GheLOOKOUT

MAY 1954 SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE of NEW YORK



The Seamen's Church Institute of New York is a shore home 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 the 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.



VOL. XLV

MAY, 1954

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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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THE COVER: The bow of the S.S. United States, symbol of America's highest merchant marine achievement in a post-war era that has seen our overall fleet dwindle and grow obsolete. See Raymond Moley's article on Page 11.

The Lookout

VOL. XLV May, 1954 No. 5



N.Y. Fire Department Photo

The Fireboats

THE pluming jets of water shot skyward by a New York fireboat heralding the maiden voyage of an ocean liner are a familiar sight in the harbor; indeed, most citizens seem to believe the fireboats' main job is to provide this shimmering spectacle for the edification of outlanders and the satisfaction of New Yorkers. Some even suspect that the Fire Department slips a little colored dye into the pumps for good measure. Actually, the sun's rays glittering on the spraying, oil-slicked salt water creates the rainbow hue. And actually, this bit of huckstering is performed at the behest of the Department of Commerce only about twentyfive times a year, by a fireboat that puts out a scant mile from its pier-side berth in the Battery.

Duty assumes many strange guises for

New York's seagoing firemen, who, like the knights of yore, know not whether a fiery dragon or a lovely maiden awaits them when they leap to answer a signal of distress. They have hauled unconscious workmen out of sewers and small Hudson River Huck Finns off makeshift rafts. They've fished disgruntled airmen out of water-downed helicopters and hunted wayward ferries, meandering in a fog.

The fires which summon them to battle may be explosive chemical blazes, or stubborn, chewing flames, undermining the lower pilings of a pier. Fireboats can often make a date with a fire, for a specific time and place. They are notified days beforehand when ships, afire miles out to sea, can be expected to arrive at Ambrose Light. Most such ships, regard-

less of destination, are ordered to New York because of the vastly superior quantity and quality of the waterborne firefighting equipment.

Fireboats always slug it out toe to toe, literally tying themselves to the burning ship or pier to hold their position while all engine power is used to operate their great sucking pumps. The sea water that surges upward and fore and aft in a hollowed tunnel in the boat's bottom is sucked up and forced out the manually operated monitors by centrifugal pumps, if need be, on a modern boat at the rate of 20,000 gallons per minute (equal to the combined power of twenty land fire trucks). Water pressure is about 150 pounds, although at least twice that much can be concentrated in the formidable bow pipe. Pressures up to 350 pounds convert streams of water into lethal weapons capable of blasting through brick walls. A fire-doomed grain elevator was once knocked apart by carefully aimed and concentrated water "artillery." With the aid of a monitor mounted on an iron mast, a fireboat in a facetious mood could clear the uppermost reaches of the George Washington Bridge with a stream of water.

Unlike the land engines, fireboats do not have the right-of-way in the sea lanes. But once, during the war, harborcraft gladly surrendered the lion's share of the Battery and Narrows' waters to the scrappy fire fighters. The dragon waiting at the other end of that multiple alarm was a burning, fully loaded munitions ship at a Caven Point pier. Shoreside men had given up the battle and dashed for cover. Beyond the pier was a huge munitions dump and Bayonne to the south and Jersey City to the north. The fireboats closed in, secured tow ropes and eased the smoking, crackling vessel away from her pier. Oil drums on her deck exploded and tumbled into the water, laying a sheet of fiercely burning oil on the surface. Harbor boats scattered like a flock of chickens on a country road, shrieking and tooting their fright. Out in the deep water, the fireboats surrounded the floating bomb and poured water from every monitor into her open hatches and stacks. Ever so slowly she sank, bubbling and steaming, under the harbor waters. The dictates of wartime security hushed the whole incident. The fireboats wrote out their official reports and returned to their stations to await the next alarm.

Nine boats strategically berthed in Manhattan, Brooklyn and Richmond protect the 540 miles of New York's waterfront. They often help out across the river in Jersey, too, bringing their operational area total to 770 miles. When one boat is called off on a "run" the seaengine at the next station moves to a new position to cover both areas. The boats average about 1200 runs a year. Of these, about 250 are "works" or actual fires and a fair number are sea rescues. The greater percentage of false alarms are "29's," turned in by conscientious citizens who pull a firebox located on a pier, thereby summoning a fireboat as well as the local truck company. Department headquarters radios the boat to turn back when the land company can handle the fire alone.

