

The LOOKOUT

Archibald Romaine Mansfield

Doctor of Divinity

1871-1934

SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE
OF NEW YORK

VOLUME XXV

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No. 3

In Memoriam . . . Archibald Romaine Mansfield

DR. MANSFIELD'S life was organized on the simplest possible plan. His whole biography is contained in the history of the development of a single idea. In the best sense, he was a man of one idea. His many occupations and preoccupations were all devoted to the service of that idea, and they all tended to realize and develop it. He allowed himself no competing interests, no conflicting pursuits, no distracting hobbies, nor, unhappily, did he ever allow himself time for reasonable rest and recreation.

From his boyhood he proceeded by orderly steps straight to the work that lay before him, and each step had a remarkable definiteness; they also followed, one on another, in logical sequence, without a break or lapse. At the age of fourteen, he went to the Rev. Dr. Gibson's school at Ossining, N. Y., where, as he often said, he learned the lessons of self-discipline and the discipline of others. He then went to college, where he got some incidental experience in missionary

work of a peculiar type, presenting many problems similar to those that he was to face later. Deciding to follow the tradition of his family and take Holy Orders, he entered the General Theological Seminary in New York directly after his graduation from St. Stephen's College.

While there he made up his mind that he would not take a parochial rectorship, thinking that temperamentally he was not well qualified for that sort of work. In later life, speaking of this period of decision, he said he wanted something more in the way of spiritual adventure than the usual run of settled pastorates seemed likely to furnish. Towards the end of his stay at the Seminary, looking over such opportunities as lay in sight, he decided to go out to Kansas with a group of his fellow-students, four or five in number, and take up the work of a missionary, preferably in some untouched field.

But on the heels of this decision came a telephone message calling him down to see

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one of his father's old friends who had an office on Pine Street. He went, and they took a walk together, starting at Coenties Slip, almost exactly where Dr. Mansfield's great monument of steel and brick now stands, and going up South Street under the projecting bowsprits of sailing-vessels—this was thirty-eight years ago when steam had not yet displaced sailing craft—until they came to the seamen's mission at 34 Pike Street. They examined the Floating Chapel, and made the hideous round of Sailortown, as it was called; that is to say, the district bordering the East River from Pike Street south to Cherry Hill. Dr. Mansfield's companion on this walk, Mr. Benoni Lockwood, was one of the board of managers of the seamen's mission. A new chaplain would shortly be needed there, Mr. Lockwood had been commissioned to find one, and he offered the work to Dr. Mansfield.

The young man of twenty-four had seen quite enough in that one afternoon's walk. He had lived all his life in the inland country, never within smelling distance of salt water. He knew next to nothing about the life of the city in general, and nothing whatever about New York as a seaport. But anybody, no matter where

he came from or how little he knew, could see by walking two hours on the East River waterfront, just why New York was known among sailors the world over as one of the worst ports in existence. There was no problem about it, nothing that could not be seen at a glance. The whole situation was so simple, so open and plain and uncomplicated, that any clear eye could not help taking it in at once.

Here was a class of industrial specialists, quite numerous, to whom society owed a great debt. They were human beings, in the first place; but even if society chose to disregard any considerations of their humanity, the fact remained that these men kept our commerce going, and if they were not here to do it, our whole industrial structure would be undermined. Yet they were being exploited, degraded, abused, to a degree that would be incredible unless one actually saw the process going on, and society was making only the very feeblest efforts to show itself not wholly indifferent. Even the law had no interest in them. Having no residence, they had no vote; and therefore the city's political organization did not care what happened to them, they were free game for the organization's underworld to

prey on as it liked, the organization's police did not protect them, and the organization's courts gave them no redress.

Dr. Mansfield saw all this at once with the clear vision of a child, and he saw at once the idea that it suggested—that these men should be invested with the ordinary social and legal rights that other people enjoy, and that they should have the same chance that other people have to restore and maintain their self-respect; and that this should be done in the spirit and name of a Christianity that believes in human character and is willing to put forth every effort to cultivate it. He took the position that Mr. Lockwood offered him, devoted himself to the carrying out of this idea, and kept to this purpose with unwavering fidelity to the last day of his life on earth.

