

The
LOOKOUT



Photo by H. S. Preiser

YOUNG MARINER
SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE
OF NEW YORK

VOL. XXXIX

JUNE, 1948

No. 6

Sanctuary

Matthew Fontaine Maury — *Pathfinder of the Seas* — HIS DAILY PRAYER

O God, Our Heavenly Father, whose gift is strength of days, help us to make the noblest use of minds and bodies in our advancing years. Teach us to bear infirmities with cheerful patience. Keep us from narrow pride in outgrown ways; from blind eyes that see not the good of changes. Give patient judgment of the methods and experience of others. Let Thy peace rule our spirits through all trials of our waning powers. Take from us all fear of death and all despair or undue love of life; that with glad hearts at rest in Thee we may await Thy will concerning us, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.



"25 South Street"

The LOOKOUT

VOL. XXXIX, JUNE, 1948

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My Most Unforgettable War Experience Our Ships Were Dark Shadows . . .

By Horace Bryan, *Mate*

The Seamen's Church Institute of New York recently conducted an essay contest on the topic: "My Most Unforgettable War Experience." The Judges were Lilian Gilkes, Frank Laskier and Donald Kennicott. Mr. Kennicott, who is editor of "Blue Book Magazine," purchased five of the essays which were published in the March issue of *Blue Book*. The Institute awarded \$25.00, \$15.00 and \$10.00 for 1st, 2nd and 3rd prize essays. The following essay won Honorable Mention. In subsequent issues we will publish the other prize-winning essays.

OUR ships were dark shadows moving through the waters. In fog and rain, in mist and foam of a storm-churned sea, in the darkness of low clouded skies, our ships with their grey, darkened wartime hulls plowed through the seas like ghosts. Sometimes they went alone, "routed independently" — remember, *Mack*? Sometimes they moved in great packs, "rendezvous with convoy."

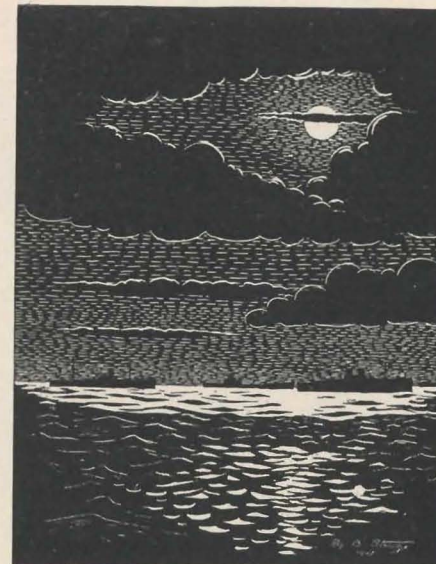
Blackout was the order—complete blackout. Running lights were out, ports bolted, alleyways and vents curtained — even tiny compass lights were closely guarded.

Light had been caught aiding the enemy and had been branded a traitor.

But inside the ghostly grey hulls there was life and light. The crews of the merchantmen lived here; we worked and played and ate and slept there. We did not tote a big club like a battleship; in our job secrecy and darkness were our friend. We sneaked our ships along shorelines under the shadows of the land; we utilized bays and inlets for retreats when pursued; we slipped prayerfully past the wrecks which marked the graveyards. We gathered at rendezvous and proceeded in great convoys across the Atlantic

and Pacific, then scattered to a thousand destinations from the Arctic to the broad tropical belt of the earth. Nearly two thousand merchant ships left their hulls and gear, and their cargo and crews, to mark the war-lanes of the many seas.

We were the first to feel the foe's long arm. Seven merchant ships had already gone down before Pearl Harbor. And we were soon to learn the full meaning of war. During 1942 we suffered the most ruthless sea attacks in history, mainly within our own water. All during the war we were on the exposed lines of supply which the enemy tried so desperately to break. When we were ready to launch our counter-attacks, we were at the beachheads with the men and goods. We knew torpedoes and bombs, V-2s and suicide planes, shell or surface raiders and shore batteries, mines and collisions.



Drawing by Reginald Strange

We knew what it meant to go overboard in Arctic waters, in shark and barracuda infested waters of the South, or in oil covered waters surrounding a flaming tanker. We knew what it meant to be cast away in a tiny lifeboat upon the great desert, the sea, without food and water. We knew what waiting meant — waiting for the bombers to return, waiting for the subs to strike again. Ours was a life of waiting — waiting for the steel bulkheads to cave in and admit the sea.

But our most common memory, the most unforgettable experience of the men who sailed the ships during the war, was the memory of the blackout. The blackout set the tone and pace of our lives.

Light, good friendly warm light, was a traitor. There must be no light! This blackout, with the limitations it imposed upon us, was symbolic of the darkness which curtained the world. But somewhere between the simple dousing of lights and the symbolism of the poet there was a colorless color known as black. To produce black we bolted and curtained every crack and crevice. The inside of our ships became steel-walled hells in the tropics. In the North we became just another iceberg drifting through the neverending grey nights.

In this blackness we navigated our ships and stood our watches, climbed the ladders and rigged the gear. It was always midnight for the sailor—that dark in-between when murder and death go marching.

But the blackout, aside from the hazards and hardships it caused aboard, produced another hazard which was almost as great as that of torpedoes and bombs. This was the hazard of collisions. The sharp bow of a friendly ship, plowing through the darkness, could destroy you as quickly and completely as the enemy's most deadly weapon.

Remember, Mack, how we used to hit the bunk "standing up" — everything on, and a life jacket for a pillow. Bunk lights would be cut out and the

port cracked for a little fresh air. Then, as you lay there listening to the pounding of the engines, you always wondered: "Is the man on the lookout station awake? Will he spot those shadowy forms which come out of the night in time to avoid collision?"

But there were some lights which we could not black out — the stars and the moon, the big, yellow friendly moon. The moon was a traitor, too; subs went hunting in the moonlight. They lay far back from the sealanes, their periscopes trained toward the moon. The silhouette of a darkened ship could be seen for many miles.

Complete darkness, fog, rain, and windstorms have always been the sailor's enemies because they increase the danger of shipwreck and collision. But they often became allies during the war. They were a shield against enemy attacks. We liked a moderately dark night best—enough light to avoid collisions, but no moon. Then the lights went on again — remember, Mack? Lights in the fo'c'sle with open ports and fresh air; lights in the alleys with doors ajar and no blackout curtains. No more staggering down dark ways, up dark ladders, over padeyes and turnbuckles and cargo on darkened decks. No more long tiresome watches on the lookout — no fear of the grey ghosts with razorlike bows which come out of the night. Ships were again lighted, living creatures—red and green sidelights, white range light aflame, ports blinking their welcome.

