

The LOOKOUT



THEY THAT GO
DOWN TO THE SEA
IN SHIPS

1623 — 1923

SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE
of NEW YORK

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The LOOKOUT

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This Month's Cover shows the FISHERMEN'S MEMORIAL at Gloucester, Massachusetts. Facing the ocean, this statue is one of the numerous interesting sights the visitor finds in that famous town devoted to commercial fishing.

Photo by Ewing Galloway.

The Lookout

VOL. XXI

FEBRUARY, 1930

No. 2

Visit the Institute!

THE smiling gentlemen pictured on this page are Mr. Edmund L. Baylies, President of the Institute, and Dr. Archibald R. Mansfield, Superintendent. It is their task to see that this great shore home for merchant seamen functions smoothly and effectively.

On behalf of the Board of Managers, they cordially invite you to visit the Institute and to bring with you your friends who know nothing of the Institute's splendid achievements. Well-informed guides will conduct your party through the building, beginning with an inspection of the famous Titanic Memorial Tower, from which you can obtain a remarkably fine view of the city and harbor.

If you would like to invite a party of friends to luncheon here, this can be arranged by telephoning at least two days in advance to the Administration Department, Bowling Green 2710, specifying the number of guests you intend to have. A delicious luncheon will



be served, either in the private dining room or in the apprentice room, for \$1.00 per person, including service.

If you are a resident of New York or suburbs, why not plan to make this visit soon?

"Fo'c's'le Follies"



An air of expectancy pervaded our auditorium one Saturday night in December. Two hundred and twenty-five seamen eagerly awaited the amateur, all-home-talent-program, which had been heralded among our sailormen for a week or more.

The first number was a harmonica contest in which five seamen competed. Only one of these seamen possessed a harmonica of his own, but he generously lent it to the other four contestants. The sailor audience was delighted with the "music" which issued forth from this instrument, until finally the German sailor who owned the harmonica asked for a second try, but to his disappointment they had blown out all the music, and try as he might, he could not get a single note out

of it. The audience laughed delightedly and gave him the greatest applause so that he won the prize—a carton of cigarettes.

Next on the program was a singing contest with nine competitors, five of whom sang "Sonny Boy" and quite outdid our Al Jolson himself, and what they lacked in tune they made up in sentiment.

By this time the audience was completely immersed in laughter but the contestants went bravely on amid cheers and applause.

Next came a Charleston contest, and what a sight it was to see these sailormen kicking their heels up and down on the stage, until one of them, a little too energetic, split his shoe in half, but the audience being good sports, clapped loudly and saw to it that he won the coveted reward.

Since that momentous opening, each Saturday night has seen more than 500 sailormen gathered in our auditorium for an evening of informal, extemporaneous entertainment. In the Slop Chest we found some old instruments, a cornet, a saxophone, a mandolin, a guitar and two accordions.

The program has assumed the name of "Fo'c's'le Follies" with a twelve-piece "band" comprised of the aforementioned instruments, supplemented by trap drums borrowed from our Apprentice Room. But alas! the accordions were so old that the leather broke apart in the players' hands. The cornet, when first played also proved disappointing, for the valves stuck, but an ingenious sailorman watered and oiled them so that the instrument became playable. Quite a few seamen are good piano players and they help to drown out the discordant sounds.

On one occasion eight seamen dressed in costumes of Toraadors, Chinamen, Pirates, Indians, etc., with grease paint and wigs, appeared on our stage with dimmed lights and a soft velvet background. They raised their voices in "harmony," (disturbed now and then by sounds which emitted from one sailor who was unluckily suffering with a heavy cold), to the tune of the "Song of The Nile." One of the specialty numbers was "Ham and Sham" which was a parody on Moran and Mack.

