

The
LOOKOUT



THE LIGHTS OF PEACE SHINE
AGAIN AT "25 SOUTH STREET"

SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK

25 SOUTH STREET

THIS MONTH'S COVER shows the Titanic and the Cross lights on the Institute's Roof.

The last convoy has sailed. Ships now proceed independently. And with lights on the "black-out" on New York's waterfront is over.

Shortly after V-J Day, the U. S. Coast Guard removed its lookouts which had been stationed during the war on the Titanic Lighthouse Tower on the roof of the Seamen's Church Institute of New York, and the Institute was again free to turn on its 40,000 candle power Cooper-Hewitt light, as an aid to navigation.

And so it shines, symbol of Peace, and Welcome to thousands of incoming ships.

May this light also indicate to returning seafarers that landsmen have not forgotten what they did during the war to deliver the cargoes and to help speed Victory.

Sanctuary

O God, our Master Pilot, steer we pray thee on a true course our ships, guide and bless those who sail and those who operate them, that they may render right service to our Nation and to the World. Bless, we pray Thee, our fellowship here, this food to our use, and provide for the wants of others, through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

(Invocation by Dr. Kelley at the Propeller Club American Merchant Marine Banquet, Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, New York, October 19, 1945.)

The LOOKOUT

VOL. XXXVI, NOVEMBER, 1945

PUBLISHED MONTHLY
by the

SEAMEN'S CHURCH
INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK

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\$1.00 per year 10c per copy

Gifts of \$5.00 per year and over include a year's subscription to "THE LOOKOUT".

Entered as second class matter July 8, 1925, at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879.

Address all communications to

SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE
OF NEW YORK

25 SOUTH ST., NEW YORK 4, N. Y.

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PLEASE SAVE THIS DATE:

MONDAY EVENING, JANUARY
14th, FOR THE INSTITUTE'S
BENEFIT PERFORMANCE OF
BERNARD SHAW'S PLAY "PYG-
MALION", STARRING GERTRUDE
LAWRENCE AND RAYMOND
MASSEY.

The Lookout

VOL. XXXVI

November, 1945

No. 11

Artists and Writers in the Merchant Marine

By Marjorie Dent Candee *

Editor's Note: This issue of THE LOOKOUT contains excerpts from speeches made at the Artists and Writers Club Panel meeting, held at the Waldorf-Astoria, October 19th, at the PROPELLER CLUB AMERICAN MERCHANT MARINE CONFERENCE.

The Institute Director, Dr. Kelley, served as Panel Chairman. Speakers included Francis Hackett, author, and book critic, N. Y. TIMES; Paul Peters, drama editor, 20th Century-Fox Film Corp.; Mrs. Isabel Peterson, director, Art Exhibitions, United Seamen's Service; Mrs. H. Suydam Cutting, administrator, USS Rest Homes; Mrs. Anne Conrow Hazard, Conrad Library, Seamen's Church Institute of New York; Lt. John Ackerson, USMS; George Noble, Chief Steward, Kenneth Johnson, 3rd Mate, U. S. Merchant Marine, and Gordon Grant, marine artist.

SEAMEN today have many cultural opportunities unknown to earlier men who sailed before the mast. If a man wants to write or paint or compose music, he is encouraged now to do so, and is aided by experts in these fields.

The Seamen's Church Institute of New York has long been aware of the yearnings of merchant seamen for self-expression. For sixteen years they have been encouraged to contribute articles, poems, stories and illustrations to THE LOOKOUT, the Institute's monthly publication. The Institute has also conducted contests in painting, photography, poetry, and essays which have done much to spur on

seamen with talent, and which have helped them to overcome the lethargy and procrastination which every creative artist finds a stumbling block to his work.

Before the war, the Seamen's Institute sold many paintings by seamen during its annual exhibition at the Motorboat Show, and also in its own Nautical Museum at 25 South Street. It also conducted (during the depression when ships were tied up and seamen were out of work) classes in ship modelling, figurehead carving and twine belt making, with contests and exhibitions.

On June 18, 1945, in answer to a real and long-felt need, the Institute officially opened an Artists and Writers Club for merchant seamen of all nationalities, with headquarters on the 12th floor of the Institute's building. Seamen are eligible to membership if they have literary or artistic ability or inclinations. Prominent artists, sculptors, writers, musicians and poets have generously given their time to aid and counsel the seamen.

The Club has been acclaimed as a specific answer to the problem of where seamen could obtain instruction and criticism, and where they could work, when ashore, in a quiet, pleasant, airy place with easels, typewriters, reference books, etc. in a congenial and fraternal atmosphere.

*Secretary, ARTISTS AND WRITERS CLUB, sponsored by the SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK.

The story is told that John Galsworthy once had lunch with his publisher who complained that there were "no new writers." Galsworthy was embarking on a sea voyage. The publisher said: "If in the course of your travels you run across a young writer with talent, let me know." On the last day of the voyage, a ship's officer timidly asked Galsworthy if he would be so kind as to read his manuscript. The manuscript was "Almayer's Folly", and the author was later known as Joseph Conrad.

Through this Artists and Writers Club seamen who may be "future Conrads" are, at least, given an opportunity to try their wings. Out of their memories of war, of endurance and heroism and fear, may come some fine stories by men who have never written before. About 90% of the manuscripts brought to me for criticism are fiction. More than half are in a humorous vein. The men are of all ratings in the Merchant Marine ranging from Ordinary Seaman or Wiper to Captain or Chief Engineer or Steward. They are about 90% of American birth; the other 10% include British, Canadian, Polish, Filipino, Spanish and Scottish. Of the artists, the classical and modern schools of art are about equally represented; 90% are high school graduates.

The majority of the men who have joined the club are interested in writing or painting as an avocation. They intend going to sea, but want to improve their technique in the creative arts. Several of them, since they have families, hope that if their material becomes saleable they may eventually stay ashore.

The procedure is to give each member an assignment to write on a certain subject pertaining to what he knows best—his life at sea. This trains his powers of observation.

Later, he is assigned a subject requiring imagination and memory. For example, the first two assignments have been "What Books Mean To Men At Sea", an essay contest being sponsored by the Conrad Library in cooperation with the Artists and Writers Club, and an essay on "Christmas At Sea." The best of these will be published in THE LOOKOUT, which from time to time, has seamen's issues. This is an outlet for material of a maritime nature which has no chance with national magazines. The seamen derive satisfaction from seeing their name in print, and we arrange to send extra copies to their families and friends.

