

The
LOOKOUT



Setting Sail on a Training Cruise. A Weather Quarter View of the Three-master Auxiliary Schooner VEMA of the U. S. Maritime Commission.

**E A M E N ' S C H U R C H I N S T I T U T E
O F N E W Y O R K**

VOL. XXXII NO. 10

OCTOBER, 1941

That it may please Thee, whose way is in the sea and whose paths are in the great waters, to have the Seamen of the world always under Thy Almighty and most gracious protection and to show Thyself to them in Thy wonders of the deep and in the Gospel of Thy dear Son, we beseech thee to hear us, good Lord. (From Dr. Mansfield's scrapbook.)

The LOOKOUT

VOL. XXXII, OCTOBER, 1941

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by the

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LEGACIES TO THE INSTITUTE

You are asked to remember this Institute in your will, that it may properly carry on its important work for seamen. While it is advisable to consult your lawyer as to the drawing of your will, we submit nevertheless the following as a clause that may be used:

I give and bequeath to "Seamen's Church Institute of New York," incorporated under the laws of the State of New York, located at 25 South Street, New York City, the sum of

.....Dollars.

Note that the words "OF NEW YORK" are a part of our title.

It is to the generosity of numerous donors and testators that the Institute owes its present position, and for their benefactions their memory will ever be cherished by all friends of the seamen.

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"Vema" Now A Training Ship

WITH all sails set, the three-masted auxiliary schooner "Vema", one of the finest American yachts until recently converted into a U. S. Maritime Commission training ship and one of the largest sailing vessels still in active service, left New York on August 18th on her first week's cruise with almost 100 apprentice seamen on board. The vessel is attached to the Commission's training station at Hoffman Island in New York Harbor. Clearing the Narrows, the "Vema" spread her 14,000 square feet of white canvas and headed to sea.

The "Vema" was transferred to the Maritime Commission by her owners, Mr. and Mrs. G. Unger Vetlesen, of 1 Beekman Place, New York City, for \$1. on February 18, last. Luxurious passenger cabins were replaced by quarters for 100 trainees.

Under the command of Lieut. Harold Arthur Morrison of the U. S. Coast Guard which administers the U. S. Maritime Service for the Commission, the schooner will make short sea cruises to train apprentices in the fundamentals of seamanship as part of their Hoffman Island course. The Commission has another famous sailing ship, the square rigger "Joseph Conrad", making similar cruises out of the Commission's station at St. Petersburg, Florida.

The "Vema" is equipped with a 780 horsepower Diesel motor to do

10 knots. However, sail will be used whenever the wind will drive the vessel. Using both sail and motor, Mr. Vetlesen in 1932 in the "Vema" made a record run from Montauk Point, Long Island, to Bishop's Rock, England, in ten days, 21 hours.

The "Vema" was built in Copenhagen for Edward F. Hutton in 1923 and was named the Hussar. She is 533 gross tons, 202 feet overall and 33 feet beam. It has been estimated that the vessel was worth \$100,000 when received by the Maritime Commission from her generous and patriotic owners.

Recently renovated by enrollees at the maritime training shops at Hoffman Island, the schooner will be used to instill the old-fashioned kind of seamanship. Apprentice seamen will be taught to handle lines and sail a ship, and will disembark (we trust) with "each hair a rope-yarn, fingers like marlin spikes and agile as monkeys".

The executive officer is Ch. Bos'n Harold Hansen, U.S.C.G. The vessel also carries a crew of about 15 men, most of them petty officers, and including an engine room force of four men.

Each student at Hoffman Island will spend one month of his seven-months course aboard the "Vema". Each time the vessel makes a cruise, half the crew will be replaced; thus, half will possess the experience of one voyage while the remainder are making their first.

