

**H**AD there been an element of Gallic fancifulness in the temperament of those who selected names for New York's landing-stairs, South Street and West Street,—or, perhaps, had they been able to see from their years into ours,—they certainly would not have so named them; instead they would have made the ship-hedged highways one, given it some such appellation as “The Street of the Nations,” and gone prophets to their graves. Were such a name bestowed now there would be nothing of vainglory in it, because to these two streets come the peoples and the wares of the world. They have called to the dwellers over-seas with promises they knew they could fulfil, and from North, South, East, and West the answer has been borne in the throbbing, headlong liner, in the dawdling “tramp,” the striving, dauntless ship of sails, and the heavy-laden coaster. And it is in these streets one comes to fullest realization that the port of New York is a port of all the world.

Along its wharves one walks from clime to clime, hearing the speech and the slang of many tongues, seeing fellow mortals of every known shade of skin. It is a geographical jumble, a sort of international fair presided over by one goddess—Commerce. Little does it seem to her that only the breadth of a pier should

separate Orient from Occident, the cool northland from the tropics. She has marshalled her forces from the limits of her widespread empire, hastened them along converging ways, and then permitted her glad servant, Man, to give them biding-place. And in New York the glad servant has no alternative save to berth them where he may, for ships are many and berths are few, and Commerce brooks no waiting. From ten to twelve vessels arrive in port, day in, day out, through the year. In one recent month 261 deep-sea craft with tight-stowed holds came to their piers along South and West streets, and the flags they flew were American, British, German, Norwegian, French, Danish, Italian, Dutch, Cuban, Belgian, Spanish, Austrian, and Portuguese. They brought the people and the merchandise of twice a hundred ports, and some, the China ships, had come through a hundred and sixty days of sea to deliver up their chests and bales.

In becoming a port of all the world, New York has only attained its manifest destiny. Mother Nature arranged it all when the waters receded. She planned the great, quiet water-court of the bay, and drew the gates almost together to yield the weary, thankful sailorman a fuller knowledge that his voyage was at an end. Within the gates she gave him generous

sea-room wherein to draw aside from the highway and rest craft and self. Far off his bows she set an island like a rugged hand for man to build a wonder city in its palm. Then Commerce, who had been awaiting the call, went to the gates and summoned her legions. By this time prosaic man had dubbed the gateway The Narrows, and named two fingers of the close-held hand South Street and West Street.

The reason the cosmopolitanism of the port is more appreciable along the water streets is that there it has its beginning; one sees it before its ever-widening ripples are all save obliterated in the turbulence of the city. Whatever comes to the port from foreign shores, be it fish or flesh or good red herring, comes to one or the other of the water-stairs, and although it may be lost as soon as it leaves Bowling Green astern, for a brief space at least it is part of the hurly-burly of the wharves.

But as West and South differ and yet are related, so is there difference and yet relationship between the two cardinal highways. West Street is of this year and last year, South Street is of this year and fifty years ago; and each, after its own fashion, is striving day and night, to the racking cough of donkey-engines and the tramp of endless files of bow-backed, shuffling men, to handle the commerce of the port.

West Street is the haven of the long, swift liners, with their polite passengers and perishable goods. There one strikes hands with the capitals of the Old World.

