

TERMINAL HOTEL
60 Market St.,
San Francisco.

Aug. 16, 1937.

Mr. MacMullen,
Editor, THE UNION,
San Diego, Calif.

Dear Mr. MacMullen:

Knowing your interest in sailing ships and their history, I am taking the liberty of submitting these verses, which I feel sure will interest the nautic contingent among your readers. Hoping you may find them worthy a place in your columns, I remain,

Sincerely,

Walter Macarthur

Walter Macarthur.

A SHELLBACK'S REVERIE

By Walter Macarthur

An old tar stood upon the beach and gazed across the bay,
And as he peered into the mist his thoughts were far away,
A-sailing o'er the seven seas in ships once far renowned,
For speed and beauty unsurpassed the whole wide world around.

Before the sailor's eye unrolled a vision of the past --
Again he paced the reeling deck and climbed the lofty mast
Of some tall clipper as she ran before the rising gale,
And lived again, as in a dream, the glorious days of sail.

Oh! sure it was a gallant sight, I'd have you all to know,
A handsome Yankee clipper dressed in muslin white as snow,
As with a breeze upon her beam -- like golden fabric spun,
She breasts the sea and bares her burnished copper to the sun!

We dropped her down the Hooghly, loaded deep with jute and rape,
Then set all sail, aloft, alow, and headed for the Cape;
We dived into the monsoon and we held her full and by,
With sheets and halyards in our hands, all ready to let fly.

The way the Old Man carried on! It made us thrill with glee
To feel the old girl quiver as she mounted to the sea
And spurned the rushing billows with her forefoot to the air,
Her straining shrouds and cordage making music to the ear.

Her course was laid to nor'ard, with the trade wind blowing strong,
The dolphins playing round her bows, she gaily bowled along,
With every stitch of canvas set, to carry or to drag,
And to the wool-ships in her wake she dipped her Starry flag.

With a west wind on our quarter we held on to every kite,
Nor doused a jib or stun sail till the Scillys hove in sight,
Then, up the Channel, east-sou east, we hit a lively pace,
And led the homeward-bounders in a hell-for-leather race.

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Good-bye, the white-winged ships of yore, the ships that used to be,
When wind and canvas ruled the wave and sailors used the sea,
For now Poor Jack is flat aback, his usefulness is o'er,
He's hard and fast upon the beach, and ships aint ships no more!