The first lighted ship we met, down off the Carolina coast, brought home to us the realization, more than anything else, that the war was over. It was a strange sight, after all those years of blackout. We raced out on deck and greeted her with shouts — lights . . . lights! And we stood on deck and stared after her until she passed from sight. Lights . . . lights . . . Yes, the lights were on again . . . on the ships at sea . . . and all over the world!



Children Entertain Seamen

PERFORMERS in variety shows who come to the Institute often say that seamen audiences are the most responsive and they enjoy coming back (many groups make three and four appearances a year) to present their entertainment. The type of show which draws the warmest approval and applause from the men is the one in which children entertainers appear. (They come in groups from song and dance studios for children.) Tiny tot tap dancers, singers, acrobats, and reciters never fail to make a hit with the sailormen spectators.

Among the groups which have been most generous and loyal are the Kay Gorham group, the Nellie Crawford, the Victoria Swobosh, and the Clark Sisters Lyceum School. Others who have given entertainment to our seamen in the Janet Roper Club are: The Miller Sisters Studio, The Weber Studios, The Children's Ballet Theatre, The Marianna Group, and the Flushing High School "Musical Spinners." Star performers have been Marian Honeyman, known to radio as "the little Kate Smith"; Doreen Metropolis, acrobatic dancer; Barbara Miller, toe dancer; Eileen O'Shaughnessy, with "the voice of an angel," and George and Eddy Crumley.



Connie and Nora Fowler, daughters of an Institute staff member, William Fowler, are members of Clark's Lyceum School which presented a program of dances. The sisters also appeared in the moving picture "Miracle on 34th Street."



A group of boys for whom dance school holds no terrors entertained in our Janet Roper Club one evening.

Goodbye, Thebaud!

By Edmund F. Moran

FAREWELL to the last of the Flying Gloucestermen. It was with deep sorrow that lovers of ships very recently learned of the loss of the erstwhile Gloucester-owned and operated, two masted schooner-rigged, sailing ship *Gertrude L. Thebaud*, lately the property of Mr. William H. Hoefler. She was wrecked as the result of a storm on the coast of Venezuela. This magnificent, world-renowned craft grounded when she was rammed by another vessel, which parted her moorings during a storm, and she now lies half submerged, given up as a total loss by her present owner. Efforts to salvage her have been given up as too costly. Very little hope remains of seeing this fine craft spreading her lofty white wings again, as she used to do in her days out of Gloucester, where the white-winged racer originated in the year 1930.

Thebaud was a bonafide fishing craft, and was operated as such from the time of her launching until the year 1942, when she joined the Corsair Fleet of the United States Coast Guard, and was sold out of her home port of Gloucester by Captain Ben Pine, who was the first owner of the craft. She was expertly designed by Frank C. Paine of Boston, to compete

with the larger, remarkably fast Canadian fishing schooner *Bluenose*. *Bluenose* was affectionately known to sailing people, lovers of fine ships, as well as to the general public, as the Pride of Lunenburg.

On March 17, in the year of grace 1930, in the Arthur D. Story shipyard, in Essex, Massachusetts, *Thebaud* slid rapidly down the ways, leaving her builder's stocks to enter the peaceful waters of the Essex River stern foremost.

In the Spring of 1921, on the drafting-board of William J. Roue, was produced the phenomenally speedy, able, giantess *Bluenose*, which was constructed at Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, by the famous "down East" wooden shipbuilding concern, Smith and Rhuland. This handsome, tall-sparred, white winged Flying Fisherman was destined to show a pretty pair of heels to the famous Canadian knockabout *Alcala* as well as to various other speed wagons of the then numerically large Lunenburg fleet of fishing schooners. Under the able command of Captain Angus Walters, *Bluenose* proved to be a world-beater, making record passages, establishing sailing and racing records never before or since surpassed.



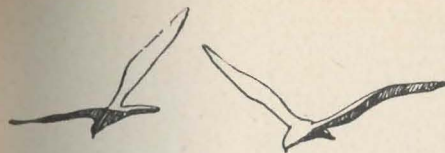
Show Boat — Chinese Style

RECENTLY when Dr. Kelley was conducting some visitors through the Institute, they paused for the usual glance at the "nautical museum." There, under a two foot high glass cover, was an object which aroused particular interest because the visitors were Bishop N. Victor Halward, Ass't Bishop of Hong Kong and South China, three Chinese clergy and a Chinese deaconess, all members of the Anglican Communion.

The object is a fragile, carved ivory model of a Chinese "flower boat." According to Bishop Halward and the Rev. Jordan Lin and his associates, it is an authentic model and should be duly prized. The Chinese flower boat flourished during the Ming Dynasty and was, originally, a pastime of royalty. Later, its patronage became more widespread. Holding 60 or 70 people, the boats would glide along the rivers in China and the passengers would partake of special dishes and be entertained by opera, dancing girls, and other musical and dramatic presentations. They were a "floating restaurant and theatre" and famous cooks vied with each other in the preparation of special dishes.

Each flower boat had certain touches in construction which were characteristic of the region in which it sailed. Our model is of one that floated along the Ching Hwai River. This river, called in China, the "poetic river," is not far from the Yangtze. The boats would probably go ten miles or more, propelled by oarsmen in the stern, and then make the return journey. Special personages would sit under a canopy close to the bow where the beauties of the passing scenery might be appreciated.

One is reminded of the Mississippi Showboats although there's quite a difference between the Chinese subtlety and delicacy of preception and our own rowdy version of river entertainment.



Bluenose met and defeated any and all craft which were sent against her, on the tumbling waters of the North Atlantic, during the classic race series off Sambro Head. In the natural trend of events between the years 1921 and 1930, the American fishing schooners *Puritan*, *Henry Ford*, *Esperanto*, *Columbia* were lost and other famous sailers of the fleet, such as *Elsie*, *Arthur D. Story* and *Thomas S. Gorton*, were considered by those who knew their condition best, to be either too old or too small to compete with any reasonable degree of success with the larger, younger, champion *Bluenose*. It was therefore decided, and wisely, to build a vessel large as well as fast enough to compete with the lady from Lunenburg.

During the subsequent racing series, *Thebaud* served her purpose as a contender against *Bluenose* capturing one out of three International races against *Bluenose*.

Bluenose was sold outright and converted to freighting, and in the year 1946 found her grave on the coast of Haiti. The hard luck which has followed every one of the racing fisherman has now befallen the last of the Gloucester's once large fleet of sailing models. The sea has claimed *Thebaud*. What a pity that it did not fall to her fate to be preserved for posterity in company with such unique craft as *Cully Sark*, which is at Greenhithe, in England, *Fram* at Norway, *Constitution* and *Constellation*, in Boston, *Sloop Gjoa* in San Francisco and the Whaler *Morgan* and Midget Square-rigger *Joseph Conrad*, the latter two grand old stagers having been gloriously enshrined at the Mystic Museum in Connecticut.