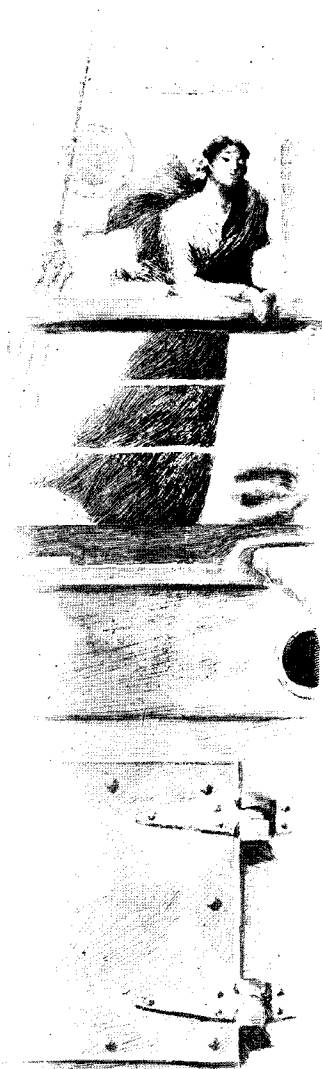
Paris leans eagerly against the rail in frills and flounces, and waves a very small scented handkerchief in a very small tightly gloved hand under the admiring protection of a waved mustache, peg-top trousers, and shoulders of the Farnese Hercules; London stands quite straight in a tailor-made gown and flat boots, and makes indifferent comment upon the row to a stolid, florid companion-piece in tweeds; Berlin, rosy and round, catches sight of Wilhelmina and Heinrich hailing from the pier long before Gottfried has ceased wondering at the towering buildings; Rome surveys the scene through dark homesick eyes, and darts a glance at radiant St. Peters-

burg and marvels at her English. Then they come bustling down the gangplank, sandwiched between innumerable stewards in shell-jackets straining under great loads of multilabelled luggage. New York is waiting for them at the foot of the incline to welcome them as Argonauts—for the Fleece is still seen golden in the West-land—or as home-seekers, and, after the customs ordeal, whirls them away in car and carriage and loses them among the masses of her people. No sooner has the stream of passengers begun pouring down the gangplank than covers are whisked from hoisting-engines, and the stevedore with



STRAINING UNDER LOADS OF BAGGAGE

his whistle takes command. Up from the warm holds comes the cosmopolitan cargo,—bales of rugs from the tedious looms of the East, silks from France, plethoric barrels of German pottery, boxes of English cloths, wines in cask



A BEWITCHING SENORITA

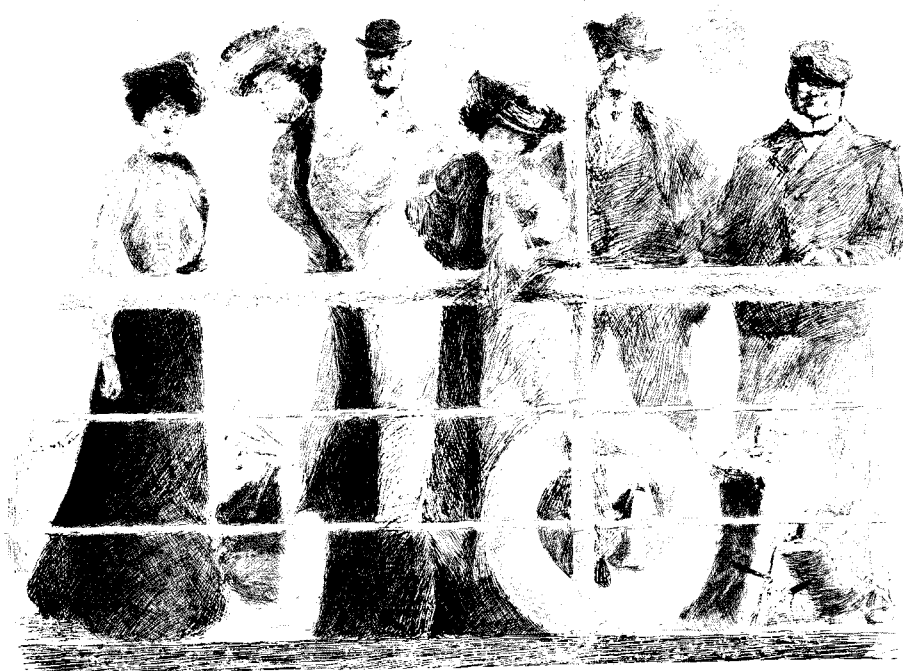
and case, all the wares which competition demands shall reach their destination with the greatest possible despatch. Sailing-ships are slow and wet, and not for such as these, wherefore steam lords it over sail and decrees a new romance of its own.