One of the things which the Club secretary had to contend with was to make it clear to members that we are not miracle workers—that there is no guarantee that their manuscripts will be published. Many of the seamen who brought in original stories have had them criticized by the committee and the men are now at sea, rewriting and revising these. Several manuscripts have been accepted for publication. Beginners in writing are reminded of the old adage: "You must first walk before you can run." The joy of writing for its own sake is also emphasized. Many personal experiences of seamen are now being put on paper, and in the sharing of these experiences, and the unburdening of their emotions and reflections, the seamen-writers have found an emotional outlet for their creative energies.

Seamen like Frank Laskier, Robert Carse, Colin MacKenzie, Lars Skatebul and Fred Herman have told with an intensity and an eloquence of the essential role played by the Merchant Marine in the war. They, and other seamen, will doubtless write of the post-war problems confronting seafarers.

(Continued on page 19)

Artists and Seamen

By Gordon Grant



Drawing by Gordon Grant

FOR some years the Seamen's Church Institute of New York, under the able guidance of Miss Marjorie Dent Candee, has been lending aid and encouragement to seamen who have an urge to draw and paint, and since the outbreak of war, Mrs. Isabel Peterson for the United Seamen's Service has done valiant things in organizing exhibitions of worth by men on the ships.

I note with pleasure that Mrs. Peterson is to follow me as speaker, so it seems fitting for me to lend a little color to the convictions that have impelled these ladies in their efforts, and produced such promising results, by relating one or two actual experiences of my own with seamen off soundings.

As a boy of fourteen, a kind providence sent me round the Horn in a large Glasgow sailing ship—San Francisco to Cardiff.

I was not a member of the crew; simply a guest of the Captain, but I lacked not for odd jobs in the four-and-a-half month passage, and by the time I put my foot ashore,

had acquired quite a spicy sea vocabulary.

What that voyage did to an imaginative youngster was not long in manifesting itself, for when my art training began, the salt in me came out and a stored-up fund of impressions has served me well through the subsequent years of painting the sea and sailors.

A good many years later, in 1925, to be exact, I had an opportunity of making a passage on another old wind-jammer, one of the "Star" fleet, owned by the Alaska Packers Company of San Francisco.

We were headed for a salmon cannery — a God-forsaken spot called Chignik — halfway along the Aleutian peninsula.

The crew — all expert salmon fishermen, was made up almost exclusively of Sandinavians, a superior lot of men, not at all comparable to the wharf sweepings in the foc's'le of my former ship.

My purpose, of course, in making the trip was to brush up on my seamanship and get another look at one of the last old timers in action before she was relegated to the scrap heap with all the rest of her kind.

As soon as the weather permitted I set up my kit on deck to restock my sketch book and portfolio.

The sailor man is a shy fellow, I've found, but after a few days I was approached by a youngster in the crew who remarked—"Oh, Mr. Grant, you should have been with me on the main royal yard this morning at sun-up. It was beautiful over there to Eastward." My days of scrambling up to the royal yard were done — the deck was good enough, so I took his word for it.

It was not long before he decided to confess that he never went aloft without a sketch book in his pocket —and rather sheepishly showed it to me. His drawings were very im-

mature, but on the other hand, were revealing in that they showed that the lad knew instinctively what was good material and what was not.

There is half the battle in the making of an artist. "What shall I paint?" goes hand in hand with "How shall I paint it?"

So we struck up quite a friendship and inside a week it transpired that three other men were interested in what I was about.

These men were professional deep water men and the sea had laid its indelible mark on them.

They were like thousands of seamen through the ages, who, try as they would, could never leave the sea for a life ashore.

The sun-rises, the gales and doldrums were part of their very soul, and, urged by the efforts of young Eric and myself, clearly indicated that they would like to put on paper what *they* had observed in the day's work.

Had I had the materials, and had the weather been more salubrious "The Gulf of Alaska School of Art" would there and then have been started.

Well—here we are today, and "The Seawide School of Art" has been started and firmly established.

Libraries for Merchant Seamen

By Anne Conrow Hazard

WHEN Miss Candee asked me to take on the job of presenting to you the work of our leading libraries for Seamen, I demurred at first, because I am no longer actively connected with this work. She persuaded me, however, that my 15 years at the Seamen's Church Institute of New York and 9 years as Librarian of the Conrad Library, gave me a sort of venerableness which, together with the Emeritus status I now hold, should bring forth some interesting reminiscences.

I am indebted to Miss M. Culbertson and Mr. Lee Brown of the

In the days not too far off, when the experiences of these young sea painters can be reviewed in proper perspective, we are bound to witness astounding results. I offer my felicitations to the Seamen's Church Institute and the United Seamen's Service for what they have done to show that hence forth life at sea need not be just pulling and hauling and swabbing of decks.

SCIENCE OF THE SEVEN SEAS

By Henry Stommel

Cornell Press. 208 pages. \$2.50

An invaluable book in that it presents scientific facts with reliable accuracy and in terms geared to all ranges of understanding. Here one can find, clearly worded, the answer to those deceptively simple questions such as: "Why is the sea salty, daddy?" or "What makes the waves?" One also finds a highly technical treatment of atmospheric optical illusions and many interesting charts: wind belts, star charts for navigation, chart of cotidal and semidiurnal tides, etc.

The range is wide, covering The Sea, Ocean Bottom, Shore Line, Sky, Ocean Life. This last section is less detailed than the earlier chapters but beautifully illustrated. The book includes a short bibliography and a short two page quiz. D.P.

AMMLA, Mr. Lee-Martin of the American Seamen's Friend Society and Mrs. I. Acheson of our Institute library for their splendid cooperation in sharing with me reports and other data.

You may wonder at the outset why we need three libraries to serve seamen in New York? Let me remind you that many thousands came to this Port last year. We landlubbers think nothing of patronizing our public library branch, the nearest lending library, and may well belong to one of the privately endowed libraries of the city. In the same way, I know from experience that many seamen who spend hours browsing in the Conrad Library during their weeks ashore belong also to the AMMLA and, through this membership, take out tech-



CONRAD LIBRARY

nical books for study at sea. I know this, because we have referred many of them directly to Mr. Brown.

AMMLA is a national organization serving only American vessels; A.S.F. and the Conrad Library serve foreign flag vessels as well coming to the Port of New York.

I would like now to give you a brief history of AMMLA taken from one of their own reports.

"THE AMMLA grew out of the Social Service Bureau of the Recruiting Service of the United States Shipping Board, when the late Mrs. Henry Howard, Chief of the Bureau, obtained help from the American Library Association by begging a small pile of books. From this small beginning in 1918, has grown the "Public Library of the High Seas", greatest traveling library in the world.

Thus the service was carried on until, on March 9, 1921, Mrs. Howard gathered together an interested group, representing many faiths and professions, and founded the American Merchant Marine Library Association, Inc. The University of the State of New York granted AMMLA its Charter on May 27, 1921.