FIVE DAYS ABOARD A CATTLE BOAT

En route from Trinidad, British West Indies to Jamaica. Distance: about 1,000 miles. Course: about 303 degrees, True.

By MARJORIE DENT CANDEE

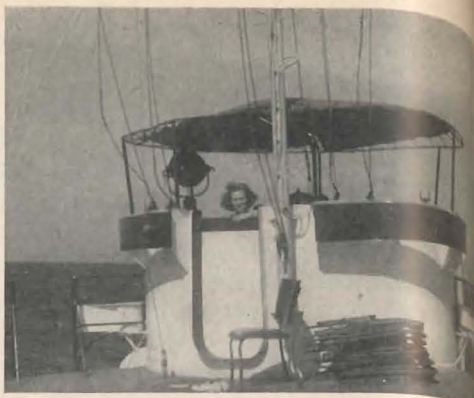
This little freighter was built as an L.C.I. (Landing Craft Infantry) for the U. S. Navy, and was just recently converted into a cattle boat. Her usual run is between Colombia and Trinidad, carrying about 200 steers each trip. The Trinidad Government imports about 75% of the meat required for its people, and for a time there was such a high mortality among the cattle brought aboard ships, that it was decided to build special stalls with non-skid slats in the forward and after holds to protect the steers from injury when the boats rolled. This resulted in only a 1.8 death rate, and the "Trinidad Buccaneer" had the least number of cattle deaths recorded. Six cattlemen come with the animals from Colombia and when one animal becomes seasick and tries to lie down, a cattlemen sees to it that the others do not stamp on it. They are huge animals, weighing from 1400 to 1600 pounds.

Only four passengers are carried, in trim white cabins with U. S. Navy bedspreads on the upper and lower bunks. A modern lavatory and excellent shower are adjacent. It is warm, sailing in tropical waters, and two electric fans in the cabins make sleeping more comfortable. Food is simple, but tasty, served by a cook who had U. S. Army Transport experience during the war. The skipper, Captain Frank Boddin, and Chief Officer, William J. Foster, were born on Cayman Brac in the Cayman Islands, (150 miles from Jamaica) the birthplace of so many excellent seamen.

The average speed of the Diesel-powered "Buccaneer" is about 10 knots. Her Chief Engineer is from London. The rest of her crew are chiefly natives of Trinidad. It takes about five days to make the voyage from Port of Spain to Kingston, Jamaica.

The "Buccaneer" is 158'-5" in length, overall; beam, 22 feet. She has a Sperry gyroscope and radio telephone, and in the evenings we "talked" with other ships.

Proceeding out of Port of Spain Harbor, then through the Gulf of Paria, this ship goes through the Huevos Passage. Christopher Columbus sailed in this area on his second voyage to the New World and when he saw three mountains he named them after the Trinity, hence, Trinidad. He came through one of the five Bocas, or mouths, and named it Serpent. These mouths are very narrow, and require great skill in navigating. They are named Navios, Grande, Huevos and Monos. During the war, the U. S. Navy, which maintains the Chaguaramas Station here, closed up all the Bocas except one, to protect Port of Spain from Nazi submarines.



Lookout Tower "Monkey Bridge"
M. V. Trinidad Buccaneer

POSTSCRIPT TO THE WALKING MAN FUROR

A merchant seaman named Don Brown who had dropped anchor at his "shore home," 25 South Street, between voyages recently came up with this one about the recent radio bedlam over the Walking Man.

His skipper got excited over the contest while he was on his regular run from New York to Texas after hearing one of the programs over the ship's radio. He retired to his cabin to write a letter with his guess, but the problem of mailing the letter was a bit of a poser since the ship would not hit a Texas port for another four days. When inspiration struck him the crew thought he'd gone daft. He raced into the galley and got a pickle jar. He cleaned it out, put his letter inside, screwed on the lid and then bounced up to the deck again. All night long he paced back and forth, constantly going to the bridge to check the ship's position. At dawn the ship was two miles off West Palm Beach and very soon, with his glasses glued to his eyes, the skipper saw what he wanted. Ducking into the wheelhouse he gave the man at the wheel a change of course and skillfully the big ship bore down upon a small fishing boat with four people in it. When near enough to the worried fisherman, the skipper grabbed a megaphone and yelled across: "Will you mail this letter for me?" and heaved his precious object toward the fishing boat. The relieved sportsmen shouted "yes" and immediately began fishing for the pickle jar.

Highly pleased with himself the skipper then ordered his ship brought back on course, full speed ahead and gave the obliging fishermen three sharp blasts on the whistle for "good bye and good luck." The sad ending to this tale is that the resourceful skipper did not win the contest!

CAPTAIN GREGORY'S DOUGHNUT

Most seafarers have heard the story of how Captain Hanson Gregory of Camden, Maine, "invented" the hole in the doughnut. But now comes word from "Yankee" Magazine that a recent ceremony was held to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the famous doughnut incident. A bronze plaque, suitably inscribed, has been affixed to the Gregory homestead at Glen Cove, Rockport, Maine.

Here is the story, as vouched for by seasoned skippers in the Penobscot Bay district. On one of Captain Gregory's voyages in the year 1847 aboard the "Frypan" (appropriately named!) they ran into a terrible storm. Several of the crew were hurt, and so the rest had to stand extra long tricks at the wheel. Being a humane skipper, Captain Gregory stood one of these six-hour tricks and the cook, in appreciation, and knowing his liking for cake, or doughnuts, brought him one to eat.

At this moment a terrific wave struck the ship and the Captain grasped the wheel with both hands. Not wishing to lose the tasty doughnut he jammed it down over one of the spokes of the big wheel. When the Captain had weathered the storm, there was the doughnut waiting for him. The idea then struck him that he had found an excellent way to feed his helmsman in an emergency! He therefore ordered his cook to make all his doughnuts with holes in them.

