

The LOOKOUT

MARCH 1956

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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 suggest 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."

Contributions and bequests to the Institute are exempt from Federal and New York State Tax.



SEAMEN'S
CHURCH
INSTITUTE
of NEW YORK



THE SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK is a shore center for merchant seamen who are between ships in this great port. The largest organization of its kind in the world, the Institute combines the services of a modern hotel with a wide range of educational, medical, religious and recreational facilities needed by a profession that cannot share fully the important advantages of home and community life.

The Institute is partially self-supporting, the nature of its work requiring assistance from the public to provide the personal and social services that distinguish it from a waterfront boarding house and so enable it to fulfill its true purpose: being a home away from home for merchant seamen of all nationalities and religions.

A tribute to the service it has performed during the past century is its growth from a floating chapel in 1844 to the thirteen-story building at 25 South Street known to merchant seamen the world around.



The LOOKOUT

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MARCH, 1956

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SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK
25 South Street, New York 4, N. Y. BOWling Green 9-2710

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REV. RAYMOND S. HALL, D.D.
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Secretary and Treasurer

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Editor

FAYE HAMMEL
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THE COVER: These raw wintry days there's much to be said for the life of a sailor. This photo of the MSTs Henry Gibbins was made in San Juan Harbor, Puerto Rico, by Tad Sadowski, an ordinary seaman who gives his views on seafaring on page 4 of this issue.

Moored at the Erie Basin Terminal in Brooklyn, the S.S. *Steel Recorder* awaits the invasion of the TV cameramen. Before she sailed eastward on a round-the-world voyage, she gave the public a look at cargo loading and unloading operations on the CBS-TV public service program, "Let's Take A Trip."



Off Again, On Again

TV WATCHES CARGO ON THE MOVE

LADEN with busses for pilgrims to Mecca and Post Toasties for the youngsters of the Far East, Isthmian Line's S.S. *Steel Recorder* steamed out of New York harbor one Tuesday last month. In her four days in port, work had gone on continuously on board the big ship: she had been stored and fueled; voyage repairs had been made; 12 passengers who had been round-the-world on the 124-day voyage had disembarked. Most complicated of all, some 1,000 tons of cargo, ranging from Hawaiian pineapples to brightly colored

straw Pandan hats from Indonesia, soon to grace the heads of horses in New Orleans, had been unloaded in favor of 2,500 tons of new cargo. The general public got an unusual chance to take a look at the loading and unloading operation on a nationwide CBS television production, "Let's Take A Trip," on the second day the ship was in port. They saw a capsule view of the kind of work that goes on every day without fuss and flourish in the harbor of New York and every other great harbor in the world to keep

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Down She Goes! Headed for the hold of the *Steel Recorder* is this bright red American auto which will go ashore in Katachi.

Isthmian Steamship photo

up the vital flow of commerce.

Through the eye of the camera, the audience went down into the hold of the ship. Captain Frank Coleman, master of the *Steel Recorder*, pointed out that the hold was divided into three sections: the shelter deck, the 'tween deck and the lower hold. Where each individual item goes depends on two things; its size and weight, and its destination. Both factors are of equal importance, and juggling them so that the ship is properly balanced and so that cargo can be readily unloaded in every port, calls for a master-hand at the controls. Sonny Fox, the man who "took the trip" for CBS, compared loading a ship to filling a shopping bag at the local supermarket. "Canned goods and bottles go at the bottom, then the light things, like eggs and light bulbs, on top." Right in principle, agreed Captain Coleman.

The ship is loaded and unloaded by longshoremen who, Captain Coleman explained, got their names in sailing-ship days. Since cargoes were usually small, crews used to unload the ship themselves

with the help of anyone they could round up who lived "along the shore." The inheritors of the title who were working the *Steel Recorder* that day were men from "Lenny's Gang." Lenny, explained the Captain, was the name of the hatch boss from whom the gang takes its name. The 23 men in each gang are divided up into three groups: hold men, dock men and deck men.

The longshoremen work in shifts, and on this particular job, the shifts went on around-the-clock. The 24-hour day is not unusual; a ship has a definite time schedule to meet, and work goes on until it is done. Queried by Sonny Fox as to whether ships worked on Saturdays and Sundays (the program was on Sunday morning), Captain Coleman quipped, "They certainly do. In fact, SS before the name of a vessel really means Saturday and Sunday. There's less interruption to the work then." The Captain explained that while most of the crew were probably home with their families or out seeing the sights of the big city, a few officers, and of course, the longshoremen, were always on hand

to keep things moving on schedule.