What does Ammla do?

Provides libraries for the ships of the American Merchant Marine.

Maintains shore lending libraries where the seamen may personally select reading matter.

Lends seamen technical books to study at sea and ashore for increased skill and higher ratings.

Sends libraries to remote Light-houses, Lightships, Coast Guard Stations and Maritime Training Stations.

Compiles and publishes the indispensable "Seamen's Handbook for Shore Leave."

Conducts 15 branches in the principal United States port cities for distributing ships libraries."

In talking recently with Mr. Brown, (AMMLA Librarian) I learned some of the difficulties in distributing such a tremendous number of books during the war. No advance information as to the location of incoming ships was available. Regulations concerning passes to the incoming ships varied with the pier and the very exigencies of war brought the percentage of books returned from a pre-war rate of 80% to 20% in 1944. In spite of this, AMMLA started a new project of placing specially chosen endowed memorial libraries aboard new American vessels. Their record for 1944 of 597,905 books and 1,087,000 magazines distributed, speaks for itself.

The American Seamen's Friend Society was organized in 1828 and has

provided since then many interesting and useful services to seamen. Since we are concerned only with libraries, I must limit myself to a brief discussion of that single function. It serves both American and foreign vessels. Last year 2102 "libraries afloat" and 4050 boxes of magazines were placed on 1206 vessels. In 1939 they opened a Reading Room for seamen at the Seamen's House Y.M.C.A., 550 West 20th Street and later opened another library at Bethelship Y.M.C.A. in Brooklyn. I understand from their report and their librarian that they have noticed a great increase in the number of technical books circulated.

The **Conrad Library of the S.C.I.** of New York, was opened in May, 1934, as a free shore library for merchant seamen of all ratings and nationalities. It stands as a permanent memorial to Joseph Conrad,—a great novelist whose books have made the seaman's life in remote parts of the world more vivid to many landsmen. The library is a cheerful room, looking out over the busy East River. Our collection now numbers nearly 10,000 volumes. Although technical books in the Marine field are naturally of primary importance to men studying for new licenses or raise-in-grade, there is a splendid general collection. Our Marine periodicals are sought after as a means of keeping abreast of the latest developments in the shipping industry, since things are moving so fast that text books cannot keep up with mechanical achievements. Similarly, after long voyages, all magazines provide popular ways of catching up with events which move so fast these days and which, during the war, escaped the attention of men who were deprived of daily papers and radio.

* * *

The **Conrad Library** is essentially a place for study and for recreational reading. Until the war, our circulation was limited to residents of the Institute, who were permitted to borrow books to take to their rooms over night. We do not circulate books from the library.

Early in the first war months, seamen from foreign ships, — British, Dutch, Belgian, came to us in increasing numbers asking for books to take to sea. These men had no idea when they would reach a home port and came to depend on us for their only means of recreation. Thus began a new phase in the library's activities, which resulted in the distribution of 20,845 books to men at sea during the first nine months of 1945, — as against 1558 during the same period in 1940. We provided a book room where "Choose your own books for shipboard reading" became the motto. Here have come stern

British masters looking for "something you can get your teeth in"—chief engineers taking Plato's works off the topmost shelf—English apprentices asking for music books so they might take turns practicing on the horn they had on board, a Scottish officer who chose the Oxford book of English verse, Wagner's Operas, Sketches of Life Backstage at the Met., the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer, saying solemnly, "I'll no read books about the war", The Iowa boy who took Phil Stong's "State Fair", because he was admittedly homesick for the corn belt. I could go on indefinitely, as I am sure could all of the librarians if time permitted.

At the moment, we are sponsoring an Essay Contest among seamen on the subject "What books mean to men at sea". As I have read these essays coming from all parts of the world, and from men of all ranks in the service, I find that they bear out what the librarians agree on from their own daily experience, namely, that one cannot generalize about seamen's reading tastes,—that they are as varied as the men themselves. Just as we were saying that seamen seldom read sea stories, along came a group of Maritime Service boys from the Nebraska farms reading everything about life at sea they could lay their hands on before setting out for their new experience. Many of these very boys planned to go back to college after the war and were grateful for books which enabled them to read in their chosen field.

We can agree that the men read for new ideas, often to make up for years they have been unable to spend at school, and that during the war good books have been the greatest tie with normal living. Technical books and non-fiction in general outweigh the interest in fiction about two to one, proving that reading for escape takes second place.

What does all of this mean in terms of "cultural activities for seamen?" I think you will agree that it means simply that seamen want books, want the contacts of a friendly library and will need them as urgently in the next years as in the past. It means also that we must make library facilities easily available and that our contributing public, now so keenly aware of merchant seamen for the first time, must not be allowed to forget them.

What Books Mean to Men at Sea

By George T. Noble, American Chief Steward

IT HAS been said that a house without books is like a room without windows, and certainly a ship at sea that had no books on board would be a very lonesome place indeed. The sailors of today are great readers and peruse avidly everything in print that comes their way. Especially when at sea and far from the distractions of the land there is nothing a seaman enjoys more than reading.

I think it safe to say that the three things Sailor-Jack enjoys most during his off-watch hours are food, tobacco and books. And perhaps I should have mentioned books first. I have never been in a ship that had too many books. I have been in many that had too few. The landsman has been impressed so many, many times with the immense quantities of foodstuffs and other supplies that must be put aboard a vessel at the start of a voyage,—but believe me,—the tremendous amount of reading matter than can be consumed by an average crew of anywhere from 40 to 70 men during the course of a long voyage—and many voyages are very long now-a-days—has been but too seldom touched upon. So that the crying need is always for more books—and still more books. Often I remember seeing our pitifully few books passed from hand to hand until they are quite literally worn out. Before entering the Merchant Marine during this War I am sure that I had no very clear conception of the time-worn phrase "battered, dog-eared and well-thumbed pages" . . . I know now . . . No matter how interesting one's shipmates may be (and often they are) we grow tired of talking together, grow a little weary of seeing the same tired faces day after day and week after week, and we like to retire within ourselves behind the pages of a good



Photo by Marie Higginson

book. Especially did we fall into this habit during those long, wearisome, nerve-wracking months of the recent War; when Death, always lurking near us, was our constant companion throughout every voyage. Books, then, brought us forgetfulness—a blessed relief from worry—a welcome avenue of escape from the grim reality of our danger.

