORE BYRON MCCANDLESS

SOME SHIPS OF THE CLIPPER SHIP ERA



Length, 222′

GOLDEN FLEECE

(In the background, see page 38)

Tonnage, 1538

SOME SHIPS OF THE CLIPPER SHIP ERA

Their Builders, Owners, and Captains

A GLANCE AT AN INTERESTING
PHASE OF THE AMERICAN
MERCHANT MARINE SO FAR
AS IT RELATES TO BOSTON

PRINTED FOR THE
STATE STREET TRUST COMPANY
BOSTON, MASS.

COPYRIGHTED
1913 BY THE
STATE STREET
TRUST COMPANY

COMPILED, ARRANGED
AND PRINTED UNDER
THE DIRECTION OF THE
WALTON ADVERTISING
AND PRINTING COMPANY
BOSTON, MASS.

HE
746
S79s

FOREWORD

THE STATE STREET TRUST COMPANY takes pleasure in presenting to you the seventh of the historical brochures that it has issued annually during the past six years.

It hopes that this will be of interest, as the pamphlet presents a phase of Boston's past, during which the foundation of New England's mercantile supremacy was being laid by the captains and merchants of this important era. In fact, the beginning of Boston's prosperity goes back to the days of its merchant traders, whose ships made the American flag so well known in Asiatic, Australian, and Californian ports.

An attempt has been made to give a bird's-eye view of the clipper ships which during their history have had some connection with Boston either through their captains, their builders, or their owners. The pamphlet does not purpose to be more than an outline presentation of the subject that has been so fully covered by Captain Arthur H. Clark in his book on Clipper Ships and by others.

The Company desires to acknowledge its indebtedness to Dr. O. T. Howe, whose exhaustive study of the clipper ship era was placed freely at its disposal, as well as to the "Clipper Ship Era" by Captain Arthur H. Clark. Thanks are also due for their assistance in the preparation of this book or for permission to photograph paintings or prints in their possession to Charles H. Taylor, Jr., the heirs of William F. Weld and William G. Weld, Louis Bacon, C. M. Baker, C. H. Millett, B. B. Crowninshield, Captain Horace N. Berry, Senior Port Warden of Boston, Frank Cousins, Richard Martin, A. W. Longfellow, Portsmouth Athenæum, Portsmouth, N.H., George H. Allen, Captain Sylvanus Nickerson, Lawrence W. Jenkins, of the Peabody Museum, and to the Bostonian Society.

1023979

CANTON, CHINA, 1840

SOME SHIPS OF THE CLIPPER SHIP ERA: THEIR CAPTAINS, OWNERS, AND BUILDERS

THE clipper ships have passed from the seas, and with them has gone the golden age of the American merchant marine. All that is left of the long, swift-sailing clippers, with their rakish masts, yacht-like lines, and clouds of canvas, lies either at the bottom of the ocean, on reefs of far-away islands, on granite ledges off Cape Horn, or may be found serving ignominiously their last days as coal barges or landing stages for passengers from other ships. Many were ruthlessly destroyed by the "Alabama" and other privateers during the Civil War.

Most of their masters and owners, too, have gone. The few captains who survive are either living in weather-beaten, lichen-covered, gray farm-houses of their native Cape Cod towns on the savings of their strenuous sea-faring days or earning, in towns not far from the sea they loved so well, a meagre livelihood as port wardens or minor custom-house officers. Descendants of some of the owners are now the heads of well-known New England or New York families, the foundation of whose prosperity was laid by the consummate seamanship, intrepid daring, tireless energy, shrewd Yankee bargaining, and sterling integrity of the clipper ship captains. The clipper era was at its height from 1848 to 1860, and this period, too, saw the most flourishing years of the American merchant marine.

The very name "clipper ship" conveys an idea of speed,—the main purpose of their builders,—and was derived from the word "clip." Dryden, speaking of the falcon, says, "Straight flies at check and clips it down the wind." And as "to clip" meant to run or fly fast, so the word "clipper" soon came to describe the fast-sailing cargo carriers with sharp concave bows

and long tapering sterns. Originally built to meet the demand for fast voyages in the tea trade, the construction of these vessels received a great impetus from the discovery of gold in California, when all the supplies were shipped from the East, and the price that cargoes brought was governed by the speed with which they were delivered in San Francisco. So great grew the demand for clippers that the ship-building geniuses of Boston, New York, and Portsmouth were soon sending from their ways ship after ship, each one of which was intended to be faster than its predecessor, and it was not long before the flags of Boston, New York, and Baltimore merchants flew from the maintrucks of ships that had no peers in beauty or speed, and were the envy of merchants the world over. Some of the clippers were so swift that they even announced in Boston their own arrival in Canton, and many made the voyage from New York or Boston to San Francisco at almost steamship speed, making the trip under 100 days, while the ordinary ship took from 200 to 300 days for the voyage.

The "Lightning," commanded by James Nicol Forbes, during a voyage from Boston to Liverpool made 436 nautical, or 502.64 statute, miles in 24 hours,—a speed faster than that of any ocean steamship of her day, and faster than any vessel, up to that time, had been moved by sail. She made the whole voyage in 13 days, 19½ hours. Her 24-hour speed was not equalled by steamer until the advent of the "Oregon" in the 80's. Her 24-hour run was at an average rate of almost eighteen knots. The "James Baines" made the passage from Boston to Liverpool in the fall of 1854 in 12 days and 6 hours, the quickest voyage on record; and she made the voyage from Liverpool to Melbourne in 63 days and home in 69, thus going around the world in the record time of 132 days. The "Red Jacket" went from New York to Liverpool in 1854, under Captain Eldridge, in 13 days, 1 hour, and 25 minutes; while the famous Red Cross Line packet ship "Dreadnought," commanded by Captain Samuels, made a passage from New York to Liverpool

in 13 days, 8 hours, and the voyage from Sandy Hook to off Queenstown in 9 days and 17 hours. Both the "Flying Cloud" and the "Andrew Jackson" went from New York to San Francisco in 89 days; while the "Sea Witch" went from Canton to New York in 74 days, 14 hours.

To find the beginning of the clipper ships, one must turn to the War of 1812, when certain swift privateers, modelled after the French "lugger," were built in Baltimore, and took the name "Baltimore clippers." The building of the opium clippers, from 1832 to 1851, for Robert Bennett Forbes and John Murray Forbes and Russell & Co., to control the opium trade between India and Canton, was another step toward ships modelled like clippers. One of these, the "Antelope," was so swift and such a good sailer that, under Captain Philip Dumaresq, she was said to be the only square-rigged vessel that could beat up the Formosa Channel against the north-east monsoon. English competition led in 1851 to the building of the famous clipper schooners "Minna" and "Brenda"—300 tons each, with yacht-like lines and clouds of canvas—that were very swift and carried large crews, and were well armed to meet the Chinese pirates, whose vessels swarmed the China seas. These two schooners were built for John M. Forbes and others by George Raynes, of Portsmouth, and earned large sums before steamers drove them from the seas.

Few of these early clippers were over 200 tons. The "Ann McKim," of 493 tons burden and 143 feet long, built in 1832 at Baltimore, represented the first effort to reproduce the large clipper-like lines of the small vessels in the lines of larger ones. She was beautifully fitted, and, as she was engaged in the China trade, carried guns for protection against pirates. Eventually, she fell into the hands of Howland & Aspinwall, ship-owners of New York, and led them in 1843 to embody in the "Rainbow," the first real clipper ship ever built, the design of a clipper which John W. Griffiths had suggested in a model he had shown at the

American Institute in 1841. The "Rainbow," which was of 750 tons, was built by Smith & Dimon, and under the captaincy of John Land proved very fast. So enthusiastic was Land that he declared she was the fastest boat in the world, and boastingly said that no boat could be built to beat her. Her success set the builders of New York, Boston, and Portsmouth to turning out clipper ships, and the discovery of gold in California and,

CANTON PACKET

later, in Australia greatly accelerated clipper ship construction. The greatest number were built between 1850 and 1855. The outbreak of the Civil War, with its privateers and the competition of steam, drove the clipper ships from the sea, and with their disappearance began the decadence of the American merchant marine. Such in outline is the story of the clipper ship era. Let us glance more closely at some of the famous ships which were either built in Boston or were owned or sailed by Boston men. The "Canton Packet" was the type of fast-sailing

merchant ship which preceded the true clipper ship, and was a bark built for J. & T. H. Perkins and others.

Robert Bennett Forbes, who was employed as office-boy in the firm of J. & T. H. Perkins, spent his spare time visiting their ships while they were unloading at Central Wharf, which was near the office on Foster's Wharf, and sometimes his uncle, T. H. Perkins, would remark, when Bob was taking dinner with him and being served with the pudding, "You won't get any so good off the Cape of Good Hope." Forbes thus early became familiar with the idea that he "was born to eat bad puddings off the Cape."

At the age of thirteen Forbes went as a cabin-boy on the "Canton Packet," under Captain John King, and he was on her altogether six years, becoming an officer at the age of sixteen and captain of the "Levant" before he was twenty.