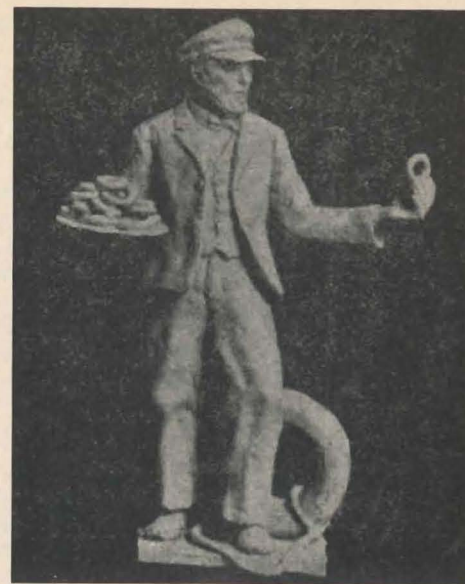
Lest landlubbers raise doubts as to the veracity of this tale, a certain Maine character searched among shipyards and claimed to have found the old wheel of the "Frypan" and on one of the spokes is a ring of grease—evidence of Captain Gregory's practice of doling out doughnuts to the man at the wheel!

Courtesy, "Yankee" Magazine

LIBERTY SHIP NAMED FOR "MOTHER ROPER" BEING CONVERTED INTO A COL- LIER. SHORTENED THIRTY FEET IN UNUSUAL OPERA- TION IN EAST BOSTON SHIPYARD.

The Liberty ship "Janet Lord Roper," named in honor of "Mother Roper," head of the Missing Seamen's Bureau at the Seamen's Church Institute of New York, is being shortened by 30 feet in the Simpson yards of the Bethlehem Steel Company in East Boston, Mass.

Formerly 416 feet in length and displacing 14,150 tons, the ship will be shortened to 386 feet with a resulting loss in weight of 870 tons. Engineers gathered to observe the unusual process of shortening a ship by bringing the bow and stern closer together



Captain Gregory

with the aid of a floating dock. There have been many instances where ships have been lengthened but only one other instance of a ship that had been shortened. The two sections will be permanently affixed by means of filler plates and electrically welded. The work is being done to enable the ship to enter small harbors as a collier. Plans for the conversion were drawn up by Theodore Ferris & Son, Company, New York naval architects.

Christened on June 26th, 1943, at the Bethlehem-Fairfield shipyard in Baltimore, Maryland, "Janet Lord Roper" by Mrs. Roper's eldest granddaughter, Laurette A. Ryan (at that time an Ensign in the WAVES), the Liberty ship was operated by the International Freighting Corporation and saw active war service in the Atlantic and Mediterranean.

Mrs. Roper died on April 5, 1943, and was mourned by thousands of seafarers whom she had befriended during her 54 years in seamen's welfare work. She began her work in Boston at the American Seamen's Friend Society at the age of 17. After her marriage to the Rev. E. H. Roper, she worked at the Fishermen's Institute at Gloucester, Mass., then in the Sailors' Home at St. John's, N. B. and in Portland, Oregon. In 1915 she was offered the post of House mother at the Seamen's Church Institute at 25 South Street in New York City, and in 1918 she established the Institute's Missing Seamen's Bureau and located more than 6,500 mariners.

Cargoes — To and From U. S. A.

Ever hear of abaca? Of rotenone? Quebracho? Annatto? Gather 'round—landlubbers, cross-word puzzle fans and the just plain curious.

Criss-crossed by ship lanes that are centuries old, the Caribbean area brings these products to the U.S.A. Abaca is a plant that grows in Panama and Nicaragua, and it serves as a substitute for Manila rope. When the Philippines were cut off during the war, this vital high grade hemp was cultivated in the West Indies.

Rotenone is also a plant from which an insecticide is made, and was introduced into the Caribbean islands to meet urgent war needs. A soothing lotion for humans is also made from it. Annatto seeds, from Ecuador, give cheese its rich yellow color.

Quebracho is from Argentina and is used by tanners in preparing shoe leather. Logwood from the British West Indies is also used for this purpose. Shoe polish has a base of beeswax which also comes from the West Indies.

American-flag vessels carry 70% of the trade from the Caribbean. Some 1,350,000 tons of food and other products arrive at Atlantic and Gulf ports each month. In addition some 6,000,000 barrels of petroleum products are brought by tankers each month to supplement our domestic supply, according to the American Merchant Marine Institute.

As in our Colonial period, the Caribbean continues to send us such products as sugar, coffee, tobacco, minerals, asphalt, spices, cocoa and liquors. Modern refrigerated ships bring bananas, and modern freighters bring bauxite, the chief source of aluminum, from the Guianas.

All these vital cargoes are brought by merchant seamen.

TO HELP MAINTAIN A BETWEEN-VOYAGES HOME FOR MERCHANT SEAMEN OF ALL RACES, make your checks payable to SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK, and mail to Ways and Means Dept., 25 South Street, New York 4, N. Y.



When an American freighter unloads its *general cargo* in a Caribbean port it may include anything from cotton to baby food. Machinery, flour, electric irons, radios, refrigerators and orange squeezers are often included in outgoing cargoes. Hemlock from the Pacific northwest, rough yellow pine from Louisiana, hospital supplies and patent medicines from New Jersey comprise another cargo.

A recent Grace Line ship carried 110 fire hydrants for Cartagena, 40 cylinders of oxygen and a ton of toy jeeps for Balboa, Canal Zone, ten tons of live bulls, chlorox and plastic articles for San Jose, biscuits and glass bottles for La Guaira.

Although the boxes, barrels, drums and bags that contain our south-bound cargoes look non-descript, their contents represent the wheat fields of Nebraska, the mines of Minnesota, the petroleum of Oklahoma, the steel of Pittsburgh mills, and the products of New England factories.

All these essential cargoes are delivered by merchant seamen.

"Speaking" the *Placida*

CAPTAIN NOLAN'S SHIP

Captain Leo Nolan knows what it's like to stand out to sea under the crack and snap of canvas, well remembers the salty thrill of following the trade winds down to Rio and Costa Rica in a sturdy sailing ship. The Alden Bessie, the John C. Fremont, the North Star—Nolan shipped on them all, in his younger days.

For all of his memories, Captain Nolan is no graybeard. Now a burly forty-seven, he's one of Hollywood's chief experts on nautical matters.

Few people today realize that it was as recently as the beginning of World War I that most of the old square rigged ships stopped operating, some even having been in use as late as 1925, when the North Star last glided out of San Francisco, bound for Australia.

A good many of the dark doings in "Mourning Becomes Electra" unfold on the *Flying Trades*. Building the ship so that she was accurate in every detail was a labor of love for Nolan; he was paid a handsome fee, of course, for making sure that the *Flying Trades* was authentic down to her last trim halyard, but the pleasure that he got out of recreating a true clipper undoubtedly was paramount.

Nolan first turned out a twenty-five-foot model, with the help of the RKO property department, then called in what amounted to a regular construction gang to help him build a full-sized ship. The *Flying Trades* never got closer to the sea than a gigantic sound stage in Culver City, but it was built with as much care as if it were going right into service on the old New York-San Francisco run—down around the Horn.

