

# The LOOKOUT



HARBOR TUG

SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK

OL. XXXVIII

September, 1947

No. 9

## Sanctuary

A Prayer for Those in Industry

O Lord, who in the gift of Thine only Son hast encouraged struggling mankind, grant that the labor movement may be wisely guided into a greater vision of usefulness, that employers of labor may fashion their dealings according to justice, and that the way of those in industry may lead to that Kingdom toward which Thou has pointed us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(The Southern Churchman)

# The LOOKOUT

VOL. XXXVIII, SEPTEMBER, 1947

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

Telephone BOWling Green 9-2710

## THEATRE BENEFIT NOTICE—

Please Save This Date: Thursday Evening, November 6th  
for the Seamen's Institute benefit performance of a new com-  
edy by Donald Ogden Stewart, entitled "HOW I WONDER"  
starring RAYMOND MASSEY

produced by Ruth Gordon and Garson Kanin.

Ticket prices and details will be sent you later.

We are counting on the loyal support of our friends to  
make this benefit a success.

# The Lookout

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## Crew of Knitters

"Here are 37 pairs of socks. Many kind thoughts are knit with them. Must have more wool; can't sit idle with our hands in our laps. Enclosing check . . ."  
(part of a letter from a volunteer knitter)

**K**NIT one, purl two, don't drop that stitch . . . and don't drop your knitting! Some of our readers may have knitted for the Red Cross during the war but now, feeling that no vital need calls for their time and energy, have allowed their hands to grow idle. But there is a vital need . . . and a constant one . . . for warm garments for merchant seamen.

From Maine to California, from Georgia to Michigan, women with hearts as warm as the socks they knit have responded to the call from the Central Council of Associations at the Institute. The call is for knitted watch caps, mittens, scarves, socks, and sweaters for the men who carry the cargoes of the world.

If you had ever faced an Atlantic gale on deck in wintertime, you'd know what warm wool garments can mean.

Recently, as he was being given a warm sweater, a Dutch seaman said: "It will be a new experience not to suffer from the cold." And a young Danish lad remarked, as he thanked a staff member for socks: "My feet are covered with blisters from socks made out of rags and from using shoes too large for my feet." These Dutch, Danish, and Belgian seamen have been particularly thankful for the generosity of American women who knit for them. Their countries are still struggling up from the devastation of war and invasion; their wages are inadequate; clothing at home is strictly rationed and knitted garments impossible to get.



Choosing one to fit.

Over 10,000 warm, knitted garments were distributed to seamen last year but there are never enough to meet all the requests. This article is written with the hope that if you are not already knitting for the Seamen's Church Institute, you will join our crew of knitters. If you are already knitting, we hope you will interest a friend in joining.

The crew of knitters is made up of women who like to keep their hands busy, women who have grown up families and time on their hands, invalids who, by knitting for seamen and sometimes corresponding with them, keep in touch with the outside world, and even school children. And there are those women who belong to women's auxiliaries of churches of various denominations and others who proudly claim seafaring in their family and take this way to express their interest in others of the same calling. One volunteer wrote in to say that her father had been a sea captain and she remembered a time when he was shipwrecked and he and all his crew were outfitted with warm garments. Another volunteer explained

that she was a retired nurse and after an active life simply had to have something to do. Another is a blind woman, 86 years of age, who has knitted over a hundred scarves for the seamen. Others, younger and more active women, knit because they enjoy the feeling of doing something for someone else in a world where there is never too much of that spirit.

New recruits please write or phone for further particulars to Mrs. Grafton Burke, Central Council of Associations, 25 South St., New York 4, Bowling Green 9-2710.

## Beef a la Moby Dick

WITH the whaling season open, the question of eating more whales is again news in a hungry world where sirloins are still gilded fare. The Norwegian tanker *Anna Knudsen* recently sailed from Staten Island for the Antarctic, where she will act as mother ship to a group of whaling vessels. Scientists with the expedition are reported to be planning to discover whether southern

whales are as good eating as their cetacean relatives in the North Atlantic.

England has long been eating northern captured whale meat in the form of "whaleburgers," and the Japanese pack whale meat and sell it at a few cents a can. The Norwegians, those most successful whale hunters, are experienced in refrigerating choice portions of their catch and shipping the meat in blocks of handy size. In 1943 the United States Department of the Interior officially moved to supply whale meat to a country short of beef. The department tried to have three ships operate from a California station and bring back whale meat which the department announced was "wholesome when properly handled" and had "no fishy taste." But the American public, apparently more fussy than beef-conscious Englishmen, turned up their noses and knives at whale steaks, which were declared to be too tough.

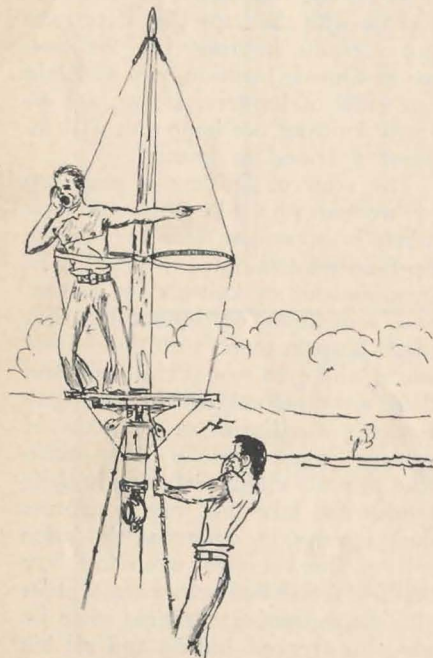
The Antarctic whale, of course, contains more fat than the northern whale, but whalers declare that any oily flavor can be removed by soaking the meat in vinegar. Doubtless alert science will find superior methods of making the Antarctic whale more palatable and, if the unfortunate whales hold out — always an arguable question — whale meat may yet appear in Manhattan as a cheap and imitative beefsteak during the more Eskimo season of mid-winter. Such a dish as "beef a la Moby Dick" may become well liked by loyal admirers of Herman Melville.

Editorial N. Y. Herald Tribune

### TRIBUTE

For risks accepted with a grin  
And death confronted with a jest,  
For sluggish hulls and plating thin,  
For vigils that have outlawed rest,  
For all the humble men that wear  
No special sort of uniform  
But with a dogged courage dare  
Dangers more deadly than the storm.  
Let's not forget a tribute to  
The men that get the cargoes through.