The Marine Division of the Fire Department is 444 men strong. Each fireboat company is assigned enough men to operate at full strength around the clock. The crew of a vessel consists of a pilot, fire officers, marine engineers and deckhands. The pilot and the marine engineers are responsible for the engines and the operation of the vessel, and while it is enroute, the pilot is in command. During the actual fire fighting, the vessel is under the command of the fire captain.

All crew members must first pass the basic tests for regular firemen before going on to special marine training.

The pride of the marine division is the *Fire Fighter*, a 132-foot vessel bristling with nine monitors and numerous rail pipe openings as well as half-a-mile of hose that can be carried by the firemen aboard a burning pier or ship. She's powered by two submarine engines purchased from the Navy, and holds a distinguished service record in the Department. The *Fire Fighter* has participated in quelling just about every major waterfront holocaust in the last fourteen years, including the spectacular *Normandie* fire in 1942 and the *El Estero* wartime munitions blaze.

She's had her share of stranger-thanfiction experiences too, and once had to
pull out all the stops and give chase to
a fleeing fire. A series of coal barges had
suddenly erupted into flames and burned
through their mooring lines. When the
Fire Fighter arrived on the scene, the
barges were stampeding downstream,
whirling giddily with the strong, shifting
currents. The Fire Fighter took off after
them, and maneuvering like a cowboy
lassoing a runaway herd, rounded them
up and towed them back to their dock,
where the fires were extinguished.

Certain to win any fire department embarrassing moments contest is the Fire Fighter's unhappy adventure of a few seasons back. Being the glamour girl of the Marine Division, she usually draws the greeting assignments. She was out near the Statue of Liberty one day, blowing her graceful streams of water as part of the welcome accorded a flagbedecked arrival bearing foreign dignitaries and our own official greeters who had met the ship at the Narrows. It was just when the Fire Fighter was the center of awed attention that her stack suddenly belched flame and billows of black acrid smoke climbed upward. A piston had frozen, causing an explosion and fire in the crankcase and the sudden outpouring of half-burned fuel started a stack fire as well. No one was hurt and there was little work for the ambulances that dashed screaming down to the waterfront. The Fire Fighter's crew salvaged their pride by putting out the fire themselves.

On June 15th of this year the John D. McKean, named in honor of a fireman who lost his life in the line of duty, will join the fireboat fleet. The new boat will be equipped with radar and its engines

will not sacrifice propulsion to the operation of the pumps, but perform both functions at the same time. The McKean will have a tremendous advantage in maneuverability over her sister ships. Perhaps she will even best the "getaway" record of 180 seconds now held by the Fire Fighter.

At the alarm, the Fighter roars to life, trembling at her pier as the last few firemen leap aboard and throw off her lines. She lunges forward like a racehorse at the gate, kicking up a frothy wake and fine bubbling spray. She's off — to what? A 29'er or a holocaust? A fifteenminute job or forty-eight solid hours of fire fighting? "Listen," says one of the firemen, "when that gong taps out the signal, you go — that's all, you go!"

- MAE STOKE

Top: The Abram S. Hewitt, the oldest fireboat in service, was built in 1902.

Bottom: In 1948 high tide prevented the fireboats from attacking the heart of this blaze in the supporting pilings beneath the pier. Pier 57 collapsed into the North River and is at present in the process of being rebuilt.

N.Y. Fire Department Photos







Photo by A. W. Spofford

JOSEPH GRADY was tall and slim and quiet — too quiet. His was the empty reserve of a lost and wandering man. He had run away from home when his father died in 1902 and he spent the greater part of his life as a messman and steward on American merchant ships. He lived without a plan, so it really didn't matter when he died. His heart beat for 54 years and then stopped from coronary disease as he slept in a small hotel room on 26th Street, Manhattan.

On that day, January 2, 1942, the police searched him and found seamen's papers and a letter from a sister in England, nothing else. They called the Institute and were told that Grady was known at 25 South Street as an active seaman. The Institute volunteered to bury him.