Men of the Convoys*

Editor's Note: Space does not permit us to reprint the entire article about the British Merchant Navy Club in the Institute which was published on Sunday, August 3rd, in the New York Times Magazine. There appeared also an editorial on the Men of the Convoys which concluded as follows:

"It is the story of men from Glasgow, Liverpool and the Clyde—'seamen born; young men, kids in their 'teens . . . not much to look at; a bit on the rough side, shirts open at the throat, faces red with sun and weather'—men who do not like to be called heroes, but who are serving with stubborn, almost casual courage in the front line of the battle to defend democracy."

By Meyer Berger

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British and American Seamen join in making Ships-in-Bottles sold at 50c each for the joint benefit of Bundles for Britain and the Seamen's Church Institute of New York.

Photo by A. Eriss

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A British Seaman plays "Drumsticks" on the piano in the Merchant Navy Club.

only that part of 138th Street that stretches between Brook and Willis Avenues. There's a Scottish colony along that part of 138th Street and a man gets the feel of home. On Sundays the Bronx Scots go out to soccer and the convoy seamen take part.

"I airned two dollar last Sunday," the Greenock lad told us. "I played wi' one o' your Edison teams an' I got pay for it, not countin' the sport."

The club serves tea every afternoon between 4 and 5 o'clock and the seamen pour in from the waterfront for it. Their hostess is Mrs. J. B. Wilson, a London woman, wife of a member of the Maritime Board in London. Seamen in for the first time, a little confused and muddled by New York accents they hear in the street, always seem to brighten when they hear her voice.

Tuesdays and Thursdays the club holds dance night. Volunteer workers, chiefly women engaged in British war relief in the city, come down to South Street these nights to talk with and entertain the convoy crews. The place gets quite lively then and Glasgow, London and Liverpool accents give the rooms an Old Country atmosphere.

A dark-haired young English sailor thought these parties might be more fun if he could get instruction in American dancing. "It'd give me more pleasure," he confided wistfully, "if I could get the hang of your jitter-bug-ging. It's one of the things I promised to bring home with me." At the Tuesday and Thursday night parties,

though, the dances are mostly Lambeth Walks and Booms-a-Daisy. . . .

The club has a dental service, too. Volunteer dentists fill cavities free of charge and in some cases make up full dentures for older British seamen who have none. The club likes the story of Gibbs, a Glasgow man about 55 years old, who, proud of his new teeth, paraded them up Fifth Avenue. He broke them in by smiling at all the pretty ladies he passed. After a while, though, the plates began to hurt. Gibbs went back to his ship, parked the plates in a glass two hours before sailing, and returned to a South Street pub.

Hours after the convoy had gone out on the harbor tide, Gibbs showed up at the club, beery and repentant. "I've missed my ship," he told the hostess sadly, "an' my dentures wi' it." The hostess got in touch with the St. Andrew Society. The society produced train fare and Gibbs rolled north. A few days later the club got a letter from Canada. "You will be happy to learn," the letter said, "that I caught up with my ship and dentures at —."

The men always keep the radio turned on in the club room, from opening at 11 A. M. until 11 o'clock at night, when the club closes. "There's something about the music," one of the older men told us, "that keeps you aware you're ashore. It's a kind of reassurance, though half the time you're not really listening."

The men don't have radios aboard ships. The Greenock Scot said, "They'll give you away by their squeal, d'ye mind?" Most of the time on the sea the men sleep in full kit, ready to take to the boats if they're bumped. The big Canadian, Mitchell, showed us his shoes; soft leather slippers that zip up the front. He said they're the best. Heavy boots are apt to take a man down when he puts over the side. . . .

We sat in the great room and watched them with strange fascination. A man would pass them by in the street and never look twice. They're quite ordinary. . . .

One at our table was a big-bellied Cockney well in his fifties. No man ever looked less a hero. Sweat poured down his face and plastered his thin hair. He was pop-eyed. Our guide introduced him; said he had been picked up two days before, one of a few survivors of a freighter sinking. Like the rest he skipped over the details. . . . "It won't help 'em," he told us. "'E cahnt do us in. We'll come out atop, don't think we won't."