This, then, is the sum-total of his biography. For the rest, we might be content to say only that his works speak for him. The port of New York, which thirty-eight years ago was as bad as any in the world, is now the best. The old Sailortown has disappeared, and its evil offshoot on the Brooklyn waterfront where Dr. Mansfield established the Breakwater has also gone. The organized exploitation of sailors has ceased, and in its

place there now exists a set of legal and institutional arrangements, the most complete and comprehensive in the world, whereby seamen may protect and care for every physical, social and spiritual interest they may have; and not only may they do this effectively, but also by methods that are entirely consistent with their self-respect.

Nor is this all. Dr. Mansfield almost immediately became a national figure, not only through the Seamen's Church Institute of America, the national association which he lent his powerful aid in organizing, but principally because his institutional ideas, plans and methods at once became the standard for every American port where similar work among seamen is carried on. This again is not all, for in a short time his influence reached to every port in the world. We who were associated with Dr. Mansfield naturally think first of him and his work as we saw them from day to day; but we try our best also to think of him as he will appear in history, a great international figure like Wilberforce or Florence Nightingale, one of those to revolutionize society's whole conception of its duty to an oppressed and disinherited class. He was the first to demonstrate prac-

tically that a truly Christian work among seamen is neither wholly evangelical nor wholly social, but consists in a steady and harmonious balance of the two. This was the fundamental principle of his work in the port of New York, and "his line is gone out through all the earth, and his words to the end of the world."

The successive steps by which he brought this result about show what Dr. Mansfield was in his executive character, his extraordinary foresight and sagacity, his mastery of plan and method, his prodigious memory for facts, and above all, his marvelous sense of efficiency, precision and detail. If he had gone into business, as at first he thought of doing, he would have been one of the old type of executive, like "the House" in Dickens's *Tale of Two Cities*, to whom every business relation was personal, who knew more about even the humblest employe than that employe knew about himself, and who carried every detail of business operation continually in his mind. Throughout his thirty-eight years of service to the great army of seamen, he knew every detail of every associate's and subordinate's work much better than they themselves knew it, and his persistent precision

kept each detail in its proper place in the order of importance.

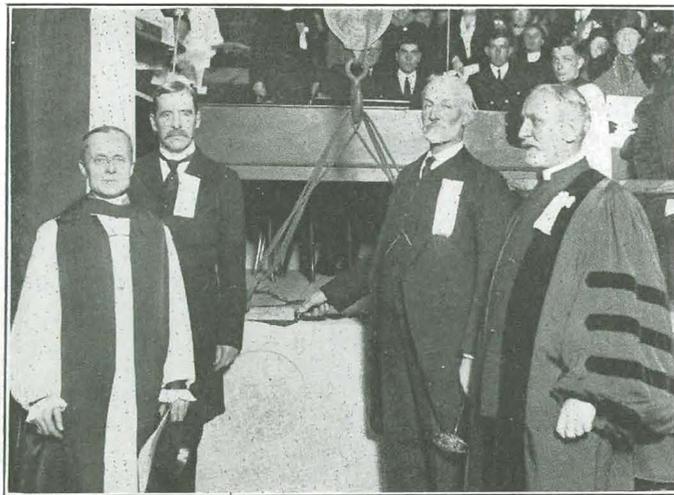
Our practical world is inclined to judge the worth of a man more by what he does than by what he is, and this judgment is good enough for many great men of vision, great planners, great executives, but it is not good enough for Dr. Mansfield. He lived to see all his projects carried out to practical completion. Structurally at least, no plan of his is unfinished, and in this sense it may be said that his work was done. Everything that he designed is going on without interruption or confusion, and will continue so to go on. But the work itself can give no adequate testimony to the spirit in which it was brought forth. Dr. Mansfield institutionalized his work, but he never institutionalized himself. Every relation he had with human beings was personal; it was personal in manner as well as substance. He had no official manner; his way with people was direct and straightforward to the point of austerity. His detachment was remarkable; he seemed to have no prepossessions of any kind. His kindness never failed any one, high or low, rich or poor, and he had unending patience, except with sham, fraud, falseness or

pretence. He could detect these instantly; probably nobody ever successfully deceived him, and not many ever tried it more than once, for the whole tremendous force of his character came out against the first sign of anything of the kind. He was the most unpretentious of men, and the most unambitious. Nobly severe with himself, his eye was single; seeking no reward, not even the reward of praise for a great work well done, he went his way content that his name should be written only in the Book of Life.