AND in bad stormy weather—when great gales are blowing and seas running mountain high—the ship struggling to get her precious cargoes to their distant destinations, fighting for her very life and ours, it is very agreeable to have a good book to read during our brief hours below. How often I've seen a man reading an interesting book while at table in the messroom and, finishing his meal, loath to leave the book which affords him temporary relief from his anxieties, carry it out under his arm through the passageway to the foc's'le bunkroom. Hours later I've come into the foc's'le to find him still reading—propped in his narrow berth against the wild plunges of the deeply laden vessel as she goes rolling through the gale-lashed seas. And so he reads till

drowsiness overtakes him and sleep comes at last.

WHEN men, exhausted physically and with their spirits at low ebb, can recall themselves back from

the brink of despair with the aid and solace of an interesting book—our generally all-too-slim library, becomes the most valuable thing in the ship . . . So—let us have more and better books whenever you can.

What Books Mean to Me

Kenneth Eldon Johnson, Third Mate, U.S.M.S.

EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY once wrote a poem about a young girl who attempted to commit suicide because the cat died and she had to go on looking at the same old bed spread. The cat was her escape from the unchanging clock tick, the unalterable barn, the commonplace father, and when it died nothing in the whole world remained.

The vision of a ship without books reminds me of this poem. The ship is the sailor's home. Here he must do what he can to gratify his needs. Here he must find rereaction, diversion. Here he must work and live.

But the ship is like a factory. Living on a ship is like living in the heart of a clock.

This is our fourteenth day at sea. We have climbed the same ladder to

relieve the same helmsman at the same time for fourteen days. We have brought the same mate coffee, changed from the same wheel to the same lookout, checked the same taff-rail log, and have been relieved at precisely the same minute every day for fourteen interminable days.

An escape from this deadening routine is not merely desirable. It is vitally necessary. Some of us gamble, drink, argue, fight. Some of us make quaint model ships. Some of us weave rope rugs, draw pictures.

And most of us read books.

There is almost no seaman who will not, at some time in just about any conversation, tell you he is going to buy a plot of ground in Kansas and start a chicken farm. So he packs his sea bag and leaves the ship at his first opportunity. But three years later you discover him in Panama City drinking *cerveza* and telling one of the brown *senoritas* he is going to stop sailing and buy a plot of ground in a state called Kansas.

Why the seaman so consistently talks of leaving the sea but so rarely does is more than I profess to know. But his dissatisfaction is manifestly visible in his cynicism, his incessant grumbling, his tendency to drink, his desire to convince you that the world has been against him from the start.

In striking opposition to the common belief that the sailor is an insatiable thrill seeker I should like to say he more closely resembles a slave, trapped in the heart of a clock.

(Continued on page 9)



Writing as an Avocation for Seamen

By Paul Peters

Drama Editor, 20th Century-Fox Film Corporation

IN THE last five years particularly, there has been an enormous change in the whole publishing world, with the result that the author has today a tremendously bigger market than ever before. While some of this will drop off with the end of the war, books will continue to sell as never before.

Here are some of the factors that have created this difference in the last five years:

1. People have a lot more money and less opportunity to spend it on such things as travel, motor-ing, goods, etc.
2. The rise of the cheap book, ranging all the way from re-prints at \$1.49 or \$1.98 to the 25 cent pocket book.
3. As a result of higher education in the last generation, there are many more book readers.

Nowadays, almost any book sells at least 5,000 copies. A best seller will go to 60,000 copies in the first printing. Frequently sales will reach from half a million to two million copies.

With the public so avid for new books and the movies, the radio and eventually television screaming for new material, both publishers and movie companies are seriously attempting to underwrite new authors. Today there are fully a dozen offers to authors which will guarantee money on which to complete their books. 20th Century Fox has a \$1,500 Fellowship to soldiers for three or four sample chapters of a book and an outline of a story. This is also open to members of the Merchant Marine. In the past two years, some 7,000 manuscripts have been submitted and five fellowships have been awarded. Twentieth Century-Fox also has, in conjunction with Doubleday Doran, one of the biggest publishing houses, a \$4,000 Fellowship for new writers. This is

open to anyone who has not had a novel published before. Again the requirements are a complete outline of the story, plus 15,000 to 20,000 words of actual writing, in order to determine the literary qualities of the author.

It seems to me that merchant seamen ought to have wonderful material to write to fill these hungry demands for new books. In the 18th and 19th centuries, it used to be the custom for young writers to make the Grand Tour, what the Germans used to call the *Wander-jahr*. In the early 20th century, young writers used to hitch-hike around the country, work on cattle boats, work in plants to get some feeling of the temper of the country. The seamen just naturally come by this.

What I'd like to see some of these seamen do is write a new kind of sea story which is not romantic like Conrad's, but has a more socially rooted approach, a more scientific approach. And I would offer as examples of this Hans Otto Storm's MADE IN U.S.A., Ralph Bates' RAINBOW FISH, Traven's DEATH SHIP. These are writers who treat the sea less in terms of romantic seascape than in terms of the big industry of shipping.

WHAT BOOKS MEAN TO ME

(Continued from page 8)

Ask the sailor what books mean to him and he will answer that he likes to read. But what he really wants to say is that books mean forgetting that the same things happen every day with scarcely an exception. That books mean forgetting that the tie between home and the ship has somehow disappeared and that books mean the discovery of a new, secret way of seeing beyond the infinitesimal circle from which he cannot free himself.



"THERE'LL ALWAYS BE AN ENGLAND."—Robert Hunt, Coventry, England, plays piano in British Merchant Navy Club while other British seamen sing their beloved songs. The British is the largest of the Allied clubs at 25 South Street.



NEWS FROM HOME.—Hans Nielsen (left) and Valdemar Hansen (right) read the "Light."

Photos by
C. J. World-Telegram



A LITTLE RELAXATION.—Hostess Josee Defoy looks on Ignace Stockman (left) of Antwerp, Robert H. Beyer of Ostend and Joseph Van Hoogten (right) of Antwerp match wits in a game of backgammon in the Belgian Seamen's Club.

"25 South Street"
Meeting Place
of
From Seven



DUTCH HOSPITALITY.—Mrs. Maike Peterson (above), a hostess, pours coffee for Fred Didam of Rotterdam and Harm de Vrede of Amsterdam, both merchant seamen, at the Home for Netherland Seamen.

JANET ROPER ROOM where 80% of the seamen are Americans.



Art Exhibitions

By Mrs. Isabel F. Peterson, United Seamen's Service

THESE art exhibitions by merchant seamen of the United Nations, sponsored by United Seamen's Service and War Shipping Administration, have been a means for men of the sea to express a joy and a release which have helped to banish monotony and make life vastly more interesting. They are not only a permanent visual record of the great part which the Merchant Marine contributed to final victory, but are a psychological study of what seamen thought about during the war. As such they indicate clearly the wholesome and healthy state of mind of seamen working under severe strain and great physical difficulties. Those of a documentary nature should be assembled in the archives of the

War Shipping Administration as part of the permanent war record.

