

AS I LIKE IT

BY WILLIAM LYON PHELPS

I CAN hardly write the words fast enough to tell all my readers who love books and stories of the sea to run, not walk, as the Fire Commissioner commands, to the nearest bookshop, and there secure a copy of "Under Sail," by Felix Riesenberg. I had sailed around old Cape Stiff with John Masefield, with Richard Henry Dana, and with other deep-water men; but never did I more keenly enjoy the thrilling experience. There are several reasons for this; the *A. J. Fuller* was a full-rigged ship, kites and all, and thank heaven, had no auxiliary; her captain, Charles M. Nichols, still living, while a disciplinarian, was as square-rigged as his vessel; the bucko mate, Mr. Zerk, still living and operating in Hawaiian waters, was often brutal and cruel, but a consummate master of seamanship; the crew were on the whole thoroughly good fellows; nothing on board was absolutely bad except the food.

The ship left New York December 5, 1897, went round the Horn to Honolulu, and docked in New York again, September, 1898. Felix Riesenberg, eighteen years old, was a foremast hand in the port watch and, while an excellent seaman, happened to have two other qualities: the imagination of a poet, and the ability to write down his experiences in a prose style so vivid that every reader will share them.

This book held me in captivity from beginning to end. It is a masterpiece of narration, description, and characterization. And although I am a landlubber, how thoroughly I understand the ache in the boy's heart when the long voyage was over—an ache deeper and more enduring than any of the thousand aches that visited his young body! I say this book deserves to stand on the same shelf with "Two Years Before the Mast," with "Moby Dick," with "The Nigger of the Narcissus," with "The Wreck of the Grosvenor," with "The Ebb Tide," and with the other classics of the sea. Even

the very form of the book is nautical; she carries a bone in her mouth; for the foreword is written by that accomplished seaman, Captain David W. Bone.

Transportation by steam was an advance in efficiency; but like so many other advances in science, what beauty, what infinite beauty, it destroyed! The one hope for the return of sails to the sea is their cheapness, and with all my heart I hope they will come back. I shall always be thankful that my first voyage to Europe was on a small steamer that carried and used canvas, with a deck so low that in heavy weather—of which we had plenty—we had not only the sensation of being on the sea, but of having the sea on us. One tremendous green comber knocked me clear across the deck, and laid me flat in the lee scuppers.

Recently I asked a man, who had arrived from Europe on one of the frivolous hotels that are now used as ferries, whether there were any rough days. "I haven't the slightest idea," said he; "I never saw the sea from port to port." It appeared that he was on one of the enclosed decks some sixty feet above the water. There is an insulting contrast between the artificiality of the modern floating palace and an element so primitive as the ocean; it is like a dining-car passing through infinite miles of sagebrush.

In reading "Under Sail" I am again filled with admiration for the amazing courage and skill of the old seamen; I think of their unspeakable hardships and miserable wages. How much more work it took to get their A. B. than to win the academic one, and how forlorn their future after they earned it!

Yet the wages of seamen were fixed, like everything else, by supply and demand; from the rational point of view, it would seem incredible that men could be found to undertake such drudgery combined with peril, when they knew in advance what awaited them, including the disgust-

it was imposed on the better grades as an act of protection. Now, however, there is a tendency away from it. I live in Tampa, where we make over 1,500,000 cigars every day. You will find many styles of the better sort coming out now without bands."

H. R. Bygrave, of Boston, writes: "I agree entirely with what you say about their being a rank nuisance. However, I think there is a reason for them. As I remember it, years ago a number of States passed laws requiring all cigars to be sold in the original package. These laws had the claimed effect of preventing fraudulent palming off of dishonest goods. In most instances, of course, where cigars are publicly sold, and where they are bought in large quantities, it is not always feasible to display them in the original box. Some bright lawyer somewhere discovered the theory that by putting a band on each cigar, with the name of the cigar and the trademark, or other insignia of the maker, the band would be the original package. I have never represented any cigar manufacturers, but this is my memory of the history of the introduction of cigar bands. . . . By the way, have you not found that your trouble with the bands has been greater of recent years than when bands were first put on? I have. Damnable as the Germans may be, originally practically all the cigar bands on the better grade of cigars were made in Germany, and they were made with a little tab which you could take in your finger and easily tear off the band without damage to the cigar. Since the Great War, this German industry has disappeared in this country."