His religion was that which St. James declared to be pure and undefiled before God and the Father. He not only labored for the oppressed and afflicted, but he also kept himself unspotted from the world. No man was ever more in the world, no man less of it. In the midst of an evil and perverse generation he walked worthily. In a time of great gen-

eral laxity and faithlessness, he remained sincere and humble and true. His life manifested the beauty of holiness, and his death the peace of perfect assurance. His place is henceforth in the glorious line of that true Apostolic Succession of whom William Law wrote that "they are deeply learned in the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, not through the use of lexicons or meditating upon critics, but because they have passed from death unto life. They highly reverence and excellently direct the true use of everything that is outward in religion, but like the Psalmist's king's daughter, they are all glorious within. They are truly sons of thunder and sons of consolation. They break open the heart, and show its filth and rottenness of death, but they leave it not until the Kingdom of Heaven is raised up within it." *Expectat resurrectionem mortuorum et vitam venturi saeculi.*

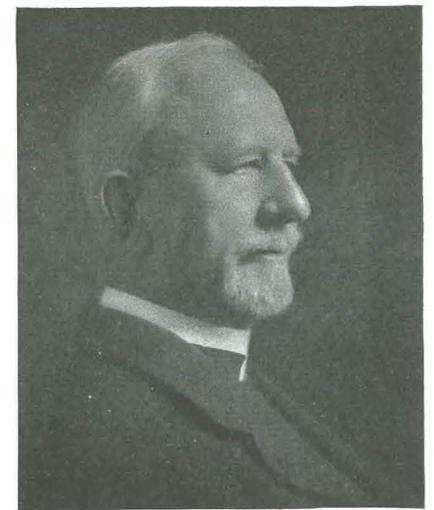




Laying
Corner
Stone
of Annex
Building
Nov. 5,
1925

Bishop Manning, Mr. Baylies, Rear Admiral Sims and Dr. Mansfield

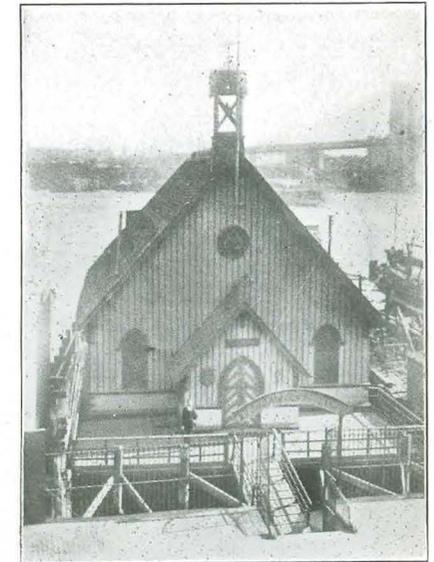
Dr. Mansfield Discusses
Construction Work in
the New Annex,
February, 1928



January, 1934

Many ships at sea should have their flags at half-mast today, for there's scarce a sailor who ever visited our port who has not good reason to remember gratefully his friend Dr. MANSFIELD. Thousands in many ports join in mourning his passing. Like MASEFIELD, who gave himself to telling his tales and fashioning his songs not for "princes and prelates" but for "the sailor, the stoker of steamers" and those in the rain and the cold, Dr. MANSFIELD devoted himself specifically to the sailor, the "unloved child of our civilization," so often homeless and friendless. Beginning with the little mission house in Pike Street at whose foot the Floating Church of Our Saviour in the East River was moored, he not only prayed and preached for the sailor but fought for him against mercenary and vicious forces that once made this "the worst seaport for seamen in the world." He left it the best. His was a field of sea and land in which any man with love of his fellow-man could wish to serve. Such a light was not there before his coming as now shines from the Seamen's Church Institute.

*Editorial, NEW YORK TIMES
February 13, 1934*



Dr. Mansfield on the Deck of the
Church of Our Saviour . . . 1870-1910
Third Floating Church

Archibald Romaine Mansfield

Born 3rd January, 1871, at Spring Valley, N. Y.

Graduated at St. John's School, Sing Sing (now Ossining, N. Y.) 1888.

B.A. St. Stephen's College, 1892.

General Theological Seminary, N. Y., 1892-1895.

Traveled in Europe, 1893.

Took charge of East Side Mission, 34 Pike Street, 3rd January, 1896.

