

Leaves From a Transport Secretary's Log-Book

By Capt. (Rev.) P. C. Reed

OUTWARD BOUND

IT was mid-Atlantic. The prow of the transport was headed for England and the war. In the soft glow of the evening twilight the men were sitting on the floor of the troop deck listening to the gramophone perched on an upturned pickle tub. The "Y" Secretary stood in their midst enjoying the scene.

"Why can't we have a sing?" suddenly demanded one of the men. "That's better than canned music." "There's a Long, Long Trail A-winding," came the instant response, and at once they were off. "Smile, Smile, Smile," "For Me and My Gal," "Good Luck to the Boys of the Allies," "Keep the Home Fires Burning," and other favorites followed in quick succession.

One by one the singers rose to their feet and gathered around the Secretary, who was beating time for the improvised numbers.

"Now for a solo," suggested the Secretary. "Come on, you, there!" cried one man to his pal, lying at ease in a hammock. The man addressed slid easily to the deck and sang, "The Best Place is Home." "Memories! Memories!" and "M-o-t-h-e-r" followed, and noting the impression produced upon the hearers, the Secretary remarked:

"Boys, before I go to the next deck to show some pictures, I should like to say a few words." "Go ahead, Captain!" came the hearty response. Briefly the speaker outlined "things that may be left behind" on going to war. Memories of home and mother should not be left behind. "Can

memories of God and Christ be left behind?" was a question put, to which came the manifold and hearty response, "No, sir!"

Encouraged by the reply, the Secretary invited these men who had not already done so to make the great decision then and there, and offered, if they desired it, to register all such decisions in his notebook. There was a brief pause for thought. Then one man said: "Put down my name, sir." "And mine!" "And mine!" came from others.

Name after name was written down, and after praying, "Father, we thank Thee. Help them," the Secretary passed on to the next deck. That night in his cabin, in a glow of joy unspeakable, he counted 103 names in his book.

On another occasion, on the darkened troop deck, following a programme of music and sports, the stereopticon, operated by a young Jewish corporal, showed the "Life of Christ" on the screen. Seated, kneeling, standing, hanging on to beams, packed into every conceivable vantage point, Protestants, Jews and Catholics watched the picture. From his seat on the floor in the midst of the men the Secretary spoke of the Wonderful Life, and as the last view was withdrawn he made a simple appeal for decisions.

"Will you make Him your choice tonight, men?" was the direct question. Again there was a pause for intense heart-searching. And again the low-spoken but earnest "I will, sir." "Put my name down, sir." Leaning forward so that the beam from