Close on each hand of the express liners are the river and Sound boats, and a cable-length away the coasters and

the West-Indian and South-American steamers. These last, like the Spanish ships and the fruiterers, are the ones which bring the air of their South ports with them, not only in the scent of their laden decks, but in the figures which crowd them, and talk and talk and smoke and smoke with many gestures and undeniable grace. The fruiterers come in mainly at the southern end of West Street, and the blacks who break out the huge, odorous bunches of green bananas keep up a loud conversation, which seems to be addressed to every one within hearing, since answers come from all directions. The squat, deep-chested black with the straw skull-cap—a hat shorn of its brim—is calling to another in the strange, soft patois of Martinique, and not a dozen feet away a St. Vincent negro shouts down the hatchway with the broadest of broad a's and a cockney disregard for h's. Meanwhile the stevedore is telling the visitor about a man who was bitten by a tarantula in a bunch of bananas that day six weeks ago, and that his arm swelled up as big as his leg;—now, you ask the skipper if that isn't so; sure, it often happens. And after that the visitor watches the men who shoulder the bunches with infinitely more interest.

The lemon-ships are redolent of the warm South. The bulging boxes with their elaborate purple lettering and stencilled figures of impossibly ugly signorinas are often adrip from the crushing of the fruit, and the air about is heavy with the pungent odor. One hears little else save Italian, unless it be a full-mouthed Irish oath at the slowness of some dark-skinned, dumpy man in brown velveteen trousers, who mutters "Si, si!" and "shakes a leg" rather less quickly than before. These cheerful, undersized men can carry prodigious loads from sunrise to nightfall, and then shuffle homeward in their much too large coats and picturesque hats—there are few swaggers of the stage who can wear their wide hats with half the dash of the Italian long-shoreman—chattering for all the world as if they were just going to their labors.

It is when a Spanish ship arrives that color and mirth and music come into the port. There is no need then, for the sake of that iridescent, misapplied thing called "local color," to drag in by the heels



ON THE DECK OF A LONG, SWIFT LINER

such enhancing "props" as "olive-skinned sons of Spain thrumming guitars," and "bewitching señoritas with midnight hair," and the like, because they are there, courting all the euphonious adjectives of verse and as merry as the four-and-twenty black birds. When the Spaniard comes to her pier, the señorita in her marvellous pompadour is likely to be hatless, unless the day be cold, while the señor seems all ashiver at her side. Color is often as conspicuous among the men as among the women, for the men cling to blankets and serapes, save in midsummer. They congregate aft in a noisy crowd while the steamer is being made fast, and chatter and roll cigarettes. The blankets, which they wear in brigand fashion, are bordered with gay colors if they are not already blue or red, and muffle their wearers to the ears. Some of the men have coarse woollen capes which sweep the deck. No one ceases smoking for an instant, and there is a prodigious amount of "borrowing" of lights. The women have eyes for everything—and such eyes!—and many are not quite so slender as they might be; but that is

no fault in Spain—Carmen has not been a slip of a girl these many years!

In voyaging to Spain the Spanish ships set an Irish course; they go first to Havana, gather passengers and cargo, and steam back to New York to fill their holds; then, when all is snug, they sail for their destined port. Two or three days are sometimes required to stow the American goods, and it is during this period that the ships add most to the cosmopolitan character of the port. They become hotels for the time, the women passengers making occasional sallies into the city in the brightest hues their wardrobes afford, evidently bent on demonstrating that Spain acknowledges no such thing as a clash of colors. If South Street, where the Spanish piers are set, were not quite accustomed to what those who navigate above the Fourteenth Street parallel deem extraordinary, these brilliant birds of passage would undoubtedly create a commotion. As it is they attract little attention, because the street is too much occupied to do more than turn its head when the swish of skirts and wake of



Chypre announce the passing beauty. The idlers and the longshoremen who lean against the sunny walls of the warehouses and wait for work see them, of course, and pay them doubtful tribute in ogling and ejaculation, but the tramping crowd of nations on the sidewalk gives small heed. There are too many nations in the world—and in South Street—for that.