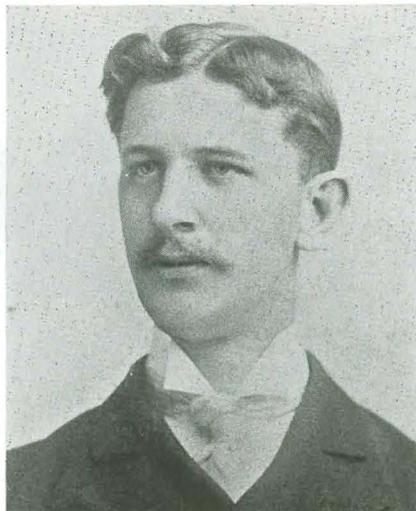
Took Holy Orders, 1896.

Married to Ella Louise Huntington, 14th June, 1899.

Established free school of seamanship and navigation at 34 Pike Street, 1899.

Opened Battery Station, No. 1 State Street, 1902.

Opened a "sailors' rest" in South Brooklyn, 1904 at 22 First Avenue.



Dr. Mansfield in 1894

Consolidated all the East Side Stations, 1904.

Projected present plan of the Institute, 1905.

Projected national organization, the Seamen's Church Institute of America, 1907.

Opened the "Breakwater", Brooklyn, January, 1908.

Became Superintendent of all city stations, 1910.

Published First issue of THE LOOKOUT, May 1910.

Participated in Laying of Cornerstone of Institute Building, April 16, 1912.

Opened the Seamen's Church Institute of New York at 25 South Street and Dedicated Titanic Memorial Tower, 1913.

Opened School of Navigation and Marine Engineering at the Institute, 1914.

Received degree of Doctor of Divinity, St. Stephen's College, 1915.

Organized system of inquiry for missing seamen, 1920.

Organized a marine medical service by radio, 1920.

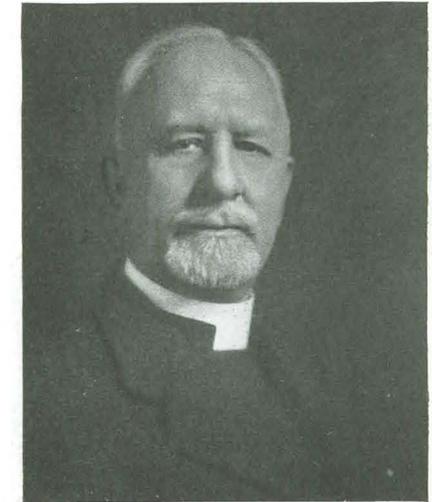
Participated in Laying of Cornerstone of Annex to the Institute, Nov. 5, 1925.

Opened Annex, 1928.

Participated in Dedication of Chapel of Our Saviour, 1930.

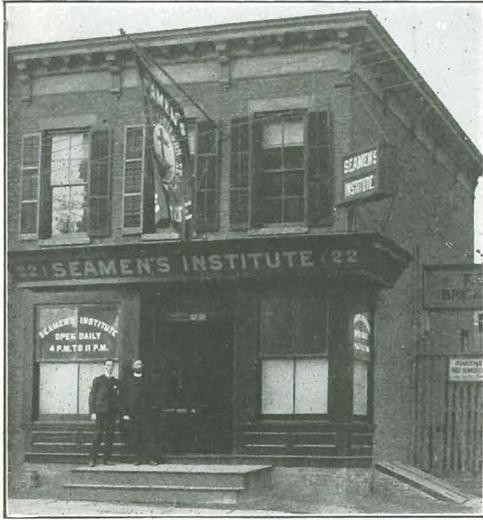
Helped establish a seaman's branch of the Legal Aid Society, 1899; helped secure passage of law against boarding ships by crimps' agents, 1900; more effective anti-crimping law, 1904; law against shanghaiing, 1906; Frye Act, 1908; barge-inspection ordinance, 1909; law regulating tow-lines, 1909; regulations requiring first-aid examination for ships' officers, 1921.

Died 11th February, 1934.