The original partners in Russell & Co., one of the best-known American firms then doing business at Canton, China, were Samuel Russell and Philip Ammidon. William H. Low, Augustine Heard, John M. Forbes, John C. Green, Warren Delano, W. C. Hunter, Joseph Coolidge, Russell Sturgis, Richard Starr Dana, W. H. Forbes, R. B. Forbes, Paul S. Forbes, J. Murray Forbes, and Edward King were, at one time or other, partners in this firm. The firm was founded in 1818 by Samuel Russell, of Middletown, Conn., and was first known as Samuel Russell & Co. In 1824 the firm became Russell & Co., and had a career rarely equalled in the Chinese trade. John Perkins Cushing, who had been a representative of J. & T. H. Perkins in China, was one of those who had much to do with the starting of the firm, as he transferred to Russell & Co. a portion of the commission business which had grown too large for Perkins & Co. to handle.

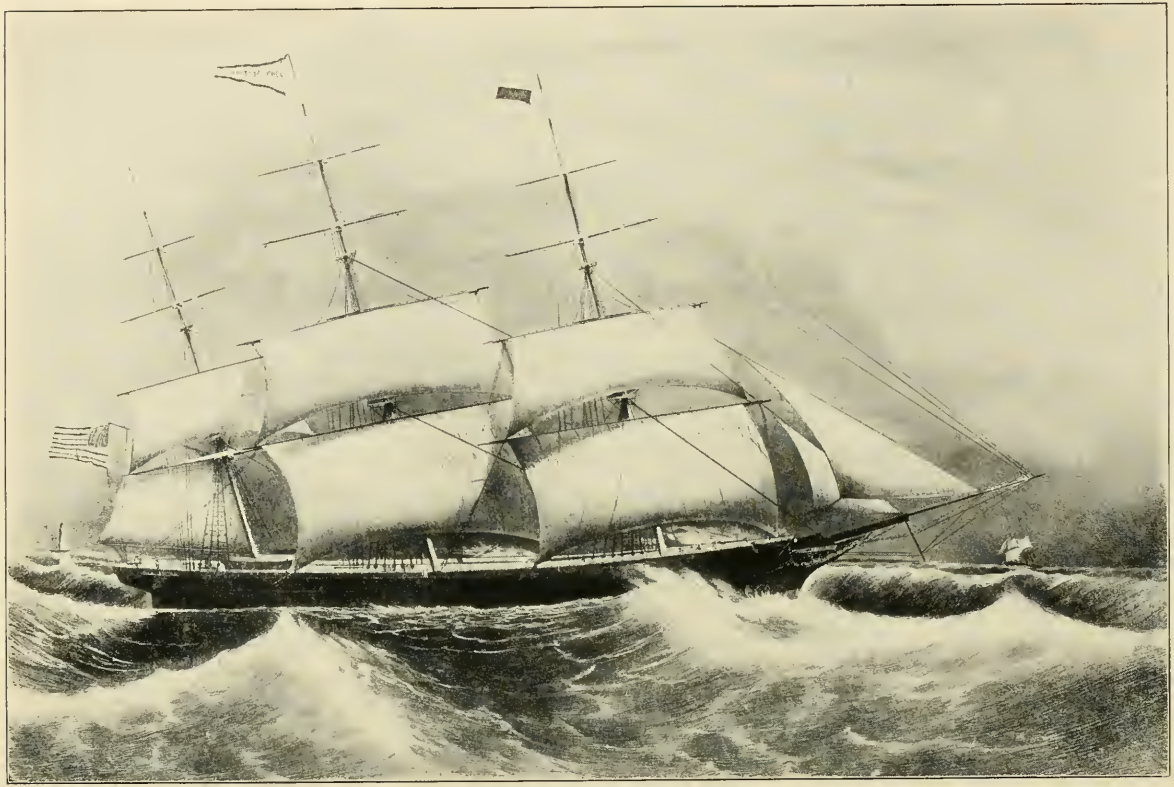
The cause of the Opium War, which interrupted trade for a time, was a peculiarly flagrant piece of smuggling, which so aroused the Chinese government that its commissioner appeared

at the foreign settlement, demanded the opium, and dumped it into the ditches. The trouble was finally adjusted by England compelling China to pay an indemnity, and trade was resumed. The opium had been brought for some time from India in the swift-sailing vessels, or "clippers," we have already described, and was smuggled into Canton by various means. As all foreigners lived in a narrow suburb on the river and were never

BRENDA

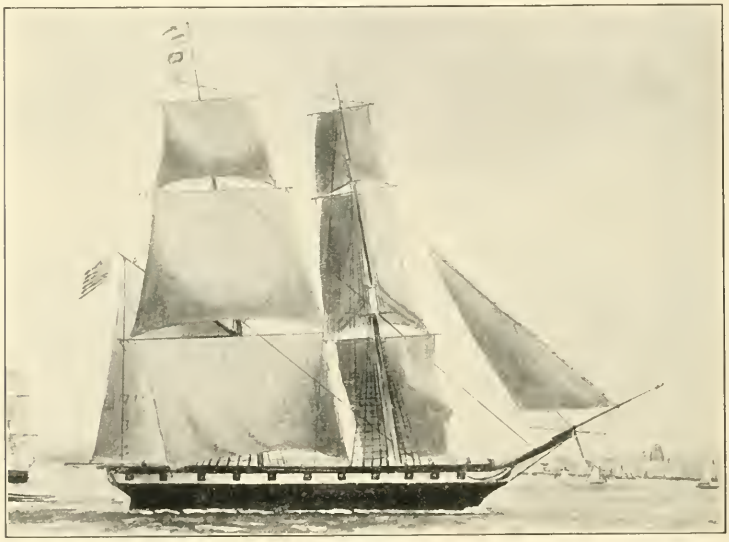
allowed within the city, business was transacted with Chinese middlemen, one of whom, Houqua, was ever the warm friend of Russell & Co.

The "Brenda," a sister-ship to the "Minna," was one of the last of the opium clippers, and, like all of these ships, was beautifully modelled, carried clouds of canvas, and was very fast. As the Chinese pirates were numerous, she went heavily armed and had a large crew. She was built in 1852 at Portsmouth, and was sent to China for Russell & Co.



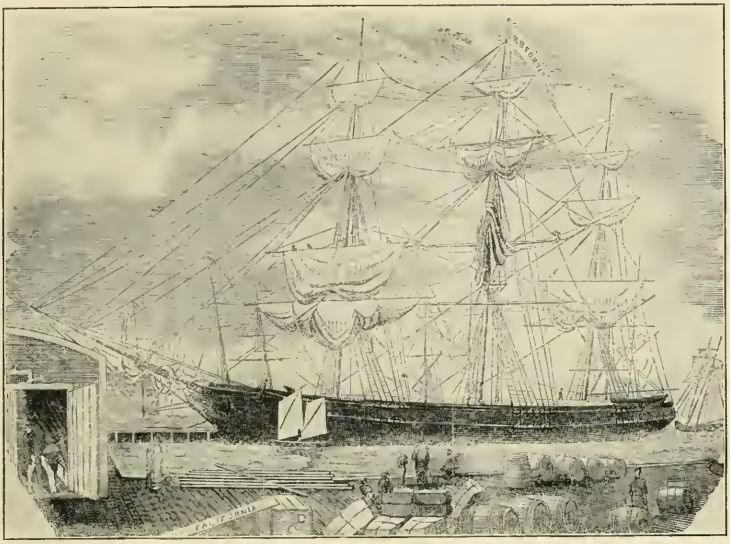
Length, 190′ JOHN BERTRAM Tonnage, 1080

Another clipper in the China trade was the brig "Antelope," of 370 tons, built in 1843 at East Boston by Samuel Hall, for Russell & Co. The "Antelope" and her captain were very popular, and no vessel could be unloaded or refitted in port until the "Antelope" was cared for. She, and the "Brenda," "Zephyr," "Mazeppa," "Ariel," and others, were Russell & Co.'s fastest opium clippers, and soon enabled the company almost to control the

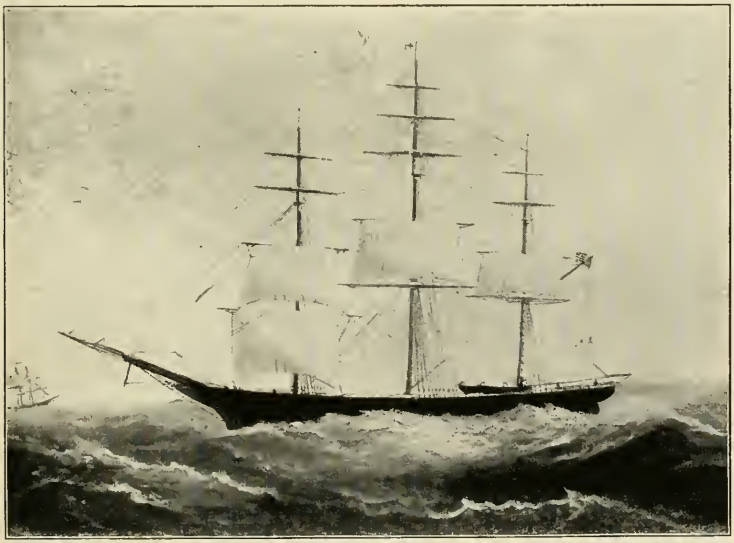


ANTELOPE

opium trade with China. With the discovery of gold in California began the construction of larger, wider, deeper, and faster ships, of heavier tonnage, and 1850 witnessed the launching of some of the most famous of the clipper ships. One of the earliest was the "John Bertram," a very sharp ship, which was built by R. E. Jackson at East Boston for Glidden & Williams of Boston. An eagle on the wing was her figure-head, and a medallion bust of John Bertram, of Salem, adorned the stern. She was commanded by Captain Landholm, and in 1852 went to San Francisco from