Of course, there is always a

sailor who wants to be Rudee Valee and so with a borrowed megaphone he croons "I'm Just A Vagabond Lover" with so much emotion as to put Rudee himself to shame. Another favorite is "Let Me Call you Sweetheart," and "There's a Rainbow 'Round My Shoulder." Their final number is always "Home Sweet Home" with our organist assisting.

They pour out of the doors with contented grins on their faces, bespeaking how much they have enjoyed these jolly times at the Institute.

LOOKOUT readers who have old musical wind or string instruments that are still playable are asked to telephone the Religious and Social Service Department and arrange for a messenger from the Institute to call for these. Our greatest need is for a set of traps and drums.



Unsung Heroes

By DR. S. PARKES CADMAN



DR. S. PARKES CADMAN

Editor's Note—The following letter, reprinted from the 'New York Herald-Tribune', is in answer to a request from an old seaman that Dr. Cadman make reference to the heroism, sacrifice and loyalty to duty of the engine room crews, when at any moment terrific death may burst upon them without any chance for their escape, such as exists for deck crews.

I agree with you that life below deck is often the scene of the bravest deeds. For this reason I seldom fail, if I can get permission, to visit the engine room of an ocean liner when crossing the Atlantic. Those old sea-dogs at the control wheel know the ways and hazards of the

deep. Thrilling yarns of duty done, told with the modest unconsciousness of devoted men, may be heard, once the "chief" or one of his subordinates can be induced to talk.

I recall one about a White Star freighter which cannot be repeated here for lack of space. When I asked the principal figure in the story what he received in recognition of his courageous work, he answered laconically, "Nothing. Never expected anything." So it goes. Praise is not always bestowed where it is richly deserved. The spectacular element counts for much in appraising the value of heroism. The deed that gives the flappers "an eyeful" is sure of the front page, though it may be commonplace enough where it occurred.

Your description of the engine room and its adjacent boilers during war time is reinforced by my recent reading of Commander Ellsberg's book, entitled "On the Bottom." Watched only by the dead, he and his intrepid mates tunneled under the treacherous clay for weeks to get cables beneath Submarine 51, in order to lift her to the surface.

I am glad we have this record, and I wish more of its kind could be obtained. But engineers and stokers cannot scribble the stuff which sensational news-mongers crave. Indeed, they are averse to self-expression. They have experienced too much of life's fierce moods to gabble about them on request. I have noticed their faces and resolute bearing. Every man is of the breed one would select to stand by his side in a tight place. They are a gallant company of unaccredited heroes, in both the merchant marine and the navy, whose duties hold them steady in the whirling maze of flying pistons and throbbing boilers.

Matrimony and Jack Tar

The foremost problem in the merchant seamen's mind today is not: What shall I do to get the "Old Man" to promote me? but rather: Shall I marry? Whom shall I marry? Where can I meet the right girl? How am I to know she is the right girl? and finally, Where can I learn to dance?

These perplexing questions absorb a seaman's mind as, sitting in the lobby of the Institute, they spin yarns or play pool or read adventure-story magazines.

"No sir," said Jim, "who is one of our regular visitors, as he lit his pipe and obligingly moved his chair to windward, "that time when I was thirteen years old and ran away to sea; it was not the blue serge and brass button uniform that lured me, it was

them white sails and those strange lands and queer adventures, and now that I have shipped on all sorts of vessels and been to nearly every port in the World, sometimes I get lonesome.



"I was telling the House Mother here the other day that this Institute ought to start a school for dancing. They could do it up there in the auditorium with men instructors; then we seamen could learn how to dance; instead of goin' to cheap shows and bum joints, we could then go to decent dance halls and get acquainted with respectable girls."

Jim was right. After all, what does a young merchant seaman, a stranger in a strange city, know about the ways of social life, when he has been spending all his time in the fo'c's'le of a passenger *Liner* or a freighter?

"Only this morning," Jim continued, "I was speaking to an old shipmate of mine and he said two years in New York City makes a fellow a woman hater, and he is right.