Ocean Vanguard

Radio remarks by Mrs. Emory S. Land, sponsor, on the occasion of the christening of the British Merchant ship "Ocean Vanguard" at the yards of the Todd-California Shipbuilding Corporation, Richmond, California, Saturday, August 16, 1941, at 4:45 P.M. Pacific Standard Time.

IT IS a great privilege to be here today and to take part in the naming ceremonies of this symbolic ship.

Congratulations to the Todd-California Shipbuilding Corporation and to every American who has worked so well to build this great Ship for Britain. Sturdily and well as you have fashioned her, may she prove her name—a leader of a continuing line — helping to carry on America's pledge of *all aid* to Britain in her valiant battle.

Ocean Vanguard—the name rings true, and sounds hope for the future and the freedom of the seas—not the Atlantic alone, but *all* seas of *all* the world—All must be left open for free and friendly intercourse among *all* peoples!

Van holds promise of ships coming on, more ships — a thousand more to follow this—the forerunner. *Vanguard* — the first of the new ships to help guard the civilization of the world against aggressors.

And last, and happily, the name holds in its center a great "V" symbol of Victory—that ultimate victory to which millions of people, held in virtual serfdom in devastated lands, are desperately pinning their faith—that Victory for which we work and pray.

Sir Arthur Salter—to you as the representative of Great Britain—my gratitude for the honor of standing sponsor for this ship—may she truly lead hosts of ships to guard the life line of your beloved Country so that again—and always—your great Poet Laureate may sing:

****out of the darkness
there was light—

There in the sea were England
and her ships."

Propeller Club Convention

The Fifteenth Annual Convention of the Propeller Club of the United States will be held at the Fairmont Hotel, San Francisco, California, from October 21st to 24th. LOOK-OUT readers who reside in California may be interested in attending the morning and afternoon public sessions of the American Merchant Marine Conference, to be held on Thursday, October 23rd. Among prominent speakers will be Captain Howard L. Vickery, J. Lewis Luckenbach, President, American Bureau of Shipping, Chairman of American Merchant Marine Conference Committee; Rear Admiral A. H. Van Keuren, Ass't Chief, Bureau of Ships, Navy Department; H. Gerrish Smith, President, National Council of American Shipbuilders; Frank J. Taylor, President, American Merchant Marine Institute, Incorporated; Rear Admiral

Emory S. Land, USN Retired, Chairman U. S. Maritime Commission; Rear Admiral R. R. Waesche, Commandant, U. S. Coast Guard, Washington.

Captain Thomas A. Scott, National President, is a member of our Board of Managers, and several of the staff of the Seamen's Church Institute of New York are members of the Propeller Club, which is doing a fine piece of constructive educational work in awakening the American public to the importance of our American merchant marine and its personnel. The need for coordinated effort in the marine industry was never so necessary as at the present time. We are glad to pay tribute to the Propeller Club for its efforts in helping our military and economic defense.

A "Lookout" Hero



EIGHTEEN-YEAR-OLD Peter Croxford was on lookout duty in the crow's nest of the British merchantman *Sussex*, bound for England, with a full cargo. At six-thirty-five A. M. he saw a Nazi plane coming over the horizon. He notified the captain and asked what he was to do. The captain ordered him to stay put—he had a better chance of dodging bombs in the crow's nest than on deck.

The rest of the story was related by Peter from his bed at Long Island College Hospital, Brooklyn, where he spent several months recovering from the effects of being blown out of the crow's nest by an exploding bomb. So let Peter tell it:

"In a moment the plane dove at our ship. It came to within fifty feet of the mast, then zoomed upward. I couldn't see the bomb drop, but I sure felt it. The first thing I knew I felt myself lifted into the air by the explosion. Everything went black for a minute, and then I felt myself falling. I grabbed for

the first thing I saw. It was a piece of rope. Luckily, the rope was one of the guy wires running between the mast and the deck. It broke my fall and snapped me back to my senses. I swung around for a minute or so, some eighty feet above the deck, then I managed to get my feet hooked into the ladder on the side of the mast. It wasn't hard to get down from there."

