

## The Ships That Won't Go Down

We hear a great commotion  
'Bout the ship that comes to grief,  
That founders in mid-ocean,  
Or is driven on a reef;  
Because it's cheap and brittle  
A score of sinners drown.  
But we hear but mighty little  
Of the ships that won't go down.

Here's honour to the builders -  
The builders of the past;  
Here's honour to the builders  
That builded ships to last;  
Here's honour to the captain,  
And honour to the crew;  
Here's double-column headlines  
To the ships that battle through.

They make a great sensation  
About famous men that fail,  
That sink a world of chances  
In the city morgue or gaol,  
Who drink, or blow their brains out,  
Because of "Fortune's frown."  
But we hear far too little  
Of the men who won't go down.

The world is full of trouble,  
And the world is full of wrong,  
But the heart of man is noble,  
And the heart of man is strong!  
They say the sea sings dirges,  
But I would say to you  
That the wild wave's song's a paean  
For the men that battle through.  
--Henry Lawson (*Australian, d. 1922*)

As we begin a new year,  
may the wild waves be singing  
for you.



*Giovanni da Verrazzano*, by Ettore Ximenes, dedicated 1909; located in New York City's Battery Park.

Verrazzano, an intrepid and persistent navigator, on April 17, 1524 became the first European to sail into New York Harbor. His report of the event, geared to the interests of the French merchants who employed him, foreshadowed New York's importance as a commercial center: "A very pleasant place, situated amongst certain little steep hills; from amidst the which hills there ran down into the sea a great stream of water, which within the mouth was very deep, and from the sea to the mouth of same, with the tide, which we found to rise 8 foot, any great vessel laden may pass up. . . . A contrary flaw of the wind coming from the sea, we were enforced to return to our ship, leaving this land, to our great discontentment for the great commodity and pleasantness thereof, which we suppose is not without some riches, all the hills showing mineral matters in them."

The Lawson poem and the details about Verrazzano are excerpted from Dianne Durante's *Forgotten Delights: The Producers*, a celebration of nineteen of Manhattan's outdoor sculptures of explorers, inventors, engineers, businessmen and workers whose thoughts and efforts reshaped New York, the United States and the world. For more details or to purchase a copy, visit

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