

## THE CHOICE

Paul Stricker

Man, you are subject to His laws  
As the moon's ebb, the ocean's swell.  
He is the only will and cause  
Maker of heaven and of hell.

Will it be heaven, man, or hell  
Where you will suffer or rejoice?  
God's is the everlasting will,  
Man's the everlasting choice.

## Bon Voyage

Robert Casey

**T**HE long, silent file of men slowly walked up the steep gangplank into the yawning side of the ship. Each man was carrying a heavily packed duffel bag, a lighter but still cumbersome field pack, and a rifle that was constantly slipping off his shoulder and getting entangled in the straps of the field pack. It was not yet dawn, and only the sergeant's gruff voice broke the early morning silence as he monotonously called the line number and last name of each man as he passed into the side of the transport. The sergeant called, "Number one-eight-six, Powell," and received in reply the required first name and middle initial of the man. As the men entered, the sergeant's assistant handed each one a mess card and a tag with a ship's compartment number printed on it. After receiving their cards, the men walked down a dimly lit corridor until they came to the steel stairs that led down to the lower compartments of the ship. The silence was broken now by the scraping and stamping of combat boots on the steel stairs.

Each compartment consisted of tiers of steel bunks three and four high. The bunks were bolted to long iron pipes at each end, and the opposite sides of the bunks were suspended by chains that held them upright. On each bunk was an unbelievably thin mattress in a plastic cover and a small, lumpy pillow also in a plastic cover. The wall of the compartment was lined with strong hooks on which the men hung their duffel bags. After stowing their gear, they again formed a single file and tramped up the stairs to get their blankets and bedding. After the bunks were made up in the approved army fashion, there was time to stroll on deck before breakfast.

It was daylight now, and the decks were crowded with men who stared down at the almost empty docks. There was little talking or joking among the men; most of them were serious and thoughtful. After thirty minutes had elapsed, the loudspeaker blaringly an-