

## GheLOOKOUT

SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE of NEW YORK

## The Lookout

## Vol. XVI <br> SEPTEMBER, 1925 <br> No. 9

## Editor's Note

There could doubtless be no truer picture of life aboard a merchant ship than the following taken from Conrad's "Nigger of the Narcissus."

## Aboard

At daylight, the "Narcissus" went to sea.
A slight haze blurred the horizon. Outside the harbour the measureless expanse of smooth water lay sparkling like a floor of jewels, and as empty as the sky. The short black tug gave a pluck to windward, in the usual way, then let go the rope, and hovered for a moment on the quarter with her engines stopped; while the slim, long hull of the ship moved ahead slowly under lower topsails. The loose upper canvas blew out in the breeze with soft round contours, resembling small white clouds snared in the maze of ropes. Then the sheets were hauled home, the yards hoisted, and the ship became a high and lonely pyramid gliding, all shining and white, though the sunlit mist. The tug turned short round and went away towards the land. Twenty-six pairs of eyes watched her low broad stern crawling languidly over the smooth swell between the two paddle-wheels that turned fast, beating the water with fierce hurry. She resembled an enormous and aquatic black beetle, surprised by the light, overwhelmed by the sunshine, trying to escape with ineffectual effort into the distant gloom of the land. She left a lingering smudge of smoke on the sky, and two vanishing trails of foam on the water. On the place where she had stopped a round black patch of soot remained, undulating on the swell-an unclean mark of the creature's rest.

The "Narcissus" left alone, heading south, seemed to stand resplendent and still upon the restless sea, under the moving sun. Flakes of foam swept past her sides; the water struck her with flashing blows; the land glided away, slowly fading; a few birds (Continued on Page 3)

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## Editor's Note

We are sure that Lookout readers will be pleased to know that the Institute has secured second class postal rates for the Lookout, for its adoption means a considerable saving in mailing expenses each year.
Probably the new subscription blanks and receipts which will be issued in the future would themselves have attracted the attention of readers to the change. The changes in the forms, however, are only those made necessary by the postal regulations, and we are certain that Lookout readers will gladly use them to help us reduce postal charges.

Entered as second class matter July 8, 1925 at Neiu
York, N. Y., under the York, N. Y., under the act of March 3,1879.

## Aboard <br> (Continued from Page 1)

screamed on motionless wings over the swaying mastheads.

But soon the land disappeared, the birds went away; and to the west the pointed sail of an Arab dhow running for Bombay, rose triangular and upright above the sharp edge of the horizon, lingered, and vanished like an illusion. Then the ship's wake, long and straight, stretched itself out through a day of immense solitude. The setting sun, burning on the level of the water, flamed crimson below the blackness of heavy rain clouds. The sunset squall, coming up from behind, dissolved itself into the short deluge of a hissing shower. It left the ship glistening from trucks to waterline, and with darkened sails. She ran easily before a fair monsoon, with her decks cleared for the night; and, moving along with her, was heard the sustained and monotonous swishing of the waves, mingled with the low whispers of men mustered aft for the setting of watches; the short plaint of some block aloft; or, now and then, a loud sigh of wind.

Forward, the look-out man, erect between the flukes of the two anchors, hummed an endless tune, keeping his eyes fixed dutifully ahead in a vacant stare. A multitude of stars coming out into the clear night peopled the emptiness of the sky; they surrounded the running ship on all sides; more intense than the eyes of a staring crowd, and as inscrutable as the souls of men.