"There don't seem to be any way for a seafaring man to meet decent girls. We don't like to go to a dance hall because we don't know how to dance and

we are too ashamed to learn where they have women instructors. I think the dance hall is our only way to get out of our bachelor life."

Jim grinned rather sheepishly, but he was full of his idea.

"Or why not start a matrimonial bureau?" he suggested. "There are plenty of us fellows going to sea who are decent. Sometimes when I am up on Times Square, alone, or with a shipmate, I see girls and fellows enjoying themselves and I can't help feeling blue. I know that I could afford to give a girl anything that those other fellows can. You know our wages are better than they used to be and the day of the drunken sailor is nearly over, and so," he concluded, "if you ask me, there is a lot of good husbands going to waste right here in this Institute!"



Courtesy of "Sea Stories"

Just at this moment a seaman stopped and spoke to Jim.

"If you touch Liverpool your next trip, Jim, I wish you'd take time to go and see my wife. I am bound for Buenos Aires and there is no telling when I'll get home next."

Jim pulled a pencil stub from his dungaree trousers and wrote the address on the margin of his newspaper. After the other seaman had departed, he commented:

"His wife'll ask me a lot of fool questions. How Harry was looking and how he behaved himself, and why he didn't write and why he didn't send money home, but I suppose I'll have to see her because a seaman can't go back on his pal. Harry nursed me when I had tropical fever three years ago, but, at that, I wouldn't mind having a wife myself!"

A Sailor's Code

When the S.O.S. crackles through the night millions on shore are stirred to apprehension and pity. Great liners, freighters and tankers turn from their course and flash the signal of hope ahead of them; ships stand by; oil is poured on raging seas, life-boats battle through gale and tempest to the rescue. We take it for granted that the crews will stand ready to sacrifice their lives according to the heroic Code of the Sea.

Thomas Wiggins, seaman, aged 31, found that the code which he followed on the high seas had become instinctively a part of his very character. Himself observing on land the rule of the sea that puts first the safety of women and children, Wiggins risked his life to live up to his code.

A fire broke out in an apartment house at 2395 Valentine Avenue, the Bronx. Wiggins, for whom the Institute had secured a job as house fireman—(since jobs at sea at this time of the