Length, 156′ R. B. FORBES Tonnage, 756



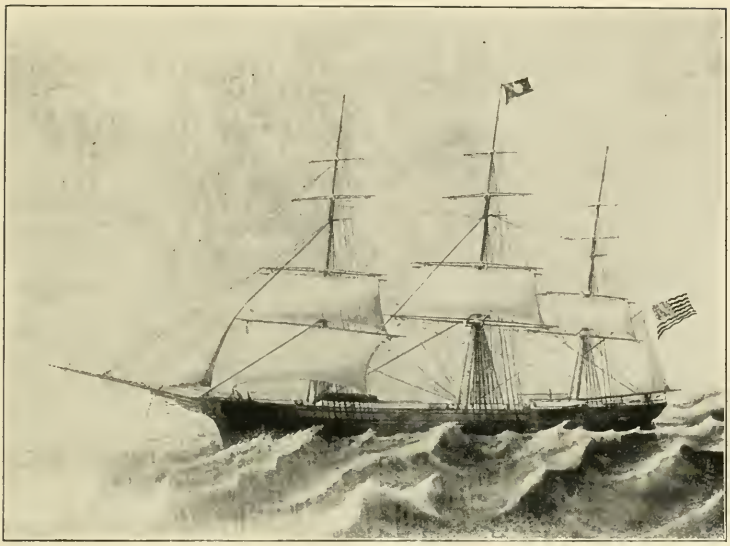
Length, 198′ GAME COCK Tonnage, 1320

Boston in 105 days, actual sailing time, and returned in 90 days, beating the "Northern Light" by 8 days. In 1869 she went under the German flag.

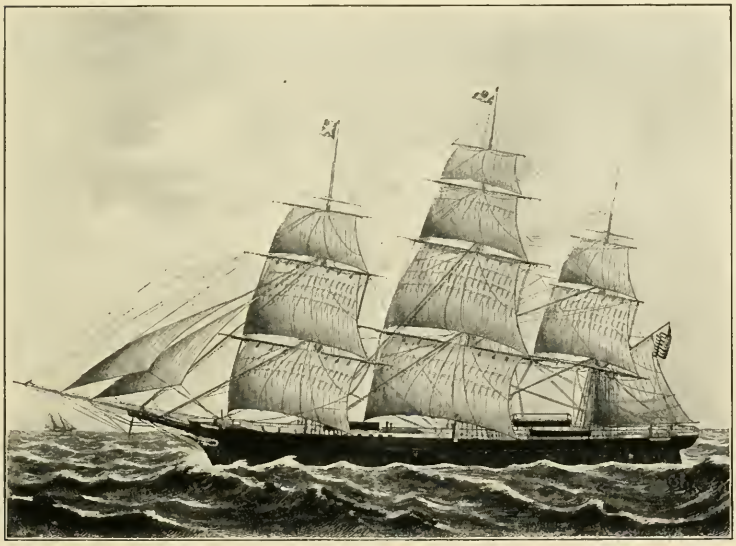
The "R. B. Forbes" left Boston September 26, 1851, the year she was built, crossed the line in 30 days, rounded Cape Horn in 60 days, and reached Honolulu in the then record time of 99 days from Boston. She was a close copy of the "Game Cock," and was built by Samuel Hall for J. T. Coolidge, Charles Brewer, and others. She was sold in 1863 at Hong Kong to foreign owners for $17,000, and was renamed the "Maria Ria."

The "Game Cock," owned by Daniel C. Bacon, of Boston, was one of a number of clipper ships upon which many a wager was laid in 1851 by the ships' owners who congregated at the Astor House, New York, or the Merchants' Exchange, Boston, to discuss the shipping news and the speed of the California clippers. She was built in 1850 by Samuel Hall, of East Boston, was commanded by Captain Hollis, and designed by Samuel H. Pook, a well-known naval designer. Her figure-head, indicative of her name and game qualities, was a rooster with head and neck in the attitude of combat. Her best record was a passage from Honolulu to Hong Kong in the remarkable time of 19 days. In 1880 she was condemned at the Cape of Good Hope.

A famous clipper was the "Witchcraft," whose prow was a tiger crouching for a spring, and encircling whose stern was a huge serpent. Every line of the beautiful craft, which was built by Curtis & Taylor, of Medford, indicated the speed for which she was primarily built. Her owners were Samuel Rogers and W. D. Pickman, of Salem, and her captain, William C. Rogers, was the son of one of the owners. Captain Rogers afterward distinguished himself in the Civil War by capturing, while in command of the clipper bark "William G. Anderson," the Confederate privateer "Beauregard." He later married a grand-



Length, 193′ WITCHCRAFT Tonnage, 1310



Length, 215′ STAG HOUND Tonnage, 1535

daughter of Nathaniel Bowditch. One of the "Witchcraft's" records was from New York to San Francisco in 97 days, actual sailing time. She once sailed from the Chincha Islands, Peru, to New York in 67 days, under Captain Freeman,—a record at that time. On a voyage from San Francisco to Hong Kong in 1852 she lost her main and mizzen masts in a squall, and, being unable to find suitable spars, she was obliged to have them made of teakwood at $1.50 a foot, her repairs costing $28,832. She once sailed for the Chincha Islands and thence to New York, making the round voyage in 8 months, 14 days,—one month better than ever done before. She was finally, in 1868, wrecked off Cape Hatteras, under Captain Booth, while on her way from Callao, and thirteen sailors and five passengers were drowned.

With the launching of the "Stag Hound" from the ways of Donald McKay at East Boston, December 7, 1850, the size of the clippers began to increase, although the raciness of line was still preserved. When she was launched, the "Stag Hound" was the largest merchant ship yet built, being 215 feet long and having a register of 1,535 tons. No less than 15,000 people gathered to see her launched despite the cold, and, as the tallow froze, boiling whale oil was poured upon the ways. When she began to slide, the foreman of the yard broke a bottle of Medford rum on her forefoot, shouting in his nervousness, as he did so, "'Stag Hound,' your name's 'Stag Hound,'" instead of the usual phraseology used at a launching.

She was regarded as the ideal type of clipper ship, and was built for Sampson & Tappan and George B. Upton, of Boston, and was commanded by Captain Josiah Richardson. At this period nearly all of the clipper ships were constructed for the California trade, in which freights were high and prices depended upon the speed with which goods were delivered in California. Many of the clippers costing from $70,000 to $80,000 paid for themselves on their first voyage. Cargo capacity was often sacri-

Length, 225′ FLYING CLOUD Tonnage, 1783

ficed for speed, and sail was carried as long as possible, so that much canvas was lost, and much rigging, and often topmasts carried away on each voyage. One sea captain, Robert Waterman, was said to padlock his gear so that sailors could not take in sail without orders. On the "Stag Hound's" first trip to San Francisco, during which she beat to Valparaiso the "John Bertram" and the "Sea Serpent," she made the voyage from New York in 107 days, actual sailing time, although a storm, when she was a few days out of New York, cost her a maintopmast and three topgallant masts. She sailed from Boston Light to the equator in a record time of 13 days; the best time ever made by a sailing vessel from New York to Canton being 77 days, by the "Sea Witch," in 1848, commanded by Captain R. H. Waterman. The "Stag Hound" took fire in 1863 near the coast of Brazil, was burned to the water's edge, and sank. All that was left of her was the ensign, which Captain Behm brought back to the owners.

The "Flying Cloud," built in 1851 by Donald McKay for Enoch Train, and purchased by Grinnell, Minturn & Co. of New York, was one of the fastest clippers ever launched. She had a figurehead of an angel on the wing, with a speaking-trumpet in her hand. Her mainmast, including the topmast and skysail pole, towered to the height of 200 feet; her mainyard measured 82 feet, and her bowsprit and jib-boom projected 58 feet, while her masts raked 1¼ inches to the foot.

She sailed from New York to San Francisco in 1851 in 89 days and 21 hours, under Captain Josiah Perkins Cressy. In one day she covered 433½ statute miles, 42 miles faster than any steamship had then done in the same time. On this occasion some of the crew had to be put in irons, though they were subsequently released to work the ship, and the first officer was suspended from duty because he cut the rigging contrary to orders. So driven was the "Flying Cloud" that for a number of days she averaged 13½ knots, and sailed no less than 5,912 miles

at an average of 227 miles a day. She sprung her mainmast, split her staysails at both fore and maintopmasts, and lost her fore-topgallant mast. Again in 1854 the "Flying Cloud" sailed eight days after the "Archer," another fast clipper, and beat her into San Francisco by 9 days, and the "Game Cock" 20 days, making the passage in 89 days and 8 hours,—a record that was only exceeded in 1860 by the "Andrew Jackson," which made the voyage in 89 days and 4 hours. One of those who was on the ship at the time she made her record trip, and who is still living, is Richard Martin, of Swampscott, who remembers well the excitement that attended the trip. Upon the return of Captain Cressy to New York he was given a banquet at the Astor House and presented a silver service set by the New York and Boston underwriters.