There is then, in these exhibitions, a determination and hope which goes far beyond their craftsmanship revealed, and which symbolizes what the men of the Merchant Marine fought and died for—the right to express himself in any medium he chooses. Out of these exhibitions there comes an insight upon our democratic ideals, which is as heroic and human as the men who painted them.

It has been my privilege to initiate and carry on these exhibitions from the beginning, for which I am grateful. Surely no woman has had a more interesting or rewarding wartime experience.



"CHANTY OF THE GALE-BLOWING FINN", by 25-year-old David Pascolesca of New York City, is a picturization of the old superstition among seamen that Finnish seamen can control the elements, and should one have a grudge against a shipmate, he might blow up a storm that would destroy both ship and crew.

Paintings by Seamen



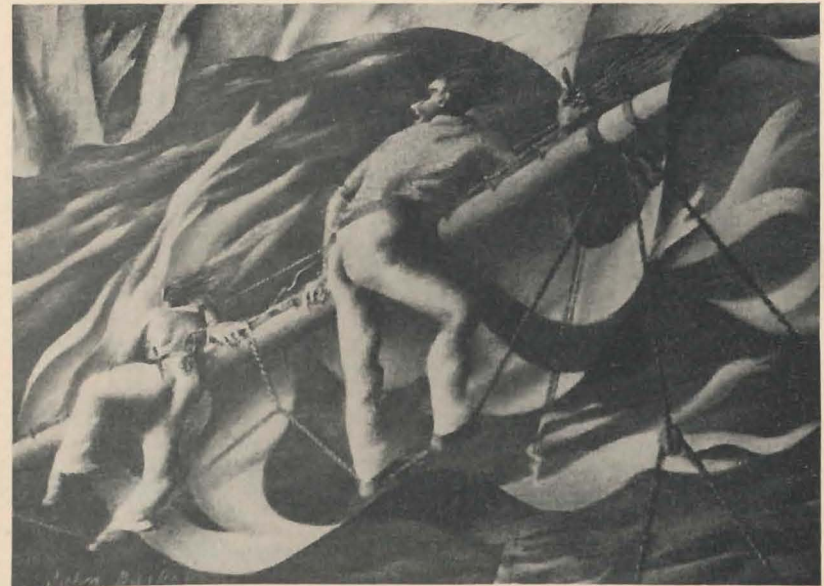
"CONVOY", by ordinary seaman Guy Botto of San Antonio, Texas.

"CONSCIOUSNESS OF BEAUTY"

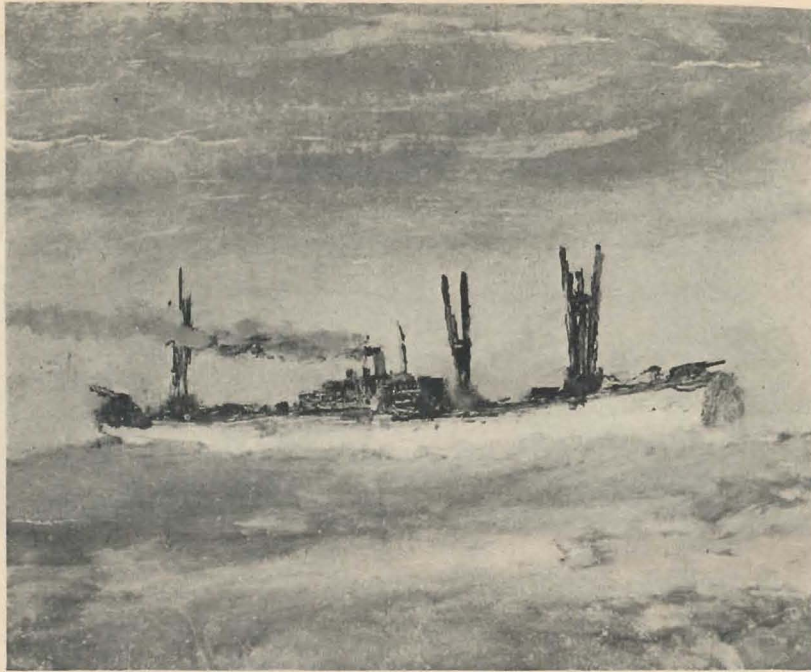
John Taylor Arms, America's eminent etcher, one of the jury of distinguished artists who selected the paintings: "The very wish of seamen to sublimate their emotions and reactions at times of the greatest stress shows how universal is the consciousness of beauty even under the most terrific circumstances and what an outlet it may

be.

"Most of all I was impressed by the spontaneity of the work. No one had drawn or painted because of an outside impetus, but purely because he felt something deeply and the need to express it was too strong for any inhibitions. There is a great cultural value in this learning to see beauty under these conditions."



"TWO YEARS BEFORE THE MAST", an oil by John Barker of Leicester, England, a radio officer in the British Merchant Navy.



Tom Dwyer of the Seamen's Church Institute, 25 South Street, New York City, found himself out at sea with a strong urge to paint. When he could find no art materials aboard, he worked out a unique solution, making a brush out of hairs pulled from his own head and making a handle of toothpicks. The result is the oil, "SEA DUST", which Dwyer explains in a note on the back of the picture is "sailor's talk for salt that sprayed us going around the Horn carrying a load of bombs." He continues that he has been interested in art "since a kid and never had, as you can see, any training," and, he adds modestly, "It's a better frame than picture."

"A JOY RIDE IN A PAINT BOX"

Winston Churchill: "Painting is something to occupy your leisure, to divert your mind from the daily round, to illuminate your holidays. It would be a sad pity to shuffle or scramble along thru one's play-time with golf and bridge, pottering, loitering, wondering what on earth to do, when all the while, if we only knew, there is close at hand a wonderful new world of art and craft, a sunlit garden gleaming with light and color, of which you have the key in your waistcoat pocket. We may content ourselves with a joy ride in a paint box, for this is the only ticket. I know of nothing which, without exhausting the body, more entirely absorbs the mind."

"A CEILING OF STARS"

Charles Hallaert, Consul General of Belgium: "These paintings have been done by men who not only go down to the sea in ships, but who have the gift of expressing what they have seen, and what they dream about during their voyage, in colors which will give you some idea of the lives they lead at sea. On these canvasses you will see the blue of the skies and the blue of the ocean portrayed and interpreted by men who, for weeks at a time—sometimes for months at a time—know no other roof than a ceiling of stars, and no other ground than the depths of the seven seas across which they sail."