The passage had begun; and the ship, a fragment detached from the earth, went on lonely and swift like a small planet. Round her the abysses of sky and sea met in an unattainable frontier. A great circular solitude moved with her, ever changing and ever the same, always monotonous and always imposing. Now and then another wandering white speck, burdened with life, appeared far offdisappeared; intent on its own destiny. The sun looked upon her all day, and every morning rose with a burning, round stare of undying curiosity. She had her own future; she was alive with the lives of those beings who trod her decks; like that earth
which had given her up to the sea, she had an intolerable load of regrets and hopes.
On her lived timid truth and audacious lies; and like the earth, she was unconscious, fair to see-and condemned by men to an ignoble fate. The august loneliness of her path lent dignity to the sordid inspiration of her pilgrimage. She drove foaming to the southward, as if guided by the courage of a high endeavour. The smiling greatness of the sea dwarfed the extent of time. The days raced after one another, brilliant and quick like the flashes of a lighthouse, and the nights, eventful and short, resembled fleeting dreams.
The men had shaken into their places, and the half-hourly voice of the bells ruled their life of unceasing care. Night and day the head and wheel, outlined seaman could be seen aft by the very steady above thagainst sunshine or starlight, faces chanced passin stir of revolving spokes. The bearded faces dark in rotation. Youthful faces, moody, but all akin with, the serene, or faces sea; all with the same attentiverotherhood of the carefully watching the compave expression of eyes, tain Allistoun, serious, and with an sails. Capround his throat, all day long pervaded the poop. At night, many times he rose out of the darkness. of the companion, such as a phantom above a grave, and stood watchful and mute under the stars, his nightshirt fluttering like a flag-then, without a sound, sank down again.
He had commanded the "Narcissus" since she was built. He loved his ship, and drove her unmercifully; for his secret ambition was to make her accomplish some day a brilliantly quick passage which would be mentioned in nautical papers. He pronounced his owner's name with a sardonic smile. spoke but seldom to his officers, and reproved errors in a gentle voice, with words that cut to the quick. colour of was iron-grey, his face hard and of the of his life pump-leather. He shaved every morning hurricane eighty miles southeing caught in a fierce had missed three consecutive days Maritius) he naught but an unforgiving God, and wished to end
his days in a little house, with a plot of ground attached-far in the country-out of sight of the sea.

He, the ruler of the minute world, seldom descended from the Olympian heights of his poop. Below him-at his feet, so to speak-common mortals led their busy and insignificant lives. Along the main deck Mr. Baker (the chief officer) grunted in a manner bloodthirsty and innocuous, and kept all our noses to the grindstone, being-as he once remarked--paid for doing that very thing. The men working about the deck were healthy and con-tented-as most seamen are, when once well out to sea. The true peace of God begins at any spot a thousand miles from the nearest land; and when He sends there the messengers of His might, it is not in terrible wrath against crime, presumption, and folly, but paternally, to chasten simple heartsignorant hearts that know nothing of life, and beat undisturbed by envy or greed.
In the evening the cleared decks had a reposeful aspect, resembling the autumn of the earth. The sun was sinking to rest, wrapped in a mantle of warm clouds. Forward, on the end of the spare spars, the boatswain and the carpenter sat together with crossed arms; two men friendly, powerful, and deep chested. Beside them the short dumpy sail-maker-who had been in the Navy-related, between the whiffs of his pipe, impossible stories about Admirals. Couples tramped backwards and forwards, keeping step and balance without effort, in a confined space. Pigs grunted in the big pigstye. Belfast, leaning thoughtfully on his elbow, above the bars, communed with them through the silence of his meditation. Fellows with shirts open wide on sumburnt breasts sat upon the mooring bits, and all up the steps of the forecastle ladders. By the foremast a few discussed in a circle the characteristics of a gentleman.

They disputed endlessly, obstinate and childish; they repeated in shouts and with inflamed faces their amazing arguments; while the soft breeze, eddying down the enormous cavity of the foresail, that stood out distended above their bare heads, stirred the tumbled hair with a touch passing and light like an indulgent caress.
"The Nigger of the Narcissus."-Joseph Conrad.

## The Conrad Memorial

To the Honorary Literary Committee to the Joseph Conrad Memorial announced in the August Lookout Sir Ashley Sparks, the Chairman of the Committee announces the following additions:

Mr. Hugh Walpole, Mr. William McFee and Mr. Richard Curle.

Their letters regarding the Memorial are printed below:

> Brackerburn,
> Manesty Park, Keswick.

August 25 th, 1925.
My dear Mr. Baylies:
I shall be very proud indeed to be a member of the Honorary Literary Committee for such a Conrad Memorial as you mention and must thank you for inviting me.

$$
\begin{aligned}
& \text { Yours sincerely, } \\
& \text { (Signed) Hugh Walpole. }
\end{aligned}
$$

> 57 Russell Square, London, W. C. I., England.

August 24th, 1925.

## My dear Sir:

I feel much honored that you should wish to include my name on the Honorary Literary Committee of the Conrad reading-room of the Seamen's Church Institute of New York.