By COLIN D. BURGESS



Drawing by Seaman Artie Huffart

## A Week's Cruise Aboard the "S.S. Janet Roper"

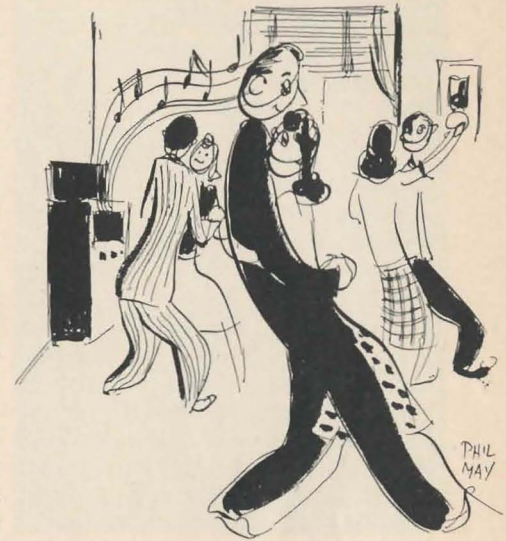
By Bob Larson, Bo's'n

I HAVE heard many times of the "S.S. JANET ROPER," of its mighty cruises to the lands of recreation. Its passengers were seamen who had sailed for dreary days at sea and who needed diversion and entertainment in the port of New York.

I had heard, too, of its "crew" which was recruited from some of the loveliest and most gracious girls and women from Manhattan, Brooklyn, Long Island, New Jersey and other points adjoining New York.

One evening, at loose ends, after several unfruitful telephone calls, I decided to go aboard the "S.S. JANET ROPER" and see all these things for myself. The elevator whisked me to its dock (on the 4th floor, 25 South Street) and I cautiously climbed the gangplank. As soon as my feet hit the deck, I was greeted cordially by the ROPER'S charming "captain," who put me at ease immediately. Explaining the evening's program, she directed me forward to the ballroom. It was Monday evening and the third mate and boatswain were in charge of the entertainment which was a joyous song-fest. The third mate led the singing and I, with forty other passengers, assisted by the entire seamen crew, made the rafters ring. After the songs, coffee and cookies were served and the phonograph gave out dance music for the rest of the evening.

Tuesday evening I went aboard the ROPER about 8:15 and found the same captain in command. I learned that the crew changed nightly and the cruise tonight would take us back to the land of yesterday when square dancing was the thing. I was a little dubious about cutting a square "rug," but the third mate ordered me on the floor as her partner. Needless to say, I enjoyed myself. Not only did I dance with the mate, but I squared off with several seamen. We "Hinky Dinked the Parley Vous," twisted the Grapevine, Railroaded,



Reeled thru Virginia and ironically danced the "Life on the Ocean Wave." I thought the dance had gotten me when I seemed to see the mate in two places at once. It wasn't until quite late (almost too late) that I found she had a twin sister. Weary but happy, I ended another night's cruise.

The Wednesday evening cruise was quiet and pleasant. Dancing in the ballroom claimed most of the passengers and crew. The recreation officer supervised and instructed at three tables of bridge on the main deck. An able-bodied seaman challenged me to a game of ping-pong (which I lost) and I posed for a pencil sketch. Thus the second officer drew my handsome profile. Later I talked with the third mate as I drank coffee served by the steward's department. Then a seaman honored me with a dance and we charted our course past couples composed of seamen and passengers.

Thursday evening found the decks of the "S.S. JANET ROPER" crowded to capacity. At least 150 seamen came aboard about 8 o'clock and a

crew of 90 was aboard to greet and entertain them as well as the regular passengers. Dancing to the ship's orchestra went on in the Grand Ballroom. Punch, cookies and sandwiches were served on the main deck. The ordinary seamen were coaxed to the stage and sang for us. I liked the song "Somebody Loves Me." It made me feel good inside. Prizes were awarded guests and crew members after they had completely exhausted their ability to prove that honors should be given them for that samba, that jitter, that rumba.

When I went aboard the ROPER Friday evening, the crew and passengers were gathered forward to hear the songs rendered by a distinguished crew member with a fine soprano voice. I slid into a seat alongside the third mate to listen. After the program was over, coffee was served by the steward. Wandering into the Chart Room, I had my character and future charted by the stars. The navigation officer presided at this popular scientific part of the program. Dancing under the direction of the recreation officer and his orchestra was Saturday's highlight.

Sunday was an evening of rest and relaxation aboard the "S.S. ROPER." Groups sat and talked of world events and trivial things of interest. At 6:15 tea was served in the Main Salon to some 50 passengers and crew, and many joined the evening service in the ship's Chapel.

And so ended seven delightful evening cruises aboard the "S.S. JANET ROPER," a ship worthy of any port. Credit for the success of its cruises to the different lands of entertainment and for the relaxation it has brought to the sea-weary men of the Merchant Marine who have walked her deck, is due the capable recreation officers. May the "S.S. JANET ROPER" sail always on her nightly cruises and bring the same happy times to those men of the sea who follow us.

## A Reader Rounds out a Story

*A reader who read Mr. Freeman Hathaway's account of some Coastwise Steamers in the June issue of the LOOKOUT, sends along an interesting footnote to the career of the Robert E. Lee which Mr. Hathaway had described as having been sunk by torpedoing with a heavy loss of life on December 26, 1943. The following details are from Mr. B. A. Thompson who ran the Atlantic and Gulf coasts on a tanker during the terrible year of '42.*

"The Robert E. Lee lost only six crew members. But the joke was on the sub. After sinking the Lee he went to the bottom off South Pass (which is a fairly shallow coastal plain shelf) and shut off all motors for the day. One of our anti-submarine patrol boats anchored close by and shut down all machinery and just listened. Towards evening, the sub, not having heard anything, got under way and our patiently waiting patrol boat did likewise and that was the end of the sub . . . Also a German sub came in during the summer at Cape Henry, laid close to the anti-submarine net and waited for an outgoing warship from Portsmouth Navy Yard. Our patrol boats blew him to pieces. At that time, 1942, these German seamen were buried behind the Navy Yard in Portsmouth. I have seen dead men floating and tankers sunk and on fire. So many seamen were lost that year that various restaurants and cafes in Texas ports commented on the disappearance of their friends."



## Old Salt, Seamen's Salvager

76-year-old Robert Brine, Who Quit Briny 37 Years Ago, Still Maintains Touch

**S**EVENTY-SIX-YEAR-OLD Robert J. Brine gave up the sea thirty-seven years ago but he still has daily traffic with objects from the seven seas as custodian of one of the most picturesque baggage rooms in New York. Through the portals of his huge, subterranean checkroom at the Seamen's Church Institute of New York, 25 South Street, pass enough odd objects to stock a museum — and, in fact, some of them do.