Although shaken by this experience, Peter helped man an anti-aircraft gun and aided his shipmates in putting out a fire raging on the ship. He was badly burned. His heroism under fire has earned for him the medal of the Order of the British Empire and also Lloyd's medal. These honors will be conferred upon him when he reaches England. As we go to press we learned that Peter had successfully won a fight that frightened him more visibly than his round with the Nazi raider. The surgeons removed fragments of bomb splinters from his arm and pronounced him once more an "able-bodied" seaman. The stiffness that lingered in his arm after the operation worried him, so he exercised it continuously. As he started happily off for the ship on which he was signed to return to England he remarked to some of his friends that he hoped he would have nerve enough to stand up calmly when King George decorated him with that medal.

EXTRA GIFTS!

You are probably helping America's defense in many ways, perhaps even sacrificing a great deal. We all have a common obligation and responsibility. We earnestly hope that you will help the Institute to carry on its important services and thus maintain the morale of these seafarers. As you know, increased prices for food and commodities are taxing our budget, so we trust that you will renew your annual contribution and send a little "extra" gift whenever possible.

Men Against the Sea

*"Come wind, come weather,
The ships must sail!"*

If you live far from the sea, you can still hear its roar when you place a sea-shell to your ear. If you live near the ocean, you understand how varied are its moods. It can be calm, and peaceful, and the next moment a raging tyrant. To the seafarer, the changeable moods of the sea are its chief charm—and also its chief danger.

The seaman's calling, in peace or in war, is a hazardous one. He must face the dangers of storm, collision, stranding as a part of his job. Since the war, he has braved the added perils of mine, torpedo and bomber. Yet the ships must sail, cargoes must move, commerce must continue—come wind, come weather, come raider, come submarine!

Ashore in the Port of New York come thousands of merchant seamen of all faiths and all nationalities to the SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK for safe anchorage, comfortable lodgings and a friendly welcome. As always, the Institute continues to welcome American seamen who are serving

"Sailing under sealed orders"—

Such is the experience of the men of the convoys. Often flying a red flag, meaning explosives aboard, these ships zigzag across the ocean, and their crews carry on, realizing that any moment an enemy raider or submarine may send them to Davey Jones's Locker.

"The merchant marine is one of those services which has a dual function. In time of peace it serves the commerce of the nation, in time of emergency it serves the armed forces. It should be large enough to serve both; commerce must not stop even in an emergency. World developments have forced us against our will into a period of emergency and the merchant ships of this country are now serving the Navy, the Army and the industrial plants which are building our weapons of defense . . . Our seamen and officers are doing their jobs efficiently and are glad of the opportunity." (REAR ADMIRAL EMORY S. LAND, *Chairman U. S. Maritime Commission.*)

their country by transporting copper, manganese, chrome ores and other important defense materials.

Please send contributions to the
SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK
25 South Street
New York, N. Y.



Three survivors of a torpedoed crew get news from home.

Photo by Marie Higginson

Health Services for Seafarers

By the Rev. Harold H. Kelley, D.D.

Editor's Note: Following are excerpts from a radio address made by the Institute's Director over Station WMCA on September 9th, under the auspices of the New York Tuberculosis and Health Association.

THE seafarer is heir to about the same ills as humans ashore, but aggravated by his wandering existence. That seamen are not sicker more of the time must be due to their unusually rugged physiques, for they are a carefully selected personnel, both physically and mentally. Seamen today are not mere casualties who have shipped because they were failures ashore, or because of rows at home. In all departments on shipboard, seamen are skilled artisans, for the most part proud of their trade.

However, for the best appreciation of today's shipboard health, one need go full speed astern through but a generation or two of maritime history. The old windships, romantic as they were in song and story, provided but little of comfort in eating, sleeping or working, and many of the early steamers were no better. The least accessible and most useless space for paying



Dr. Hugh Hodge treats a Seaman in the General Medical Clinic.