*in the Fourth Annual Art Exhibition under the auspices of the United Seamen's Service and the War Shipping Administration

WHEN Captain Christopher Jones of the good ship MAYFLOWER reached America in 1620 with his stalwart crew and passengers, he found no friendly welcome on the "stern and rockbound coast." But today, a symbol of welcome to all ships coming to America is the Titanic Tower light—again—after a war-time blackout—from the roof of the Seamen's Church Institute of New York.

As Thanksgiving Day approaches, we plan to celebrate this first peace-time holiday in a spirit of thankfulness, and in a spirit of sharing. Here at the Institute, plans are progressing for serving about 1,500 turkey dinners on Thanksgiving and on Christmas, in accordance with a custom inaugurated 32 years ago when the building at 25 South Street was first opened.

Some of the seamen who will enjoy holiday dinners and entertainment will have just returned from voyages to the Pacific carrying cargoes of food and supplies for occupation troops. Some have been in the regular Atlantic run, delivering necessities to liberated people in Europe. Some of the men will be "standing by", while their freighters and tankers are being loaded in New York harbor.

A few seamen will be convalescing from illness and injuries incurred during the dangerous war years.

Won't you please help us to say WELCOME in big bright letters on the doors leading to our cafeteria and dining room on Thanksgiving and Christmas Day? Your contribution, as generous as your heart prompts you, will help to provide music, moving pictures, cigarettes as well as dinners on these two great Home holidays when seafarers away from their own homes are particularly appreciative of the home-like surroundings at "25 South Street." These all supplement the Chapel service which begins the day.

Perhaps in your own home, there may be some familiar faces missing from the Thanksgiving table. In their name, will you say "Welcome, sailor" by sending a gift to our HOLIDAY FUND?



Kindly send your contribution marked for HOLIDAY FUND to 25 South Street, New York 4, N. Y., and make check payable to the "Seamen's Church Institute of New York".



Art and Skills

By Mrs. H. Suydam Cutting, Administrator U.S.S. Rest Home

EVER since October, 1943, when the first group of seamen arrived at Gladstone our association has been most agreeable and interesting—our men have been and still are all races, creeds, colors. I don't think I ever remember a dispute of any kind ever on the subject of race or religion.

We tried desperately, and succeeded I think, to keep a club atmosphere at the Center, but discovered after a few months that fresh air, baseball, hiking, outdoor barbecues, dances, bingo, birthday parties were not enough for these he-men. It was thus—with the help of the Red Cross—that I established a workroom, complete with every kind of book-binding equipment and a small beating machine to make hand made paper. Two master craftsmen, a binder, paper maker, came once each week to instruct the Red Cross workers as well as the men, and in no time we discovered rare talent among the men for fine workmanship and originality of design. The first book bound at Gladstone was made by a seaman from Texas called Quinn. It is bound with the first paper made at the mill, of an old shirt. This book was followed speedily by beautiful examples of care and workmanship. Then a complete set of Allied Nations Albums came into being—Red one by British boy, Red and white by Polish boy, Dutch, Yugoslav, American, Greek, Chinese, Casablana, Russian and so on. These albums have been exhibited all over the country and were a source of inspiration to other ill men trying to work away the long day light hours.

Our men have made super knotted bags, leather sea-wallets, belts, purses, ditty bags of leather and canvas. We have a busy corner for artists—painting in oils and drawing in charcoal or crayon. There is also

jewelry and other objects which they color-glaze. The baking is done in a kiln. Two or three looms are generally in use. There the men may weave luncheon sets, doilies and handbags.

After just six months of such work our place was beginning to be talked about in Red Cross circles all over the United States. Many days were spent (grudgingly taking time from the men), while we toured the establishment with people, who wished to set up workrooms in other larger and better known hospitals—in short, we became the trailblazers' proving ground for rehabilitation work for sick and convalescent men. The men backed us up in their appreciation of fine designs, beautiful materials and top master craftsmen. It was a new work with the sick. Our work arts, skills is not to be confused with occupational therapy. We "Arts Skills" (Red Cross girls in green smocks) are interested in good work and the best possible design. The result was that our merchant seamen held a show of their work, the first of its kind in this country, at the Newark Museum where representatives from many museums along the Atlantic area came to see. Since then we have been requested to send our articles, which the men very generously loaned to us—to many committees all over the country, including an exhibition at Red Cross Headquarters in Washington. We have three traveling shows now going to out-of-the-way hospitals.

The visitors still continue to pour in for the workroom supply closet inspection. My little place has become a laboratory and proving ground for workers also. The Army, Navy, Red Cross and civilians are all impressed by this Arts and Skills project.

Sea Poetry

By John Ackerson, Lieutenant (jg) U.S.M.S.*

SEA poetry that has a good, valid ring has developed from the glory, the adventure, the hardships—yes, from the boredom of life on the great waters. In other words, sailors have inspired it, or better still, have written it.

For examples of reputable stuff written by sailors, I give you those early English sea poems, "The Wanderer" and "The Seafarer"; the wonderful chanteys shouted aboard our Yankee clippers, the polished rhymes of John Masefield. Landlubbers, even those who wrote superbly of valor and death, yet who shrank from the actual ordeal of coming to grips with Father Neptune, like Tennyson in his "Ulysses", have been inspired by the deeds of famous mariners.

Taking into account the small crews on merchant ships, it is remarkable, the number of men I've met who can take a long view back over the march of mankind—true, and a long look forward, also.

Let us glance back upon the first ocean-going ships, the galleys of Sidon and Tyre, that brought back "resin of incense, ebony, ivory set in pure gold, scented woods, paint for the eyes, with dogheaded apes, long-tailed monkeys and greyhounds, leopard skins, and slaves." They had travelled over the whale's way, and had lived to tell it! They had done this marvelous thing! Don't you think they sang about it? As to the Athenians, whose galleys were rowed by enlightened men, with swords at their sides, we know they sang of the sea, as witness the saga of Jason and the Argonauts.

Came the Romans, with vessels no longer rowed by free men, mere soldiers at sea, brave but unimaginative; the far horizons did not

lure them, and so we have little poetry from them.

The Venetians, the Byzantines, the Moslems, in the Mediterranean, rarely ventured out of sight of land, and they, too, have left us little.

The Vikings, unchained as the winds, have left us stirring lines sung by their skalds.

When Europe began to arouse from its lethargy of a thousand years, she turned to the sea, and began to chant brave new songs. Portugal, then a land of progress, gave us the *Lusiad*, by Camoens, celebrating the voyage round Africa of Vasco da Gama.

The Spaniards were courageous and daring, but no true seamen, for in Aragon and Castile, thought was in manacles.

Nourished by the great deep, the Dutch, free men always in their souls, have bestowed on us many a song of the sea.