There was much rivalry at this time between the clipper ships, and they were constantly racing. As they sailed from San Francisco to China and came back with tea, so great was the competition between the American and the English ships that, when the *Illustrated London News* in 1852 stated that the "Chrysolite" and "Stornoway," two English clippers, had beaten the "Oriental" and the "Surprise," the article aroused the interest of the New York and Boston clipper ship owners, and the American Navigation Club was formed by Daniel C. Bacon, Thomas H. Perkins, J. P. Cushing, William H. Boardman, John M. Forbes, Warren Delano, and Edward King. The club published a challenge in *Bell's Life* of London, offering to race an American clipper ship, to be modelled, manned, and officered by citizens of the United States, against any English clipper, modelled and officered by Englishmen, for £10,000 a side. But the challenge was never accepted.

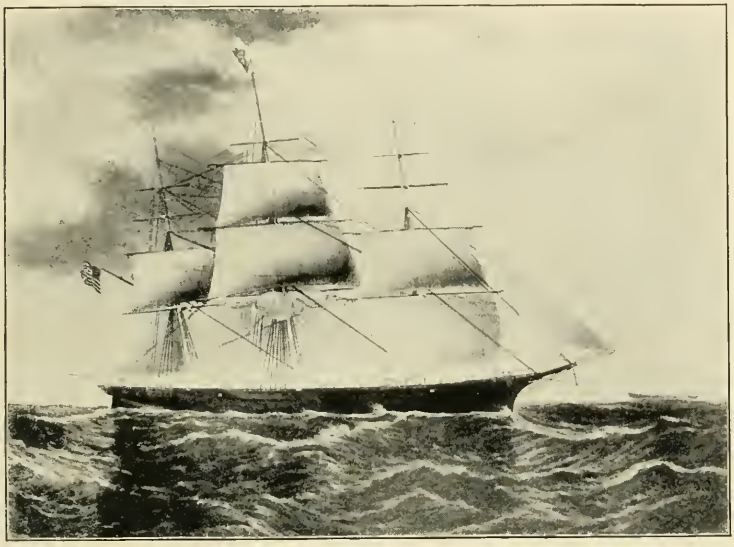
The "Flying Cloud" was probably the fastest-sailing ship that went to San Francisco, if not the fastest that sailed anywhere at any time, for she made four passages to San Francisco in 89, 89, 105, and 108 days, or an average of 97¾ days, which

was at least a day's better time than the best average made by the "Andrew Jackson." Despite the great rivalry and efforts to make fast voyages, the ties of humanity were never forgotten. While the "Flying Cloud" was in the vicinity of Madagascar, running twelve knots, April 2, 1856, she lost a sailor overboard. Mrs. Cressy, who saw the accident from her cabin window, no one else seeing it, rushed on deck and threw over the life buoy, at the same time giving an alarm. The ship was hove to and a boat sent out, but after a long search it returned without finding the sailor. Captain Cressy determined to rescue him, and, sending out two boats, ordered them to keep up the search until night. Four hours later the man was picked up, almost dead, about two miles from the ship. He was brought to the ship, placed in Mrs. Cressy's cabin, and nursed by her back to health. The "Flying Cloud" was finally sold to James Baines & Co. of Liverpool, and eventually was destroyed by fire at St. John, N.B., in 1874.

The "Flying Fish" was another boat built in 1851 by Donald McKay for Sampson & Tappan, and was captained by Edward Nickels, whose dinners and luncheons on his ships to his shore friends were quite famous. Her figure-head was a flying fish, on the wing, in gold and green. She spread 8,250 yards of canvas with water sails and all the "fancy" canvas. In the fall of 1851 she sailed a great race to San Francisco with the "Sword Fish" of New York, the "Flying Fish" sailing from Boston the same day that the "Sword Fish" sailed from New York. She led the "Sword Fish" to the equator by 4 days, and the two raced around Cape Horn side by side, but the "Flying Fish" was beaten into San Francisco by 8 days, the "Sword Fish" arriving in 90 days, while the "Flying Fish" took 98½. Large sums were wagered on the result. Her best record to San Francisco was 92 days.

During a race with the "John Gilpin" in 1852 the two were side by side off the Horn, and Captain Nickels invited Captain

Justin Doane, of the "John Gilpin," to come aboard and dine, which unique invitation Doane was "reluctantly obliged to decline." Although the "John Gilpin" led into San Francisco, she was beaten in time by the "Flying Fish," which made the passage in 92 days, while the "Gilpin's" time was 93 days. The "Flying Fish" was wrecked in 1858, as she was bound out of Foo-Chow for New York with a cargo of tea, and was sold by



Length, 198′ 6″ FLYING FISH Tonnage, 1505

the underwriters to a Spanish merchant of Manila, who rebuilt her, changed her name to "El Bueno Suceso," and sailed her between Manila and Cadiz, until she foundered in the China Sea.

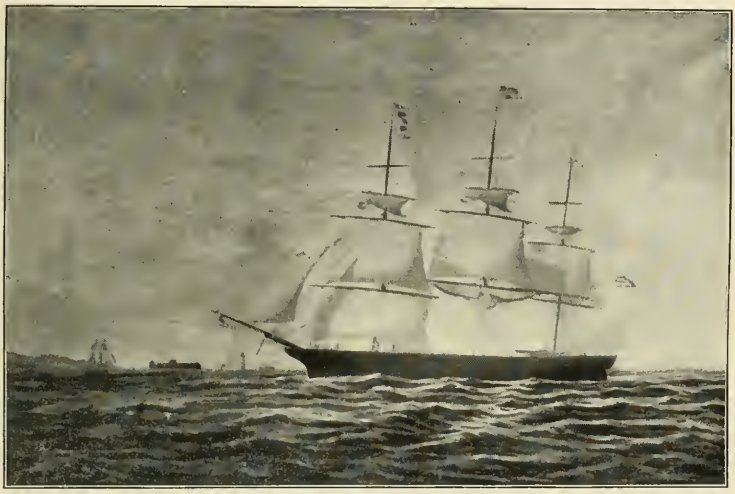
The "Southern Cross" was a sister-ship to the second "Radiant," a picture of which is shown, and was in every respect identical with her. She was built in 1851 by Briggs Brothers of Boston for Baker & Morrill of Boston. One of her best passages was from San Francisco to Hong Kong in 32 days. She

had a golden eagle for a figure-head, and was commanded by Captain Stevens. On a voyage from Mexico for New York she was burned by the Confederate privateer "Florida."

One of the finest and certainly one of the fastest packet clippers which sailed between America and Europe prior to 1854 was the "Staffordshire," whose big "T" on the fore lower topsail indicated she was owned by Enoch Train & Co. of Boston, for whom she was built in 1851 by Donald McKay. Her first captain was Albert H. Brown. The sharp and graceful bow carried a witch's head, while her elliptical stern was ornamented on one side with a carved representation of a manufacturing scene in Staffordshire, and on the other with a representation of the old building on Lewis Wharf occupied as an office by Train & Co. She made the run in 1851 from Boston to Liverpool in 13½ days, or from wharf to wharf in 14 days, 18 hours. Subsequently she was rigged for the California trade, and under Captain Josiah Richardson, who had commanded the "Stag Hound," sailed from Boston to San Francisco in 101 days, and made the return voyage in 82 days. While sailing from Liverpool for Boston in 1853, she was wrecked during a fog on Blonde Rock, near Cape Sable, and sank. Captain Richardson had broken his back several days before by falling on deck, and when his first mate, Joseph Alden, reported that the ship was sinking, directed the officer to save the women and children, but declined help himself. His last words before the vessel went down were, "God's will be done." Forty-four, officers and crew, were saved, but 170, including Captain Richardson, were drowned.

The "Typhoon," when she sailed into Liverpool on her first voyage in 1852, was the attraction of the whole water front, for she was the largest ship that had yet been seen at the port. . She was built by Fernald & Pettigrew of Portsmouth for D. & A. Kingsland of New York, and her captain, Charles H. Salter, came of a generation of distinguished commanders of Portsmouth ships. She was launched fully rigged and with colors flying, and

made a trial run to Liverpool from Portsmouth in 13 days, 10 hours, and her best day's run was 346 miles. One of the great races of the clipper ship era was in 1851, between the "Typhoon," under Captain Salter, the "Raven," under Captain Henry, and the "Sea Witch," under Captain Frazer, all of which sailed for San Francisco together. The "Sea Witch" and the "Raven" were almost side by side for about two weeks in the thrash to windward around Cape Horn; while the "Typhoon" pressed



Length, 225′ TYPHOON Tonnage, 1610

the two leaders closely, and finally led both into the Golden Gate, although the "Raven" actually won, her time being 105 days from Boston Light, while the "Typhoon" was 106 days from Sandy Hook, and the "Sea Witch" was 110 days. The "Typhoon" was sold in 1864 at Singapore for $39,000 to sail under English colors.