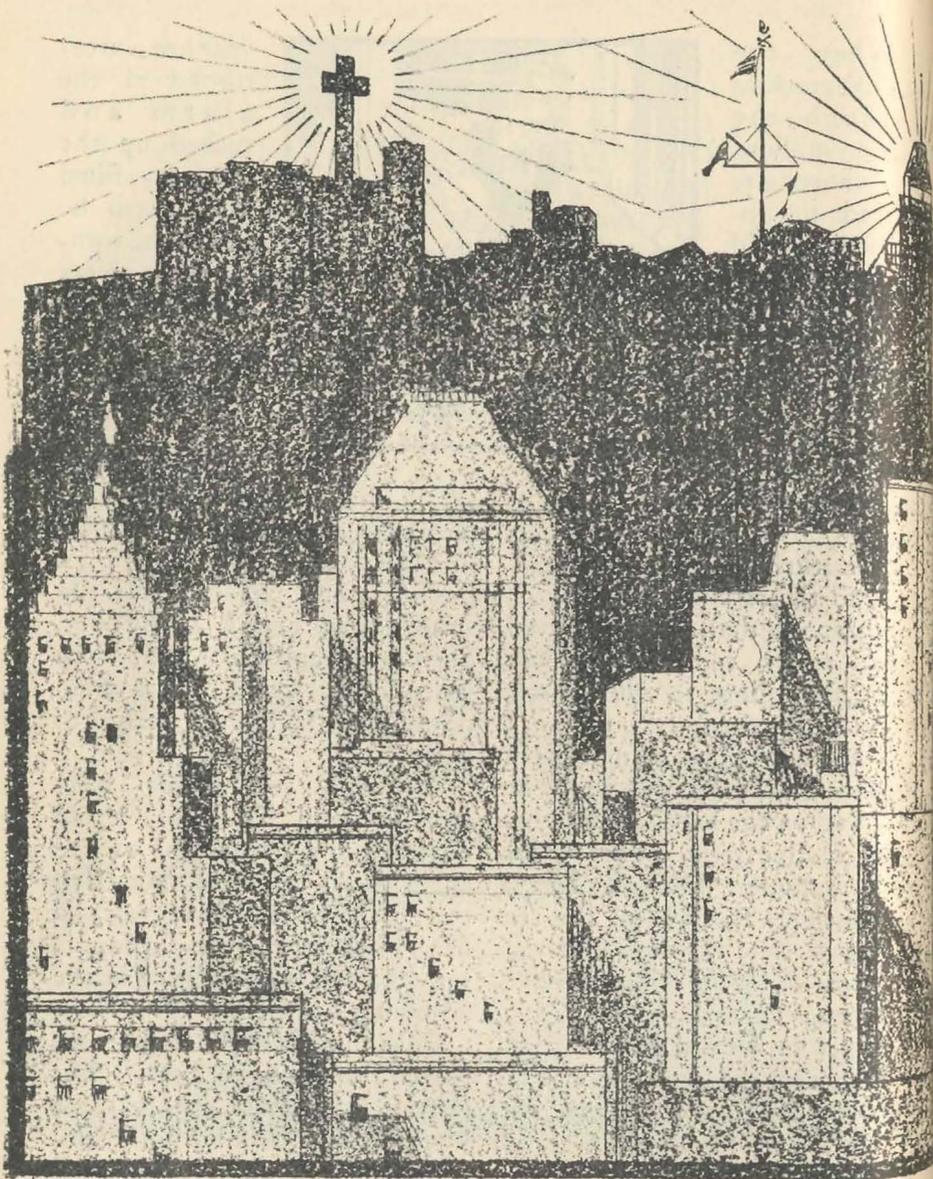


year are scarce) turned in the alarm and rushed up the smoke-filled stairs until he found the owners of the voices who were pathetically screaming "Fire"!

Mrs. Wilhemina Deckert, a fifty-year old housewife, had been cleaning some dresses and the pan of gasoline fell on a gas stove and exploded. Hastily snatching up a rug from the floor, Seaman Wiggins smothered the blaze and carried the woman down five flights of stairs to safety.

Although his hands were scorched and his legs terribly blistered and burned, he turned again to his task and, mounting the blazing stairway, rescued Miss Deckert, 23-year-old daughter, who had been sleeping in the adjoining bedroom.

Both mother and daughter received only slight burns, but Seaman Wiggins spent three weeks in Fordham Hospital simply because he could not go back on the Code of the Sea.



A "City" Within Four Walls

To run the Institute necessitates a payroll which includes architects, builders, electricians, plumbers, carpenters, clerks, stenographers, nurses, doctors, lawyers, furnace men, chefs, waitresses, elevator men, engineers, clergymen, teachers and many other men and women of different professions are required to run this great shore home—the largest in the world—for merchant seamen.

* * *

Three stories underground, men work day and night, to supply this great building with heat and light, power for the elevators, and the kitchen, and the laundry, and ventilating the building, and for the organ and electric clocks, and for the green lights in the Titanic Tower, and to keep out seepage water that comes in at the rate of 11 gallons a minute.

* * *

Thousands of miscellaneous items are expended each day for the efficient administration of the Institute.

* * *

It takes money to run a "City" like this!

But when our Building Fund debt is paid off we will be on a much sounder financial basis.

* * *

Four times a year we must pay interest on our bank loans. We must not take this money from our general maintenance budget.

* * *

Some day in the near future we hope you shall be able to read "Finis" on the center page of "*The Lookout*" and you will know that it means that our great worry is over—the Building Fund debt is finished and completely paid off.