Born on the Isle of Man, the son of a seafaring man and the brother of two others, Bob sailed as an oiler from the age of 21 until he was 39. In 1913 he joined the Institute as an assistant shipping master and about seven years later became an assistant in the baggage room.

He has been the boss there now for more than a quarter of a century and has supervised the handling of more than three million pieces of seamen's baggage—including some live pieces. The live pieces have included cats, dogs, monkeys, parrots and honey bears. (He still occasionally accepts pets overnight but doesn't encourage them.)

Along with the trunks, suitcases and sea-bags he often gets such an unusual object as a Chinese bird cage or a teakwood table. Trunks are kept for 50 cents a month; suitcases, sea-bags, packages, sextants, clothing and musical instruments for a penny a day. Packages are held for three months, longer by special request, and other objects for a year, also with a special request provision. At present he has a couple of suitcases checked in 1944 and marked to be held until this summer or fall.

### Isn't Ready to Retire

The baggage room, with a staff of five under Bob, is open from 7 A. M. to 8 P. M. six days a week; from 8 A. M. to 2 P. M. on Sundays and



Christmas, and from 8 A. M. to 6 P. M. on all other holidays. Bob takes off Sundays, holidays and some Saturdays, but he has no thought yet of retiring.

Unclaimed baggage is opened after the time limit expires and the clothes are cleaned and sent to the Sloppe Chest for distribution to needy seamen; personal papers are kept in the safe, and curios go to an upstairs treasure-room at the Institute.

The curio room is crammed with souvenirs from an Atlas-full of countries — carved masks, weapons, pith helmets, shells, idols, coins and miscellanea. There's a tattoo set, too, some handcuffs, musical instruments, false teeth, several sets of brass knuckles and two old bottles of champagne.

Bob, who lives at 426 East 67th Street, knows he'll never go back to the sea, but he likes the atmosphere in his seamen's baggage room. And, though it's a very long shot, there's a chance that someday he'll check a sea-bag for either of his two brothers, from whom he hasn't heard in thirty-seven years.

Reprinted from N. Y. Sun, July 5, 1947

# Fine Ships Mean Fine Food

By Joseph J. Ryan\*

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## NEW ROLE FOR THE INSTITUTE

The Institute played a new role not long ago when it was the scene where talent was discovered and sent on its way to the West Coast.

An eight year old Brooklyn girl, Rhoda Francis, star pupil at the Nellie Crawford Dancing School in Brooklyn, made an appearance at the Institute to help entertain merchant seamen and was discovered by Nick Kenny, well-known radio reviewer and song writer. Mr. Kenny took one look at Rhoda's twinkling toes, forgot the rest of the show, and sent the little dancer home to pack for Hollywood and an M-G-M contract.

Who knows what treading the boards at the S. C. I. may not lead to? Other troupers who give their time and talent to merchant seamen audiences may also receive similar recognition. At least, the chance that they may add a little zest to their performances here. So here's good luck to the many faithful singers, dancers, actors, and other entertainers who bring diversion to merchant seamen at 25 South Street.



## Food at 25 South St.

"Victualing a ship is big business" said ship news reporter Joseph Ryan in the foregoing article. Carol Terwilliger, dietitian of the Officers' Dining Room and the cafeteria at the Seamen's Church Institute might echo that with: "Victualing seamen is a big job."

The Institute serves about 3,000 meals a day to its merchant seamen patrons, dock workers, staff members, and the general public.

Feeding seamen is not very different from feeding men of any calling, says our dietitian, except that they favor dishes that are filling and reasonable, such as stews and meat pies. Tomato and lettuce is especially prized by men who have been out on long voyages, so are milk and desserts. The younger seamen are very fond of sweets; recently one of them loaded his tray

with five different kinds of dessert and no solid food at all. Small salads are growing increasingly popular. In spite of so much time spent on the briny deep, seamen like fish quite well and eat a lot of it. Ice cream is popular summer and winter.

Asked how she manages to cope with unexpectedly big crowds as crews land in port, Miss Terwilliger shrugged mysteriously and said: "An emergency shelf is kept stocked for such an event. This is where that good old American institution — the frankfurter — comes in handy!"

Seamen don't care to experiment with new foods; things like sweetbreads or brain fill them with horror. They just want their food, hot, filling and reasonable and that's what they get in the Seamen's Church Institute's cafeteria under the careful eye and the practiced hand of its dietitian.



Officers' Dining Room

## From Far-off Ports to You



Courtesy, Grace Lines

### Loading Cargo at Valparaiso

SO that you may have hundreds of articles for your comfort and pleasure, merchant seamen brave the fury of the seas, the hazards of fire, fog and collision. The wool you wear, the metals you use, much of the food you eat, are brought to you from far off places on merchant vessels.

Merchant seamen have skill, courage, and endurance. When the winches turn and the cargoes are unloaded, what of these men? Where do they go for the relaxation and companionship they need? Where — on the waterfront — can they find "safe anchorage"?

For 103 years the Seamen's Church Institute of New York (25 South Street) has provided a shore home for these men of the sea, serving their special needs through wars and through the years of peaceful trade with other nations. Most seamen pay

the moderate charges for rooms and meals, baggage, checking, laundry and other facilities. But they keenly appreciate the free services made available by the Institute's generous friends.

As grateful landsmen, we hope you will continue to say "welcome home" to these seafarers between voyages. Your contributions help to provide a home-like atmosphere, medical care, educational and cultural aids, comfortable club rooms, friendly counsel. The knowledge of your interest in their welfare helps greatly to minimize the lonely, tedious hours at sea and the ever-present possibility of disaster.

Please send contributions to the Seamen's Church Institute of New York, 25 South St., New York 4. Contributions are tax exempt.

# The Bosun's Lucky Cat

By John Hodakovsky\*

## Best Sea Story of the Month



"NOW, there is a nice pet to keep aboard ship," said Bosun "Red" McNamara of the *Georgia Belle* to Martin Nolan, quartermaster. He pointed over the ship's rail towards the gangplank where a black and white cat was gingerly making its way aboard. "Cats are good luck. That's one thing we're going to need this trip. We're leaving these islands at 0800 tomorrow. Skipper says we're going to Noumea. Plenty of Jap submarines on that run. They just lie in wait for lone ships like the *Georgia Belle*. I think we'll take that cat along for insurance."

"Oh, no we won't!" Nolan objected. "She'd be a nuisance."

"That's how much you know about cats!" interrupted the bosun. "All cats need is a sand-box. I'll make one for her. She won't be any trouble."