Following the service an Institute chaplain wrote to the sister whose letter had been found on the dead man. He told of the circumstances of Mr. Grady's death and briefly described the funeral, mentioning the hymns and the solo of the 23rd Psalm. The Committal Service was read in Evergreen Cemetery, Brooklyn, where Mr. Grady went to rest "along with the many other seamen who had made their last port far from home."

But the chaplain's letter came back "addressee unknown," and it was re-

turned to Grady's file, joining the other slim evidence of his life and death. A 1937 Credit Bureau carbon thanked him for repaying his loan of \$25.10. In 1938 the Personal Service Bureau helped him with a letter to the Immigration and Naturalization Service. He had forgotten to sign the photographs submitted with his certificate of registry. In January of 1941 Grady repaid a loan of \$11.20, and in November of the same year he was thanked for the \$6.00 money order squaring his account. The rest of the file related to his death.

For more than a decade an indifferent silence spiralled larger and larger. Then exactly eleven years from the date of the chaplain's letter a nephew of Grady addressed an inquiry to the Institute's Missing Seamen's Bureau, saying "I would be extremely grateful if you can obtain any trace of my uncle." The writer of this inquiry proved to be the son of the woman whose correspondence Grady carried at the time of his death.

Recently, in March of 1954, the chaplain's original letter of consolation was forwarded to the English family, and for those who cared, the personal history of a merchant seaman, one Joseph P. Grady, tall, slim and quiet, came around the full circle. In observance of Maritime Day

THE SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE

of New York

cordially invites you to its

ANNUAL "OPEN HOUSE"

SUNDAY, MAY 23, FROM 12 NOON TO 7:30 P.M.

Featuring:

Our Marine Museum, offering an excellent exhibition which includes 150 ship models, with a special display from the Nautical Research Guild.

"The Cruel Sea," an outstanding film provided through the courtesy of Universal Pictures Company, Inc. Showings at 1:30 and 7:30 P.M. in the auditorium.

Highlights of the Institute's program of service to seamen, tours starting on the 4th floor.

Tea in the Dining Room, 3-5 P.M.

Chapel Service 5:30

Luncheon and dinner will be served 12:00 to 2:00 and 6:15 to 7:30 P.M. (\$1.50 per person). For your advance reservations please call BOwling Green 9-2710.

To reach the Institute, take the Broadway bus or Seventh Avenue subway to South Ferry, the BMT subway to Whitehall Street, or the Lexington Avenue subway to Bowling Green and walk east on South Street. By car, take the East River Drive or the West Side Highway to 25 South Street. Parking space will be available.

BRING YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

The World Ships

POLLUTION PARLEY

Sea pollution and methods of prevention are being discussed in London by thirty participant and eleven observer nations, representing 95% of the world's merchant shipping. The major problem under discussion is that of oil pollution. and some of the recommended solutions under consideration include: the prohibition of the discharge of certain oils into the sea; the provision of facilities for the disposal of tankers' oil residue in oil-loading terminals and ports; the adoption of new tank-washing methods aboard tankers, and requiring of detailed records of oil disposals by all ships using or carrying oil as cargo.

Sir Gilmore Jenkins, permanent secretary to the British Minister of Transport, expressed the hope that the conference would produce a convention on sea pollution that all nations could sign and ratify. He said that Britain has sustained considerable and repeated damage to her coasts from oil pollution and that "thousands and thousands of birds have suffered a lingering death as a result of of being 'oiled up.'"

FUTURE DIM

The Sparrows Point shipyard of the Bethlehem Steel Company completes outstanding work by October of this year and faces the grave possibility of a suspension of operations. Last year, Sparrows Point delivered more ship tonnage than any other shipyard in the world, their 218,860 deadweight tons bettering the Deutsche Werft yard of Hamburg, Germany, by 2,700 tons.

Mr. D. Strohmeier, vice president of the firm, declared that "New business must develop immediately to assure continuity of this yard as an important national defense asset. It was the existence of old line yards, like Sparrows Point, with their reserves of experienced engineers and craftsmen that made it possible for Bethlehem-Fairfield, a war emergency yard, to build 508 Libertys, Victorys and L.S.T.'s in record time."

CHEESE WAKE

Perhaps the best-traveled cheese in the world is the 100 tons of roquefort that the liner *Liberte* toted back and forth across the Atlantic during the recent longshoremen's strike. Five times the dogged *Liberte* and the determined roquefort made the long 3,000 mile voyage together before they finally parted company on a New York pier. The *Liberte*, considerably lighter, tread her skittish, buoyant way out of the harbor, cheeseless for the first time in a month.