More details on loading were explained by the pier superintendent, Captain George Kozel. "The main characteristic of a freighter," he pointed out, "is its booms." Most booms on a freighter can handle about five tons of cargo at a time; a few larger ones on the *Recorder* take up to ten tons; the biggest one handles 30 tons. They are controlled by winches, which are driven by electric power. "In the case of a huge piece of equipment," said Captain Kozel, "we have to use a floating crane." The TV audience got a chance to watch just such an operation a few minutes later as a part of the first cement plant to be built in Surabaya, Indonesia, was hoisted aboard. The gigantic piece of machinery weighed 45 tons. A floating crane from Merritt-Chapman & Scott eased it into the hold as gently as if it were a just-out-of-the-oven cake. "We have to handle these things carefully," explained the Captain, "because they may have delicate machinery inside."

At the other extreme of the weight scale, light bulbs, X-ray supplies and the aforementioned Post Toasties also went aboard. One of the high moments of the show came when an auto bound for Karachi gracefully made the 3-D trip into the hold. Uncrated, the bright red Buick was cradled in a sling fashioned of cables and steel rods that cupped its wheels. Longshoremen of the "winch gang" guided the winch operator by hand signals, and the automobile swept aboard as smoothly as if it had been a child's toy car. Working the winch is a complicated operation requiring teamwork, one longshoreman told the TV reporter. "Me and my buddy, we work together. But it take long time before we understand each other's signals. Maybe two, three months, before we get to be real good team."

Some of the last items to be taken aboard a ship are the food supplies for crew and passengers. The *Recorder* loaded all the provisions needed for a four-month journey and she left New York with about 60,000 pounds of meat and vegetables, 15,000 eggs and 12,000 pounds of sugar, to mention only a few of the items.

From New York, she headed across the Atlantic through the Suez Canal to the Middle and Far East, and round-the-globe back to the States via Panama. While the ship stops to load and unload cargo in Beirut, Alexandria, Akaba, Jeddah, Karachi, Belawan, Penang, Port Swettenham, Singapore, Djakarta, Semarang, Surabaya, Manila, Hawaii and the coastal ports of the United States, passengers and crewmen get quite a bit of sightseeing done. Incidentally, for passengers, it's one of the most inexpensive ways on record to get pleasantly around the world, an average of \$10.00 per day per passenger.

TV's visit to the *Steel Recorder* will be remembered by both the cameramen and the longshoremen, each of whom found themselves in strange waters. Working down in the hold in the path of swinging slings, climbing narrow ladders, gave some of the TV technicians the jitters. Looking into the bright face of the TV lens gave some of the longshoremen the jitters, too; others got the giggles (though not, of course, on camera.) Overheard outside the range of the TV mike from one longshoreman to another: "Hey Mac, is my pancake makeup on OK? Today I'm a star!"

— FAYE HAMMEL

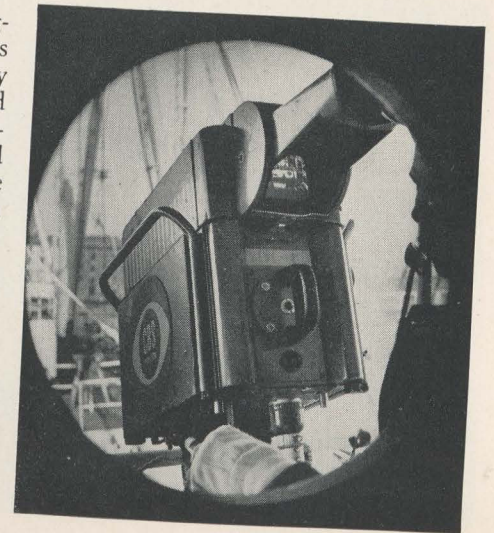




Photo by Cbris Hansen

Seafaring as a Career

By Tad Sadowski

*Third Prize,
AW Club Essay
Contest, 1955*

THIS job of going to sea asks more than relinquishing a third of the day for the material demands of food, clothing and shelter. Work you must, but what shore job offers the challenges, the stimulation that seafaring does? The work is hard and healthy, the rewards many.