But the chief homage, I think, I should pay to the Elizabethans, daring and valiant and free, every man a volunteer. Englishmen smashed the "invincible Armada" and saved what was best in western culture from the bloody hands of the Hitlers of their day. Their poetry flowed easily and greatly from at least an unconscious evaluation of their achievement . . . the spirit of Britain soared . . . poetry became the supreme artistic expression of the English-speaking peoples.

The humblest sailors have played their part, for instance, the rough tarpaulins who wept when Horatio Nelson died, then sang his deeds in gallant doggerel.

With reluctance, I pass over a sweep of time, to British sea rhymes of the First World War, 1914-1918, that shine like jewels, and the

golden clarion call to duty rings through the collection. I give you these lines by Noel F. M. Corbett, of the Royal Navy:

*"How long ago and far it seems, this peaceful country of our dreams,
Of fruitful fields and purling streams—
the England that we know:
Who holds within her sea-girt ring
all that we love, and love can bring;
Ah, Life were but a little thing to
give to keep her so!"*

British sea rhymes of World War II are new yet, but coming to the fore, and among them are specimens worthy of the island's old-time bards.

Last, and by no means least, I take up, with sincere respect, our American rhymes of the sea. Up to and including the period of our Civil War, the maker of verses held high place in our communities. During the Civil War, our nation had its back to the wall, and our people knew it, and we had a flowering of poetry and song. That conflict was truly a people's war, and the sailors spoke their piece, also, in the rough-hewn verses of Henry Brownell. Then came the let-down. With the rise to supreme power of the so-called "practical man", most Americans have come to exhibit a diffidence toward poetry. Poetry, not only the composition, but the enjoyment of it, is for women, these "practical persons" say, for effeminate men, and escapists, for failures in life.

Was Sir Philip Sidney a failure, he who died struggling against the night of the Inquisition that was descending on the Netherlands? Were Edward Wyndham Tennant, Charles Hamilton Sorely, Wilfred Owen, effeminate men, they who offered their young bodies to stem the flood-tide of Huns? Were Padraic Pearse, Thomas McDonagh, and Joseph Mary Plunkett, failures, they who fell for a free

Ireland? Or our own Alan Seeger, our own Joyce Kilmer? Or consider our sea poets of this war. My critic's hat is off to them. I applaud the ringing manliness of Cornel Lengyel's *apostrophe to the sea: "Deaf mother, father; bassinet and grave,
So roar my dirge who will not hear me groan,
And swing my sack who'll strip me to the bone."

The lads who man our Merchant Marine to-day are men of the old breed. The Athenians of the age of Pericles would hold them for kinsmen. Very early our seamen recognized the menace of fascism; numbers of them went to Spain to fight for the people's Republic; their bones are strewn from Madrid to the Pyrenees. I predict that their comrades will yet make very good songs about them.

There are encouraging signs roundabout. The American poet to-day has an increasing audience. Our sailor bards, then, should be of good cheer, as we take our full part in the fight for a better world.

Here let me pay tribute to The Seamen's Church Institute of New York, and the drawing forth of talent it has accomplished. For the first time in our country, there is an Artists and Writers Club for merchant seamen.

We sailors have a splendid heritage. I emphasize again that the sea breeds free men.

So long as we keep the flame of ideals burning brightly in our hearts, as we seek the new horizons—so long as our ship of state is manned by loyal Americans, we shall weather all seas but the ultimate, that must account for every man and ship and nation.

* American Merchant Marine winner of 1945 Marine Poetry Contest. Sponsored by the Seamen's Church Institute of New York.

Artists and Writers Club

The following are quotations from some of the seamen's letters to the Club secretary, indicating that there has long been a need for a criticism service of seamen's manuscripts:

From a second mate now in a Marine hospital suffering from chronic ulcers:

"You have no idea how much of a relief this writing gives to me. It has very definite therapeutic value."

From a Chief Engineer with real writing talent, but who admits he is a procrastinator:

"Congratulations on this excellent and much needed Club. I now seriously intend to concentrate on writing and have one article almost finished."

From a Filipino steward recently released from a prison camp:

"Indeed it is a great honor to be a charter member of the Club. I intend to keep up my drawing and water color painting. Besides this art, and a little music, I think writing is the most interesting occupation any person can have and completes a man's life."

From a radio operator at sea:

"I wish I had the clubroom to use tonight as working in the wireless room is rather awkward. I am now working on another story which I will send along soon."

From a Scottish Able-bodied seaman:

"Your kind and encouraging letter arrived yesterday and I can only thank you for the interest you are taking in my writing. My reading and writing have been of necessity somewhat neglected through the war, but they are my main hobby."

From an American Able-bodied

seaman who writes humorous stories of life at sea:

"Before shipping out, I want to thank you for everything you have done for me. It has been an invaluable experience having the Club and receiving the critical help of the experts. From time to time I shall send you stories that come to my mind while I am out to sea, and I intend to follow the instructions implicitly of the editorial committee so that my material will improve."

From a Third Mate, American:

"I am definitely rewriting this story keeping your suggestions in mind, and I want to thank you for studying it through for me. This really gives me something to work toward, and will keep me pounding away at the typewriter until it is finished."

The editorial committee of the Club who criticize seamen's manuscripts includes:

Paul Peters, Director Story Dept.
20th Century Fox Film Corp.,
Chairman

Margaret Acheson, Popular Publications

Summer Blossom, The American Magazine

Whit Burnet, Story Magazine

Don Congdon, Simon and Schuster

Robert Fuoss, Saturday Evening Post

George E. Grant, Reader's Digest

Graeme Lorimer, Saturday Evening Post

Leonard A. Paris, This Week Magazine

Beth O'Shea, 20th Century Fox Film Corp.

Henrietta Sharon, supervisor, writing classes for Naval Hospital at St. Albans

Elmer Rice, playwright

Vincent McConnor, radio scripts

A. M. Sullivan, Poetry Society of America

ARTISTS AND WRITERS CLUB

Rogers Terrill, Argosy Magazine
Sally Warren, Fawcett Publications

Charles Wolverton, World-Telegram
gram

The Sponsoring Committee of the Club includes:

Christopher Morley, Advisory

PHOTOGRAPHY—

Anton Bruehl, commercial photographer

Dr. I. Schmidt, Miniature Camera Club

Mabel Seacheri, World-Telegram photography columnist

Marie Higginson, LOOKOUT photographer

POETRY—

William Rose Benét

MANUSCRIPTS—

Paul Peters, 20th Century Fox Film

ART—

Gordon Grant, marine artist

Mrs. Helen Lawrence, portrait artist

S. J. Woolf, portrait artist

Allen Terrell, artist

George Lober, sculptor

HUMOR—

George Price, cartoons

Tom O'Reilly, sports

MUSIC—Dr. Sigmund Spaeth

NEWS ITEM

Blessed event news on the waterfront is that "Seaweed," the cat at the Seamen's Church Institute, 25 South Street, has given birth to four kittens which have been named respectively, Ditto, Quote, Unquote and Comma, because of the white markings on their noses. The kittens are being groomed as ship mascots for four new cargo vessels, the ONWARD, RAPID, DEFENDER and WHISTLER of the United States Lines which will soon sail on their maiden voyages. Another cat named "Coursey", was given to the ship's crew of the U. S. liner S.S. COURSER, (now on her way to the Philippines) by the Seamen's Institute. It is always regarded in seafaring circles as good luck to have a cat on board a new ship. For the interest of stamp collectors, "First Day Covers" will be serviced on these new ships.

