

Once freely roaming the
seven seas, now resting
calmly, our oldest re-
stored iron hulled sailing
ship entices all tourists
to climb aboard.

OLDEST IRON hulled sailing vessel left in the world, the Star of India, beautifully restored, rests quietly at San Diego's embarcadero, tugging gently at her moorings every time she feels the wake from one of the Navy's giant men-of-war as it passes in or out of the harbor.

Built by British workmen in the Isle of Man in 1863, when the sailing ship was at its zenith, she has seen all the seven seas of the world. Originally christened the Euterpe, and still bearing the image of that Greek goddess of music as her figurehead, today she is a delight to visitors, recreating for them the times when travel across the oceans was a matter of months, travel that today's jets make in hours.

She was a beautiful and modern ship on the day she sailed from Liverpool for Calcutta on her maiden voyage. Honestly built, with the finest materials in her hull and rigging, her masts towered one hundred thirty-nine feet and she could carry more than a quarter acre of sail. By today's standards she was small, two hundred seventy-five feet long with a thirty-five-foot beam, but she did useful work for sixty years.

Indian ports saw her for several years—Trincomalee, Bombay, and Calcutta. Later she made more than twenty voyages around the world, in the New Zealand-Australia run with emigrants, returning via Cape Horn with cargo.

As steam grew ever more dominant on the world's oceans, the tragedy common to all the beautiful sailing ships came to her. She had to take



The Iron Lady

By JOHN ROBINSON

pickup cargoes, often the hated coal. Finally, she was purchased by the Alaska Packers Association. They used her to carry supplies and oriental workmen north each year to the canneries, and to carry them back with a load of canned salmon each fall. In this service her name was changed to Star of India, but with no official christening.

By 1923 she could not compete even in this trade. Steam was cheaper even there, and windjammer sailors to crew her were becoming hard to find.

She escaped the fate of many of her sisters who were cut up for scrap, but she lay forty years in San Diego harbor, a rotting and rusting hulk, before a Restoration Committee

was formed and money was raised to repair her. The hull was still sound, but much of the rigging and decking had to be replaced. Old men who knew sail were found as advisers, and everyone pitched in to help, including many man-of-war men from San Diego's Navy vessels.

On her one hundredth birthday, as part of a happy celebration, she was officially christened Star of India. Today, operated by the San Diego Maritime Museum, she is open to all visitors. There is good parking right on the quay, and a token admission charge, with half price for children.

Although no longer allowed to swing freely into charging seas, the Iron Lady's decks are once again echoing to the sound of footsteps.