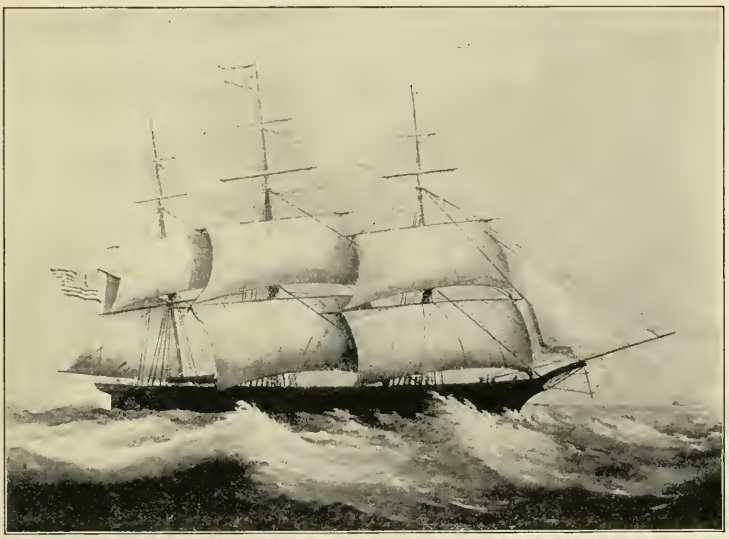
The launching in 1851 of the "Witch of the Wave" at Portsmouth, where she was built by George Raynes for Captain John Bertram and Alfred Peabody of Salem, was made an occasion

Length, 240' STAFFORDSHIRE Tonnage, 1817

of much festivity. A large party accompanied her to Salem Harbor, and a poem was read, one stanza of which ran:—

"They say a man came down to-day
To carry the Witch of the Wave away,
And the people think he oughtn't oughter
Just because he's been and bought her."

She subsequently came into the possession of Glidden & Williams. At first she was captained by Matthew Hunt, and later

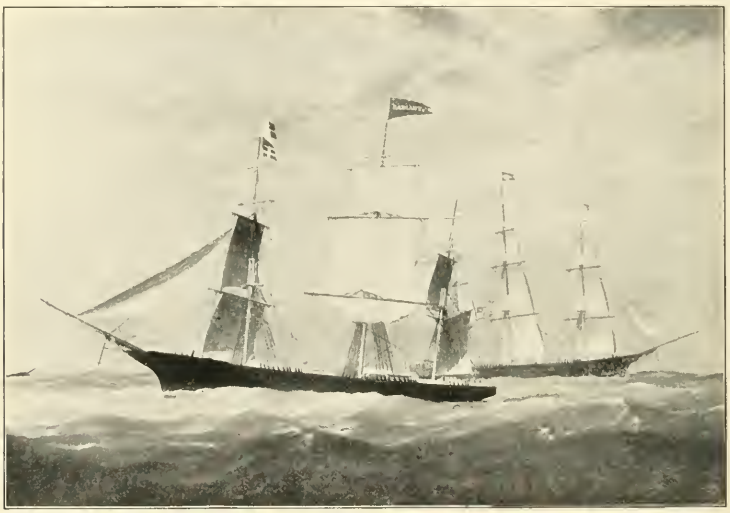


Length, 220′ WITCH OF THE WAVE Tonnage, 1498

by Captain Joseph H. Millet, of Salem. The London *Times* of April 16, 1852, printed a very laudatory article, in which it was said that the "Witch of the Wave" brought one of the most "valuable cargoes of tea that had ever entered England," and that "she was built at Salem near the Port of New York." In 1853 she beat the "Raven," the "Comet," and the "Trade Wind" in a run to San Francisco. On her trip home she went

from Calcutta to Boston in 81 days, which was then a record. She was sold in 1856 at Amsterdam.

The "Radiant" in 1852 came off the ways of Paul Curtis at East Boston, and the "John Land" was built in 1853 by Briggs Brothers of South Boston. Both ships were owned by Baker & Morrill. The "Radiant" was wrecked in 1871 on Crocodile Reef, while on a voyage from Singapore to Boston, and was lost. The "John Land" in 1864 foundered at sea, all hands being saved.



"RADIANT" AND "JOHN LAND"

One of the largest of the clipper ships was the "Sovereign of the Seas," which was owned by Funk & Meinke of New York. She was built in 1852 by Donald McKay, and commanded by his brother, Lauchlan McKay. She carried a crew of 125 men and boys. She made her first trip to San Francisco in 103 days, crossing the equator in 25 days. During her voyage she carried away several of her sails and topmasts, which Captain McKay repaired at sea. The New York Board of Underwriters presented him with a handsome solid silver dinner service for rerigging his

RADIANT

ship at sea. She carried a cargo weighing 2,950 tons, a portion of which was flour that sold for $44 a barrel; while her total freight was valued at $84,000. Thousands of people were about the wharf to greet her, and, when she arrived, the sailors sang,—

"O Susannah darling, take your ease,
For we have beat the clipper fleet,
The Sovereign of the Seas."

Length, 258′ SOVEREIGN OF THE SEAS Tonnage, 2421

According to Lieutenant Maury, the best authority, she sailed, from March 9th to the 31st 433 statute miles a day. She went empty to Honolulu, and loaded with sperm oil for New York, making some remarkable runs on the voyage. One day she ran 424 miles, and sailed during a portion of the 24 hours at a rate which must have been almost twenty knots an hour. She made the passage in 80 days. She then sailed to Liverpool in 13 days and 22 hours, outsailing in 5 days the Cunard steamer "Canada" by 325 miles. In 1858 she was sold in London for $40,000, and

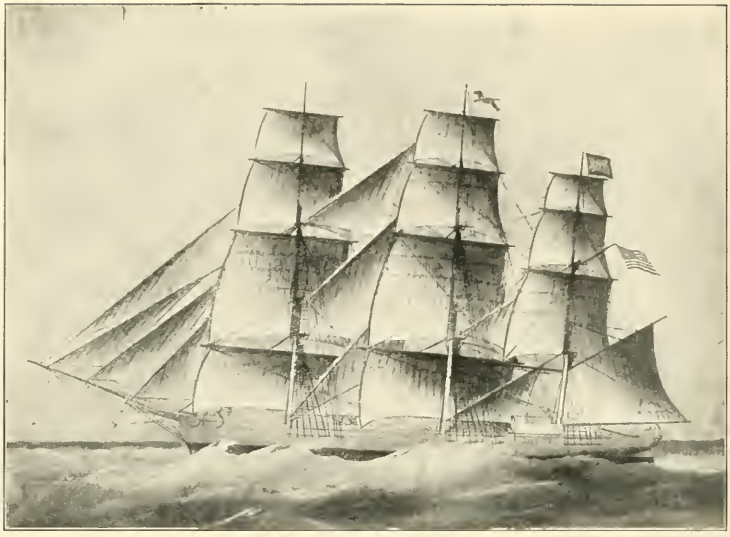
eventually she ran on Pyramid Shoal in the Straits of Malacca and was lost.

The reproduction of the "Westward Ho" shows the clouds of canvas which the clipper ships carried. She, too, was built by Donald McKay, and was one of 33 clippers launched in 1852, and was owned by Sampson & Tappan and commanded by Captain Hussey. She was finally burned at Callao.

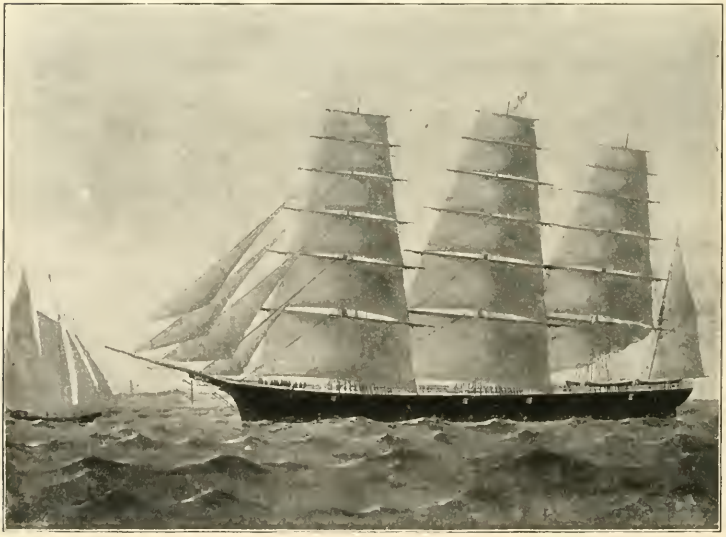
WESTWARD HO

The "Fearless" was designed by Samuel A. Pook, the "architect" who had drawn the lines of the "Game Cock," "Herald of the Morning," and other famous clippers, and was built in 1853 by A. & G. T. Sampson of East Boston for W. F. Weld & Co.

The largest of all the clipper ships was the "Great Republic," which was built by Donald McKay, her first owner, and later was bought by A. A. Low & Brother of New York. She was 325 feet long, 53 feet beam, 38 feet deep, and of 4,555 tons burden.