WORLD TRADE WEEK

THE week bracketing National Maritime Day (May 22) has been selected again this year for special observances by the New York World Trade Week Committee and its cooperating organizations.

Monday, May 17, will be "Port of Friendship Day," sponsored by the New York City Department of Commerce. Following a parade up Broadway, which will pause at Trinity Churchyard to honor the sarcophagus of Captain James Lawrence ("Don't give up the ship!"), an historical pageant will be presented at City Hall and will include talks by Mayor Wagner, Committee Chairman James S. Carson and others.

"Kings Point Day" on Tuesday will include, in addition to an inspection of

the Academy's officer training facilities, a debate between Kings Point and Princeton on the subject of "Freer Trade."

On Wednesday, Congressman Walter H. Judd of Minnesota will be guest speaker at the World Trade Luncheon held at the Waldorf-Astoria.

A tour of the harbor will be made Thursday by guests of the Port of New York Authority.

At 1 P.M. Friday, May 21, the public is invited to join committee guests at the Seamen's Church Institute in viewing a marine movie montage. This will be followed by a tour of the building, with special emphasis on the Institute's Marine Museum which will present a review of world shipping.

"National Maritime Day," May 22, sponsored by the American Merchant Marine Institute, will feature Kings Point cadets in a parade from Bryant Park, West 42nd Street, up the Avenue of the Americas to Rockefeller Center, where colorful ceremonies will take place in the Lower Plaza. Speakers will include the Hon. Sinclair Weeks, Secretary of Commerce of the United States.

For the details concerning the Institute's "Open House," Sunday, May 23, see page five.

PAGEANT ARTICLE

The June issue of Pageant magazine now on the stands carries an interesting article by Peter Farb on the work of the Missing Seamen's Bureau at the Institute.

The Bureau was founded during World War I to aid in the search for merchant seamen feared lost to the German U-boats. Headed today by Mrs. Shirley Wessel, the Bureau has located a grand total of more than 10,500 seamen.

SHIP NEWS

WNBC, 660 on the radio dial, has instituted a year-round community service of special value to mariners and maritime interests. Every day of the week, WNBC broadcasts at 1:15 P.M. a report on the arrival and departure schedules of ships using the Port of New York. In addition, WNBC offers other news of delays in arrivals and departures, or changes of ports for incoming ships.

SPEAKERS

The Speakers Bureau of the American Merchant Marine Institute has a substantial roster of steamship people available for talks, at no cost, before church groups, fraternal organizations, and community and educational associations. The general topic of "Ships and America" is used for all such engagements.

Requests for speakers should be addressed to the Bureau of Information, American Merchant Marine Institute, 11 Broadway, New York 4, New York.

FRENCH RECOMMENDED

Hailie Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia, not only put out the red carpet and gladhanded some American tourists from the liner *Independence* in late March, but also champagned and caviared them, according to an enthusiastic report from the American Export Lines. In his new royal palace at Addis Ababa, the Emperor dazzled his guests with some gay chatter and sent them off, midst saluting guards, with the admonition that they learn French. "It's such an expressive language," he said.

Secrets of the Sea

By Frank L. Remington

M OST of the world is unexplored! So say the oceanographers, those scientists who study the ocean. According to these researchers, the seas cover some 70% of the earth's surface and little is known about the underwater regions or the strange creatures that inhabit it. Deep in the sea there exists a weird world of eternal cold and darkness, save for the fantastic flashing lights of strange fish. Today, the oceans of the world are gaining in importance, for their potential resources of metals, minerals, and foodstuffs are incalculable.

The oceans contain three times as many living organisms as all the world's land masses. Among them are nightmarish creatures of the deep who must supply their own illumination. Some have brightly-glowing parts that resemble light bulbs. One deep-sea denizen flashes lantern-like lights along its sides. Gliding through the water, it appears like an eerie submarine with glowing portholes. The eyes of another strange-appearing fish are fastened to projections that extend several inches in front of it. The chiasmodon, one of the oddest denizens of the deep, has rubber-like jaws and an expandable stomach that enables it to swallow and digest fish three times larger than itself.