The tangible advantages are, perhaps, most accented when the agent distributes the pay-off. The greenest hand and the oldest salt realize their worth in easy-to-translate currency. Advancement to a higher wage scale comes with time and with time comes the practice of the trade that breeds the knowledge and the right to lead and to command. There are no sacred cows in the American merchant marine who hold responsibility by virtue of favoritism. Every hand must know his job. He is entitled and encouraged to look forward to a better berth.

A seaman is aware of the larger role

he plays on the world's stage. His job is the link in the communication and trade between nations. His backyards are the ports of foreign shores and the oceans covering this globe are his tracks of passage. Historically, the world has shrunk because of the seaman — the Phoenicians in their frail craft, the early ships seeking neighbors, then the men of vision finding new lands, new routes and later bringing other men to explore and settle their discoveries. In times of peace and war the merchant seamen deliver men and cargo. Those who crew the ships today sail with a proud heritage.

Seafaring holds a compensation, a deep one that is within the person to harvest. Ours is an age that has made fantastic technological progress and the machines that produce for us have developed a paradox whereby they think for us. And ours is an age where men sublimating them-

selves to machines loudly proclaim their individuality while, unnoticed, basic values slip away. The seaman has a life close to his work, his fellow men and nature. His daily chores vary, and as the trip progresses, so does the work. As new situations arise he has to meet and solve them. Nowhere in any industry is there the bond of camaraderie that is to be found aboard ship. "Shipmate" is a time-honored term with a connotation that cuts across the boundaries of color, caste and origin by men working and living together. Thomas Mann in *Buddenbrooks* asks: "What . . . men prefer the . . . sea? Those . . . I think who have looked so long and deeply into the complexities of the spirit that they ask of outward things one quality above all: simplicity. . . . When one is worn out with turning one's eyes inward upon the bewildering complexity of the human heart then one finds peace in resting them on the wideness of the sea." With the remembrance of many faced seas, the cool breezes and star-studded nights, the loom of lights on entering port and a lifetime of other impressions he and the sea were partners to, a seaman would probably answer when asked why he chose seafaring as a career, "It gets in your blood."

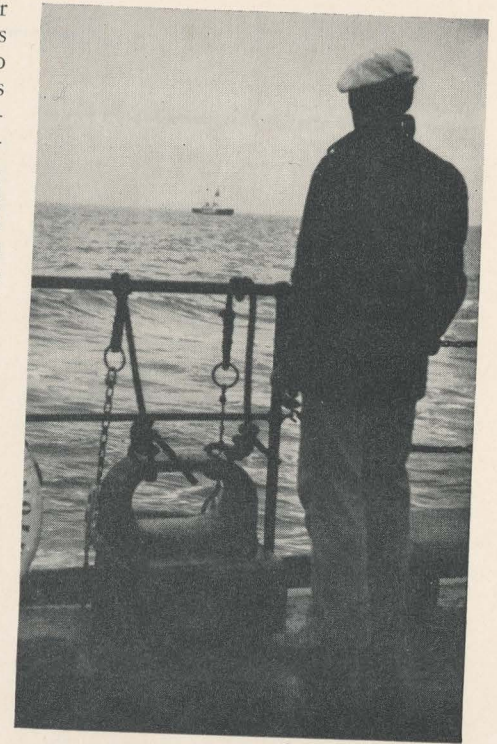


Photo by Tad Sadowski

Above: waiting for the pilot boat.

Below: rust chipping.

Photo by George Pickow from *Three Lions, Inc.*



The Work of Ships

HAR DE HAR HAR

At least three dozen young Indian women had hoped to become the bride of an American merchant seaman when his ship arrived in Calcutta last month, and all of them were disappointed.

Shipmates of Seaman Peter Kamdrot of Kulpmont, Pa., had placed an advertisement in a Calcutta newspaper, stating that Kamdrot was looking for a wife. It was meant to be a practical joke on Kamdrot, who had vexed his shipmates by being quite a practical joker himself.

Young ladies and their chaperones and guardians turned up at the dock to look over the prospective bridegroom. Fortunately, Kamdrot has been married for seven years.

SILENT NIGHT

Traffic in New York harbor, which by and large, sleeps the darkness away, may soon be on the move all night, provided that shipping and port interests can get action in Congress this spring to provide for 24-hour inspection of ships at Quarantine.