FEARLESS



Length, 325′ GREAT REPUBLIC Tonnage, 4555

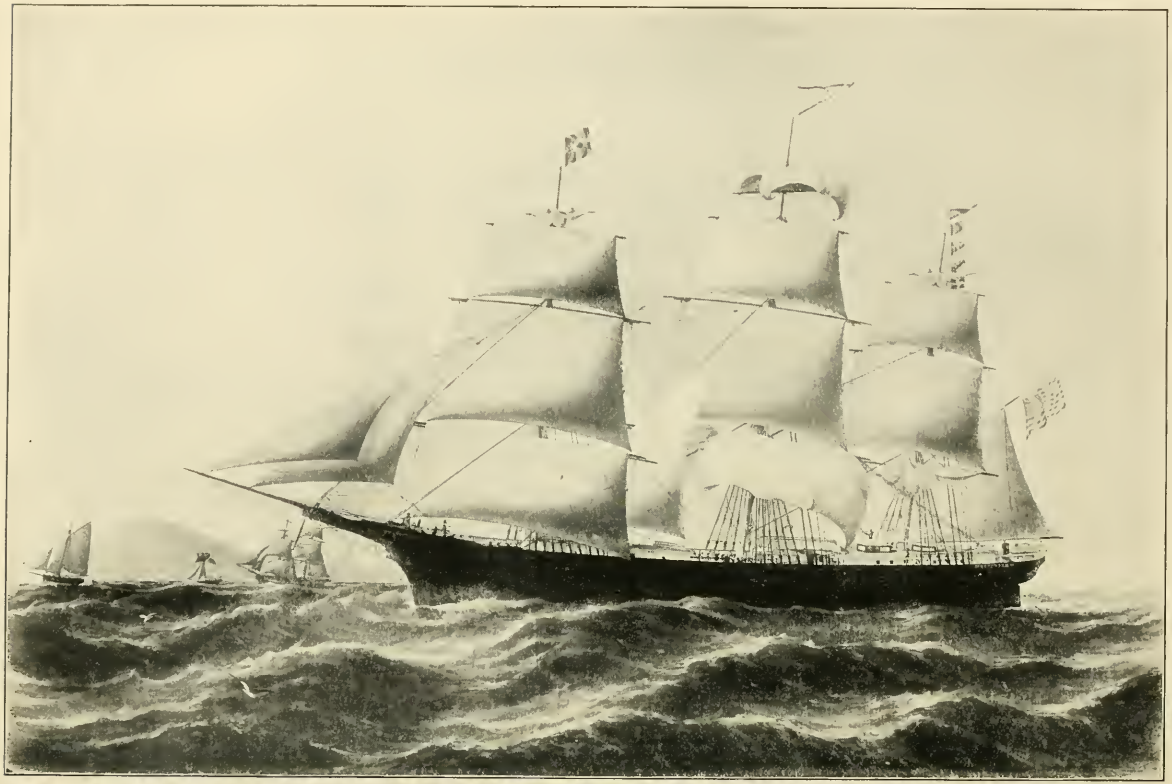
She had 4 decks, 4 masts when launched, and her figure-head was an eagle. On her stern holding a shield in his talons was another eagle, whose outstretched wings were 36 feet from tip to tip. Her long sharp ends and concave lines forward and aft gave her a very racy look despite her size. She had the Forbes rig of double topsails and Harris system of lightning conductors, and was intended to carry a crew of 100 men and 30 boys. At the time of her launching wire rope was unknown, so that all her standing rigging was hemp, her main rigging being 12½ inches and her top rigging 8 inches in circumference. She carried 15,653 yards of sail, required 1,500,000 feet of hard pine, 986,000 feet of white oak, 336 tons of iron bolts, and 56 tons of copper, besides sheathing.

It is said that 30,000 people crowded the wharves at the North End of Boston, the Charlestown Navy Yard, and Chelsea Bridge, and an equal number crowded the immediate neighborhood of her yard, October 4, 1853, to witness her launching. In deference to the temperance sentiment then prevalent she was christened with a bottle of Cochituate water. Her foremast was 130 feet, her main 131, her mizzen 122, and her jigger 110 feet. She was commanded by Captain Lauchlan McKay, and went to New York to take on a load of provisions, valued at $250,000, for Europe. A great conflagration in New York, December 26, 1853, set fire to her, and, although she was sunk, the water was too shallow to save her, and she was burned to the water's edge. Her owner, Donald McKay, gave her up to the underwriters, and received about $220,000 insurance. She was dry docked and rebuilt under the direction of Captain N. B. Palmer. She was cut down to 3 decks, 36 feet taken off her mainyard, and her other masts and her yards materially shortened, and she was lighter sparred and canvased. Her tonnage was reduced to 3,357, which still left her the largest merchant ship of her day. On her first voyage to Liverpool she was commanded by a Captain Limeburner and manned by a crew of 50 men, less

than half the crew she would have required under her old rig. The passage, a rough one, took 19 days. As she drew 25 feet of water and there was only 24 feet at the Liverpool pier, she had to anchor and her cargo was lightered. She was chartered to carry French troops to the Crimea. She made in 1857 the record time from New York to the equator of 15 days, 18 hours, Cape Horn in 48 days, and San Francisco in 92 days, one of the record passages. It was on this voyage that she beat the "Westward Ho," and the New York men who had backed her in the race won large sums. As a majority of her owners were Southerners, she was seized as rebel property in 1861 on her return from Liverpool to New York, and sold by auction. In 1862 she was chartered to carry General Benjamin F. Butler's troops to Ship Island. There she collided with the "Idaho," and went ashore. Two weeks later General Butler wrote from New Orleans: "I am now at the Passes and find the 'Great Republic' ashore there, I am tired of waiting for her, send the 'Ocean Pearl.'"

She was pulled off, resumed the California trade, making a voyage in 111 days in 1865, and was finally sold for $25,000 to the Merchants Trading Company of Liverpool. She went under the English flag, and was renamed the "Denmark." In 1868 she sailed from St. John to Liverpool in 14 days, one of the fastest voyages ever made by sail. While on a voyage from Rio in 1872, she sprang a leak and was abandoned at sea.

The "Reporter" was built in 1853 by Paul Curtis at East Boston under supervision of her future master and part owner, Captain Octavius Howe. Her first voyage was to New Orleans, and when, pushed by four tugs across the bar at the South-west Pass, she pulled up to the levee, October 11, 1853, she was the largest and fastest-sailing vessel that had ever visited that port. A month later she sailed for Liverpool, crammed with cotton,—cotton on her deck and 50 bales in the captain's cabin,—and on his arrival Captain Howe wrote the owners, "We have given the whole fleet from the North, South, and West a terrible licking." It was



Length, 207′ REPORTER Tonnage, 1474

found, however, that speed did not compensate for lack of cargo capacity, and in 1856 she was sold to W. F. Weld & Co. for $76,000. This firm employed her in the business to which she was adapted, and the same year she sailed for California. She rounded the Horn in 48 days, and reached San Francisco in 107 days, beating the "Ocean Express," the "Torpedo," and every other vessel sailing about the same time. In 1861 the "Andrew Jackson" made the best passage of the year, 102 days from

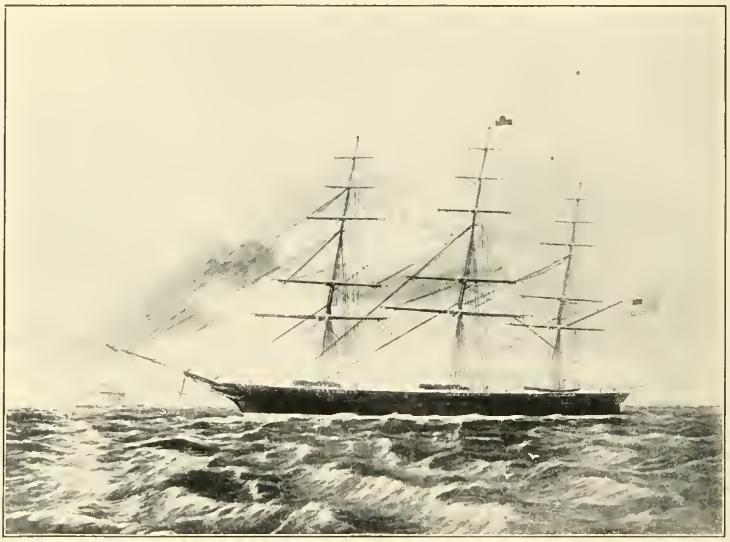
Length, 190′ STARLIGHT Tonnage, 1150

New York to San Francisco, and the "Reporter," the second best, 103 days, beating the fast clippers "Golden Eagle," "Romance of the Seas," "Sierra Nevada," and "Great Republic." On June 3, 1862, the "Reporter," Captain William H. White, left New York, for San Francisco, and off Cape Horn shipped a tremendous sea, which smashed all the boats and started a leak. Rafts were constructed and the vessel abandoned, but, before rescue by the English bark "Enchantress" came, all on the rafts but four had died of cold and hunger.

TITAN

The "Starlight," owned by Baker & Morrill, was built by E. & H. O. Briggs at South Boston in 1854. She finally went under the Italian flag, and was named "Proto Longo."

The "Titan" in 1857 carried 6,900 bales of cotton from New Orleans to Liverpool, said to have been the largest cargo of cotton ever shipped up to that time in a sailing vessel. She was built in 1855 by Roosevelt & Joyce at New York, and was owned by



Length, 178′ NIGHTINGALE Tonnage, 1066

D. G. & W. Bacon of Boston. She was commanded at different times by Captain Oliver Eldridge and J. Henry Sears, both of Boston. Her first voyage was a charter carrying French troops to the Crimea. The London *Times* said of her in 1857, "The 'Titan,' the largest and finest clipper in the world, has just returned from the Crimea, and will run in the White Star Line to Australia." Subsequently she sailed to Melbourne and back. In 1857 a gale off Liverpool forced her to cut away the main and mizzen masts in order to wear, and thus she made her way

into Liverpool as shown in the picture. The next year she was abandoned at sea.