Photo by Marie Higginson

cargo was at the extreme bow, yet this, too hot in summer and bitterly cold in winter, by common consent was a good enough "fo'c'sle" for the crew! The cheapest and most monotonous food often must needs be carried from the galley forward on a cold deck to be eaten at one's bunk-side. Few knew, and fewer cared about balanced rations in those dark days, and scurvy and a variety of stomach ailments were the lot of too many of those old crews. Accidents were common, and it was the lucky ship in the gold rush days to California which did not have men laid up with broken arms or legs, not to mention some lost overboard from aloft while furling sail in dark and dirty weather. The only and most haphazard medical care was that given by the Captain, usually with no specific training. From his medicine chest he might or might not administer the right potion. For cuts and broken bones he had but little to work with, and hideous are the stories of necessary amputations with just the carpenter's saw and a sheath knife. And pity the poor sailor suffering from a toothache! Pliers or a quick yank with a heavy twine might pull the ailing grinder, or possibly some old and quite unsterile forceps might be on board, such as have occasionally turned up in unclaimed baggage at the Seamen's Institute.

Today the story is brighter. Steam and Diesel motors virtually have driven the beautiful old square-riggers from the seas, and with them most of the health hazards. Improvements in living conditions, such as the enlargement and relocating of fo'c'sles, with fewer men to a room, better ventilation and heating, and even air-conditioning, gradually have been accomplished through the foresight of the owners and the various seamen's unions and, most recently, the United States Maritime Commission. The

unlicensed men on many of the newest ships today live, and quite deservedly, far better than did many an officer or even passenger a generation or two ago. The commissary is incomparably better, thanks first to a minimum menu adopted by Congress in 1915. Food for the entire crew, officers and men alike, is drawn from the same stores, is plentiful and properly balanced, of course the foundation of good health.

Great progress also has been made in accident prevention. Seldom need a man climb the rigging while at sea, and never under conditions comparable to the old wind-jammers. Everywhere, deck, galley or engine room, accident prevention is stressed. Men are taught, by rules, company posters and even by very clever cartoons, such as those in "The Pilot", of the National Maritime Union, to take no chances of injury. Due to this, and the greater care with which today's crews are selected, also the strict physical examinations before shipping, sickness and accidents among today's seamen are greatly reduced.

Health services for modern seamen fall conveniently into shipboard and shore. For shipboard, due to a Federal ruling in 1922 at the instance of the Seamen's Church Institute of New York, and enacted into a law in 1931, every candidate for a license must pass an examination in First Aid and the emergency care of the sick and injured, which means that nearly all of today's officers have been trained in elementary medicine. To assist in this shipboard health service, the Institute publishes a manual on first aid, as does also the United States Public Health Service. The Merchant Marine School of the Institute, with its complete general curriculum also helps medically through its course on First Aid, and illustrated lectures are given at the Institute several times each year by City and other health representatives. Most passenger ships carry competent doctors, and an important health



The Institute's Eye Clinic is equipped with modern devices for measuring vision. Mrs. Elsie Latimer is the head nurse.

Photo by Marie Higginson

facility on practically all ships is a special and well equipped hospital.

In 1922, with practically all steamers equipped with radios and trained operators, the Seamen's Church Institute of New York initiated a very beneficial shipboard health service through its own radio station, K.D.K.F. Ships were invited to radio for medical advice if crew members were injured or sick. Diagnosis and directions from the United States Public Health Service were radioed back, and often a series of questions and answers sped between ship and shore, resulting in the saving of life and the recovery of the patient. Dislocated bones are a frequent source of trouble, as evidenced by the following radio message from a tanker Captain to Port Arthur, Texas: "Sailor aboard dislocated right shoulder. Considerable pain. Can you give us Coast Guard or Health Service assistance?" The reply crackled through the ether to the ship's Captain: "Lay sailor flat on deck. Take your shoe off and place your heel in armpit of sailor. Grasp the hand of the dislocated arm and pull outwards slightly. Bone will probably slide into the socket. Then bind arm to the side."