I well remember those blessed tabs. I remember also that in Germany before the war one could buy anywhere a cigar for six cents that was superior to any fifteen-cent cigar I ever saw in the land of the free.

Another and more romantic explanation of the origin of the cigar band comes from Doctor W. C. Hovey, of Nokomis, Illinois: "The bands on cigars are an outgrowth of a custom prevalent in Cuba in early days. It was the custom of the Spanish ladies, who smoked cigars, to place brown paper rings around their 'smokes' so that their pretty fingers

might not be stained by coming into contact with the tobacco."

The last word for the present on this subject shall be given to the clergy. The Reverend Lloyd C. Douglas, of Akron, Ohio, whose sermons must sparkle with originality and wit, makes the following interesting contribution:

Pursuant to your appeal, in a recent number of SCRIBNER'S, I dare say there will be many volunteers who, fond enough of the things you write to regret any discomforts you may experience, will point you to certain brands of cigars which, unlike the locusts emulated in the Solomonic saws, go not forth in bands.

It is possible that some self-confessed philanthropist may refer you to the cigar which is known as the J. A., a two-for-a-quarter cigar distinguished for its ungirt loins.

Perchance, one thinks, the price of a garish band, and the labor of gluing the same to the cigar, may be added to the quality of the tobacco.

One thinks a poor thought.

The cryptic name of this cigar, which the hopeful purchaser imagines to be secret symbols for some charmed words never to be spoken above a whisper, and not outside the chapter-house, is revealed so soon as ignition has occurred.

J. A. means Jipped Again.

One of the most poignant sorrows of my life is that I cannot blow rings. I have given this matter serious attention, and had faithful, consistent practice; with the result that by making the most horrible grimaces, I can once out of fifty attempts emit a circle. Yet some of my friends, without looking any worse than usual, belch forth a succession of rings, and then, with astonishing muzzle velocity, shoot another one through the whole row.

"As right through ring and ring runs the djereed
And binds the loose, one bar without a break."

I can pat my stomach and rub my head, I can waggle my ears without moving my eyebrows, but I cannot blow rings.

My remarks on the pleasanter aspects of Soloism and my wish that all trains exhibited the names of those in charge, have aroused echoes. And I am glad to learn that in many parts of our country this excellent custom has already been established. I. C. C. writes from Pasadena:

Every bus driver has his card posted where the occupants can see it. And, as in other public utilities, the directors request the public to inform them, should they receive "unusual courtesy"!

Franklin T. Nevin, of Pittsburgh:

You will be interested and pleased to learn that in the trolley-cars running between Louisville and Shelbyville, Kentucky, the names of conductor and motorman in charge are posted in a conspicuous place for the information of passengers.

Frank L. Long, of Philadelphia:

I would commend to your attention the city of Miami, where the street-cars contain placards announcing the name of the operator.

Several correspondents write me that on the limited trains of the Northern Pacific, Union Pacific, and Great Northern a card is handed to every passenger which gives the name of the conductor, Pullman conductor, and porter.

Finally, good old Jim Borland, who runs a daily column in the Franklin and Oil City *News-Herald*, publishes the following information:

I know Mr. Phelps will be delighted when I inform him such a plan has been in operation for some time past by the Northwestern Electric Company, plying between Meadville, Linesville, and Erie. . . . There is a space boxed off in the end of each car, where the names of the train crew are put in on slides, before the run.

All this is good news, and it is clear that this particular brand of Soloism is beginning to sweep the country.

By the same token, I have received two interesting letters concerning my comments on *Milkmen* and *Milk*. Professor Frank Moore, of the Theological Seminary at Auburn, writes: "You should live in upper New York State, in the wide open spaces where life is life and men are men, where we say neither 'the milk' nor 'the milkman,' 'the post' nor 'the postman,' but 'there's Mr. Prentis,' etc." Does every householder know the name of the individual who delivers the milk?

A "humble remonstrance" comes from a Briton:

As you like it the English have a custom. . . . "That's the milk. That will be the post." But as I like it (and I spent some thirty years of life in the "old country") I can't recollect that we so belittle our milkmen and our postmen.

Is it not that the milkman on ringing your bell calls "Milk!" and the nice man who brings the mail calls "Post!"?