"Maybe," grumbled Nolan, "but I don't want a cat aboard."

The bosun got mad. "That cat stays," he yelled belligerently. Red never argued much. He preferred action to words. The crew respected him for his huge bulk, ready fists and Irish love of battle.

"Okay! Okay! The cat stays! Don't get sore, bos," Nolan said.

The next morning, the *Georgia Belle* steamed away from Kwajalein atoll into the blue Pacific. On the bridge the captain observed, "Clear weather, tail wind and following sea. Couldn't ask for better sailing weather." He turned to the second mate. "How does the glass read, mister?" The second mate went over to the barometer and looked at it. "High and steady, captain."

\*Member, Artist & Writer's Club for the Merchant Marine.

"Hm-m-m," mused the captain, "We ought to make knots." The second mate grinned. "We'll need them in these waters. Sparks said he intercepted a distress call from a ship two hundred miles south by west. Sub surfaced and shelled the ship. It's right on our course, Captain."

The skipper looked grim. "The Jap that meets us will be a sad Jap," he said. "With our seven thousand ton cargo of bombs, we'd blow him and ourselves right off the ocean if we were torpedoed."

Below, the bosun's cat was getting a lot of attention. "What are you going to name the cat?" asked able seaman Dutch.

"I've been thinking about that. Got any ideas?"

"Well," Dutch screwed up his homely face to show he was thinking hard, "Tabby sounds all right."

"No," said the bosun, "Too common."

"How about Victoria, — after the name of the Kwajalein island where we found her?" suggested Dutch.

### The cat is christened

"Victoria — Vickie for short," the bosun tested the name. "Sounds all right. We'll call her Vickie from now on."

The newly christened cat looked up at the bosun and purred. "She likes me," the bosun said, very pleased.

Dutch kept staring intently at Vickie. "Bos, you notice something about her?" The bosun scrutinized Vickie. "She's a little plump," he said.

"That's what I mean," Dutch said, "She's too plump."

"Holy cow, Dutch, you're right! She's going to have kittens!"

The first few days at sea, Vickie was miserable. She tried to walk as Nature had taught her but couldn't keep a straight course. The ship's deck kept pitching, bouncing and slanting at all angles. Her stomach began to turn handspins. It puzzled her and she'd meow mournfully.

The bosun comforted her. "Now, take it easy, Vickie, everything will be all right. You'll have your sea legs soon, and everything will be all right."

From the very beginning, Vickie favored the bosun. She loved to be petted by him. Sometimes her silky fur crackled.

Vickie was a creature of many moods. She could be spry, playful, alert, watchful, patient, lazy, placid or drowsy. Most of the crew loved her. Some did not. One of these was Nolan. He had a fanatical dislike for cats. He was sure they were evil creatures — mean, fickle and cowardly.

"They carry diseases," he said. "Kill birds, rabbits, squirrels."

"You'll like Vickie. She's going to bring us good luck," prophesied the bosun.

"That I gotta see."

"You will. I can tell you — and prove what I say — about cats that have brought good luck to ships. You heard about the cat that saved the ship from a salvage crew? The ship got beached on the Farrallones in a fog. The skipper was sure she was going to founder, so he ordered, 'Abandon ship.' All the crew left — but the old man left the ship's cat aboard. The ship didn't sink though. A salvage boat came along, boarded her, and claimed her a salvage prize. But the ship's skipper said 'no' — she was still his ship. Under navigation laws a salvage prize is a deserted ship. That ship was not deserted as long as a member of the crew was aboard. The ship's cat is part of the crew. The court upheld that decision in favor of the skipper."

"Haw," laughed Nolan skeptically, "Pretty soon you'll be telling me that a cat manned the guns and knocked a Zero out of the sky — or blew a sub out of the water."

The *Georgia Belle* seemed charmed. All about her ships were under attack but she steamed on unmolested. U. S. Merchant ships had strict orders not to go to the aid of stricken ships and thus expose themselves to danger. Losing one ship was bad enough, but losing two was worse.

### Vickie helps morale

Bosun McNamara insisted that Vickie was the charm that protected the ship. The crew were inclined to agree. Vickie did do a lot for their morale. She was so soothing and companionable. She was just the kind of medicine a high-strung crew needed.

Vickie grew and grew. "She is getting broad on the beam," as Dutch put it. She didn't play around as much. She retained her pleasant mood, but she became very careful. She lumbered about slowly, with an unnatural gait.

The bosun suffered more than Vickie did. He was so very concerned about her. Once, she jumped from deck to hatch coaming and the bosun was horrified. "Don't you do that no more, Vickie," he scolded her. "You're liable to hurt yourself and the little ones."

Earnest speculations arose among the crew as to how many kittens she would have.

"Boy, oh boy!" remarked one admiring ordinary seaman gazing after her rotund figure. "She looks like she'll have fifty."

"She won't have no more than five," said Tiny, the four-to-eight oiler. Tiny was a ridiculous nickname for the big two-hundred and seventy pound oiler.

"Yeah?" retorted the bosun, "I'll bet five bucks she has at least six."

"You mean that, bos?" asked Tiny.

"Sure I do."

"I'll take that bet, bos."

"Okay, Tiny, it's a bet," said the bosun. Nolan was coming up. He'd just finished four hours at the wheel and was idle for the

next four hours. He overheard the talk between Tiny and the bosun. "I'll take five of the same thing, bos. Want to make it more?"

The bosun eyed him belligerently. Nolan's eyes were mocking him. "Any amount you say, Nolan," he said slowly, "You name it, I'll cover it."

"This is like taking candy away from a baby," Nolan gloated. "I'll bet you fifty bucks that your wonderful cat," he spat out the last words, "does not have six kittens."

"Six or more kittens, I said!" interrupted the bosun.

"Okay — six or more. Want to bet?"

"You're on!" said the bosun, "And don't count your chickens before they're hatched. You aren't taking my money — you've got to win it."

Nolan laughed. "It's as good as in my pocket right now."

### The cat experts argue

News of the bet caused mild excitement. Vickie became the topic of messroom conversation. All the crew became cat experts.

"An ordinary batch of kittens," reasoned Dutch "is about three to five."

"But some cats have up to ten," pointed out the bosun.

"Those were unusual cases," replied Dutch, "How old would you say Vickie is?"

"About a year, maybe a little over," guessed the bosun. "What's that got to do with it?"

"Maybe nothing — maybe all," said Dutch, "If this is her first batch she won't have but about three. If she's had kittens before, she should have more than three."

"She'll have six," said the bosun.