At present, ships that anchor in the harbor after 6 p.m. must wait at the Quarantine Station off Rosebank, S. I., until the next morning before Public Health Service inspectors will come aboard to clear their entry into port. Most passenger liners, coming from medically "clean" ports abroad, are cleared by radio on the word of their own doctors, and are not involved in the delay. Freighters are; in 1954, approximately 43.4% of the freighters coming into the port were held up. The cost to the shipping companies runs into millions each year.

Although the Government bears the expense of round-the-clock health inspec-

tion for airliners, it has continually frustrated the efforts of the marine industry to obtain such service at the industry's own expense. Last year, President Eisenhower killed H.R. 6253, which would have cleared the way for the 24-hour service, on the ground that it would have given quarantine inspectors excessive overtime and premium pay.

The shipping industry is trying again for legislation. Meanwhile, vessel operators run a risk in hiring pier labor; 24 hours worth of ship tonnage is clogged into harbor channels in 12 hours; tugboats are idle at night and are rushed during the day. And still the ships sit.

Captain C. E. Umstead

At the age of 48, Captain Charles E. Umstead, principal of the Institute's Merchant Marine School, died unexpectedly of a heart ailment at the Institute on March 13. His death is regretted by his fellow staff members and by the thousands of men all over the world who came to know him as a sailor and as a teacher of his trade.

Prior to joining the staff of the Merchant Marine School in 1945, Captain Umstead had commanded a training vessel for the United States Maritime Service in the early stages of World War II, helping to train officers and men for the wartime fleet. In 1942 he began sailing as a first mate on Army Transport Service vessels carrying troops to Africa and the Mediterranean area. Following a heart attack suffered when his vessel was under fire at Bizerte, Tunisia, Captain Umstead was retired from further sea duty and he served as a marine inspector for the Army Transport Service until the close of World War II, when he came to the Institute's

Marine School as an instructor in the Deck Department. He became principal in January, 1946.

Captain Umstead, born to a long family tradition of seafaring, was raised in Philadelphia and Norfolk. During his early years, Captain Umstead spent his summer vacations sailing on the ships which his father commanded. When he was sixteen, his father died and Captain Umstead went to sea permanently to help support his mother and two sisters.

He leaves his wife, Emma Virginia Umstead, now registrar at the Merchant Marine School; a daughter, Joan Markle of Fairfield, California, and his sisters, Mrs. Margaret Jones of San Diego, California and Mrs. Florence Poole of Norfolk, Virginia.

Funeral services were held at the Institute's Chapel of Our Saviour on March 15th, with the Reverend Dr. Raymond S. Hall officiating. Burial was in Evergreen Cemetery, Brooklyn.

HUSTLING HARBOR

Past and present in New York harbor come to life in a marine exhibit now on display at the Museum of the City of New York, "Hustling Harbor of New York."

Of special interest are a diorama of the harbor as it looked in 1524 to Giovanni de Verrezanno, who discovered the Hudson River and Manhattan Island some 85 years before the voyage of Henry Hudson and the *Half Moon*; an actual Coast Guard harbor buoy which weighs 1729 pounds and stands eleven feet high, and scale models of various types of harbor craft — barges, fireboats, salvage derricks, towing tugs, and Coast Guard cutters.

Prints, paintings, charts and photographs round out the exhibition.

TO THE BOATS, MEN

Seamen will once again take to the lifeboats to vie for the glory of ship and country when the 1956 international seamen's lifeboat races get under way on May 30. The International Seamen's Recreation Council, which sponsors the annual contest, announces that entry in the two-mile race to be held in the Narrows, is open to crews of merchant vessels of all flags.

The Council is a voluntary group organized to promote athletic events among merchant seamen in the port of New York. During 1955, close to 7,000 seamen from 400 ships, representing 14 nations, took part in its 200 soccer games, cricket events, bicycling, track and field events, swimming competitions, lifeboat races, fencing and table-tennis tournaments. In addition, 1955 was the first year for the baseball world series of the maritime world, with teams from 13 American ships qualifying in games played in various foreign ports.