Today Captain Nolan spends most of his spare time in his Palos Verdes home on the California shore, his spyglass to his eye, searching the horizon rather wistfully for sails. He doesn't find many.

can produce dishes in as many national cuisines. He served on British and American ships during the war. The captain and crew were invited to attend the regular Saturday night dance at the Institute.

The *Placida* was built originally as a yacht in Bath, Maine. She was sold to the Navy and did convoy escort duty during the war. After those adventurous experiences she was reconditioned as a fruit carrier. She is only 27 feet wide, 900 tons displacement, but she is a doughty little craft with nice lines and a most hospitable captain and crew. Bon voyage, *La Placida*.



WHEN a freshly painted little fruit cargo ship, boasting only 185 feet overall length, anchored outside the Institute recently and unloaded 250 tons of bananas, staff members became curious as to just what she was and where she went and who owned her so the LOOKOUT editors decided to clear up the situation.

Called *La Placida*, she flies the Honduras flag, is owned by a Brooklyn lawyer, has a Yugoslavian captain and a crew that represents Yugoslavia, Italy, Cuba and America. Her full complement is 14 crew members. Her plans are to bring tropical fruits from Haiti and other ports to the United States.

Captain A. Glavan was kind enough to invite the associate editor and another staff member to lunch aboard her. We dined with the captain and the first and second engineer in the officers' mess. After sampling chicken and spinach, fried fish, salad, coffee and fruit, the guests complimented the cook—whoever he might be. This caused considerable merriment as it turned out that the captain himself was the cook, having been unable to find a seaman cook who knew a pot from a marlinspike.

He confided that they had had seven cooks in a month and all had been found wanting. The captain speaks seven or eight languages fluently and

Thirty-two Days in a Lifeboat:

An Anonymous Report

One day during the war THE LOOKOUT editor found on her desk a manuscript, unsigned, untitled, and with no clue as to the identity of the author. We'd hoped to be a successful Sherlock Holmes, and have held the story all this time. It was probably written by one of the mates of a Norwegian merchant ship. Now we've decided to publish it, for we believe LOOKOUT readers will be interested in it, and we hope also that the author will see it and acknowledge his story. The first page of the manuscript was missing which accounts for the abrupt beginning.

. . . situation hopeless. I had no choice but to order all hands to the boats.

Originally we had five lifeboats and five rafts, but the two starboard lifeboats had already been smashed beyond usefulness by a shellburst which killed several members of the crew. On the bridge, where I then remained alone, there was a raft which I started to unlash, as it looked like my only chance for escape. But by this time the entire bridge was on fire and the raft burned up before I could free it.

I then climbed over the side to reach the boat deck. The Jap raider was now so close that we were easy targets for machine gun fire. To reach the two lifeboats that were left, on the port side, we had to crawl on our hands and knees or be exposed to the gun fire. The after lifeboat had simply disappeared in the shellburst.

As we were preparing to lower the after boat of the two we had left it was shot away by a machine gun burst which also killed three of the crew. That left us with a single boat into which we placed all the wounded. While I was helping one of them, a Dutch army officer, he was shot again and died in my arms.

The third engineer and I remained on deck until the lifeboat had been lowered, then we jumped overboard to join the others. There had been 58 of us on the ship — 47 officers and crew members and 11 pas-

sengers; now we were 22. So far as we knew, we were the only survivors. Four of our number were seriously wounded — three so badly we knew they could not survive, 12 more of us had minor wounds and only four had escaped with nothing worse than burns.

As soon as I got into the lifeboat all of us who were able started bailing madly, but within a few minutes the boat was filled with water and awash. It was pure luck that it didn't sink because we later discovered more than 20 machine gun holes through the hull.

The Japs must have known what happened the instant we abandoned ship for we were hardly in the lifeboat before the raider came alongside to pour shells into the burning hulk. For the first time we were able to identify the enemy as a heavy converted merchantman. We in the lifeboat had drifted far enough from the action so that the pitchblackness of the winter night hid us from the Jap's view, although the whole scene was framed before our eyes as though it were taking place on a movie screen.

We had one immediate prayer — that the thousand tons of ammunition on our ship would explode when the Jap raider was alongside so that it too might go down in the blast. But that wasn't to be. About 40 minutes from the time the attack started, our ship went down almost on an even keel, ablaze from end to end.



Drawing by Walter Steinsiek

It was then so dark that the enemy could hardly have seen us even if he had searched. But he didn't search, probably believing everyone on board our ship had been lost. As soon as our ship went down, the raider started off in the direction from which it had come. Within five minutes or so it was out of sight.

It was still dark, so we couldn't do much with the wounded, but we did manage to save the second mate from bleeding to death. He had lost an arm and had several bullet holes in his chest. We then did what we could in the darkness to save the emergency food supplies.

Our first check showed we had normal emergency rations for 16 days for the 22 men. They consisted of dry biscuits, concentrated chocolate, milk tablets and pemmican. We also had 130 liters of fresh water, some of which later proved to have been spoiled when salt water poured into the tanks through bullet holes.

Having made this check, there was nothing to do until daylight except bail and consider our situation. There were 22 of us in a 24-foot lifeboat built for 17 men — a boat so badly shot up that it was all we could do to keep it from sinking. Five of us were completely disabled so far as helping in the work was concerned and three others were capable only of bailing with buckets.

Repairing the Boat

At daylight all of us who were still able-bodied dropped out of the boat to give it greater buoyancy. Then we started making temporary repairs. We had an ordinary lifeboat repair kit, including simple carpenter's tools, lead and nails. With cotton taken from our first aid kit and wood from boat seats and covers we patched up the bullet holes from the inside of the boat. We found exactly 27 holes. Then we bailed the boat and got aboard again. All that day we drifted around the scene of the sinking, looking for any other possible survivors. Meanwhile we did whatever we could for the wounded — it



Drawing by H. Brockdorf

was really a day for patching, boat and men—but the second officer died that morning despite our efforts. He passed away quietly and was buried just as quietly. One of our passengers, an American clergyman, said a simple prayer, and the body was slipped over the side.

During that day I spent much of my time studying weather charts and currents to determine our best course. We were 1,400 miles west of Australia but to return there by lifeboat was out of the question — the prevailing wind was dead against us and it was unlikely we could survive the cold weather (it was mid-winter in that latitude) if we tried to head in that direction. The nearest land was in the Netherlands East Indies. There were many points there which we could have reached within five or six days. But we knew that those islands were all occupied by the Japanese. The best possibility for us, we decided, was a port in Ceylon, about 2,400 nautical miles away.