Dutch shook his head. "We don't know anything about Vickie. She don't look like anything unusual. Just an ordinary cat. Maybe you're expecting too much, bos."

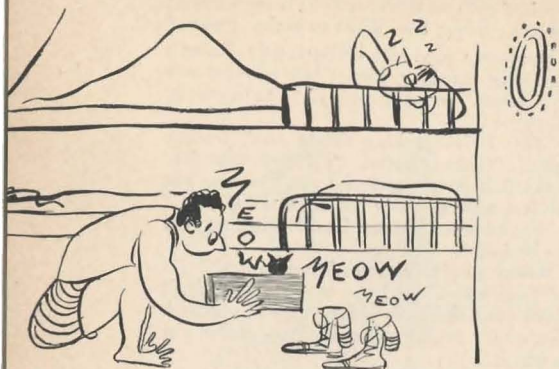
"Vickie will come through," the bosun persisted. "Just wait and see."

"I hope so bos — I hope so," said Dutch.

Vickie was oblivious to the excitement. She continued to waddle along on deck — seeking out every nook and cranny for a suitable place to make her nest. The bosun kept a watchful eye on her. "Don't fail me, Vickie," he told her. "We'll teach Nolan a lesson."

One morning the bosun was awakened earlier than usual by a strange sound. As he lay on his bunk half-awake, half-asleep, wondering what it was, he heard it again. A tiny, protesting "meow" from under his bunk. A sudden realization came to him. Vickie was having kittens. He jumped out of his bunk, knelt down and peered under it. In the semi-gloom he could make out Victoria's outstretched body in the wooden box he kept his tools in. Two furry little forms were wriggling about her.

The bosun got up and rushed out to the passageway. The cooks were preparing breakfast. "Hey, cooks!" shouted the bosun, "Vickie's having kittens!"



Drawing by Phil May

"Yeah? Where?" asked the second cook.

"Underneath my sack!" the bosun answered. "Two of them — and more coming." The cooks dropped their work temporarily. They had to see for themselves. When they got to Vickie's nest there were three kittens.

#### Each arrival causes interest

Throughout the day the kittens came, each new arrival causing fresh interest. The quartermaster, being relieved at the wheel, would ask his relief, "How many now?"

"Four."

"No kidding?" and then would hurry down to see Vickie.

The lookout in the crow's nest saw Dutch below.

"Hey Dutch," he shouted, "Anymore?"

"Five," was the answer.

On the bridge the captain said, "What's that lookout shouting about, mister?"

"Bosun's cat is having kittens sir, and it's the talk of the ship," answered the third mate who was on watch.

"Kittens!" bellowed the skipper, "You tell that lookout to keep his eyes open and never mind about kittens."

"Yes sir," said the third mate and went over to the phone to call the lookout.

"What is this ship turning into — a cat nursery?" grumbled the skipper to nobody in particular. "Five, eh? Hm-m-m," and he went back towards his cabin.

Victoria had a lapse at five. For an hour there were no new arrivals. The bosun watched Vickie anxiously. Nolan came in. He had a satisfied smirk on his face. "I told you, bos," he said. "Maybe you won't be so crazy about cats after this."

The bosun glared at Nolan. "She ain't

done yet. It's the sea that's giving her trouble. It changed from two points off the starboard bow to right on the beam. See how she rolls?" It was true — the *Georgia Belle* was in a trough. Once she started on a roll, it seemed she'd never stop. Up, up slanted her decks, then she'd pause at the peak of the roll and come back to even out, only to start another roll on the opposite side. It was sickening. Nolan left, and the bosun, alone with Vickie, began to talk to her. "Don't stop now, baby," he said. "Keep going — or I'll have to pay that guy fifty bucks."

"How's your wonderful cat doing, Mac?" asked a familiar voice at his back. Only one man on the ship called the bosun "Mac." That was the captain. The bosun turned to face him, surprised. Evidently, Vickie's fame had reached topside.

#### Vickie hates the ship's roll

"Not doing so well, sir," answered the bosun respectfully. "This trough the ship is in — it's giving Vickie trouble."

"Hm-m-m. I suppose you want me to take 'er out of the trough for the sake of your cat?"

"Yes, sir" said the bosun eagerly.

"I'm not changing the ship's course for a cat!" said the skipper sternly. "You ought to know that, Mac."

"Yes sir — but I thought — that — for a little while," stammered the bosun. "Just long enough for Vickie—"

"The ship keeps her course!" said the captain with finality. He turned on his heel and went topside as suddenly as he had come. The bosun gloomily sat down beside Vickie's nest.

He had been there quite a while when the general alarm rang. Its din reverberated deafeningly through the passageways. It woke the sleeping, startled the loiterers and galvanized them all into action. Submarine — the lookout had spotted a submarine. Each grabbed his life preserver and headed for his station. The bosun grabbed his and started out of his foc'sle. His eyes lit on Vickie. Quickly he scooped up Vickie's box and hurried out. His station was the forward falls of Number One boat. When he got there he deposited Vickie's box in the boat. She was safe now and he had time to look around.

The crew was already there — all tense — alert and scared. Dutch was the only one that was calm. He had been through this sort of thing before and he held a fatalistic view. "When you go, you go," he'd said often, "No use worrying about it."

"What's happened?" the bosun asked him.

"Lookout's spotted a sub," Dutch said. "The way we're swinging around they must have thrown a torpedo at us." The bosun looked — the ship was careening rapidly to starboard. He saw something else — a

feathery wake that got longer and longer. "I'll say they threw a torpedo at us," said the bosun, "Here it comes now." Closer and closer came that feather closing the gap of water between itself and the ship. Would it ever stop? Hearts beat faster, pulses pounded. There — it slowed down — now it seemed to stop altogether. The torpedo hadn't really stopped — the swinging ship made it seem that way. Before, when the torpedo had been headed for the side of the ship the crew could see the feather grow. Now that the ship had the torpedo almost dead ahead it seemed as if the deadly missile had stopped. It was one point off the starboard bow. It would miss!

It did miss — by a scant twenty yards. It went by the starboard side harmlessly and a great sigh rose up from the crew.

The gun crew swung into action. It had taken time to remove the tarpaulin covering off the forward three inch gun.

"Boom" sounded the gun, — its noise was deafening. A sudden hot gust of wind hit the crew. The ship shivered under the shock. "Boom" the gun repeated, "Boom" and again. The din was terrific.

"Here comes another!" shouted Dutch above the din. The bosun looked. This time the feather was streaking towards the starboard bow at an angle, instead of dead ahead.