NOT ROYALTY LESS

Some 300 cadets at the U. S. Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point were sadly disappointed last month when Prince Ranier of Monaco turned down their invitation to visit the school. The reason: not that they loved royalty less, but vacations more. Had the Prince, a reigning monarch, consented to pay a visit, the demerits the cadets had accumulated during the last semester would have been automatically forgiven. Instead, proving that the days of royal pardon are all but dead, the demerits will have to be worked off, in the usual way, during vacation time.



New York waterfront, 1958: The North River docks, from Canal to Christopher streets will look like this in 1958, when Holland-America Line moves to New York City.

Score One for New York

HOLLAND-AMERICA Line, a resident of Hoboken, New Jersey for some 66 years, is going to move across the Hudson to Manhattan sometime in 1958. The Dutch steamship company has agreed to transfer its entire cargo and passenger operation from the Jersey side of the river to New York City and to rent a streamlined \$16,000,000 terminal to be built with municipal funds.

The terminal, to be located at the foot of West Houston Street, close to both the Holland and Lincoln tunnels, will cost the line some \$1,000,000 a year in rent.

Holland-America's move to New York will be a tremendous boost to the economy of the City, it was pointed out by Mayor Robert Wagner and Commissioner of Marine and Aviation Vincent A. G. O'Connor, who engineered the transaction. The new terminal will bring the City an annual payroll of more than \$2,000,000; the value of cargo shipped through it will

amount to many millions of dollars yearly. In addition to increasing employment opportunities for hundreds of longshoremen, checkers and supervisory personnel, it should also swell the volume of the City's trucking, insurance, customs brokerage and banking businesses.

Frederick R. Wierdsma, General Manager for North America of Holland-America Line, stated that his company had decided upon the move because facilities in Hoboken were gradually becoming insufficient for the needs of the line. By 1959, Holland-America will have more than a dozen ships moving in and out of its terminal monthly, too many for the New Jersey piers to accommodate. These ships will include the *Statendam*, which should be delivered in 1957, and a new flagship, the *Rotterdam*, which will become a running mate to the *Nieuw Amsterdam* in 1959. Two new freighters are also under construction in Holland.

The proposed terminal is described by Mr. O'Connor as "revolutionary." The first of its kind to be built in this country, the three-level, square-shaped pier has been designed to accommodate and work four passenger and cargo loaded ships at the same time.

A 20-foot-wide apron, extending out from the pier on all three sides facing the water, will make it possible for trucks to drive directly on to the apron from the street to load or unload exceptionally heavy pieces of cargo.

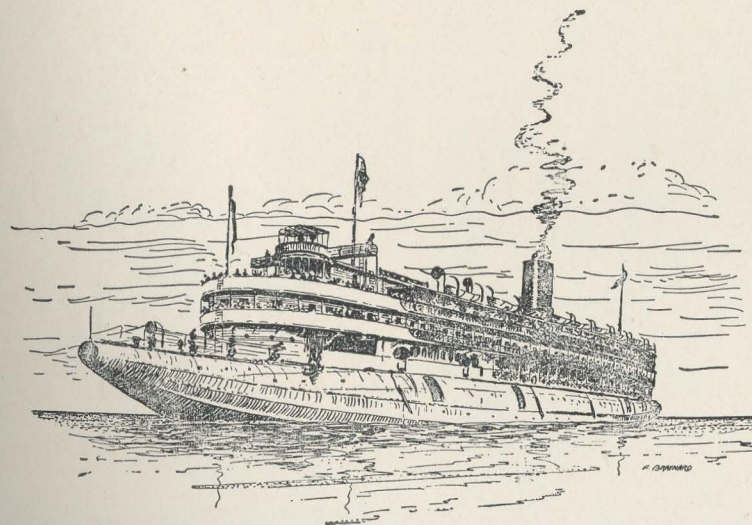
Passengers will be able to avoid the usually hectic frenzy associated with getting to and from most piers. The upper deck of the new terminal will be devoted entirely to their use, with ample space provided for taxicabs and private cars to

roll right to the side of the ship.

On the main, or cargo deck, there will be modern truck berths for the simultaneous loading and unloading of 125 trucks backed up against the tailgate-high cargo-handling platform running around three sides of the terminal. At no time will there be any cross traffic between trucks, cargo handling vehicles and men on the pier, as there so often is today, said Mr. O'Connor.

The roof of the terminal should provide a boon to downtown office workers. It will have a parking space for approximately 1,000 automobiles.