* * *

Will YOU help us realize our hopes?

GORDON KNOX BELL, *Chairman*
Building Finance Committee

* * *

Please send your contributions to JUNIUS S. MORGAN, JR.,
Treasurer, Annex Building Fund, 25 South Street, New York City



It always seemed to Seaman Dan Munson very queer that he should have dropped into the Institute on that day of all days. It was Sunday, that loneliest day in the week for merchant seamen. A week before he had not been lonely, for his fiancée, Doris, and he had spent the afternoon visiting the Aquarium.

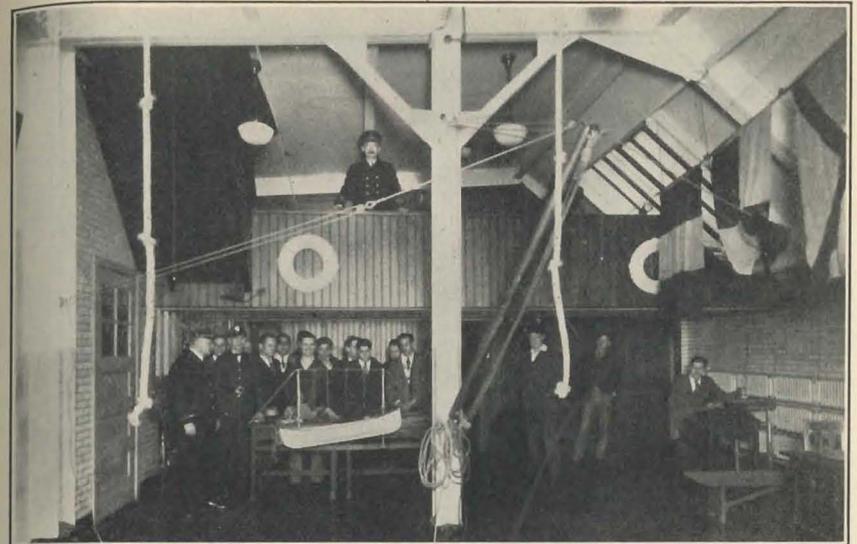
But now all this was changed. Doris had quarreled with him and had refused ever to speak to him again. Dan felt his spirits dropping to a lower and lower ebb as he crossed the lobby of the Institute. It was 8 o'clock in the evening and he noticed that a great many men were turning their footsteps toward the Chapel door.

Not caring whither he went or what became of him, Dan was just about to wander down South Street when another seaman whom he knew accosted him; "Hi there Dan, comin' into Church tonight?" Dan was in too disconsolate a frame of mind

to offer objection, and he permitted the other seaman to lead him into our little Chapel.

After the service Dan, his eyes wet with ill-concealed tears, his face radiant, came to our Chaplain and said, "That sermon was worth \$278.47 Sir, and I'll prove it to you!" He drew out an application to the Veteran's Bureau all filled in with Dan's name and credentials and the amount due him \$278.47. As his address, he had written the location of a speakeasy in Hoboken. With a bold stroke of a pencil Dan crossed out the address and wrote above it, "25 South Street, care of the Chaplain."

Dan explained that he intended to go on a long drunk to drown his sorrows because he had lost his sweetheart. "But your sermon was a life-saver and made me feel ashamed of myself", he said, "and tomorrow I'm going back to Doris and make it up with her." Which he did, and the money that might have been spent so disastrously, when it arrives here from Washington, will now be placed in the Institute's vault for safe-keeping.