The blue whale, largest of all known marine animals, weighs as much as 294,000 pounds and consumes a ton of food each day. What fantastic creatures live in the utmost ocean depths, no one knows. And because of the terrific underwater pressures there is little hope that this region can ever be explored. There



Each delicate tentacle of the widowed sea anemone is a poisonous barb that seizes and stings to death any smaller creature.

is little doubt, however, that sea-serpents of incredible size actually exist there, and that they occasionally come to the surface. Pieces of tentacles, scores of feet in length, forty feet in circumference, and weighing as much as the largest whales sometimes wash to shore. The unknown monsters to whom these parts belong are frightening to contemplate.

The Scripps Institution of Oceanography at La Jolla, California, is one of the places where scientists study the secrets of the sea. One of the few institutions of its kind in the world, Scripps offers an ideal spot to study the Pacific Ocean. Offshore, there are great underwater canyons, huge beds of seaweed, plenty of deep-sea water, and both rocky and sandy beaches. To explore this area, the institution maintains four research vessels with special equipment for securing samples from the ocean floor and from the water at various levels. Laboratories on deck or below make it possible to conduct oceanographic studies at sea. Special underwater scientific equipment is set up about a mile offshore and is connected by submarine cable to a central recording room ashore.

The laboratories on shore are provided with running sea water, without which it would be impossible to study certain forms of ocean life. A pier, extending one thousand feet into the ocean, provides the means of firsthand information of waters along the shore. For visitors there is a museum and an aquarium, where weird sea animals may be viewed.

A scientist studying the ocean floor faces problems similar to those of examining the ground from an airplane thirteen thousand feet in the air. For thirteen thousand feet is the estimated average depth of the ocean, and at one place near the Philippine Islands the bottom sinks to thirty-four thousand feet. The deepest part of the ocean, therefore, is almost a mile further below sea level than the highest peak of Mount Everest (29,002 feet) is above it.

A few years ago, an expedition headed by Dr. Roger Revelle of Scripps, returned to San Diego after three months of exploring the mid-Pacific. Consisting of two laboratory ships, thirty scientists, and eighty-five crewmen, the expedition announced many important discoveries. A mile beneath the waves between Hawaii and Wake Island, the expedition found evidence of a lost Pacific continent with a thousand-mile-long range of mountains, the peaks of which arise as high as fourteen thousand feet. Dr. H. E. Crampton, a member of the party, estimated the submerged continent might be several thousand miles long and almost twice as wide.

The expedition found bacteria in a state of suspended animation deeply imbedded in the mud on the ocean floor. Nature filed these organisms away millions of years ago. Dr. Revelle estimates they are the oldest living things in the world.

Some of the lower forms of animal life appear more like plants than animals. Among these are the beautifully-colored sea anemones with colors ranging from bright crimson and green to dark blue and purple. These flower-like animals attach themselves to rocks. Although they

are capable of slow, creeping movements to new positions close by, the anemones depend on ocean currents and the waving of their tentacles for longer trips. The tentacles are covered with numerous thread cells with which they capture and paralyze their prey and bring it to their slit-like mouths.

The plankton, microscopic plant and animal life, constitute the chief item of diet for all forms of sea life. Marine animals either eat it themselves or devour other animals which live on it. A single quart of sea water holds hundreds of thousands of plankton organisms. Those animals which cannot go in search of their food eat nothing but plankton. The clam, for instance, has no mouth, but siphons water through its body and devours the plankton it contains. Sponges and sea squirts also live entirely on a plankton diet. In the future, humans may enjoy "planktonburgers."

The ocean supports huge quantities of plant life. Some scientists believe there is enough vegetable matter to support a far greater population than now exists on the earth. As yet, this vast food potential has barely been tapped. Indeed, man now takes only about 1 per cent of

Magnified a million times, some tiny sea organisms wouldn't cover the head of a pin.



what he eats from the sea. There are, for instance, at least seventy types of edible seaweed. Kelp, one of the most abundant, is eaten by Orientals. It can also be processed into paper pulp, insulation material and fertilizer.

There's enough mineral and chemical wealth in the ocean to make every person on earth a billionaire. The Dow Chemical Company estimates that each cubic mile of sea water contains 175 million tons of dissolved chemicals worth five billion dollars. And there are 320 billion cubic miles of ocean water!