January, 1934

Mission Stations Which Dr. Mansfield
Consolidated Into the Institute



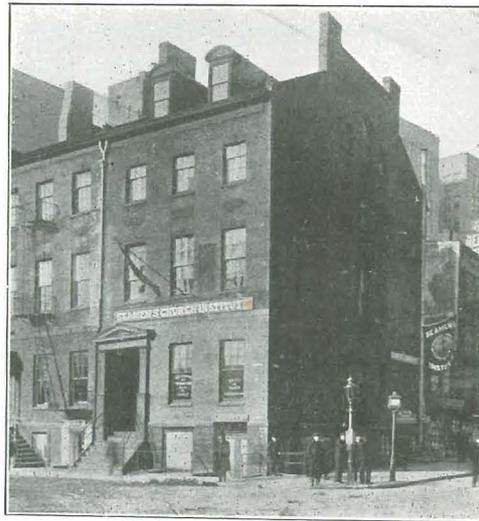
22 First Avenue, Corner 42nd St., Brooklyn



34 Pike Street



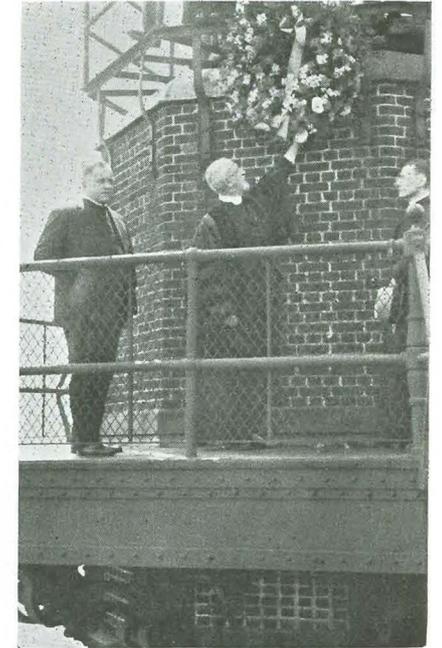
"The Breakwater", 19 Atlantic Avenue,
Brooklyn



No. 1 State Street
Battery Station



Dr. Mansfield Opens Annex, Feb. 20, 1928



Dr. Mansfield Placing a Wreath on Titanic
Tower April 15, 1931



Memorial Day Service, Jeannette Park, May 30, 1932

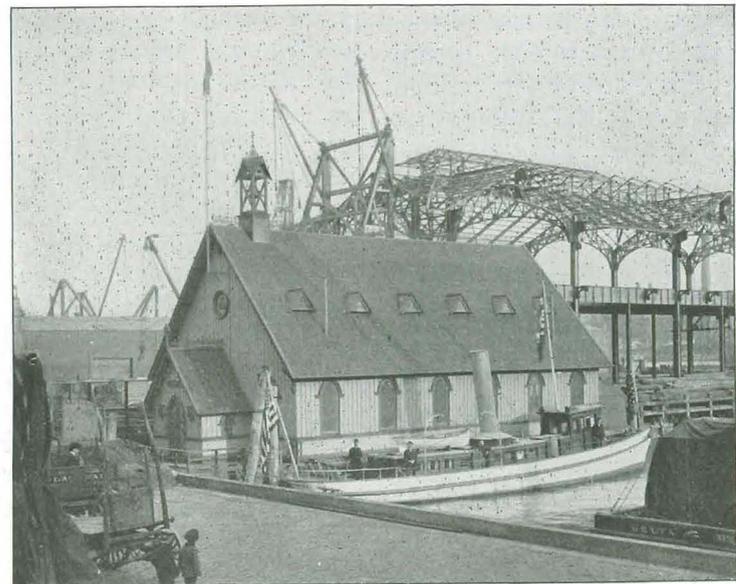


Mr. Edmund L. Baylies and Dr. Mansfield, January, 1930

June, 1921



Dedication of "The Sentinel", November, 1903



Dr. Mansfield on the deck of "The Sentinel"

To the Friends of the Seamen's Church Institute of New York—

MANY of you have learned through the last issue of *The LOOKOUT* of the death of Dr. Mansfield, but I know that to others the news will come as a great shock. To the Board of Managers and the staff of the Institute it was the loss of a friend and a leader, but to the Merchant Seamen it meant the loss of one who throughout his life had given all to improve their condition, and in this he had succeeded. He left us in exactly the way he wished to go, at the zenith of a great career and in full command of his extraordinary faculties, a wish that is granted to few. He had hoped to be spared for two years more to complete certain things that were before him—first and foremost the paying off of the bank loans which are hampering the fullness of the work; and secondly, the completion of a history of the Institute and its relation to the improvement of worldwide conditions for Seamen. These two additional years would have completed his forty years with the Institute at the age of sixty-five, his birth date and his anniversary as Superintendent being coincidental, and at that time he intended to turn over the leadership to a younger man. Although within the last few weeks he