In Scotland the folks say "There's Postie," and "Postie" is a term of affection.

Personally I think people over there esteem the postman and the milkman more than do the people on this side. The difference lies in the phone!

Few English homes have a phone, few American homes lack one. If an American housewife wants an extra pint of cream, she 'phones, and somebody or something at the other end takes the order. In England the housewife goes to the dairy and, as we say, "makes love to the dairyman." She knows him as a real human being, to be cajoled or scolded face to face, not merely as something who dumps milk-bottles on the step, and removes milk-tickets mysteriously.

So that, granted you are correct in your assertion, there seems to me more belittling in the American attitude that would say "that's the postman" but yet would be too busy "hustling" to realize he is a *man* and not merely a carrier of letters. After all as our wise old Shakespeare says: "What's in a name?" It is the meaning behind the name that counts.

Indeed that seems to me to be the biggest difference between Britain and America—they emphasize and stress different things. You are "fussy" over details of nomenclature and we are "fussy" over ingrained ideas. So America remains outside of the League of Nations. They are so busy saying "That's the postman!" Britain says: "I must have a talk with the man who brings my letters," so it's quite possible they say: "That's the post!"

Which would almost seem as if I admitted you right after all.

Sincerely yours,

Oh, well, what's in a name!

Already it would appear that I have accomplished what I set out to do. Those who have read and pondered on my suggestions will I am sure henceforth treat the man who brings the mail more in the spirit than in the letter, and in return for the creamy liquid they will give the milk of human kindness.

Two of my Yale students, somewhat jealous of the favors shown to Browning by the organization of the Fano Club and of the Asolo Club, write me from the grave of Arthur Henry Hallam at Clevedon, Somerset, England:

It gives us great pleasure to cordially invite you to become a charter member of the Clevedon Club. Tennyson seems so far to be without an élite club, so we have decided by this organization to try to raise him to a par with Browning. On to Fano!

WILLIAM M. VAN ANTWERP.
LYONEL H. PUTNAM.

Now it is true that too few pilgrims visit the shrine of Hallam, made famous by Tennyson and so poetically described in "In Memoriam." But anything so accessible can never be a sufficient foundation for an exclusive club. Let me recommend to tourists, however, that they fol-

low the example of these academic pilgrims, and go to see Clevedon, so near is it to Bristol, Bath, and Wells. Furthermore, not only is Clevedon immortal by reason of the parish church containing Hallam's remains, it is also associated with "Henry Esmond" through the beautiful manor house, Clevedon Court, beloved by Henry James.

There is a curious incident connected with Hallam's grave that I have never seen explained. Hallam died September 15, 1833, in Vienna, and his body was brought to Clevedon and buried in the little parish church on January 3, 1834. Although the language of "In Memoriam," published in 1850, would seem to indicate that Tennyson must have attended the funeral (XVIII), another stanza (LXVII) in the same poem seems equally conclusive that he did not, although he wrote the inscription for the tomb.

In the first edition of the great poem, these lines appear:

"And in the chancel like a ghost
Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn."

Now Hallam's inscription is not in the chancel, but in the south transept. Some one must have corrected Tennyson, because after a few editions had repeated the word "chancel," Tennyson changed the line to read

"And in the dark church like a ghost."

It is possible that the tablet was moved from the chancel to the transept.

Two new members of the Asolo Club: Mortimer S. Doolittle, a student in the Yale Law School, who sends his application in triplicate, and E. H. Carmichael, of Washington, D. C. Their accompanying picture postcards show that Eleonora Duse, following the instance of Browning, has a street named after her.

Baseball language is always interesting, and Mr. James R. Bettis, of Webster Groves, Missouri, gives me a new word coined by Martin J. Haley in the *Globe-Democrat*, who in his picturesque account of a game between the St. Louis Browns and Boston Red Sox, writes as follows:

The Brownie pilot's round-tripper yesterday was one of the three hits allowed the Browns by

Murray, who worked seven innings, and by Workman, who northpawed in the eighth.

"While it is beautiful neither to the ear nor to the eye," writes Mr. Bettis, "it has the merit of conciseness." *Northpawed* means a right-handed pitcher pitched. Mr. Bettis wonders what an Englishman would make of the word if it were handed to him without context.