The "Nightingale," one of the most beautiful of clippers, had a most checkered career, beginning as a yacht and ending as a slaver. She was built in 1851 by Samuel Hanscomb at Portsmouth as an exhibit at the World's Fair in London, to which she was to carry passengers, and was most luxuriously fitted out for that purpose. It was intended to name her after Jenny Lind, a figure-head of whom she carried, but, as another ship already had the name, she was christened the "Nightingale." As her owners failed before she was completed, she was sold at auction in Boston to Sampson & Tappan, who sent her, under Captain Fisk, to Australia. She went from Sydney, Australia, to Shanghai, took on a load of tea, and raced the clipper ship "Challenger" to Deal, beating her by three days. Subsequently Sampson & Tappan offered to back the "Nightingale" for £10,000 against any ship, British or American, in a race to China and back, but the challenge was never accepted. In 1855, under Captain Samuel Mather, she sailed from Shanghai to London, beating several clippers, including the "Star of the East." She was soon after transferred to the California trade, and later sold to unknown owners. In the fall of 1860 she arrived in England from New York, and soon it became known about the docks that she had become a slaver, although ostensibly she was loading for St. Thomas with a cargo of guns, powder, and cotton cloth. The United States war-vessel "Saratoga" in the spring of 1861 captured her on the African coast, loaded with 961 slaves and commanded nominally by a Spaniard, but really by Francis Bowen. She was sent to New York, condemned, and finally sold for $13,000. During a part of the Civil War she was used by the government as a supply and coal ship. She was sold for $15,000, and went under Norwegian colors.

The "Herald of the Morning," another famous clipper, in 1855 went from New York to San Francisco in 99 days, and in

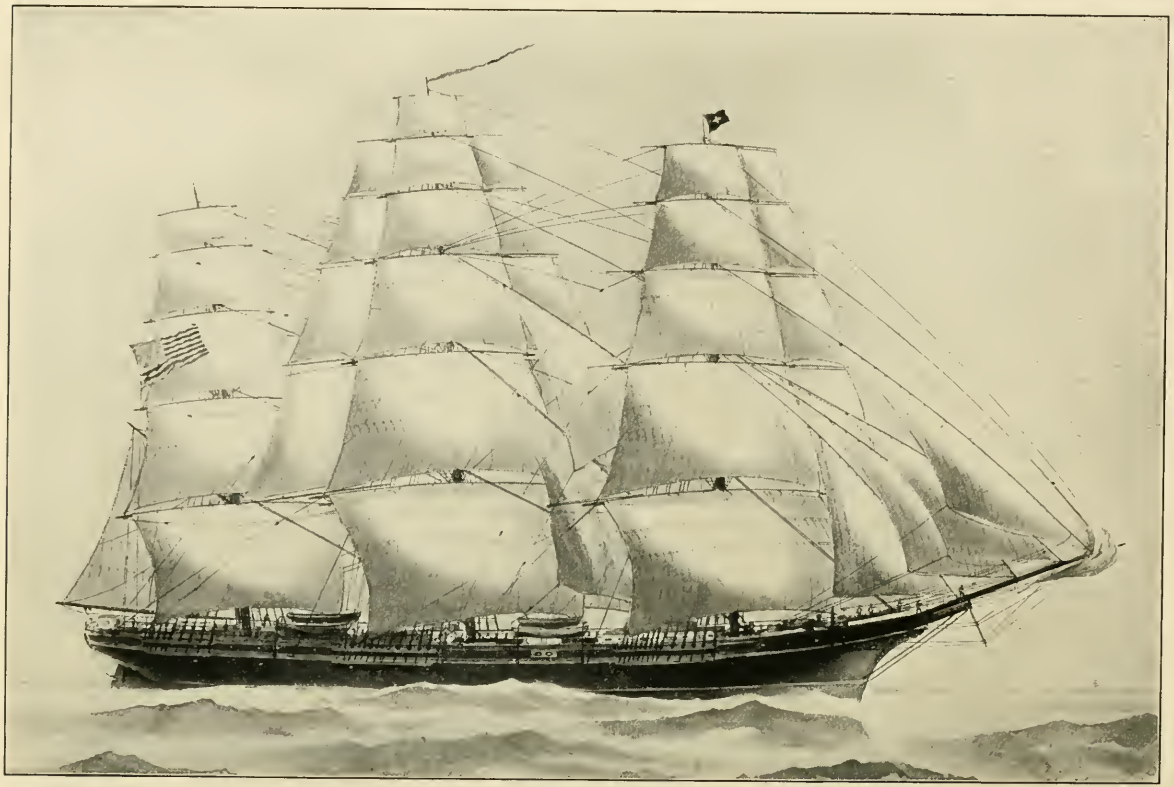
1867 in 102 days. While off Cape Horn in a voyage from Callao to Hampton Roads, she struck a large whale and lost seven feet of her bow, having to throw part of her cargo overboard to prevent her from sinking. She, too, eventually went under the Norwegian flag.

The "Golden Fleece," another of the W. F. Weld & Co. clippers, was built in East Boston by Paul Curtis in 1855, and was

Length, 260′ RED JACKET Tonnage, 2030

from the same model as the "Reporter." A knight in armor was carried as a figure-head. While entering the Golden Gate in 1857, she struck "Four Fathom Bar" off Point Bonita, but managed to reach her wharf with twelve feet of water in her hold. Finally, in 1878, she was caught in a storm off Montevideo while on a voyage from San Francisco to Boston. Badly damaged, she put into port, and was condemned and sold.

The "Red Jacket" was one of the most famous of the Australian packets of the White Star Line. She was built in 1853 by

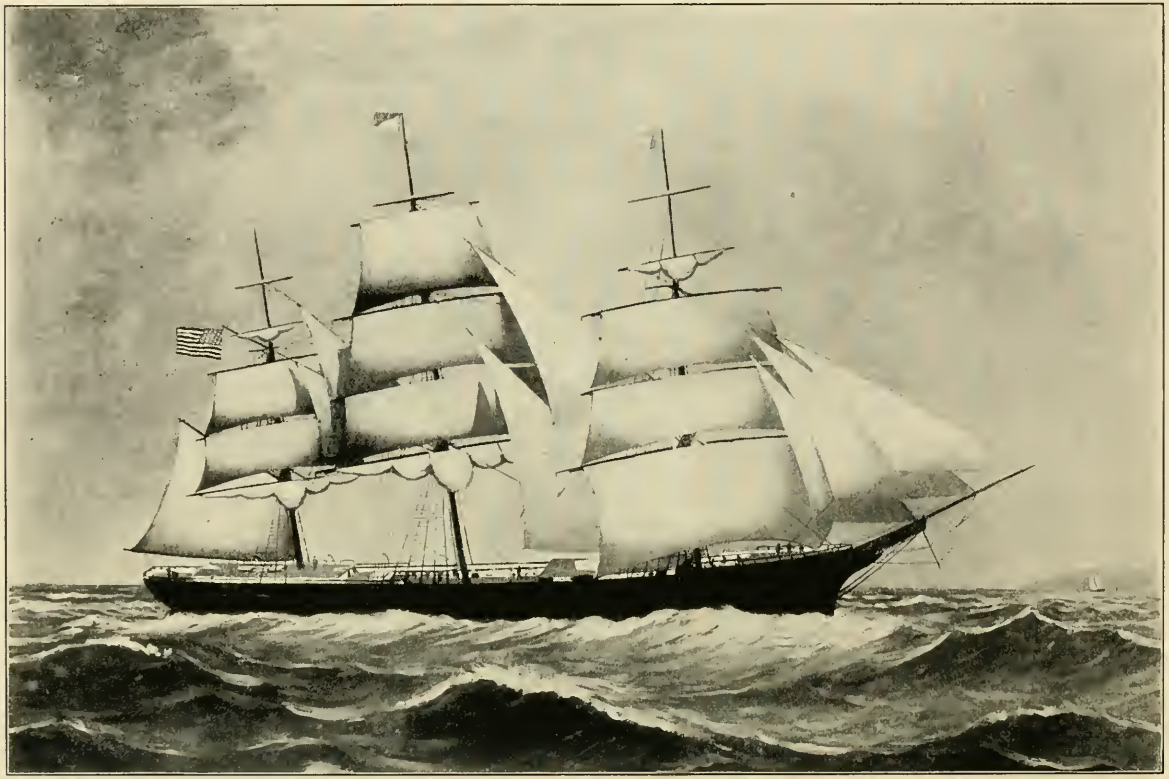


Length, 266′ JAMES BAINES Tonnage, 2515

George Thomas at Rockland, Me., for Secomb & Taylor of Boston, and was designed by Samuel H. Pook. She ran to Liverpool in January, 1854, from Sandy Hook to Rock Light in 13 days and 1 hour; actual time to Liverpool, 14 days and 8 hours. On her arrival she was bought by Pilkington & Watson, agents of the White Star Line, for $150,000, and went into the Australian trade. She sailed from Liverpool to Melbourne, Australia, on her first voyage in 69 days, 11 hours. During her voyage of 13,880 miles she averaged 200 miles a day. She rivalled the "Lightning" as the fastest ship in the English marine, and ended her days in the lumber trade between Canada and England.