This type of terminal, said O'Connor, will probably become a model for similar projects here in New York City and elsewhere in the United States.



The **CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS**, said to have carried more passengers in her 44 years than any other liner on the Great Lakes, according to the American Merchant Marine Institute. Built in 1892 she was the best known of the "whaleback" type. This unusual design was intended to offer minimum resistance to wind and sea. Difficulties in unloading cargo and size limitations were serious handicaps, however, and the style was not long popular. Great Lakes shipping is an important part of our merchant marine. High construction costs are making it virtually impossible for private shipping to build new ships for passenger or freight services. Without new ships the American Merchant Marine can not long perform its service to our peacetime economy or serve as our "fourth arm" in war.



Below Deck

Carpenter, secretary, storekeeper, locksmith, painter, cook, seamstress, engineer — here are a few of the many people from many trades who team up in behalf of the sailor at 25 South Street.

These are people who work behind the scenes to help maintain this large shore center needed by seamen between ships in New York, just as the sailor himself works beyond the horizon in starting the great cycle of goods and services that are the life of this port.

Book Watch



A SAILOR'S LIFE

Jan de Hartog

Harper & Brothers, New York, \$3.00

Jan de Hartog, a Dutch seaman-turned-author (*The Lost Sea, The Distant Shore*), once received a letter from a German lad who had read one of his books and determined then and there, in spite of the protests of his parents, to go to sea. In view of de Hartog's responsibility for his decision, the boy requested some advice about what a young sailor should know before leaving home for his first voyage. De Hartog pondered upon a reply and found his musings growing into *A Sailor's Life*. It is a delicious pot-pourri, not only of friendly tips for the young seaman, but of wise and witty reflections on the author's own life spent around ships and sailing men.

De Hartog's prose is as crisp as the salt sea air, and he has something interesting to say on just about every aspect of life that involves the sailor; bosuns and captains, sweethearts and mothers, sea cooks and cats, how a retired sea captain should write letters to the editor and why he should not grow roses. His comments are a mixture of urbane humor and sage perception. Here are some examples. Advice to parents: "Parents who instinctively feel that to become a sailor is as bad as getting into debt or marrying one's aunt should realize that life at sea is about the sanest life a man can lead under present-day circumstances. If a boy wants to go to sea, let him, for if you don't, he will be a stranger at your table."

On captains: "The loneliest man at sea is not the keeper of the Eddystone light-

house but the captain of a transatlantic liner." On the danger of cabin boys being corrupted by rough company in the fo'c'sle: "The presence of a child turns any crew into a Father's Union." On passengers: "... a crowd of normal individuals who, when setting foot on a gangway, go quite out of their minds... they all share the unspoken wish that the world they left behind may be blown sky-high in their absence."

De Hartog holds no brief for the glamorous old days of the sailing ship: "I sailed under canvas as a boy and in my memory the stalwart salts with the hearts of oak were moronic bipeds dangling in the branches of artificial trees in constant peril of their lives... old sailors' regrets for the silhouette of the square-rigged ship are tinged with the widower's sorrow, who married a saint in retrospect." On the possibility of a ship's successfully carrying a herd of cattle, he writes: "A farmer is a farmer and a sailor is a sailor, and God help you when the twain shall meet." And again, on the value of shore leaves in foreign ports: "The sailor abroad looks for familiar things in the belief that he is looking for adventure... he needs a first leave to make the ship his home."

ALSO OF INTEREST:

Ship Ashore! A Record of Maritime Disasters off Montauk and Eastern Long Island, 1640-1955, Jeannette Rattray, Coward-McCann, New York, \$5.00, exciting tales, complete with pirates, buried treasure and slave ships, of shipwrecks off New York's salt-water coast.

SYMPHONY

Bass viol and drum in sea-crescendo surge to a wave-swept shore in triumph, then recede across these purling waves.

Sunset burns to blue-point ember stippled burnished gold, bright winged arrows tipped with fire burn on ocean's breast.

Violins sob in reeds of winds forest-woven fugues, fireglow melts to velvet shadow, surrenders to the night.

A birdnote flutes lonely shore. Sea, like a dreaming meadow, blends with tender imagery finale of the night.

Pomp and pageantry subside — gloria to silence — overhead an evening star takes a nocturnal bow.

Adelaide Long Lawson