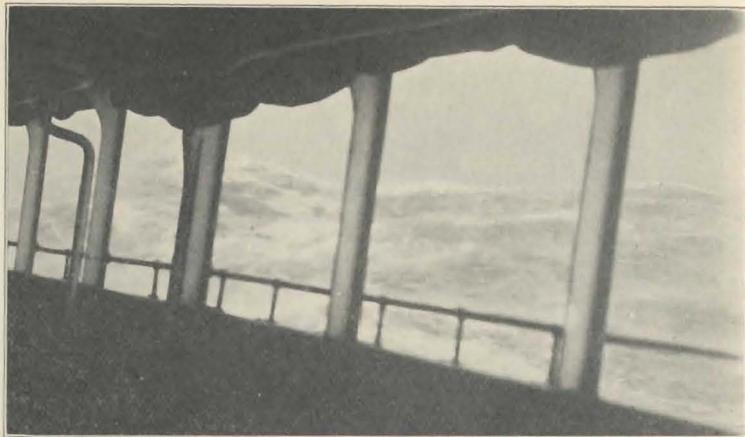


Jack Tar is ambitious. He is eager to study and to improve himself so as to obtain better positions. To meet the constantly growing demand for marine and ship knowledge, the Institute Marine School has been completely enlarged and remodeled so that it now closely resembles the deck of a ship with its pilot house, charthouse, bridge, life boats, etc. In the pilot house, observations for determining latitude, longitude and deviation of the compass will be made. Practical use of the compass will be taught by an ingeniously arranged apparatus that is turned by a ship's wheel which swings, thus steering a standard compass in any desired direction. Should the horizon be obscured, an attachment is used on the sextant adjusted to the celestial horizon.

A new course in ship knowledge which will be open to pleasure boat owners as well as merchant seamen will be given on Wednesday evenings from 7 to 10 p. m. The course which will be greatly simplified and very practical is prompted by reports that United States Steamboat Inspection Service is considering revising the present ruling for water craft to require all operators of yacht and motor boats over 65 feet to pass examinations for licenses.

The Institute is very proud of its Marine School with its complete equipment and a personnel of navigation experts. Since it is operated below cost it is hoped that someone who would like the privilege of having this "ship school" named after him would give \$5,000 towards its maintenance.

The Men Who Follow the Sea



I

Off Hatteras in a howling gale
In a tramp that was nothing but rust
and scale,
Off Hatteras at the fall of night
With the sea all mountains of seeth-
ing white,
And the old tramp making a losing
fight.
But such is the lot of sailors,
Of men who follow the sea.

II

Off Hatteras in a nasty trough
When our engines started to wheeze
and cough,
And the chief's voice cut through the
wrack of gears,
Damning the lot of the engineers,
While the firemen shoveled to drown
their fears.
But such is the work of sailors,
Of men who follow the sea.

III

Off Hatteras with a gale run high
And life holding too much joy to die,
So we shoveled like mad in the bunk-
ers there,
While the coal-dust rose like our
black despair
And the bulwarks echoed our bits of
prayer.
But it's all in the life of sailors,
Of men who follow the sea.

IV

Off Hatteras and the storm was gone,
And the seas rolled easier far by morn.
But a prayer came now from the en-
gineer,
While the fireroom help that had
cringed in fear,
Bawled out oaths that would scorch
the ear.
But that is the way with sailors,
With men who follow the sea.

By BERTRAND L. SHURTLEFF

The End of the Rainbow

After sailing the seven seas for seven years, a Portuguese seaman found happiness at the end of the rainbow when he entered the lobby of the Institute.

The Bulletin Board in the lobby of the Institute is a sort of international newspaper for the men who follow the sea. So when Ricardo Franceschi, able seaman, arrived from foreign ports, he headed there as a matter of course. Running his eye over the hundreds of items which in brief tell tragic stories of missing men and missing ships, Ricardo suddenly was held by an item of more personal interest.

"There is a letter and a package in the Chaplain's office for Seaman Ricardo Franceschi, if he will call for them."