knew his fate was sealed, no one who was not told this would have known it. He planned for the future without hesitation, having absolute confidence in the work which he had built up from a modest beginning, and in the staff that he had developed around him. He never for one moment diminished his interest in the current events of the Institute, for he took the deepest interest in Mrs. Roper's participation in the broadcast by Phillips Lord "Seth Parker" from his sailing vessel then moored in the Potomac at Washington, and predicted that it would return many "Missing Men" to their "home ports"—and it has. He followed closely the success of the Institute's booth at the Motor Boat Show, the largest and most interesting exhibit that the Institute has ever presented and which attracted the attention of hundreds of "strangers" to our work and aims.

And so I could go on detailing the fullness of those last days,—but what they disclosed to me was his calm and unerring faith in the continuance of his life work in no less a degree than as if he were to be with it. It is one thing to build well with bricks and mortar. It is quite another thing to build with human

material, and one of the greatest tributes to his rare ability is the sure and loyal manner in which the staff is carrying on without his guiding presence. When his successor is found the work will be there, waiting and ready for another cycle of progress. This is part of the legacy that Dr. Mansfield has left to the friends of Merchant Seamen who wish to see this work ever carried onward. Dr. Mansfield never hesitated in a forward movement, and we cannot do less in accepting his challenge.

In closing I would like to quote the Resolution which was offered at the last meeting of the Board of Managers (February 21st):

"Dr. Mansfield's death was so unexpected and our loss is so recent that it is very difficult to put into words any adequate expression of our sorrow or of our deep sympathy for his family. The time may come when we will be accustomed to enter this room without his cheery greeting and to conduct our meetings without his presence, but it is not yet. Only one of our number can remember our organization without Dr. Mansfield as its central figure. All the rest of us have only known it as it has grown, step by step, in size and usefulness under his wise guidance and inspiring leadership. It is very difficult to realize that we will not hear his deep, resonant voice again; that his busy brain is planning no longer; that his helpful hands are folded in rest and that

his generous, sympathetic heart has ceased to beat. Within these walls it seems to us today that he must always be a real presence because his spirit and his energy are here enshrined.

"Few men have begun a crusade against greater odds than young Mansfield did in 1895 when he started to clean up the water-front of the Port of New York and make it safe for sailors on shore. It was the kind of practical Christianity that appealed to the men who came by selection to make up the Board of Managers of the little Missionary Society which his enthusiasm developed into this great Institute. We found that he had common sense; that he was a tireless worker and that he was absolutely unafraid. With these qualities he combined a deep religious faith. His belief that he was doing the work of our Lord and Master carried him through times of stress and discouragement and helped him to overcome difficulties that sometimes seemed insurmountable. It was this faith and his fighting spirit that enabled him to go on with his work, despite ill health and threatening blindness. He never was dismayed.

"We all realize that it was the example which Doctor Mansfield set us that spurred us to our best efforts and we know equally well that it was the personality of the man that made us love to work with him. No man ever had a better friend than Dr. Mansfield. His loyalty to those on the Board and to the members of his Staff was splendid. Sincerity and Simplicity were two of his traits.

"When some years have passed and the results of his life work are, perhaps, better known and

understood, a fitting tribute to him can be spoken or written. Today let us record in the minutes of this meeting, without regard to formal phrases, our appreciation of and affection for ARCHIBALD ROMAINE MANSFIELD, our friend and our leader in the work of helping to improve conditions for seamen afloat and ashore in this port and the other principal ports of the United States. Out of respect to him, the flags of every nation might well be at half-mast on all the Seven Seas. Out of love for him, tens of thousands

of seamen whom he has befriended might join us in deep and heartfelt sympathy to Dr. Mansfield's widow, his children and his sisters in their great loss."

With appreciation always of your sustaining interest and help we go forward in his spirit.

Very sincerely yours,

C. G. Nichols
President.



Mr. Baylies, Bishop Manning, Dr. Mansfield and T. Clive Davies at Dedication of Chapel of Our Saviour, May 22, 1930



Seamen's Church Institute of New York, 25 South Street

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