When I had reached this conclusion, I explained the situation to everyone in the boat. I told them that we might reasonably expect to reach Ceylon in about 40 days. Without exception they agreed that was our best course. Not a one suggested that we should steer for one of the Netherlands islands. All preferred death in the lifeboat to becoming Japanese prisoners.

On the second day after the sinking we had made all the repairs possible, including the patching of tears in our one good sail. We then hoisted that sail and began our voyage.

For navigation we had a chart of the Indian Ocean, an ordinary lifeboat compass and two or three watches. Fashioning three boards into a triangle we made a simple hand log such as the old time sailing ships used for checking speed. To it we attached exactly 60 feet of fishing line. Now, by dropping the log behind the boat and checking precisely the time it took for the 60 feet of line to run out we could determine our speed with reasonable accuracy. It was not until the sixth day that we could make a sun check on our position. We then discovered a compass deviation of about 12 degrees.

Provisions Rationed

Planning on a 40-day voyage we tentatively rationed our provisions so that each man would get three biscuits, five milk tablets, a half ounce of chocolate and five ounces of water each day; plus half a meatball and a tenth of a can of pemmican every second day. We then set definite meal hours at 8 A.M.—noon—and 6 P.M. It was agreed that no one would be allowed to save up any part of his rations which he did not consume on the day they were issued, and no one was permitted to give unused rations to another individual. To ensure complete fairness they had to be returned to the common supply.

Everyone was assigned to a job. Those who were physically unable to help with the bailing could keep an eye on the provisions or watch the sail. Those who could bail were assigned to one hour watches for the purpose. The First Officer, the Chief Engineer and I took turns at the helm, serving four hour watches. During the rest periods we remained in our seats, huddling with our nearest neighbor to keep warm. It seems as though none of us ever really slept. The most seriously wounded were stretched out on seats with the result that we were very crowded. It was impossible for anyone to move about because of the constant danger of capsizing.

During the first six days it was very cold with slushy snowfall the first two nights. The wind was strong and the seas were high, constantly dousing us with waves and spray. But the conditions which made us so miserable were also responsible for speeding us on our way. We made excellent time during the first few days, actually making the sensational distance of 167 miles in one 24-hour period. (Our average for the whole voyage was about 100 knots per day.)

On the seventh day, or rather on the night of the seventh day, we entered warmer water and saw large schools of flying fish for the first time. We also saw all kinds of sea birds and tried to trap some of them, but always without success. We had more luck with the flying fish, however. Many of them would strike our sail as they leaped over the boat, and would then flop into our laps. At first we tried to dry the fish for eating by placing them on the sail, but they never got really dry before a burst of spray would douse them. We stopped that and took to eating them raw, biting their heads off and swallowing the rest whole. Because they were still alive, they tickled going down, but they were a pretty welcome addition to the diet so far as most of us were concerned.

Burial at Sea

The day after we caught our first flying fish the chief radio operator died from his wounds and was buried. We were all amazed that he had lived so long since he had never been conscious after leaving the ship. After his burial we began wondering out loud who would be next, but no one got panicky.

Our worst lack was water and it began to be very serious after the first week. On the eleventh day we really began to suffer from thirst and I decided to increase the water ration to 6½ ounces per man per day, hoping that we might soon get a good rain and add to our supply. We were entering the Monsoon area and had reason to expect rain any day.

Almost immediately on making this decision we started having brief rain squalls and we tried to catch water in an old sail, but the rain never lasted long enough to wash the salt out of the sail. After one squall when we managed to collect a little fresh water, a wave came over and spoiled it. On the 13th day (June 28th) one of the stewards died from his wounds and our company was reduced to 19 men. Coupled with our increasing thirst this was a pretty depressing experience, but the general morale still remained excellent. On June 30th we had a really good rain storm and managed to collect 15 gallons of water. The water ration was then increased to ten ounces a day. By wringing the water from our rain-soaked clothes, letting the drops fall directly into our mouths, most of us took on considerably more water than even our increased rations would permit. Thus we all felt in much better spirit.

We Checked Our Position

On July 5th we got a good check on our position by the pole star and the azimuth of the sun at sunrise and sunset. Our position was approximately 3 degrees north and 80 degrees east, or about 200 miles due south of Ceylon. On the following day our sail was badly torn during a strong squall and we had to drift while we made repairs. It was the third time this happened, but the two earlier tears had not delayed us greatly.

The entry in my log for July 8th tells of the greatest disappointment we suffered during the entire trip. It reads: "We should now, according to dead reckoning, have sighted Ceylon, but a strong southwest wind and an easterly current have probably sent us to the leeward of the island. Some of us are a bit disappointed. The only thing to do now is to continue into the Bay of Bengal as we should certainly, with the present wind, reach shore within ten days." Considering everything, our spirits were still pretty good.



Photo by Charles C. Novak

For the following three days we had a strong wind and heavy sea during which we drifted dangerously in the direction of Burma. Fortunately the wind changed in time for us to regain our course toward India and overcome the loss by drift.

At 7 A.M. on the 32nd day we sighted a ship approximately 4 miles off. We knew from the course it was taking (apparently toward Calcutta) that it must be a friendly ship, so we sent up a few rockets, but to no avail. Then our spirits really began to ebb.

Two hours later we sighted a couple of hills in the dim distance off the port bow. This was all that was needed for our spirits to become 100 percent again. As we approached the shore we discovered it to be partly sandy beach and partly rocky reefs with a heavy surf rolling. Except for a few hills the region was flatland covered with dense wild tropical jungle.

As the breakers were running very heavy we had to pick a landing place carefully. At 4:15 P.M. we rode the breakers in successfully. All who could move jumped out to pull the boat as far toward shore as possible. Then we carried our three worst wounded companions ashore. We were all exhausted and nearly everyone col-

lapsed on the beach. As we lay there watching, our lifeboat was pounded to bits in the breakers. It disappeared completely within 15 minutes. For 32 days it had been our home. We watched it go with regret.

Sign Language Fails

At first we had no idea what we could do next, but this didn't give us too much concern while we rested. That evening, shortly before nightfall, several native fishermen reached us, some having come through the jungle while others, who said they had seen us coming in, had found their way to us along the shore. It was quite late before one of them came along who could speak any English. Before his arrival we tried to talk to the natives in sign language, but with little success.

The native who spoke some English was eager to show us to the nearest native village, but the others regarded us more with curiosity. Those of us who had any clothes had taken them off and laid them out to dry on the beach. Some of the naked natives evidently thought they needed the clothes more than we did, so they just helped themselves. You couldn't call it stealing, it was done so naively.