In connection with the subject of our national game, the unique Ty Cobb, in an interview given at Toronto, and widely quoted, is reported as saying: "If I had my time over again, I would probably be a surgeon instead of a baseball player. . . . I shall not have done any real good to humanity when I retire." Meseems Mr. Cobb is too modest. He has achieved the distinction of being the greatest ball-player in history; and he has given wholesome happiness to hundreds of thousands of people. But in addition to his supremacy and to his benefactions, he has, by retaining his skill after nineteen successive years of steady competition, set an example to men, women, and children of enterprise, courage, audacity, and perseverance. Such a life has surely not been wasted.

I am interested in the legends on the paper jackets of two new novels. The Klondike poet, Robert W. Service, who has a prodigious reputation among American university graduates, hundreds of whom can quote pages and pages of his verse, has finally launched a work of prose fiction, called "The Roughneck." I have often meditated on the origin of that word, and this paper jacket, which incidentally is full of other interesting information, gives Mr. Service's explanation: "I think the origin of 'The Roughneck' dates back to the time when to shave the back of one's neck was a sign of sartorial grace. In my early Alaskan days every barber would ask you if you wanted a 'neckshave,' and not to have one put you in the category of those who were indifferent to their appearance, or too unsophisticated to conform to the fashion of the day. You were a man with hair on his neck; in brief, a roughneck. The fashion soon passed, but the expression remains." Now when I was a boy, my virgin aunt, who, like all virgin aunts,

knew far more about the world and was far more in sympathy with it than one's mother, said to me emphatically: "Don't you ever allow any barber to shave the back of your neck." She *knew*. Whatever may later have been the reversed dynamics in Alaska, she knew that a man whose neck was shaved was outside the pale of polite society. I was particularly interested in Mr. Service's explanation, for during the last twenty years in these United States, my observation proves just the opposite. I have never seen a genuine tough who did not have the back of his neck shaved. And I divide all barbers into two classes—those who, without asking you, attempt to shave the back of your neck, and those who would no more perpetrate such a monstrosity than they would shave off your ears. It is, as Barrie's policeman would say, a test absolutely *infallible*. No New York or Boston barber has ever done any necking on me; but in every small town west of Buffalo, unless I am alert, I get a large dose of lather under the cerebellum.

But how in the world did Aunt Libbie know this test forty-five years ago? That was some time before Mr. Service was born.

The average undergraduate's ideal is Service; and if the test of poetry be the frequency with which it is quoted, the Alaskan bard should be content. I must admit, however, that although I made a brave attempt to read "The Roughneck," I was knocked out in the further chapter.

The other jacket adorns "Ordeal," by Dale Collins. This is the first novel by a young Australian, and it shows a command of style that promises much for its author's future reputation. If any novelist from that continent can do for literature what Percy Grainger has done for music, we shall all rejoice. I read the novel "Ordeal" with mixed feelings; its finest and most original character is an old woman. But it is rather too sensational; the dignity of art is sacrificed for immediate and theatrical effect. The author's distinction of style could be better employed. The Manchester *Guardian* is quoted on the jacket as saying: "If you can imagine Barrie's Admirable Crichton

changed into a raving, lustful brute of a steward . . . you will get some idea of this amazing and powerful story." Exactly: well said: but it seems not altogether fortunate that so many writers at this moment and presumably so many readers prefer the debased coin to the real. With all due respect to the powers of Mr. Collins, it seems easier to draw a raving, lustful brute than it is to draw a man! The difference between "Ordeal" and "The Admirable Crichton" is the difference between melodrama and tragedy.

Let me recommend to lovers of Elizabethan literature "The Bodley Head Quartos," delightful little volumes containing reprints of interesting and not easily accessible books by the contemporaries of Shakespeare.