Sometimes a series of messages beginning with the ship captain's description of symptoms and diagnosed by a Public Health doctor as pneumonia results in a successful recovery as vouched for by the following: "Patient improved. Thanks for your help." This service proved so valuable and the calls so numerous as to swamp the modest Institute station and in 1923 the great Radio Marine Corporation of America undertook the now famous radio MEDICO service, still with the cooperation of the Federal health authorities, receiving and transmitting free of charge thousands of messages. Today a sick or injured man on shipboard has almost as good a chance of recovery as ashore. However every effort is made to land a sick patient as soon as possible. The United States Coast Guard, with its motto "Semper Paratus", "Always ready", often rushes cutters and even flying boats to transfer patients from off-shore ships to hospitals. An excellent illustration of the regard for human life on shipboard appeared in a New York Times article a few days ago describing a destroyer leaving its important post in a convoy to rush one of its sailors back to England because of an illness too serious to treat on board.

For health services ashore, seafarers are more fortunate than workers in most land trades, for their very lack of settlement over a century ago forced the Federal Government to establish Marine Hospitals or sub-stations. Since town and county authorities declined to accept seamen as patients in their local tax-supported hospitals, federal care was a necessity and seamen were for the first time recognized as wards of the Government. For a time the Marine Hospitals were partly supported by a wage assessment on seamen and a tonnage tax on vessels, but this burden to both sides, expensive to collect, was given up. The Marine Hospitals, under the United States Public Health Service, have grown

and spread wonderfully, and during the last decade many have been re-housed in superb new buildings in ports such as New York, Baltimore, San Francisco, etc. They are the last word in hospital facilities and medical care, and any active American seaman, of any rating, may be sent from his ship or apply for admission from shore, receiving free care. Out-patient care is also provided.

The Marine Hospitals cooperate fully of course with other health agencies, particularly city, and with organized welfare and health associations.

The Seamen's Church Institute of New York, ministering as it does to the spiritual, mental and physical well-being of merchant seamen, cooperates in every possible way with health services. Its Chaplains visit sick seamen in the Marine Hospitals on Staten Island and Ellis Island and at other hospitals in the port. At the great 13-story Institute at 25 South Street, New York City, containing 1,600 beds, commissary, welfare, recreational and educational facilities, as well as a beautiful Chapel, a complete clinical service is maintained, supplementing the public facilities and through giving immediate care not only has helped prevent more serious illness on the part of seamen, but has done much to render seamen ready for employment. In 1931 the Institute also established the first Eye Clinic exclusively for merchant seamen in this country. Good eyesight is a primary requisite for a seaman, and he may be refused an officer's license if his vision becomes impaired. The fitting of proper glasses has restored confidence to thousands of seamen and has permitted them to obtain better jobs.

The Institute's Dental Clinic was established in 1931 and has averaged 1,300 treatments a year. Many companies send to this Clinic members of their ships' crews requiring dental treatment.

With the establishment of an Ear-Nose-Throat Clinic in 1933, fol-

lowed in 1936 by a General Medical Clinic, the Institute became, in addition to a complete shore community for merchant seamen, a fully equipped health center.

Thus the Institute is helping to keep physically fit the merchant marine personnel so essential both to the commerce and defense of civilization.

Attention, Stamp Collectors!

LOOKOUT readers who make a hobby of collecting stamps may be interested to know that the Institute has been appointed cover agent for new merchant ships of the United States, Cuba Mail, Moore McCormack and American South African Lines. These covers are carried on the maiden voyages of the vessels to foreign ports. Each cachet has a picture of the ship, printed in two colors, with the American flag and the house flag intertwined.