The "James Baines" was one of four clipper ships built in 1854 by Donald McKay for James Baines & Co. of Liverpool, who ran the Black Ball Line of packets to Australia. Her figure-head was a bust of her owner, James Baines, and on her stern was a globe supported by the arms of England and America. Commanded by Captain Charles McDonnell, she made the run from Boston Light to Rock Island Light, in the record time of 12 days and 6 hours. In the winter of 1854 and 1855 she ran from Liverpool to Melbourne in 63 days, and home in 69, thus circumnavigating the globe in the record time of 132 days, her best day's run being 420 statute miles. On June 17, 1856, she made 21 knots with main skysail set, the highest rate of speed ever made by a sailing vessel. During the Sepoy mutiny the "James Baines" was one of the clipper ships to carry troops from England to India. She was finally burned at Liverpool, and her hulk was made a landing stage for Atlantic steamship passengers.

The "Dreadnought" was built at Newburyport in 1853 by Currier & Townsend for David Ogden & Co. of New York, and, captained by Samuel Samuels, made many very swift voyages to Liverpool from New York in David Ogden's Red Cross Line. In January, 1856, she made the phenomenal passage from Sandy Hook to Queenstown in 9 days and 17 hours. On one voyage



Length, 187' FORMOSA Tonnage, 1252

the crew mutinied, and Captain Samuels's prompt courage alone saved the ship from seizure. In 1869 she was wrecked on the crags of Cape Horn, and Captain P. N. Mayhew and her crew were picked up after being 14 days in open boats.

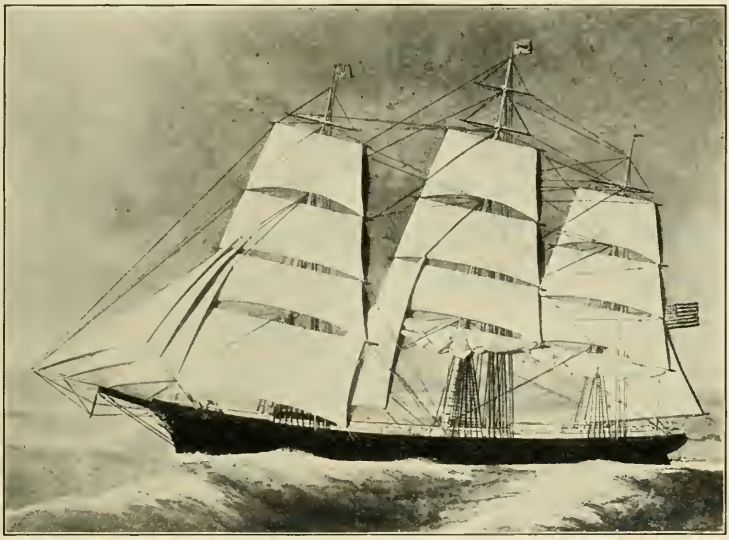
The clipper "Huguenot," under command of Sylvanus Nickerson, foundered in the Indian Ocean while on her way from Iliolo to Boston with a load of sugar, going down in three hours. Her

Length, 200′ DREADNOUGHT Tonnage, 1413

captain and crew were 8 days in open boats before they landed on an island in the Ormbay Straits. They were made prisoners by a Malay tribe, were released, made their way to another island, and were finally rescued by a Dutch man-of-war.

The "Formosa" was built by John Taylor, at East Boston, in 1868 for Silsbee, Pickman & Allen of Salem. Under Captain Charles H. Allen, Jr., in 1871 she sailed from New York to Melbourne in 89 days, and again in 1876 made the passage from Boston to Melbourne in 79 days. She finally went ashore on the Western Tweeling Island at the entrance of Atlas Straits,

January 3, 1880. After experiencing heavy squalls, the ship became unmanageable and would not steer, and the strong current carried her on shore. She pounded on the rocks, and at last, on January 6, swung off and sank in deep water, leaving nothing visible but her topmasts. The captain and crew landed on the island, but, finding the tide rising so high that it would submerge the island, the spars and rigging were taken from

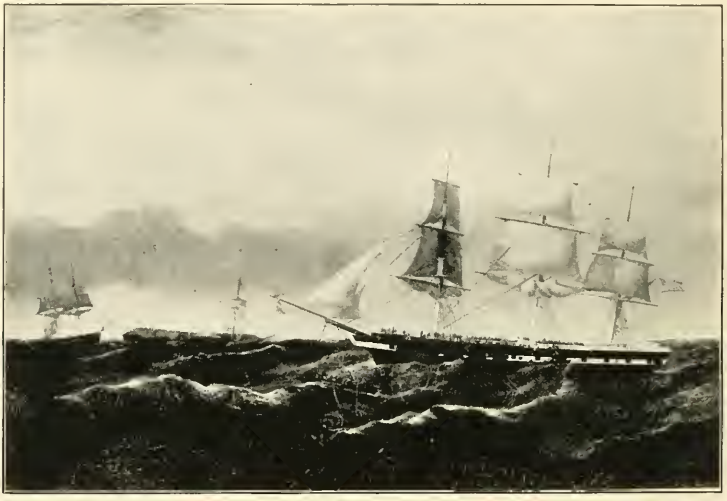


Length, 215′ 6″ GREAT ADMIRAL Tonnage, 1576

the ship and a platform was erected in the cocoanut-trees, on which the crew and the stores were placed as the surf rolled in and covered the island. The captain and crew were finally rescued.

The "Great Admiral," one of the last of the clipper ships, belonged to W. F. Weld & Co., and was built in 1869; and from 1869 to 1897, when she was sold to Captain E. Sterling for $12,500, she was a steady money-maker and made many voyages around the world.

One of the most thrilling rescues of the clipper ship era was that of the 300 passengers and crew of the steamship "Central America," in 1857, by the brig "Marine," owned by the firm of Elisha Atkins, the head of which was the father of Edwin F. Atkins, who is now head of the firm of E. Atkins & Co. The "Central America" was burned at sea while on her way from Aspinwall to New York, and her passengers and crew were found



"DANIEL WEBSTER" RESCUING THE PASSENGERS OF THE SHIP "UNICORN"

adrift on the ocean by the brig "Marine," under Captain Burt. Owing to the high sea which was running, the rescue was accomplished with great risks, which were fearlessly taken by the captain and crew of the brig. Those rescued were safely landed in New York. The other passengers were picked up by other vessels.

An interesting experience in the carcer of Mr. Atkins was an experimental cold storage cargo, one of the first probably sent to any foreign market. It consisted of poultry, fish, and oysters

consigned to Demarara, which was so ingeniously packed in blocks of ice that an alternate cavity was left for the turkeys between blocks of ice. In other layers thousands of pounds of oysters and fish were laid away, and each layer was covered with other blocks, so that tier upon tier of the ice was thus built up. The provisions were landed at their destination frozen solid. It was, however, but a slight task to break out the cargo. As a financial proposition, the experiment did not pay.

Another interesting rescue was that of the passengers from the immigrant ship "Unicorn" by the ship "Daniel Webster," under Captain W. H. Howard, on November 9, 1851. This has been interestingly depicted in an oil painting owned by Arthur Williams, Jr., which is shown here.

Any account of clipper ships, however meagre, would be incomplete without something about Donald McKay, the master builder, from whose yard so many of the fastest clippers came. He was a Nova Scotian of long Scottish descent, and when about sixteen went to New York, where he learned his trade with Isaac Webb and other well-known ship-builders. He returned to the East, and helped build the "Delia Walker" for Dennis Condry. He so impressed Condry with his skill and energy that, when Enoch Train, a wealthy Boston merchant engaged in the South American trade, decided to put on a line of packets between Liverpool and Boston, Condry dissuaded him from having the ships built in New York and advised him to see McKay. This Train did, and was so pleased with him that he gave McKay, who had gone into the business for himself, the contract to build the "Joshua Bates," the first ship of Train's famous Liverpool line. Train persuaded McKay to come to Boston and establish a yard in East Boston, and from this yard came many of the swiftest clipper ships. McKay's prosperity continued until the loss by fire of the "Great Republic," from which he never fully recovered.

The State Street Trust Company takes pleasure in presenting to you this monograph entitled Some Ships of the Clipper Ship Era.

It is the seventh in the series of historical brochures that the company has issued during the past six years, and the company hopes that you will find it worthy of preservation in your library.

The State Street Trust Company desires also to call your attention to the banking facilities which it offers to individuals, firms, and corporations that either contemplate a change in banking relations or are seeking a bank for the first time.

The offices are equipped with the most up-to-date Safe Deposit Vaults, which have every accommodation required for such a department.

The State Street Trust Company extends to you an invitation to visit its offices if you have not already done so.

MAIN OFFICE
33 State Street

BACK BAY BRANCH
130 Massachusetts Avenue
(*Corner Boylston Street*)

UNIVERSITY OF

Syracuse, N. Y.
Stockton, Calif.

L 007 802 733 1

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
AA 001 008 929 0