#### A close call

Up on the bridge, the captain slammed the telegraph to "Stop." The engine room had barely answered when the captain put the indicator "Full Speed Astern." The engine room again answered promptly, but it seemed ages before the ship went astern. Precious seconds slipped by while the *Georgia Belle's* powerful screw churned the water in a foaming, boiling mass as the ship recovered from the momentum of heaving way ahead to go exactly opposite. At last she answered. Slowly at first, she lumbered astern — then rapidly gained speed. Just in time. The deadly torpedo crossed the bow by ten feet and sped on. That was too close!

The tension the skipper was under snapped. He was boiling. "I'm going to ram that yellow son of heaven right out of the water!" He rammied the telegraph "Full Speed Ahead." The third mate said, "Captain, our cargo will blow us all to hell if you ram that sub."

"And if I don't, he'll blow us up — so what's the difference? There's a chance that the forepeak will take all the shock. Our cargo don't have warheads, and ought to stand it. Maybe we'll come out all right. Got to chance it." The captain turned to Nolan at the wheel. "Give her right rudder, quartermaster. Easy."

"Right rudder — easy," repeated Nolan and turned the wheel about three spokes to the right. The captain peered ahead. His keen eyes sought out the slim almost invisible periscope. It was about three points on the starboard bow. The three inch forward still threw shells at it but that

periscope was an impossible target and the shells skipped by it, as flat stones do on the surface of the water, and then exploded harmlessly well out of range. The shells served one purpose — that was to keep the sub under the surface. The only way to get rid of that sub was to ram it — or force her to sound.

The skipper gauged the distance between the *Georgia Belle* and the submarine. "Midship your helm!" he ordered. Once again he was as cool as though he were piloting the ship along coastal waters.

"Midship," answered Nolan.

"Steady — steady as she goes," said the captain.

"Steady as she goes!"

The ship was in a direct line with the sub now and she ate up the expanse of water between it and the sub as she ploughed forward. The Jap saw her intention — started to veer away. Instead of showing his stern the Jap chose to stay and fight it out. That was his mistake.

In mathematics, the problem concerning a circle is that the circumference is three times the diameter. The Jap sub was making the circle around the *Georgia Belle* while the *Georgia Belle* was travelling the diameter — perhaps a little more than the diameter for she had to turn very slightly to keep her bow pointed at the sub. The Jap had to go three times as fast as the *Georgia Belle* to make the same distance as the *Georgia Belle* did, to stay out of her way. He couldn't do it and the breach of water between ship and sub rapidly narrowed. Relentlessly the *Georgia Belle* ploughed on aiming her thousands of tons of steel at the Jap. The Jap got frantic. Hastily he threw a torpedo — then another. But the *Georgia Belle's* bow was too small a target. Both missed.

The Jap saw he was in a spot. He began to sound. The periscope sank lower and lower — then disappeared beneath the water. But it was too late. The *Georgia Belle* was on her. She bumped and lurched a bit as her bow rammied the invisible sub. There wasn't much to the collision — the water cushioned most of the shock. But the sub was done in. The spot where it submerged became very agitated. Great bubbles boiled the water — a large patch of oil slick came up and some debris. A few minutes later there was a muffled underwater explosion and that was all. The *Georgia Belle* circled and came back for survivors but there were none. One body came up momentarily. Blood was pouring from the dead Jap's nose and mouth. He sank almost immediately leaving red streamers of blood behind. "Lungs burst," said the captain.

Up on the boat deck — the bosun suddenly let out a whoop, startling the intent seamen who were watching the fight.

"Look!" he shouted so loud that it demanded immediate attention. The crew tore their hypnotized gaze off the spot that marked the Jap's grave. The bosun was



pointing at six little furry bundles squirming around Victoria. In the heat of the battle, Vickie had delivered. The bosun had been oblivious to anything else. "I told you guys, she'd do it!" he chortled. "I knew she would!"

A little later the Chief Engineer had reported no serious damage to the ship's bow. The deep tanks showed two more feet of water, and the *Georgia Belle* went down by the head a bit, which made steering a little difficult — but that was all. She'd get her bow plates repaired in Noumea — they had floating dry docks there.

Nolan came into the messroom. Tiny was paying the bosun five dollars on the bet he'd lost. Nolan waited and when Tiny finished he said, "Here's your dough, bos," handing the bosun a sheaf of bills that had been carefully counted. The bosun took the money and started counting it. He noticed that Nolan was actually happy and he looked at him with surprise. Nolan saw the look and laughed. "Bosun" he said, "you've got a wonderful cat."

"Mr. Nolan," the bosun asked in surprise, "are you feeling all right?" Nolan laughed again and the bosun eyed him suspiciously.

"You sure you're all right? That enemy attack didn't do something to you?" he asked anxiously.

Nolan got serious. "Well — yes bos — it did in a way."

"I knew it!" interrupted the bosun. "Grab him boys, before he gets violent." He moved towards Nolan swiftly, with outstretched hands and enveloped him tightly in a bear hug. Nolan laughed helplessly, "Hold on a minute, bos, I ain't nuts! Wait a minute." The bosun released him, still eyeing him with suspicion.

"I take back what I said about cats," began Nolan. "They are good luck."

"You just lost fifty bucks—" said the bosun.

"Yeah. I know. But if it hadn't been for

Vickie I'd have lost my life — and so would all of us. So what's fifty bucks?"

"Go ahead — spin the yarn," interrupted the bosun impatiently.

"I was at the wheel when the Jap attacked," began Nolan. "Just before the lookout reported seeing the periscope the old man came into the wheelhouse. He walked back and forth in front of me. I could see he had something on his mind, but I paid attention to the compass. He stopped in front of me and said, 'Quartermaster, what do you think that loony bosun wanted me to do?'"

"I can't imagine, sir," I answered him."

"He wants me to take this ship out of this trough so his cat can have her kittens. Can you imagine anything so crazy as that?"

"Can't say that I can sir!" I said. He started walking back and forth again. Then he stopped and said, 'Quartermaster, I may be an old fool but I'm going to change the ship's course. Put her head into the wind and sea!'"

Nolan paused. "The *Georgia Belle* was just answering the helm when the first torpedo was loosed. That torpedo was aimed at our starboard side. If it hadn't been for Victoria causing us to change our course that tinfish would-a hit us midships as sure as I'm standin' here."

The Bosun was grinning. He was too pleased and too proud and too surprised to speak. Suddenly he cocked an ear. Someone was talking in the passageway. "Sh-h-h. Listen!" They all fell silent.

It was the steward talking to the captain.

"But captain," the steward was saying, "we've got chuck and stew meats. That should be good enough for a cat!"