All but three of us were able to walk to the native village of *Kupilli*, about a mile through the jungle from our landing place. The others were carried by the natives as we were barely strong enough to help ourselves. At *Kupilli* the natives plied us with food, a concoction of rice and chickens (of which we ate far too much) and plenty of water. That night we slept on the stone floor of an old native school hut.

Goat Stew

The next morning when we asked for food we were told we would have to buy it. Fortunately one of us had a small amount of Indian currency. For the equivalent of \$1.25 we bought a goat. We killed and skinned it and sold the skin back to the natives for 15 cents worth of vegetables. We made a stew of the whole goat and the vegetables in a huge kettle bor-

rowed from the natives. We ate until the kettle had been scraped clean. It tasted better at the time than any meal ever had at the Waldorf. The natives who had found us had sent word the same night to the village of *Shikagole*, about 11 miles distant. It was the nearest community which boasted white residents. After we had finished off our goat stew, we started for *Shikagole*. All of us were barefoot and most of us were stark naked. One by one 12 of our group dropped by the wayside from exhaustion, but the seven of us who were strongest kept on, stopping only once to rest. We reached *Shikagole* in six hours. By that time ox-carts had been sent back for those of our party who had dropped off, native runners having gone ahead to inform British military authorities.

The local authorities at *Shikagole*, both native and British, took good care of us. We were quartered in a maternity home for native women. As it had only 5 beds, the strongest of us slept on the floor, but it was restful compared with what we were used to. We remained there just one night. In the morning we were examined by native doctors who said we must be taken to *Calcutta* as quickly as possible.

We left for *Calcutta* the same afternoon. It was only 150 miles by rail but the trip took 24 hours. When we arrived at the main station in *Calcutta*, barefoot and clad only in pajamas, we were a sorry looking lot. None of us had shaved for 36 days. We had lost from 30 to 45 pounds apiece in weight and were badly in need of hospitalization despite our high spirits.

After 14 days in the hospital all of us were able to travel. We went immediately to *Bombay* by train and boarded another Norwegian ship the day we arrived there. Heading first for *Australia* we passed uneventfully over the stretch of water which had been the scene of our recent adventure. Seventy days after leaving *Bombay* we arrived in *New York*. It was wonderful to be on American soil again.

Ship News

FIGUREHEAD REVIVAL

The use of figureheads on the prow of ships has been revived. Discarded with the decline of sailing vessels, this old maritime custom is enjoying a new lease on life.

Modern figureheads, instead of being carved of wood, are of steel construction and are an integral part of the ship's bow. Their use has been stimulated by the return to favor of the clipper or curved bow, which replaces the vertical stem. Figureheads were originally images of animals or great warriors. The new trend has been toward the "Grecian Goddess" type.

IS THERE A DOCTOR ABOARD?

The Army Transport *Zebulon B. Vance*, homeward bound from *Bremerhaven* recently, received a "Medico" call from the Army Transport *Joseph V. Connolly* also enroute to America. A passenger had suffered a heart attack and there was no physician aboard. Dr. William H. Young, Jr. of the *Vance* radioed instructions on how to treat the patient. The two transports converged at an agreed location but the waves were too rough to make a transfer. Finally, after three days, the patient was transferred from the *Connolly* to the *Vance* by means of a sling and a lifeboat. Another emergency call was received by the *Vance* from the Greek freighter *Nachman Syrkin* asking advice on treating the second engineer who was suffering from swollen arms and legs. Another transfer to the *Vance* was arranged. When the transport finally docked at *Staten Island*, the engineer was sent to the U. S. Marine Hospital at *Staten Island*, and the other patient walked ashore, completely recovered. Dr. Young also treated several of the 163 war brides and 37 children aboard the *Vance* for the usual illnesses and mal de mer.

OLD SIDEWHEELER IS SCRAPPED

The 47-year-old sidewheeler *Smithfield*, owned and operated by the *Keansburg Steamboat Company*, has been scrapped, according to an announcement by *William A. Gehlhaus*, president of the company.

Built in 1900 at *Elizabethport, N. J.*, the excursion steamer first saw service on the *Norfolk, Va.*, to *Smithfield* run of the *Old Dominion Steamship Lines*. In 1921 she was acquired by her present owners and during her long service in local waters she became well known to thousands of *New York* travelers. After the summer season of 1941 she was taken out of service and

Today *Captain Nolan* spends most of his tied up at the company's *Keyport, N. J.* docks. During the hurricane of September, 1941, she was beached, and the expenses of refloating her proved so great that the com-



THE "NEW LOOK" IN FIGUREHEADS

Courtesy, Akers Mek Verksted, Oslo, Norway

OLD SALT CELEBRATES CENTENNIAL

Over at *Sailors' Snug Harbor* recently the 100th birthday of *Captain Dennis Torney* was celebrated. The trustees of the Harbor provided a five-tier cake surmounted by a miniature ship made by one of the "Snugs." *Captain Torney* went to sea at the age of twelve, and sailed 25 years under sail and 25 years under steam. Then he retired to the Harbor, where he enjoys playing his violin and spinning yarns with "young" fellows in their seventies and eighties.

Many people confuse the *Seamen's Church Institute of New York with Sailors' Snug Harbor*. The Harbor is a fully endowed home on *Staten Island* for "aged, decrepit and outworn sailors" where they spend their declining years in comfort and with a view of *New York harbor* with the ships coming and going. The Institute, on the other hand, is a partially self-supporting welfare organization for *ACTIVE merchant seamen* of all nationalities.

pany was finally forced to dismantle her.

The *Smithfield* was a sturdy representative of the type of side-wheelers still in service are owned service in local waters after the turn of the century.