Owing to the wartime emergency it is not possible to state definite sailing dates or destinations of these ships, but a foreign stamp will be affixed to each cover. Readers desiring such covers may send *fifteen cents* (in coin or money order) for *each* cover to the Seamen's Church Institute of New York Cover Agency, 25 South Street, New York, N. Y. Covers will be serviced for three new passenger ships of the American South African

Line, which are now nearing completion. These are the *African Comet*, *African Meteor* and *African Planet*. Two new ships of the New York and Cuba Mail Steamship Company have been completed; these are the *AGWI Monte* and the *AGWI Prince*. Orders will now be accepted on these vessels. In sending orders, please do not send self-addressed envelopes or domestic stamps, as they cannot be used.

Since all of the new ships are on long voyages, collectors should not expect to receive their covers until the early part of January.

The proceeds on the sale of these covers will be used by the Institute for its welfare and recreational work among merchant seamen of all faiths and nationalities.

The Institute has already serviced first-day covers for three new freighters of the United States Lines, the *American Builder*, *American Leader* and *American Press*. *Orders for the American Packer will be accepted.*

Clipper Ship Cachets

FIVE new C-2 cargo ships will be named after famous clipper ships of the past, and first day covers will be serviced on their maiden voyages. The first of these vessels, the "*Surprise*" was launched at sunrise on September 27th from the Sun Shipbuilding & Drydock Company at Chester, Pennsylvania, thereby starting the largest mass launching of merchant ships since the last war. Four other ships will follow shortly. These are the "*Stag Hound*", "*Lightning*", "*Sea Serpent*" and "*Shooting Star*", all to be in the American Pioneer Line service, a subsidiary of the United States lines. Collectors will be pleased with the

cachets on these new vessels. Each cover will bear a reproduction of a painting of the original clipper ship for which the new ship is named. The paintings will be by such well-known artists as Charles Robert Patterson, Gordon Grant, etc. In addition, a rubber stamp "sea post" certificate will assure collectors that the covers were carried on the maiden voyage. Closing date for orders on the "*Lightning*" is November 1st and for the "*Surprise*", November 15th. The other ships will follow in rapid succession and collectors are advised to send in their orders promptly. Covers are fifteen cents each.

Book Reviews

"FISHERMEN AT WAR"

By Leo Walmsley

Doubleday, Doran, \$2.50

To use the writer's own words, this book was written to "show to what heights of bravery and fortitude and self-sacrifice and kindness men can rise". And the men he writes about are the British fishermen—fishermen at war, whose present tasks call not only for fishing, their means of livelihood, but for mine sweeping and patrolling the waters of the North Sea in the face of great danger.

The author, an air observer with the Royal Flying Corps in German East Africa during the last war, in order to gather his material, met and spoke and sailed with these men of the sea. He gives his readers a vivid account of his visits aboard a fishing boat, a mine sweeper and with the "Kipper Patrol", the flyers who guard the fishing boats of England. He takes the reader from the deck of a mine sweeper to the shores of Dunkirk, and Mr. Walmsley's chapter entitled "Dunkirk", the account of which was given by *Curley*—one of the survivors who sailed back to England from that disaster on a barge—is a tale no one should miss.

For a splendid first-hand account of the war at sea, this is the book to read.
L.R.

IN THE MILL

By John Masefield

New York: The Macmillan Company, \$2.00.

This is an unpretentious account of Masefield's two years in a carpet mill in Yonkers. His recollections are all happy ones and he writes with great enthusiasm for both the work of the factory and the men with whom he worked. It might be said that his is a rather old-fashioned and comfortable concept of labor and its problems. The reviewer was particularly interested in his early realization of the value of books for seamen and read with interest his comments about the books he bought and turned over to the Seamen's Reading Room on West Street. A.W.C.

Sea Conference

On August 9th, somewhere on the Atlantic, off the coast of Maine, an historic meeting at sea took place between the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Great Britain. The conferences were held aboard the British Battleship *Prince of Wales* and the U. S. cruiser *Augusta*. To quote "LIFE" magazine "the leaders of the two great English-speaking democracies met upon the clean, windy sea . . . The Prime Minister, wearing the nondescript naval uniform* he always affects at sea, looked rather like a well-to-do tugboat captain. The President had on a light striped summer suit

and a floppy felt hat. For more than an hour the two statesmen talked and smoked on the sunlit deck."