AFTER THE SQUALL

Blow hard whistling west wind,
Send swiftly the sullen squall south,
Ahead blue skies beckon,
Their fingers tipped with the flush of dawn.

And the sun in glory awakes,
Round and regal in fiery robe.
Yes, what bright delight to share
After dark gloom shrouds all light from sight!

Out of a black canopy,
Into bright heavens smiling clear
My ship and I race to greet the new day.

SEYMOUR ZEIGFINGER, 2nd Mate

A GOOD SAILOR NEVER DIES

Into the rigging Jack went aloft,
Perilous climbing and far from soft.
One hand for the company, one for me,
He sang as he climbed so carefully.

The old ship gave a sudden lurch,
Jack went tumbling from his perch.
Far below he hit the deck
Crumpled up with a broken neck.

It's not the end though Jack is dead,
For among seamen it's often said,
A good sailor never, never dies,
But becomes a seagull and away he flies,
Away from shore, the ocean o'er,
Back with the ships once more.

ARTHUR J. HOGLUND, U.S.M.S.

FIRST-DAY "COVER" TO BE SERVICED ON MAIDEN VOYAGE OF MERCHANT SHIP "ERNIE PYLE"

A first-day "cover" will be serviced for stamp collectors in connection with the maiden voyage of the new C-4 ship named in memory of Ernie Pyle, famous war correspondent who was killed on Iwo Jima. The ship will be operated by the Luckenbach Steamship Company. She will sail in the Pacific and, if possible, the cover envelopes will be postmarked from Iwo Jima or some Pacific Island port. The three-cent green Iwo Jima issue will be affixed to each cover. The cachet will bear a picture of Ernie Pyle and a drawing of the new ship by Robert Bolton.

Orders at 25 cents per cover should be addressed to the "ERNIE PYLE" Agency, 25 South Street, New York 4, N. Y. All proceeds on the sale of these covers will be for the benefit of the Seamen's Church Institute of New York to help maintain its educational, health and welfare services for merchant seamen of all nationalities.

EXCERPTS FROM REMARKS BY FRANCIS HACKETT, author and book critic, Co-Chairman, Artists and Writers Panel

We are here because we feel something should be done to help the seamen, who have had not the initiation that we may have had into the literary struggle, into the struggle for self-expression.

It is extremely difficult because to disentangle the copy aspect to arrive at the creative is almost impossible when you are dealing with men immersed in life. . .

A ship is extraordinarily valuable for fiction because a ship is a community and the best fiction is written about communities, about the inter-relation of people. . .

. . . The real episode at sea is the episode of a man alone with himself and if he comes back with herd instincts that he hasn't emancipated himself from, he is going to be trite. What Conrad discovered was that the sea is incidental, he discovered Conrad. What Melville discovered was Melville. The sea was an adjunct. The sea was an accident, a happy accident. . .

. . . The sea is like a great lump of marble out of which he has to mold to make his statue. That statue, to be good, must fill every bit of the space that is given to him, the cubic space that is given to him by this wonderful, natural raw material. But the constructive genius is the genius of the Michelangelo who discerns this simply as material for the complete man and Conrad used it marvelously.

What has diminished Conrad's reputation? What has made people no longer buy Conrad? Is it the succession of two wars, two wars that took away the novelty of Conrad? The news in Conrad was an accretion of great interest, but that accretion of news was destroyed by the fact that hundreds of thousands of men have had the same news and what we all go back to Conrad for is not the news in Conrad but Conrad's discovery of, say, Adolf Hitler in "The Nigger and the Narcissus," the little upstart who is tortured by the sense of frustration and who works against his community.

In other words, it is psychology and it is psychology through this Pole, through this uprooted Pole, who was extraordinarily curious about life, who had a beautiful mise en scene given to him by the sea, but who was making and making not with the help of experts in colleges, because writing cannot be taught. The common place of writing can be as a mercantile product, can be arranged for, but the real writer is a man who explores himself.

Seamen become writers; want to become writers; want to make this exploration as they are drawn out of a hurried life and given a community in which their emotions come into play so that we who want to help them have, first of all, to strive very hard to de-vulgarize them, not to urge them to go into the game of writing for magazines, which is all right if you want money and if you want to reach a great public, but they must expect to fail.

A preparation for failure is the first thing a good literary man must have because literature is a triumph of character. Melville wasn't a success. "Moby Dick" wasn't discovered when he was alive. The men who fit themselves to the contemporary mood like Kipling are men who pass out of fashion when the mood changes. Kipling was a great writer, could have been a great writer, but Kipling suited himself to a current imperialistic mood which has departed, and with that a great deal of Kipling has departed.

But when a man is a great writer and pays no attention to current mood and, therefore, fails, and when he is safely dead and under the ground and moldering away, then he is rediscovered because the mood which he did not suit has departed and it is found that he is perennial and he is sure to be read.

Anything that is true of the sea is sure to go on being read. Shakespeare took the trouble to read a book on seamanship when he wrote "The Tempest" and it was all accurate, but what he gave it was this perennial quality.

Conrad said that the artist descends within himself and in that lonely region of stress and strife, if he be deserving and fortunate, he finds the terms of his appeal.

The club exists to make those terms nearer to men in the stress and strife of trying to be creative.



Photo by Marie Higginson
John Ackerson and Francis Hackett

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*Serving in the Armed Forces.

LEGACIES TO THE INSTITUTE

You are asked to remember this Institute in your will, that it may properly carry on its important work for seamen. While it is advisable to consult your lawyer as to the drawing of your will, we submit nevertheless the following as a clause that may be used:

"I give and bequeath to **"Seamen's Church Institute Of New York,"** a corporation of the State of New York, located at 25 South Street, New York City, the sum of.....Dollars."

Note that the words **"Of New York"** are a part of our title. If land or any specific property such as bonds, stocks, etc., is given, a brief description of the property should be inserted instead of the words, "the sum of.....Dollars."