Book Reviews

LIVES OF THE LINERS

By Frank O. Braynard

Cornell Maritime Press, 195 Pages, \$3.75

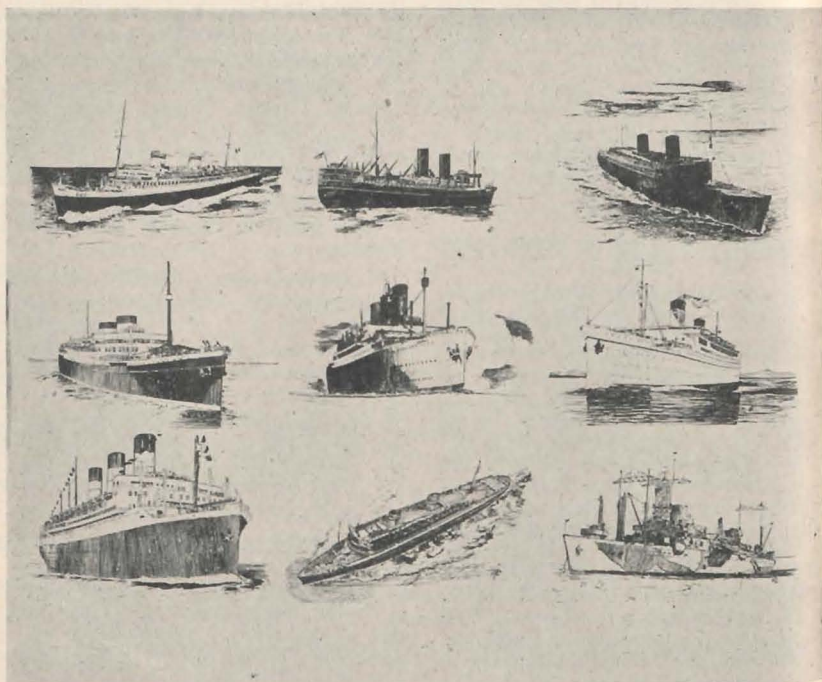
To such a group as composes the many guests, past and present, of the Seamen's Church Institute, and readers of *THE LOOKOUT*, this book will find a hearty welcome.

To find in one book, in compact, enjoyable form, the personalized stories of practically all of the world's liners, both large and small, their operations as pre-war peace-ship, and as ships of war, is a treat no ship-lover should miss.

The author has skillfully separated his subject into four sections, treating the superliners, such as the *Queens*, *Leviathan*, *Rex* and many others,—the express liners, mail ships and the smaller ships, so that one complete picture is given, either for just enjoyable reading, or accurate reference.

Mr. Braynard has made a study of ships since his early youth, and combines this knowledge with his artistic ability, which has produced over forty splendid sketches from his pen of some of the best known vessels, to illustrate this book. This combination of author-artist has given ship-lovers a book which will remain an active one in every nautical library.

FREEMAN R. HATHAWAY
Member Steamship Historical
Society of America



THE SEA FARING AND OTHER POEMS

By Louis O. Coxe

Henry Holt & Co., New York, 1947

Navy in the late war, Mr. Coxe presents 44 poems, young stuff, deft even when obscure, alive, and partially fulfilling great promise. Old school verse lovers requiring their fare lucid and rhythmic will find much hard reading, some of it rather technical for a landlubber, as "Red Right Returning." But there can be no doubt that Mr. Coxe himself knows what he means; he sees the "mirage beyond the utmost miles," and hears

"... Whispers below the tide
Are patternless and quick
Where men have died."

He probes deeply, his feelings are rich and warm. This reviewer hails him as an artist and a sensitive human being; he hopes Mr. Coxe will dare to pay the price and follow through as a poet.

JOHN ACKERSON

BELOW:

Nine sketches from the new book *Lives of the Liners*, by Frank O. Braynard, published by Cornell Maritime Press, New York. See if you can identify these:

REX, RAWALPINDI, QUEEN ELIZABETH, GEORGIC, CALEDONIA, MONTEREY, ILE DE FRANCE, NIEUW AMSTERDAM, ANCON.

Marine Poetry

DUE NORTH

By Benjamin R. C. Low*

Enough: you have the dream, the flame;
Free it henceforth:
The South has given you a name;—
Now for the North.
Unsheathe your ship from where she lies,
In narrow ease;
Fling out her sails to the tall skies,
Flout the sharp seas.
Beyond bleak headlands wistful burn
Warm lights of home;
In-shutting darkness frays astern,
Far-spun, the foam.
Come wide sea-dawns, that empty are
Of wet sea sand;
Come eves, that lay beneath a star
No lull of land.
And whether on faint iris wings
Of fancy borne,
Or blown and breathed, the south wind
brings
So much to mourn!
The deep wood-shadows, they that drew
So softly near;
The violets all veined with blue,—
Be strong, and steer!
There is a silence to be found,
And rested in;
A stillness out of thought, where sound
Can never win.
There is a peace, beyond the stir
Of wind or wave;
A sleeping, where high stars confer
Over the brave.
The south winds come, the south winds go,
Caressing, dear;
Northward is silence, and white snow,—
Be strong, and steer!
For in that silence, waiting, lies,
Untroubled, true;—
Oh, eager, clear-like love in eyes—
The soul of you.

*Who served on the Institute's Board of Managers from 1905 to 1941.

Reprinted from "The Eternal Sea"
Edited by W. M. Williamson
Coward-McCann, Inc., New York

ON WATCH

By Jerry Doane

Stars lend a silver silence to the night;
The big bright ones that beam unblinking
And all the swarms of small ones winking,
Together somehow make a sight
That sets a man to thinking . . . thinking.
In measured march they span the skies
Unchanged, unchangeable, serene,
And no one knows just what they mean;
Yet still they make a man feel wise,
And still they make a man feel clean.

"Salt Water In Their Veins"
The Fine Editions Press

THE OLD QUARTERMASTER

By Gordon Grant*

Next week they're goin' to lay me off be-
cause I'm gettin' old.
Well, maybe I've it comin' after forty years
at sea.
An' partin' ain't so bitter hard from liners
white an' gold,
For' bred-in-sail seafarin' men like what
they used to be.
I stand my trick—I take the wheel, all
trimmed with patent gear;
Electro-gadget compasses an' iron mikes an'
such,
An' babe-faced youngsters come to me an'
tell me how to steer
This forty thousand tons of steel, respondin'
to a touch.
The school I learned my steerin' in was no
steam heated suite,
With no shore station radios to tell you
where you are.
Lashed to a five foot buckin' helm in blind-
in' Cape Horn sleet,
Or thostin' through the tropic night, the
mast-head on a star.
I knew as much as all this lot when I was
half their age;
A man to turn a handle there or push a
button here,
A man to close an' open valves, a man to
watch a gauge,
An' show the pretty passengers their scien-
tific gear.
Fine art in trimmin' sail to wind, to coax
another knot,
Of crackin' on for full-sail breeze, or short-
enin' to the gale,
Is gone, with all the ships that's gone, an'
like to be forgot,
Except by ancient crabs like me, who served
their time in sail!

*Marine artist whose beautiful "Seascape" adorns
the veredos in the Institute's Chapel.

Reprinted from "The Eternal Sea"

LADY OF DANGER

By Joseph F. Ferran*

The sea is a woman
Inconstant but sweet,
Whispers her gladness
Each time that you meet.
The sky is her bonnet
Darkened or light;
Danger in daytime
Dark danger at night.
Soft now and gentle
While fury she girds,
Lulls your awareness
With sweet whispered words;
But under the guise
Of the ocean's smooth breath,
There is all of the promise
And sureness of death.

*Member, Artists and Writers Club for the
Merchant Marine.

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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."