"You give that cat steaks and chicken from now on in, do you hear?" bellowed the skipper. "Nothing's too good for her!"

"Yes, sir!" answered the steward meekly.

## Ship News

### EDUCATED CARGO

The exchange of students and teachers between the United States and Europe on a greatly enlarged scale was made possible this summer through the allocation by the United States Maritime Commission of two ships for the specific purpose of transporting the students and teachers both ways. The vessels used are the converted troop transports *Marine Tiger* and *Marine Jumper*, C-4 type vessels, each capable of carrying 925 passengers. They were operated by United States Lines, Inc., and Moore-McCormack Lines, Inc. The State Department division estimated about 3,500 students and teachers planned to study abroad, many of them in the Scandinavian countries, and that several thousand foreign students studied in the United States.

### TUG GOES TO AID FREIGHTER

HALIFAX, July 13 (CP)—The seagoing tug *Foundation Josephine* steamed out of here early today toward the American Liberty ship *Robert Watchorn*, in distress in the Atlantic off Santa Maria in the Azores. Officials said the big tug would take four or five days to reach the side of the 7,200-ton freighter, which she would tow to New York. The freighter was said to have lost her propeller and broken her mainshaft.

### A SAILOR'S EXISTENCE

As grim and deadly as the sea can be, its terrors have seldom driven a sailor from his trade. What breaks some hearts and discourages others is the relative solitude and confinement a ship enforces and the monotony of endless months away from home and the works of men. A sailor's existence in normal times is compounded of an eventless routine which forms the warp and woof of every sea passage and the brief and usually unsatisfactory excitement of port. To be content in his work, a seafarer must be able to call upon his store of equanimity and patience every day, upon his courage once or twice a lifetime; it is a calling which demands a philosophic resignation to mischance and an ambition which is in no hurry to be served.

Extract from article in *The Saturday Evening Post* of June 28, 1947 entitled "Men at Work — Merchant Marine Officer," by Richard Thruelsen.

### NIEUW AMSTERDAM

The first post-war sailing of the 36,287 gross ton liner *Nieuw Amsterdam*, flagship of the Holland-America Line, has been scheduled for October 29 from Rotterdam to New York, via Southampton and a French port.

The big Netherlands liner, which will be the third largest in operation, was built in Rotterdam in 1938, and was on a cruise to the West Indies and South America with 600 American tourists when Holland was sud-

denly invaded by the Nazi Army on May 10, 1940. Her master, Commodore Johannes J. Bijl, abandoned the trip and docked in New York at the same time that German planes were destroying Rotterdam, on the 14th.

Shortly thereafter, she was turned into a troop transport and served throughout the entire war, with her own master and crew and flying her own national emblem. The vessel traveled more than half a million miles and carried 400,000 troops to all the fighting fronts, without a single direct attack or casualty.

Some readers may recall the beautiful Tulip Show aboard this ship held in 1938 as a benefit for the S. C. I.

### WESTERDAM'S BIRTHDAY

The Holland-America motorliner *Westerdam*, 12,149 gross tons, has just passed her first birthday and, with her sailing from New York to Rotterdam on July 9, entered upon her second year of service.

Still the only new postwar ship sailing out of New York in the transatlantic trade, the *Westerdam* also was the recipient of New York's first postwar harbor welcome on the morning of July 8, 1946.

The *Westerdam* has made ten and a half round trips between Rotterdam and New York and her passenger accommodations were fully booked for all of them. A month later she was joined by her reconditioned prototype, the *Noordam*, and in March this year, the *Veendam* also entered the run.



### TANKER EXPLOSION

A type T-2 tanker owned by Keystone Shipping Co. of Philadelphia and under contract to the Shell Oil Co., exploded at her dock in Wilmington, Calif., with more than half the ship's crew of 42 on board. A half ton piece of the *Markay's* hull was blown more than 1,000 feet over the dock terminal, and windows in a store five miles away were shattered. Total casualties had not been ascertained at this writing.

### SHIP CYLINDER FLOWN HERE

To meet the reconversion deadline of a former Navy attack transport, a three-ton centrifugal tailshaft bronze liner was flown by transport plane from Cleveland to Newark to be installed at a local shipyard. This was the first movement by air of so huge a piece of marine equipment.

The eighteen-foot bronze cylinder was transported by a chartered DC-3 cargo plane. The cylinder was fitted in place in the stern section of the *P. & T. Explorer*, an 8,000-ton passenger-cargo vessel, owned by Pope and Talbot, West Coast ship operators. The vessel will be employed on the West Coast-Orient run.

### WANTED: A GOOD PIANO

A number of our merchant seamen are excellent musicians. And how they do appreciate having a good piano where they can practice while they are in port! The other seamen are appreciative listeners, as reports from our Janet Roper Room show. Classical music appeals to many, and often a whole evening is spent listening to pianists as they go through their repertoire. But we greatly need a good piano in good condition.

We have a piano (baby grand) which is kept for the use of dance orchestras and it is our hope that we can find some generous friend who has an upright or grand piano which they would give us for the use of our fine seamen musicians, to be available to them at all hours. Experience has shown us that pianos in bad condition are too expensive to move and to repair, so our plea is urgent — but particular — for a GOOD piano in GOOD condition. For such a one, we will gladly send a truck and a mover. Perhaps your family have grown up and moved away, leaving a fine piano which you personally never touch . . . if so, please call us (Bowling Green 9-2710) or write to our Department of Special Services, 25 South Street, New York 4, N. Y. A great many seamen will appreciate your generosity.

## Book Reviews

### TIDE-RODE

By Adelyn Bushnell

Coward-McCann, 344 pp. \$3.00

Fans of the historical novel will be provided with a pleasant evening by this colorful story of love and adventure in Maine and on the high seas in the 1870's. It is entertaining, light and fast paced, even though the characterizations are shallow, the motivation mechanical, and the plot too complex. Danger, excitement, intrigue, even mutiny cause disaster to all concerned, but through skillful maneuvering, the author is able to manipulate a happy ending.

We meet the family of arrogant Captain Caleb Dow, "tide-rode" by his pride, power and wealth, first in their hometown of Tranquility, Maine, and we follow their fortunes around the world on the Dow ship SOPH-RONIA.