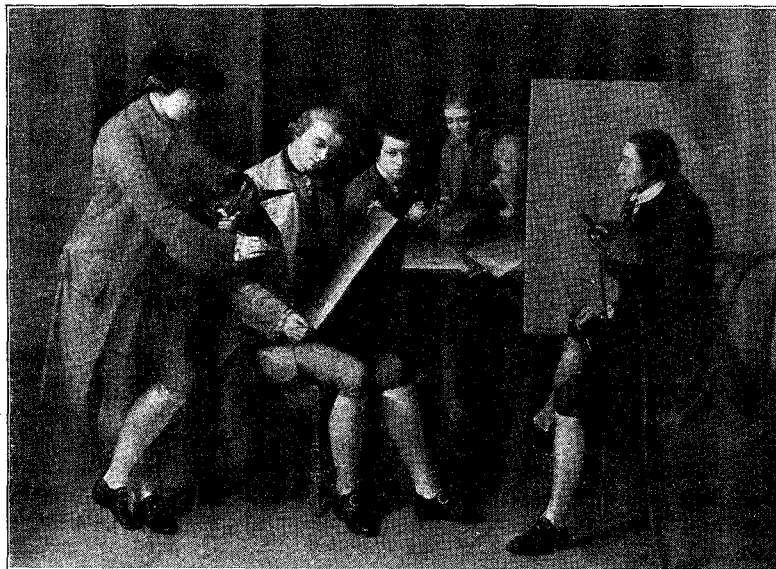
The death of Joseph Conrad removed one of the great figures of our time; and so far as anything dealing with the future can be convincingly stated, the best of his novels seem imperishable. I shall never cease to rejoice that he made the journey to America in 1923; for I found him as simple and lovable in character as he was austere in art.

I am away to Europe for some months; but I shall continue my monthly comments on American and foreign books and art; and on human nature, which knows no national boundaries. I shall in this way correspond with each one of my readers from over seas. When I come back, I hope that the United States will have officially adopted the metric system of weights and measures. It is high time. Over 100,000 petitions are now before Congress, but let us hope for the best in spite of that.

To all who contemplate travelling in Europe either this autumn or next summer, let me recommend Clara Laughlin's Travel Study Courses. From the Fine Arts Building in Chicago Clara Laughlin sends out these booklets covering every European land; they are the best I know. They give detailed information for intelligent sojourners, and have you ever seen an American who, if not intelligent, did not wish to be?

THE FIELD OF ART

BY ROYAL CORTISSOZ



By courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The American School.

From the painting by Matthew Pratt in the Metropolitan Museum.

IN the correspondence frequently and to my great pleasure elicited by these pages there is one subject which again and again recurs. It is the subject of American art. Readers, writing for themselves or for some association, make inquiry as to modes of acquainting themselves with the history of our school. They want the titles of helpful books and sometimes they want to know just how most profitably to use such publications as are available. From an inquirer in the South I received not long ago this typical interrogation: "Our literary club has 'American Painters' for its subject next year. May I ask you for a few suggestions or the names of the artists we should study?" There is a clause in that question that particularly interests me—"the names of the artists." My correspondent has hold of the right end of the stick. It is the individual artist, above all things, who counts. No artist or group of artists was ever vitalized by a principle

drawn out of the air and externally applied. The artist has always come before the art. It is always the artist, the personality, who invents, develops, and validates the principle. I speak thus emphatically of a point which is obvious enough because, as a matter of fact, it is often forgotten, and it is in the nature of things easy to be overlooked. Every historian of art inevitably succumbs to the temptation to "block out" his material into so many more or less watertight compartments. Mere chronology not unnaturally invites him to do this, and the appearance of groups, movements, and schools in the record confirms him in a pardonable tendency toward a certain misleading kind of "system." Almost unconsciously the reader forms an impression that at such and such times, in such and such places, artists were collectively moved by such and such impalpable influences. All this is the more facilitated in making its effect upon the imagi-

nation because in numerous instances it is fortified as an hypothesis by accessible facts. I have no intention of underestimating the lessons of history. But I would deprecate their obscuring a more personal approach to the study of art. I think I know what Whistler was driving



William Vans Murray.

From the painting by Mather Brown. Privately owned.

