

F100-1C

# CHAPTER I

## A Cold Collation Is Served

You ~~may~~ can't beat Saturday as a launching-day. Shipyard ~~has~~ <sup>workers have</sup> been known to celebrate a successful launching, not wisely but too well, and having the affair on <sup>enables them to</sup> with a Saturday ~~launching they can~~ sober up on their own time. All of this may or may not have been why Saturday, November 14, 1863, was chosen for that festive day at the yard of Messrs. Gibson, McDonald & Arnold at Ramsey, in the far-off Isle of Man.

On the stocks was the <sup>naked</sup> hull of <sup>an</sup> ~~a~~ iron ship, awaiting the dollop of baptismal wine across her forefoot. ~~Bunting~~ <sup>clapped in the crisp autumn breeze, both around the yard and on the new ship.</sup> Among the flags which dressed the sleek iron hull, three stood out smartly -- the British Union Jack, the colors of the Port of Liverpool and, for reasons which are not entirely clear, the Stars and Stripes. And in this pretty gesture there was something prophetic, for it was the American flag, last of the three under which she was fated to sail, which was to carry her, re-named Star of India, to the end of her first century afloat.

<sup>Above</sup> ~~the~~ platform which had been rigged for the launching-party, her figurehead gazed serenely over the crowd; it was a buxom figure of the Greek goddess Euterpe, fresh from the skillfully plied chisels of George Sutherland, the Glasgow carver. That was to be her name -- Euterpe -- and that figurehead was to scan the rolling greybacks of the <sup>Rouling</sup> ~~Rolling~~ Forties, the pack-ice of the Bering Sea, and the waterfronts of, to name but a few, <sup>Melbourne, Wellington</sup> ~~Calcutta, Foulness, Port Chalmers~~ and San Francisco. Most of that figurehead is intact today, and whether the few missing bits were lost to a nameless Spanish brig off the Welsh coast, <sup>to</sup> the steamship Canadian in Glasgow, or the plodding stern-wheeler Fort Bragg in San Francisco is not a matter of record.

As busy as a beaver that day was the reporter from the Manx newspaper Mona's Herald; he was going to have to fill the equivalent of three columns of Agate type, so it is small wonder that he went into some detail.