

American "auxiliary" expedition down into the South Seas does not seem likely at the moment.

Yet the United States is augmenting its fleet and strengthening its outposts in the far-flung archipelagos between China and Chile. Our airliners are following the trails blazed by Nantucket whalers some eighty or ninety years ago. They carry passengers and mail to the China coast and to the white dominions "down under," and in the main they are using American possessions for their bases. With most of the South Pacific steamship lines thrown out of business by the prevailing copra slump or by the war, the American clipper planes have become the major link between those remote outposts of empire and the Western World. America's South Pacific islands, inhabited by birds, crabs, rats and turtles, have assumed eminent significance in a Pacific otherwise almost as isolated as it was in the time of Captain Cook.

If you take a pencil and connect

these American islands on your map, you will find that they form a thin, long-drawn-out line linking this continent with white possessions along the fringes of East Asia. Their use as a transpacific bridge is dependent upon the continued possibility of safe passage through French and British Oceania.

In friendly hands, the islands, reefs and atolls of the Southern Seas are the living link between the Western Hemisphere and the British Commonwealth of Nations. In hostile hands they would become a barrier which could not be pierced without tremendous losses in ships, planes, men, and time. The war in Europe has cut the hawsers which held them to the Western World. They are left to drift in a treacherous sea. The South Sea Islanders — white, yellow, brown and black — search the horizon with uneasy eyes. And they remember, with a bitter smile, that in the musical languages native to their beguiling world, there is no future tense; no word, indeed, for tomorrow.

PICTURE

BEREFT of leaves
And thwarted of beauty
The bare trees stand
In penance and duty, —

Brown limbs etching
Across the grey —
A winter scroll
For a winter day.

— GRACE SAYRE

CURIOSITIES OF COLLECTING

BY HARRY SALPETER

ALMOST everybody collects something. Rich man, poor man, beggar man — no one seems to be exempt. The magnate collects Old Masters, precious books, *objets d'art*, miniatures and manuscripts; the pauper, pieces of string or cancelled postmarks. Objects of no value or interest, like streetcar transfers, posters, matchboxes and birds' nests, achieve both when accumulated. Hobby horses, says a German proverb, are more costly than Arab thoroughbreds; but while the rich man may spend a fortune riding his steed, the poor man sometimes guides his hobby horse to the doors of a mansion. The Duveen fortune in art, for example, originated in a collection of Delftware made three generations ago by the wife of a Dutch blacksmith.

The new leisure, even the new unemployment, have justified the hobby. It not only serves as a recreative dividend to a life of activity; it is all the activity many lives have, and lends them new meaning and significance. News-

papers and hobby publications have never before been so full of collecting activities — local and national exhibitions, displays of collections by college students, faculty members, brokers, housewives and physicians. A hobby hour on the air, a Hobby Guild and the American Hobby Federation chart the doings of collectors. When a new stamp is published, lines lengthen before post-office windows everywhere. Half a million dollars' worth of the stamps are sold to collectors the first day. It is estimated that in the United States alone 10,000,000 men, women and children collect stamps, not to mention the 600,000 rare coin fanciers.

But collecting is one of the last refuges of individualism. Among the more fabulous collectors' organizations is the International Cigar Band Society, whose members value some of their shiny bits of paper at more than \$20 apiece. The Blue Moon Club collects match labels. It has members in six countries, and its leader boasts more than 25,000 specimens. At