The results of this dramatic sea meeting indicate increased responsibilities for both American and British merchant seamen in "carrying the cargoes", an essential contribution to "the final destruction of the Nazi tyranny".

* The uniform worn by Mr. Churchill is that of Trinity House, an organization chartered by Henry VIII in 1514 as a "Guild, Fraternity or Brotherhood of the Most Glorious and Undividable Trinity of St. Clement." Duties: to erect and manage coast lighthouses and buoys, operate the pilot service in harbors. In 1604 members were divided into Elder and Younger Brethren. There are 13 Elder Brethren, two from the Navy, eleven from the Merchant Marine; and 200 Younger Brethren, elected by the Elders. Trinity House is now a corporation. Churchill is an Elder Brother.

PLEASE HOLD THIS DATE

Monday evening, November 17th is the date set for the Institute's Annual Fall Theatre Benefit. We have been fortunate in securing the first benefit performance after the opening of Shakespeare's "MACBETH", starring Maurice Evans and Judith Anderson. The play will be on Broadway for a limited engagement only. Please mark the date on your social calendar. Details regarding tickets will be sent you later in October.

HARRY FORSYTH,

Chairman, Ways and Means Committee

PRISONER . . .

An elderly woman and a young girl came to the Institute inquiring about the girl's brother who had been torpedoed on a British ship and taken a prisoner of war. There happened to be standing nearby an officer from a ship of the same line who suggested that the two women might like to talk with the chief engineer who had been on the torpedoed ship but who had escaped in another lifeboat and was then in the Institute. The women were delighted and invited the officer and the engineer to join them after the concert in the British room where she could hear further details about her brother.

To a shipmate lost at sea when the Belgian freighter "Ville de Liege" was torpedoed and sunk, April 9, 1941.

What whim or premonition kept me safe ashore

While he sailed forth on this, his last long voyage home?

The sea gulls fly above his unmarked grave

God grant he sleeps serene beneath the wave.
M.D.C.

Columbus

In celebrating Columbus Day, the only merchant seaman for whom an American holiday (October 12th) is named, let us think also of the seamen who comprised his crew: of course they were superstitious, for they were a product of the times. A few were mutinous, but the majority were courageous, and loyal to their inspired commander. Histories allude to "a sailor named Rodrigo de Traina" as one of Columbus's crew who first sighted the outlines of the New World. Grace Clementine Howes pays tribute to Rodrigo in the following poem, which we reprint from The New York Times.

"A Sailor Named Rodrigo"

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Statue of Columbus in Nassau.

Photo by Marie Higginson

"Sailors, even more than poets, write their histories in water; their mark is impermanent as the trace of a ship's passing . . . But the name of Columbus echoes across the oceans. He was convinced that there was a divine purpose impelling him toward a divine fulfillment. Like a monk on a pilgrimage, he seized gratefully on all that might augment his power or insure his success, but in the prosecution of his mission he lived austere and humble.

"He was a man of pertinacity, vision and endurance; a man stubborn in his ideals and mystic in his principles. The love of women and the motives of men seem alike to have been beyond his comprehension; he was at home only with the elements, and he returned from them to die, broken, ashore.

"While he lived, he had glory, honor and position within his grasp, and before he died, saw all fade and disappear. But after death, greater glory, greater honor and respect came to his name than ever he, living, could have hoped for."

Next year the 450th anniversary of the discovery of America will be celebrated. A fitting tribute to Christopher Columbus, the great seaman-navigator, would be a memorial room in the Seamen's Church Institute of New York which serves thousands of seamen daily!

GRACE CLEMENTINE HOWES.

(Reprinted from the New York Times, October 12, 1931.)

To quote Andre de Hevesy, a French author, in his book "The Discoverer":

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