I accept with great pleasure, for I know well how close to Conrad's heart were the interests of seamen. . . . .

$$
\begin{aligned}
& \text { Yours sincerely, } \\
& \text { (Signed) Richard Curle. }
\end{aligned}
$$

## A Definition

"The people who have to do with the running of Seamen's Institutes are just like other people with perhaps a more definite consciousness of the need of an abiding faith, great patience and a sense of humor. We do not know how it is with the rest of the craft but it sometimes happens with us due to perhaps pretty constant wear and tear that it seems as though the mast carries away and takes with it all of the above mentioned virtues. When these times come we just sit down and read those lines which Eugene O'Neill put in the mouth of the dying sailor in his "Bound East for Cardiff' $\qquad$
"This sailor life ain't much to cry about leavin' -just one ship after another, hard work, small pay, and bum grub; and when we git into port, just a drunk endin' up in a fight, and all your money gone, and then ship away again. Never meetin' no nice people; never gittin' outa sailor town, hardly, in any port; travellin' all over the world and never seein' none of it; without no one to care whether you're alive or dead. There ain't much in all that that'd make yuh sorry to lose it . . . . . It must be great to stay on dry land all your life and have a farm with a house of your own with cows and pigs and chickens, 'way in the middle of the land where yuh'd never smell the sea or see a ship. It must be great to have a wife, and kids to play with at night after supper when your work was done. It must be great to have a home of your own ."
This is all so true that we just have to take a fresh hold on things and try and see if we can not do more than we have ever been able to do before."
-The Mainstay.

## Part of the "Annex" Muster

The past few weeks have seen some additions to the Annex crew. Among them are many Lookout readers whose names will be found below :
Byron S. Adams ..... $\$ 100$
Mrs. W. L. Andrews ..... 100
Mrs. H. K. Appleton ..... 100
W. A. Augur ..... 100
Anonymous ..... 100
Captain F. D. Berrien ..... 100
John E. Berwind ..... 2,500
Bertha G. Brooks ..... 100
A. L. Burns ..... 100
W. F. Carey ..... 100
Mrs. Hugh J. Chisholm, Sr. ..... 100
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Mrs. David T. Dana ..... 100
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Miss Elizabeth H. Flack ..... 100
John Fraser ..... 200
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W. A. McLaren ..... 100
Miss A. R. Nash ..... 150
Mrs. Samuel M. Nicholson ..... 100
Miss Louise Niemeyer ..... 100
Miss Fanny Norris ..... 100
Mrs. William Church Osborn ..... 100
Miss Caroline H. Palmer ..... 100
Mrs. Edgar Palmer ..... 100
Mrs. Edward McClure Peters ..... 5,000

## A Stranger's Strange Story

(Continued)
My shore leave is up in a few days. I have a queer feeling about leaving this place-so many things happening-in broad daylight too. Here the other day, while digging for the Annex I told you about-more room for the Institute needs, and mind you, all this for seamen-they find "buried treasure" for sure. The wreck of an old Dutch ship, buried twenty-five feet below the street level, in the corner by Front Street and Coenties Slip. And now another forty-foot sloop was uncovered near Cuyler's Alley. The excitement down here, the crowd on Front Street was so large it interfered with the workmen. The newspapers are printing all the news day after day, of the finds-"buried treasure." Even of old rum bottles, along with other things to go in museums. They belong here, those relics, in the building, "finders keepers" the old saying, what?

I had a talk with a man from Glasgow the other night down by the wharf, an old sailor. He works about the docks, has only one leg and everybody thinks he's queer in the head. But everyone trusts him and the dockmaster sees that he gets pay enough to live on. He's only himself to do for. Well, we turned up a few people we knew during our talks. And something kept at me to ask him about Captain Kidd-I mean to
tell him how he came alongside that first night and walked-and the other times-especially that night in Jeanette Park. While I was making up my mind how to begin, he spoke of the finding of the wrecks, said he first heard of it from a man who was digging there, then he read the news-papers-even went over to see the crowd standing about there. Saw the Dutch ship, and wanted to go over again to Coenties Slip to see the sloop, the last find. I said "Come along with me, when your time is up this evening. It's light until eight bells, and have your supper with me in the building."
That night after supper we walked out on Co. enties Slip. There was a fair sized crowd of men and boys standing about talking and pointing out the sloop-and one man near us said that
nothing ever light, no matter how long or how deep came to hid. The Glasgowman took him on. How about Captain Kidd's treasures. Think of the years and money spent trying to locate them. "Why even when I was a boy on my first ship I heard of Captain Kidd. Of course that he was a pirate
which made me think none the less of hime which made me think none the less of him. I
loved the adventure of it. Then the treasure what I would have done about it ... where I would send it . . . To this day I've not changed my mind about the place where I would put it. To my mind the safest place in the world is

$$
\dot{(T o b e ~ c o n t i m u e d) ~}
$$

## Reputation

The postal authorities have many problems to contend with in the way of curious addresses. But they seem to know from long experience that any ambiguously addressed envelope having to do with things nautical eventually finds its way to 25 South Street. In the past there have been letters addressed to "The Sailors' House with the Green Light," "Seamen's Lighthouse," "Coenties Slip Sailors' Home," "Marine House," "Seachurch," "Sailors' Home New York" that have all reached their proper destination. This time it was a letter addressed to "Some reputable steamship employment agency, New York City," and mailed from an inland city hundreds of miles from the waterfront. It was brought by one of the officials of the postal department with instructions to try to deliver it to the Institute. He thought we lived up to the address, he added.