A cubic mile of sea water holds suspended gold particles worth 93 million dollars and silver particles worth 8 million dollars—but to extract this fabulous fortune by present processes would cost even more. There are also vast oil fields beneath the ocean. One geologist estimates there are 40 billion barrels of petroleum off the coast of Southern California alone. These riches will be available when man devises economical methods to salvage them.

Oceanographers and industrial researchers, however, do recover many valuable chemicals and useful substances. Fish oils, for instance, contain many vitamins and are used widely for medicinal purposes. These oils are also employed in the manufacture of soap, linoleum, printing ink, and many other products, including substitutes for butter and short-

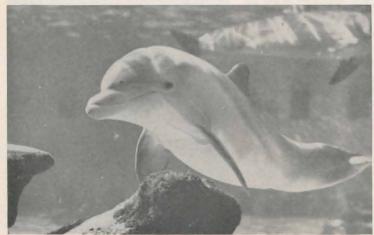
ening. A ton of fish skins makes sixty gallons of glue, and the skins are further used for belts, billfolds, handbags, and shoes.

Possibly there is more salt in the sea than any other substance — a pound of it in every four gallons of water, or enough in all the oceans to cover the entire earth with a layer 112 feet thick. Already commercial companies are extracting salt from sea water. At Newport Harbor, California, the Irvin Salt Works produces 5,000 tons of saline crystals each year.

One of the most important current projects at Scripps is a sardine study. For some years the sardine industry has been badly crippled by the mysterious partial disappearance of this fish from California waters. Scripps' scientists hope to solve this problem and put the industry back on its feet. In the past, many species of deep-sea fish, as well as whales and seals, have become almost extinct through overfishing. After much research, Scripps found the answer. Now fishermen are instructed in the basics of conservation.

Almost daily, oceanographers and scientists are discovering fascinating new secrets of King Neptune's realm. These findings and those to be made in the future will do much to improve man's life on earth.

Courtesy Pen Magazine



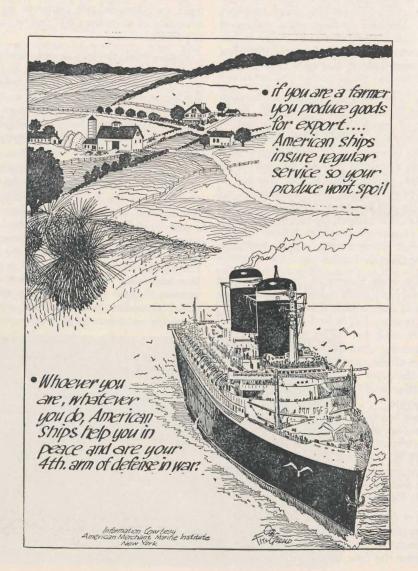
One of the more friendly and familiar sea creatures is the porpoise, who always greets seafarers with an amiable smile and a little frolic.

Our Merchant Marine

By Raymond Moley

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SPRINGTIME ON THE WATERFRONT

Above, the sky is soft and blue, and clouds hang high Like Grecian garlands in celebration of the season.

Liberty strides the green waters, her skirts a-ripple in the young wind,

And lifts her arm in gay and smiling welcome.

The winter's slipped away,

It's springtime on the waterfront.

The foam-tipped waves leap high to kiss the breeze

And fall again in rains of drenching gold.

The white-winged gulls make graceful patterns against the light And then recede into the thin infinity of the far horizon.

Along the shore the buildings lose their massed bulk and blackened solidarity,

And fade into muted silhouettes, remote and soft,

Like a scene left on canvas by a painter

Making children's storybooks.

The pavement cats come forth to stretch and open wide their emerald eyes,

Their feline instinct keened to the quickened, pulsing scene.

Blinking they watch the panorama of the moving ships,

The majestic liners, the bouncing tugs,

Destroyers spiked with boom and gun,

Excursion boats parading, ferry boats painted exclamatory-red,

And by the shore a barge with flowers growing in its windows, atop its roof.

Adventure's in the air, and wanderlust like an invisible siren calls and beckons,

It's springtime on the waterfront.

Ann Blaikie

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LEGACIES TO THE INSTITUTE

You are asked to remember this Institute on 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:

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.