In the evening the Spanish ship in port forgets all about New York and becomes a Spanish island, at least between decks; mandolins and guitars are brought out just as if it were in a stage setting, and there are singing and dancing far into the night. With hand on hip and high-tossed head the dancer stamps and sways through the tarantella, ending with a merry half-conscious laugh in the clamor of applause.

"Dance?" the longshoreman said, standing by to make fast a dripping hawser as one of the Spanish ships was being warped alongside her pier. "Say! I've seen 'em dance in there like reg'lar variety-show dancers. A couple of fellers is settin' off to one side with guitars, pattin' their feet for time, an' a girl gets

up and steps into the middle an' does a dance as would knock your eye out. An' say! can't them Spanish fellers just pull a guitar inside out! They keep their heads goin' from side to side and pullin' away till it sounds like a whole brass band. I don't know what they're singin' about, but they cert'nly can sing. There's always three or four of 'em aboard with guitars, an' it seems as if every one of the women can dance. Now, I'll bet you *she* can dance." The man jerked his head in the direction of a young woman who was leaning her elbows on the rail, watching the mooring operations. As we looked up at her she drew back, and although this apparently did not indicate anything save a desire to avoid scrutiny, the longshoreman said, "I told you so," with the evident intention of being heard on the upper deck. The young woman did not show herself again, whether she understood the implied compliment or not; and half an hour later, when the passengers hurried over-side to enjoy a motionless foothold and explore a new city, she was not to be distinguished from a score of others who had very black high-rolled hair. But



WHERE LONGSHOREMEN WAIT FOR WORK

it should be said, in behalf of the long-shoreman, that she was probably one of the dashing figures in the merriment which filled the ship that night, as there were five in the dances who looked amazingly like her.

From Spain to China is a far cry, save in South Street, and there the countries are within the toss of a biscuit. The odor of the raisins, the licorice, the Cadiz casks, and the bales of cork from Seville is mingled across a few narrow piers with the indescribable yet all-describing scent which arises from a China ship. The China ship is also a Japanese ship and an East-Indiaman, as from the Mikado's Empire she ranges along the China coast and southward to Java and Sumatra, thence to Singapore and, if holds be not yet filled, to Colombo. Therefore it is with the wealth of Eastern ports that the ship comes in, and when her hatches are thrown off, there is no doubt that the proof of the China ship is in the smelling.

She has aboard sandalwood, cinnamon and other spices, tea, black-wood ware, hides, and coir matting, and the odor is of each and all. Occasionally about the deck one meets a fore-castle Chinaman, but these are as rare as the curios in the skipper's cabin; what one never fails to see is John the cook, in blue drill blouse and trousers, leaning from the doorway of the galley, stoically uninterested in what

is going on about him. His inner self never appears to be aroused until Li Fow and Charlie Fong come down from Doyers Street to visit him and cheer him with their greetings, which begin and end on the same key.

Farther along the piers is a stocky, low-riding steamer with a cargo of dates from the Persian Gulf, and, a hundred yards away, a ship with a load of currants from Greece. One misses here the noise of hoisting-engines, and sees in-

stead a patient-looking, flea-bitten horse, with a rather less patient driver, toiling full-chested against its harness to raise the cases from the hold. A Belgian bark at an adjoining pier is laden with window-glass and rags for paper-making, a Norwegian barkentine astern of her is giving up a store of wood pulp and matches, and to the southward another bark with a grizzled crew has brought a cargo of mica from Greenland. It is an



ANCIENT SHIP-CHANDLERS CLING TO THE WALL

endless array of shipping, each ship with its distinctive burden from remote shores, and all pouring their treasure of commerce at the feet of the city.