## Sea Cure

The world seemed all too crowded yesterday. Trees irked me with their thousand whispering tongues.
The windows of the little houses round
Were curious eyes that peered into my soul. "Let me alone!" I cried to all of them. The street stood still before my quiet door, And would not go upon its paltry way. Even my garden spot seemed tawdry-trite. I hungered so for distance.

So I came
Here where the sea was healing respite-calmCovers me-folds me-wraps me softly in.
Gray twilight . . . on the endless sea and shore.
How I am glad for these vast sweeping tides. Gray ing, deep
Effectual and blessed increment
Of needed comfort.
the faint
Intangible far beauty of slow clouds.
A sail . . . A gray sail, here . . . A petrel,
And the pale drifting feathered lines of smoke.
Wonder and waiting fill me. . . . I am healed
Of every malady of disconitent.
How I am glad no flaming sunset flaunts
A streaming opulence . . The gray of nuns-
Of mother's eyes-is what I need tonight.
O quiet sea O distance . . . where I trace that cleave the dusk with silver
Small hopes that cleave the dusk with silver wings.

The world is far away . . . And I shall love My whispering trees when I go back again.
The little windows-they will be asleep.
The street-gone stepping bravely on its way.
My garden flowers, awaiting me, will lie
Dreaming beneath that gold-bowed rising moon.
And I will stand above them, glad and strong.
For the gray potent healing of the sea,
With its clean tides, has made me whole again.
Barbara Young.

## Suggestions

Several of the suggested memorials that were published in the earlier numbers of the Lookout have been subscribed to.

The list below contains some of the most needed units for the new building that have not yet been taken.

Many of them are especially suitable for groups-business, professional, patriotic, or fraternal organizations-who may wish to pay tribute to one of their members.

Perhaps it will suggest to you the form you desire a contribution to take?
200 Chapel Chairs .Each ..... $\$ 50$
(23 Taken)
8 Drinking Fountains on Dormitory Floors.....Each ..... 250(2 Taken)
3 Drinking Fountains on Second, Third and Fourth Floors ........................................Each(Second and Fourth Floors Taken)
Name as Co-Builder in Entrance Lobby... $\$ 1,000$ to ..... 500500
205 Seamen's Bedrooms Each ..... 500
( 13 Taken)
211 Seamen's Bedrooms with running water ..... 1,000(IS Taken)
41 Staff and Licensed Officers' Bedrooms ..... 1,500
(12 Taken)
1 Dressing and Wash Room for Men and ClericalEmployees3,000
1 Public Dining Room ..... 5,000
1 Cloak and Wash Room for Volunteer Women Workers ..... 5,000
6 Forty-two-bed Open Dormitories ..... 5,000 (I Taken)12 Bedrooms and Endowment for free use of de-pendent convalescents ........................Each( 4 Taken)5,000

8 Very Large Dormitory Wash Rooms........Each 5,000
Wing of five Officers' Bedrooms on Fifth Floor... 7,000
Wing of five Officers' Bedrooms on Twelfth Floor 7,000
4 Wings of nine Seamen's Bedrooms.......... Each

+ (I Taken)
Main Public Stairway, Second Floor to Fourth ${ }^{* * 10,000}$
Mezzanine ............................................ 15,000
Superintendent's and Administration Offices....... 15,000
6 Corridors of Seamen's Bedrooms (19 in all.................. 50,000
Entrance Doorway and Lobby......................... 20,000
1 Block of 15 Officers' Bedrooms
Enlarged Apprentices' Room, including Cloak Room and name as Founder
6 Wings of Seamen's Bedrooms (19 with running water, 14 ordinary rooms)....................Each
Wing of 18 Officers' Bedrooms and Wash Room on Twelfth Floor
1 Reading and Lounge Room ( 10,000 sq. it.) ........ 50,000
Dispensary and Hospital Rooms
50,000
Dit of entle the donor to recognition
** All gifts of $\$ 3,000$ and over entitle the donor to recognition main entrance lobby.
* Donations of $\$ 10,000$ or more cntitle the donor to recognition as FOUNDER.
(This list does not contain several of the large memorial (This list does noted and already subscribed.)
gifts poster