In the Chaplain's office, after identifying himself by his discharge papers, black-eyed Ricardo was handed a letter post-marked "Portugal" and a photograph of his mother whom he had believed dead for eighteen years. Yet there she was smiling up at him out of the photograph, wearing a beautiful lace

shawl over her gray hair. And there in the letter from his brother Pedro, was the secret which since his birth Ricardo had never known. As he read the letter, his eyes filled with tears and he explained happily to the Chaplain:—



"My twin brother, Pedro, and I lived with my uncle since we were babies. When we grew older my uncle told us that my mother had died giving birth to us. At eleven years of age I ran away to sea because my un-
cle treated us so

cruelly, and now, after seven years, I get this letter from my brother telling me that my uncle has died, has left us a lot of money, and has confessed that my mother is well and alive, and lives in a village near my uncle's farm in Portugal! It is too wonderful to believe!"

His brother had sent letters to all ports where he thought Ricardo might be. So with the prospects of seeing his mother, young Franceschi, with the help of the Institute, obtained a job as a deckhand on the first ship sailing to his home in Portugal and embarked on a joyful home-coming.

Musings of the Mate



Meet Our Baggage Master

No sailor ever speaks of Mr. Robert Brine, except with great respect.

Three stories below the street level of the Institute is the great storage cavern where sailors' baggage is stored for safe-keeping with Mr. Brine.

Seaman D. G. Nurrell had a shore job in Wilmington, N. C., so he wrote to our baggage master and requested us to hold the baggage which he had left with us for thirty days. Since the suitcase was in bad condition, it could not safely have been forwarded to him, but Mr. Brine, knowing that the seaman needed the clothing in the suit case, arranged to have it carefully packed and shipped in a cardboard box.

It is such service as this that has endeared Mr. Brine to his thousands of sailor friends.

Flags

We asked a seaman, of many years' seafaring, about a flag that was flying over a vessel in the harbor.

He looked at us scornfully but vouchsafed the following information:

The ensign with the red background and the Union Jack is flown on English Merchant Ships, carrying cargoes. The ensign with a blue background and the Union Jack is flown on English Merchant vessels of the Royal Naval Reserve. The Royal ensign of white with three Red Crosses of Saint George and the Union Jack is flown by the British Men of War. All foreign trading and passenger ships fly the red ensign at the gaff—on the aft mast, but when they enter an American port they fly the American Flag at the foremast.



ANNUAL MEETING

Central Council S.C.I. Associations held a most successful meeting on Tuesday afternoon, January 28th, in the auditorium of the Institute. The Associations far and near were well represented. As *THE LOOKOUT* is about to go to press, a full account of this interesting meeting will appear in the March issue.

Reprinted From
The Editorial Page of
THE NEW YORK TIMES
SATURDAY, JANUARY 11, 1930

THE SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE

Celebrating his thirty-fourth anniversary as a member of the Seamen's Church Institute staff, the Rev. Dr. ARCHIBALD R. MANSFIELD rejoiced that New York's old "sailor town," with its degrading exploitation of the merchant seamen on leave or looking for a ship, was absolutely of the past. If the drugging of the sailor with bad rum and his falling into the clutches of harpies and thieves still occur, the cases are rare. With not only the Seamen's Church Institute but numerous other clubs, homes and missions offering Jack accommodations and entertainment, there is no excuse for backsliding. As for shanghaiing him, the laws as well as friendly institutions protect him against the outrage. Writers of fiction may find him less picturesque today as a subject and lament the passing of "romance." Prohibition has little or nothing to do with it. The clipper ships have gone, and the few sailing ships left are now curiosities. Steam has worked so great a transformation in the life of sailors that the old-fashioned mariner has ceased to exist, except perhaps on whalers in polar seas—and even whalers are for the most part engined nowadays.

The sailor coming to New York today heads for the Seamen's Church Institute's new thirteen-story building on South Street, with its private rooms, baths, social hall, library, restaurant, medical clinic, employment service, postoffice and various forms of entertainment, and including the universal radio. And on West Street, Twenty-third Street and elsewhere in the city there are clubable shelters where he can be comfortable and enjoy himself.