Those who love the sea and those who fear it will find fellow-travellers in this yarn, which follows the usual pattern of the many historical novels of the latter part of the nineteenth century. Louise Noling

### THE BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF

By C. Vann Woodward

Macmillan, \$4.00

On October 24-26, 1944, the greatest naval battle of all time took place. Four Japanese fleets took part against our 3rd Fleet under Admiral Halsey and the 7th Fleet under Vice-Admiral Kincaid. The Japanese evolved their plan knowing that they must keep the Philippines or eventually lose the war and in many ways this was the death struggle of the Imperial Navy. The Japanese had a powerful navy; the battleship Yamato with her 18 inch guns was able to deliver a greater tonnage of explosive steel than any ship in the world. Here for the first time the suicidal Kamikaze Corps were used and it was during this battle that the last of the six carriers which had attacked Pearl Harbor was lost.

Professor Woodward gives some of Admiral Halsey's reports with alternate battle plans considered and the conclusions reached. The magnificent work done by our submariners and the importance of our scouting activities are fully described. Post war investigation of Japan's naval vessels and questioning of Admiral Kurita and other sources available after the war, revealed much which had been unknown to our leaders and makes interesting reading.

I. M. Acheson

### OUR ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE

By Bernice Richmond

Random House, \$2.50

If you find that you want to read a book more than once, that is a test of the way a book is written and what is written into it. The Bernice Richmond books "Winter

Harbor," "Right as Rain," and "Our Island Lighthouse" have the rereading urge for me. Every experience she describes, every scenic beauty she paints, every sound she hears, every character she knows is as clear to me as if I had been there. You don't have to discount one experience she has been through. I know, because I was born on the Maine coast seventy years ago, and know it summer and winter, and the people who live there.

"Our Island Lighthouse" gives you all of these sensations. If you have been to sea, even if only off shore yachting, or if you have lived on the Coast and had strength of mind and body enough to go out on the exposed rocky shore in a gale of wind, and seen the elements at work, then you will appreciate the life that Bunny Richmond lived at her Island Lighthouse, and you will want to read about what she did, and how it was done, and the friends she could depend on to keep their eye on her and the island. Although the friendship might be only the waving of a hat or the flashing of a light, it was an understanding and a dependable friendship.

Buy Bunny's books and you will reread them and loan them and find yourself in a real world of nature and unselfish human beings, from whom you can learn many worthwhile things. W. R. Chamberlain  
"Porthole Pete"

### CALL ME ISHMAEL

By Charles Olson

Reynal & Hitchcock, \$2.50

Students of Herman Melville and those who have read "Moby Dick" will find this careful study of the influence of Shakespeare's plays on the writing of Melville's most famous novel an original and stimulating treatment. In 1841, Melville's reading of the "extraordinary narrative and distressing shipwreck of the whaleship *Essex*, of Nantucket, which was attacked and destroyed by a large sperm whale in the Pacific Ocean, by Owen Chase, of Nantucket, First Mate of *Said Vessel*, 1821" had, as Melville admits "a surprising effect" on him. In 1849, after half completing one version of "Moby Dick," Melville wrote to Richard Henry Dana, "It will be a strange sort of book, I fear; blubber is blubber, you know; tho you may get oil out of it, the poetry runs as hard as sap from a frozen maple tree." And yet, Melville spent another full year rewriting *Moby-Dick* as we now know it. The author of this book gives evidence that in Feb. 1849, Melville bought a set of Shakespeare's plays in Boston and exulted over the edition in "glorious big type." The influence of King Lear on Melville's writing is evident in Ahab's odyssey. This is a strange but compelling book by a Gloucester poet. M. D. C.

## Marine Poetry

### THE GOOD SHIP SO AND SO

Tune: "A-Roving" (Old sea chantey)

'Twas on the good ship "So and So,"  
Heave ho, my lads, heave ho!  
The wind did blow, the ship did crash  
Upon a reef we all did smash,  
We saved the grog and parrot, too,  
And all our crew.

A-sailin', a-sailin',  
Upon a raft a-sailin'.  
The Mate he drank the grog up, too,  
That rum old stew!



The Mate he tried to be the last,  
They seized and tied him fast,  
He was the plumpest of our lot,  
They plunked him in the big stew pot,  
So full of grog for flavorin'  
That Fiji stew.

A-cookin', a-cookin',  
Our shipmate is a-cookin',  
He's cookin' in the cauldron.  
Farewell old stew!

The gluttons of that Fiji tribe  
Refused our sailors' bribe,  
They offered gold and watch and chain,  
But never saw their homes again,  
And ended in the cauldron,  
Soon we were few.

A-bubblin', a-bubblin',  
The stewpots are a-bubblin'  
The seasonin's very salty,  
That rumpot stew!  
Meantime the princess of the Isle  
With all her charms and guile  
She tried to woo me for her own  
And offered me her Fiji throne  
But to my sweetheart I was true,  
The coop I flew.

A-runnin', a-runnin',  
This sailor was a-runnin',  
I ran away onto a raft  
And skipped the stew.

By M. D. CANDEE



M. Kozach

We landed on a Fiji isle  
The natives with a smile  
Led all of us upon the sand  
We sailors did not understand  
The fate in store upon that shore  
For all our crew.

A-squawkin', a-squawkin',  
Our parrot was a-squawkin',  
Off his skin his feathers flew  
His days were through.

### SAILOR'S CHOICE

Up jumps the devil, my own familiar devil,  
And I says to him, says I,  
"I'm sick to death of the sea-winds,  
The foam and the lowering sky.  
Where can I find a haven,  
A place where all is calm?  
Where is that snug harbor  
Of ease and rest and balm?"  
"Go to hell," replies the devil;  
"That's just the place for you.  
There you can spend eternity  
With nothing at all to do.

But then you'll pine for the sea-winds,  
You'll long for the cloud-wracked sky.  
Better up your hook with the tide, mate;  
It'll be too late when you die."  
So I weigh my hook and I cross the bar  
And I'm out on the rollicking blue;  
The sight and sound and taste and smell  
Of the sea come seeping through.  
The wavelets chuckle, and the tall ones roar,  
The spindrift mounts to the sky:  
I forget the snug harbor, the haven of ease,  
"Thank God for the devil!" says I.

By THOMAS DUDNEY, Oiler

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The Board of Managers is deeply grieved over the death of its senior Vice-President, Herbert L. Satterlee, who served the cause of merchant seamen so long and so faithfully. Since 1902 he gave unstintingly of his time and talents to help make the INSTITUTE a home where shipmates could meet, and a place where they could find the assistance so often needed and the recreation not possible when at sea. Mr. Satterlee's life-long enthusiasm for ships and the sea was evidenced by his devotion to the cause of merchant seamen and as an officer of the Life Saving Benevolent Association he presented many of its awards to seamen for saving lives at sea. His friendly counsel and loyalty will long be remembered.