## Black Silk

Tall he was, Scandinavian, with the ruddy color of the sea in his face, and he surged rather than walked into Mrs. Roper's office. For a moment he was a little embarrassed as he settled himself in the chair beside her desk. He showed her some Oriental pearls he had bought in Japan for his mother. Then he came to the real question. It had to do with silk. The best black silk in New York, it must be, for his mother's fiftieth wedding anniversary; would she help him get it? She would, and it was then that the question of quantity came up. How much was required? "Tonnage," "displacement," and such terms were all right for ships, but a dress was a different question! He could think only in terms of ship's dimensions.

Finally he fumbled about in his pocket and produced a photograph of his mother. Then his attempts at description clarified themselves in the House Mother's eyes. She called a volunteer who had a real flair and taste for the materials women love, and the modern Viking found himself towed away to a smart up-town store in the wake of the small but kindly lady who had volunteered to go on the quest.

That was a year ago, but the story did not end there.

Only last week the same big Dane came into Mrs. Roper's office with such an elated smile that she was certain that it must have something to do with his mother. It did, but it was something more than a dress, for he waved before her as-
tonished eyes a cheque for five hundred dollars, the next to the last payment on a four thousand dollar house he had been buying her.

Her one joy was her church, he said, but in the winter, on the farm, the snow lay so deep that it was impossible to go. The new little house in town was only a stone's throw from the church she could go as much as she liked.
'You see, the old man doesn't set such store by that as she does," he added smilingly. But his father didn't have a black silk dress to wear.

## Realization

When I was a lad, I used to read
By summer afternoons and nights
Of adventurers in squared rigged ships, Of foreign ports and splendid sights.

And I would dream upon the day, When I should know a heaving deck, Or beach a long-boat on the sand, Beside some galleon-buried wreck.

Now I am gone to see the world;
Nor all the eager dreams of youth,
Afire with tale of pirate gold
Have conjured up the living truth.
The odor of the water-port,
The sun-white sand of coral keys;
No tale of verse may ever hint
One-half the spell of far-deep seas.
Ira South.

## THE LOOKOUT

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## In Port

Somewhere in Snug Harbor is an old seaman who is grateful to the Institute. He didn't know a soul in New York, he had had two paralytic strokes, but was well enough to take a steamer to New York en route to Snug Harbor. So the Seamen's Institute in San Francisco wrote to the Head of the Social Service department, requesting someone to look out for him. The steamer was not an ordinary passenger ship; its arrival was entirely a matter of conjecture. So for several days there was much telephoning back and forth, and the officials of the steamship line thought some one of note was traveling incognito. But somehow along the line the thread of kindness instituted by the San Francisco Institute seemed to be running. The clerks, the office force at the steamship company appeared to take a personal interest in the matter, and even the taxi man who finally drove the Social Service worker to the dock took special care of the worn, white-faced old seafarer who came shakily down the gangplank, startled, dazed and not a little touched by all the attention paid him. But his confused thanks, his joy at being cared for, his relief to reach his port, fully repaid all those who helped an ancient mariner reach his final harbor.

## The Song of the Sails

Not long ago a schooner was sunk in a severe storm. Six of the crew survived by clinging to a small raft for nearly a week, without food or drink, and with intense suffering.
One of the survivors, an old man, lost all his effects, and the Chaplain volunteered to procure duplicates of his papers. This done, the old sailor was ready for sea again.
"Why don't you ship on a steamship?" asked the Chaplain. "After this experience, you surely won't want to ship on another schooner?"

The old man thought intently.
"Steamships is fine," he said slowly, "but . . . you don't hear the wind rattling the sails at night I guess I'll take a schooner."
And he was gone.

## The Last Ship

If men who love ships were to choose the last
To be a final vision from the sea-
It would be one of lofty, slender mast
With bright sails filled and lifted gloriously.
It would be such a ship as dreamers knew
By island coast-line when the dawn was mist
Of star dust and great rubies stricken through
With breakers' foam and bay's tossed amethyst.
It would be a ship that proud adventurers
Rigged up for gold coasts and the pearl lagoon,
And all the dreams they had would yet be hers,
Come in from distant voyages near the moon-
It would be such a ship as makes men sad
With beauty for romance they might have had.
Glenn Ward Dresbach.