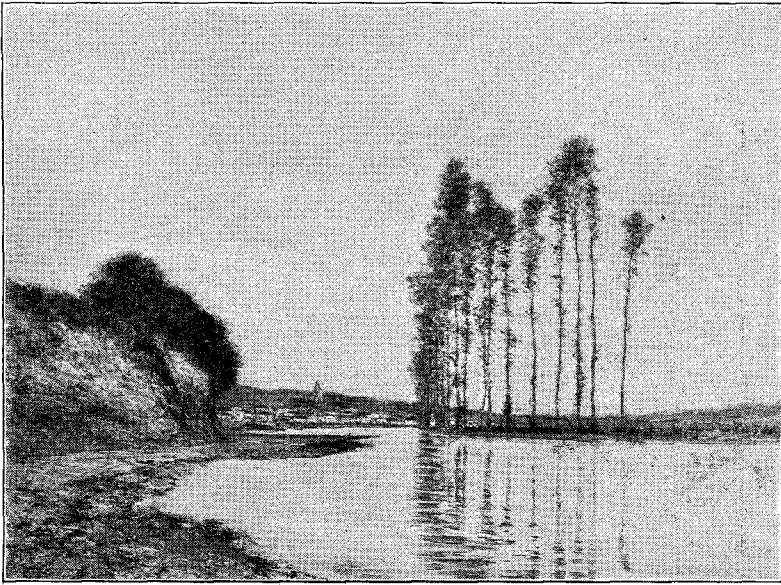
at when he made that famous and much-debated pronouncement of his to the effect that there never was an art-loving nation, that there never was a period talismanically blest in the creation of works of art. That was simply his protest against too great a philosophizing of the subject, his affirmation of the potency of Velasquez, say, as against the organized effectiveness and the intrinsic prestige of the Spanish school as a school. The student of American art who starts with a clear head on this phase of the matter has already won half the battle.

CHRONOLOGY is an indispensable aid, but the essential thing as you trace it from the beginning is to watch out for the individualities that arise to make it significant. When you begin at the beginning in our art history, it is very much worth while to think about the traits of the period, to get hold of an historian like John Fiske, and to find out how our people lived and the tastes they had back in Dutch times, and later in the Georgian epoch. The social background is always good to know. But it can easily be carried too far in research. That is why, I believe, there has been so much misapprehension of the founders, so much unnecessary talk about our eighteenth-century school, as though it were nothing but a slavish echo of the British, so crassly "derivative" as to be innocent of any really racy characteristics. We imitated the British, it is true, and took over their tradition of portraiture. But if there is one thing more than another which is obvious in the whole course of American art it is its sometimes languid but more often active interest in painting as a

craft, and you can trace this preoccupation with technique right back to the pioneers. I don't know any more eloquent souvenir of our formative period than the picture by Matthew Pratt called "The American School," which hangs in the Metropolitan Museum. Pratt was born at Philadelphia in 1734. His uncle, James Claypoole, taught him the rudiments there, but he went abroad to study under Benjamin West in London. He painted this picture in West's studio, and showed himself submitting one of his drawings to the master's correction. Now West was not

a good painter, but he was a good man, quick to encourage those of his countrymen who came to him for instruction in a steady stream; and if I find the picture important it is because it symbolizes the whole Anglo-American situation at that time. We were hungry to know how to paint, and the studies which I am asked so often to direct would be twice as rewarding if the students were to grasp that fact and make it their guiding principle.

study wasted. On the right basis of research Benjamin West will only detain us in so far as he personally stimulated his American contemporaries, and the examination will go on to follow the careers of such men as Copley and Stuart. Nor will this line divert one from figures less resplendent. One of the striking things about our early period is its occasional production of men in nowise famous but still of sterling gifts. I reproduce in illus-



By courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Harp of the Winds, a View of the Seine.

From the painting by Homer Martin in the Metropolitan Museum.

The value of every painting ever produced has depended upon the manner in which it has been painted, and that has depended upon the qualities of the individual. What makes the study of any art exciting is the running to earth of the first-rate artist. Thus in approaching the pioneers it is a mistake to fling one's net for a miscellaneous catch of names. Really to be repaid by more than a certain quantity of information that may be memorized out of the books, and to find the dry bones of history leaping into life, is to separate the men of genius from the men of talent and to distinguish from both the ever-present mediocrity. In other words, the study that is not critical, that does not foster the art of appreciation, is

tration the portrait of "William Vans Murray," by Mather Brown, who was born in 1761 and died in 1831. If I had anything to do with the divagations of a literary club studying American painters, on the evidence of this portrait I would send all the members scurrying after Mather Brown. I would have them find out all about Brown, who he was, when he lived and worked, what manner of man he seemed to have been, where his works could be found, and so on. Hard labor? Of course it is hard labor, and if the student is incapable of that he ought to let the subject alone. But in the clubs of the United States countless papers are prepared and read every year. I would commend the kind of paper I have just indi-