South Street is a street of old-fashioned things, and scores of years look down upon the toiling, teeming highway from high-peaked roofs and dormer-windows. There the ancient ship-chandlers cling to the wall against which Progress has thrust them and speculate upon their chances of existence. In their shops are



IDLERS SUNNING THEMSELVES IN SOUTH STREET

redolent, museumlike collections of marine wares. Huge, many-sheaved, weather-beaten blocks hang from overhead beams like hams in a smoke-house; sidelights and forestay lanterns, some clinging still to the fading distinction of polish, share the dusty eminence, and against the walls countless fathoms of anchor cable, highly suggestive of sausage, trail down into rusty piles on the floor. In the grateful background shadows, modest companies of rope coils and sea-worn sails court rest and quiet behind bulwarks of superannuated deck-fittings. Among the tenantry of the "show" windows are stands of carbines, short-swords, unreliable-looking revolvers, oilskins, and generally a coat of military cut with greenish braid and buttons. The shops are gloomy, mysterious places, equally appropriate for refurbishing four-masters or fitting out Central-American revolutions; their business is mainly with lean men in caps and wrinkled clothes who haggle interminably over prices.

Shoulder to shoulder with the ware-

houses and shipping-offices, and as if leaning against them for support, are the low, fat "hotels" with saloons on the street floor. These are filled with the noise and smoke of garrulous seafarers and wayfarers; big bony men who have not made the harbor for more than a year,—and men without a hailing port, whose only cruising is from bar to bar. Near the corner of Fulton Street are the meeting-places of the skippers, clean wide rooms with a multitude of arm-chairs, where Cap'n Jack and Cap'n Jerry—surnames entirely superfluous—may indulge in cribbage or seven-up, "write home," or read the papers. Across the way—and that means from the Hook to the Battery—are the ships coming, tarrying, going, the liner with three millions of gold in a steel box, the schooner with a deck-load of Georgia pine.

Peoples follow trade, so they crowd to the port. Every day through the iron gateway east of the Barge Office an amazed, confused throng of men, women, and children, alien in tongue and dress, enters upon new life in a new

country. These Argonauts hesitate a moment on the sidewalk, their loneliness full upon them, not realizing that, whatever be their native land, they shall not walk many steps before encountering a countryman; that somewhere in one of the water-front streets a ship is unloading a cargo from their own shores. Camel caravans, donkey trains, sledges, poled dugouts, lumbering river steamers, and breech-clouted bearers are laboring throughout the zones to send their wares to this universal port; liners are gathering their multitude of packages, "tramps" are nosing from harbor to harbor for trade, and sailing-ships, creaking with their cargoes, are staggering under booming canvas to keep alive their old-time glory.

And so the ships of the nations meet

at the piers, some vain of the loads they have brought and braggarts of their zeal, others content to set down an armful and hasten back for more.

Off Liberty Island the "tramps" are gathered, fretting at their cables,—because it is the habit of the "tramp" to tarry no longer in a port than is necessary to unload and load again; up the bay the coaster and the ocean liner are racing with the sun to gain Quarantine, rather envious of the doughty brig ahead which has passed the station and, confessing the inadequacy of sails, taken a line from a tug. From sunrise to sunset the ships come in with their costly gifts, rivals for the favor of an imperial mistress, whose courtiers have hastened hither from the ends of the earth.

## "1685"

BY LAURENCE HOUSMAN

**B**ELOW the hill as I came down,  
Across the flats where the peewits fly,  
I heard the drums through all the town  
Beat for the men that were to die!

Oh, blithely up the morning street  
Looked in with me the early sun,  
Up to the market-square, where feet  
Went marching all like one.

And dark against the high town-hall  
The shadow of the shambles fell;  
And clear beneath its gilded ball  
The town-clock tolled their knell.

Came bleatings from the distant farms,  
But from the market not a cry:  
Though wives with babes upon their arms  
Stared and stood waiting by.

Oh, oft I come, and oft I go,  
And see the roofs against the sky,  
But not the town I used to know  
Where simple hearts beat high.

Now like a wreck each homestead looks  
While round it sunlight falls in flood:  
And all the peewits by the brooks  
Are crying out of wasted blood.