For the change to the good new times seamen are indebted to reformers like the Rev. Dr. MANSFIELD and to philanthropists and ship owners who have made handsome contributions to the upbuilding of the Seamen's Church Institute from the floating church moored at the foot of Pike Street almost a hundred years ago. Where the great modern building rises was formerly

the "Museum" saloon of the old bad days, grim, sordid and foul. South Street at night is now as quiet as the financial district. The Seamen's Church Institute is the finest sailors' hotel in the world, for so it can be called, as three-fourths of its regular revenue comes from the patrons. But it is not yet free of debt, the sum of \$1,225,000 being still outstanding.

Walls

"Aye, a man needs a get-away", remarked Trader Horn, that saltiest of old salts, "Walls 're a mistake".



That is the way Rudinsky felt about land jobs, so he ran away to sea. But unfortunately being ignorant of the immigration laws, when his ship docked in Baltimore he over-stayed his leave and was promptly arrested. His letter telling of his predicament, addressed to the Institute, sent one of our Chaplains down to the Baltimore jail, where, after due explanation, he was released, somewhat the wiser for his stay behind stone walls.

"A Lucky Break"

He entered the elevator with such a radiant, beaming, smiling face that every one turned to look at him. Another seaman queried, "What's the good news, buddy?" The answer burst enthusiastically from his lips: "I

just got a telegram that, out in my home in Venice, California, they struck oil on my old dad's property, so believe me, I'm beating it to the coast as fast as I can get there!" "A lucky break for you," replied the other fellow shaking his head wistfully.

"TRAGEDY AT SEA comes in many ways, but the way which is the most awful (in the word's original sense of inspiring awe), and at the same time the most agonizing to those who have loved ones on board, is that which receives the least attention in the press and therefore makes the smallest ripple on the surface of the world's emotions. We are thinking of the ship which simply disappears. The newspapers write nothing of her because there is nothing to write. There is no fire, no wreck, no collision to chronicle. The ship leaves port, is spoken once or twice, and then . . . After a while she is reported as overdue and friends of those aboard become anxious. Then anxiety turns to fear, and finally to despair. There is little or no newspaper comment because there is no crisis, no event to record. A day comes finally when the ship is posted as missing, but long before that, hope has faded and even memory has begun to blur. Who in this country, for instance, knows that the

Danish training ship Kobenhavn, the world's largest sailing vessel, cleared from Buenos Aires last December, was spoken a week later, and then disappeared from human ken with her company of sixty-seven men and boys. Had we had news of the loss in some definite way it would have gone on the first pages of the newspapers all over the world. As it was, the tragedy just slipped by unnoticed. The last news we saw was an inconspicuous dispatch on June 26 saying that a searching vessel had visited the island of Tristan da Cunha, had shown the inhabitants photographs of the Kobenhavn, and had been told that the ship had been seen drifting by, deep in the water and apparently abandoned. Probably there will never be anything else to tell.

The Nation—Aug. 21, '29"

Oil on Troubled Waters

From time to time "*The Lookout*" has recorded stories of seamen who were artists, sculptors, singers, novelists and poets in the embryo.

Our latest celebrity is Seaman Harry W. Stocking, an inventor of a storm oil spreader which he has patented and which is used for getting life boats clear of ships in bad weather.



SOME of the services extended to all worthy sailormen by the Seamen's Church Institute of New York, during the year 1929:—

417,612 lodgings registered.

335,409 meals served.

822,042 sales made at the soda fountain.

83,534 pieces of dunnage checked and protected.

26,141 books and magazines distributed among merchant seamen.

73,241 special needs administered to by the Social Service Department.

1,566 seamen treated in the Institute Dispensary.

8,637 seamen placed in positions by the Employment Department.

316 missing men located.

\$607,364.35 received for safe keeping, and transmission to seamen's families.

14,004 seamen attended 215 religious services.

28,345 seamen made use of the barber shop, tailor shop and laundry.



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