

THE LOOKOUT



TUSITALA TRAINING SHIP, U. S. MERCHANT MARINE

THE SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK

VOL. XXIX NO. 9

SEPTEMBER, 1938

THIS MONTH'S COVER shows the "TUSITALA" under full sail in the days of her cargo voyages. Keystone View Photo.

The LOOKOUT

VOL. XXIX, SEPTEMBER, 1938

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Telephone BOWling Green 9-2710

CLARENCE G. MICHALIS

President

FRANK T. WARBURTON

Secretary-Treasurer

REV. HAROLD H. KELLEY

Superintendent

MARJORIE DENT CANDEE

Editor, THE LOOKOUT

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The Old Skipper Bids Farewell to His Ship

(NEWS ITEM: "The 'Tusitala', last full-rigged vessel to fly the American flag, was towed out of New York Harbor, to be broken up for scrap. The old ship's captain was grief-stricken." For later news, see page 3.)

Goodbye, old ship! I shall not see again
The mountainous green seas sweep over
you,

Nor see you come up smiling, wave
encrested,

In calm or gale your stately bearing held.
Old ship, the storms we've seen together,
you

And I, 'tween Dover's cliffs and 'Frisco's
Golden

Gate; Like a driven deer the western
winds

Have hustled you along, the breath of life
Within you, logging seventeen, you led
Us into port, reeling beneath the royals.

We both have seen life's dawn become
its noon,
And manhood's prime grow mellow with
the ripening

Time of life; And we have seen together
The rain and mist and flying spray as
down

The roaring Forties with the wind we
raced.

And I am sad that youth must pass
and ships

Decay. My memories of golden days
And star-sown Tropic nights, the stormy
Horn,

Are mingled with the thund'ring Wester-
lies

Amid the tossing world of waters down
In Fiddlers' Green where sailors' bones
repose.

I shall not walk again your heaving deck,
Nor watch the up-flung spume caress
your prow.

In man's short life are many kinds of
love,

But to the sailor comes an unique love:
The love for one ship above all the rest.
And so farewell! I could not feel more
sad

If I were parting from a well-loved
friend.

Goodbye, old ship. You marked my pas-
sage from

A boy to man. The men'ry of your grace
And form shall haunt me in my thoughts
and dreams.

By MARJORIE DENT CANDEE

The Lookout

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Hail, "Tusitala!"



Captain Carl Gundersen, Skipper of the "Tusitala."

OLD Captain Carl Gundersen, skipper of the full-rigged ship "TUSITALA", sat in his cabin, his gnarled hands busy with a palm and needle. A visitor asked, "Why bother to repair that flag, Captain, since the ship is going to be broken up?" The skipper went on with his sewing, and replied: "I want her to look as nice as she can, going to her funeral".

So the "TUSITALA", after fifty-five years of sailing the seven seas, her flags flying proudly, was towed down the Hudson River on July 2nd and bowed her head gallantly as she squeezed underneath Brooklyn Bridge (her three royal yards were down, and so were her fore, main and mizzen topgallant masts) and proceeded to her destination—the scrap-heap, to be broken up by the Marine Liquidating Corporation

at Fall River, Mass., and old salts' eyes are misty.

Thus ends the career of the last full-rigged merchant ship to fly the American flag, and the only square-rigger afloat with stun'sails. Her owner, James A. Farrell, former president of the United States Steel Corporation, (who, as a boy, had played about on the decks of the clipper ship "Glory of the Seas", commanded by his father) went aboard and removed from the captain's cabin two valuable letters, one from Joseph Conrad and one from Robert Louis Stevenson (the ship had been named "TUSITALA" as a tribute to Stevenson; in Samoan, the name means "writer of tales"). Mr. Farrell also removed the ship's clock and barometer which will doubtless be placed on exhibition at India House. The

letter from Joseph Conrad, dated June 2nd, 1923, reads as follows:

"To the Crew of the Tusitala: On leaving this hospitable country where the cream is excellent and the milk of human kindness apparently never ceases to flow, I assume an ancient mariner's privilege of sending to the Owners and the Ship's company of the *Tusitala* my brotherly good wishes for fair winds and clear skies on all their voyages. And may they be many!

And I would recommend to them to watch the weather, to keep the halliards clear for running, to remember that 'any fool can carry on but only the wise man knows how to shorten sail in time' . . . and so on, in the manner of ancient mariners all the world over. But the vital truth of sea-life is to be found in the ancient saying that it is 'the stout hearts that make the ship safe'.

Having been brought up on it I pass it on to them in all confidence and affection.

JOSEPH CONRAD".

This letter has been presented by Mr. Farrell to the Joseph Conrad Library at the Seamen's Church Institute of New York.

The "TUSITALA" started life in 1883 as the "INVERUGLAS", the last ship built by Steele of Greenock, Scotland. She made several voyages to Australia

in the wool trade, and was then acquired by a Liverpool firm and renamed the "Sierra Lucena". In 1904, Norwegians purchased her and renamed her "Sophie" and until 1923 she sailed under the Norwegian flag. In 1923 she was laid up at Hampton Roads, Virginia, and it is there that Captain Felix Riesenbergs and Christopher Morley first saw her, formed a syndicate and persuaded James A. Farrell to purchase her. She was then rechristened "TUSITALA" and in

command of Captain James P. Barker, made several voyages to Honolulu, by way of the Panama Canal, carrying miscellaneous cargoes (fertilizer for island pineapple plantations) and bringing back molasses, sugar, etc. For the past five years she has been tied up at an old wharf at 156th Street and the Hudson River where her white hull and towering masts have been seen by thousands of Riverside Drive strollers, a picturesque reminder of the days when white-winged ships reigned supreme on all the oceans, and when steamers were contemptuously referred to by old-timers as "tin-pots".

Many an American lad received his sea-training on the decks of the "TUSITALA", for her owner believed strongly in the value of training under sail and encouraged boys to sign on. Last year, when he realized that the old ship could no longer pay as a merchant vessel, he offered her to the U. S. Maritime Commission for use as a training ship for the personnel of the American Merchant

Marine. Rear Admiral Henry A. Wiley, U. S. N. retired, Captain Felix Riesenbergs, Captain Alan Villiers, and many other marine authorities who favor sail training, supplementing training in steamships, approved Mr. Farrell's offer, but such training would be expensive, as only a hundred or so cadets could be carried, and so Congress failed to appropriate the necessary funds to rebuild and recondition her as a school ship.

There now remain only two

square-rigged ships under the American flag, and these have been converted into yachts, with Diesel engines. They are the "Seven Seas", owned by Walter Gubelman, and the "Joseph Conrad", owned by G. Huntington Hartford. The latter, before she became a yacht, made a two-year cruise around the world with a crew of young men, in command of Alan Villiers.

And so, we must say, "Hail and Farewell" to the good ship "TUSITALA". No longer will the commands be heard on her deck: "Haul round the cro-jik yards! Main yards round — Haul away there! Belay all! Let go fore tack and sheet; haul away that fore brace; belay fore! Haul away tops'l braces!"

Just before the old vessel left her wharf at 156th Street, it was realized that the captain's old dog, a Belgian shepherd who had been aboard since 1923, would no longer have a home, so the owner of the yacht, "Wanderlust", Mr. O. F. Holt, agreed to take the dog so that he may continue his seagoing.

Captain Felix Riesenbergs, when asked to write a fitting epitaph for the ship "TUSITALA" he loved so well, said:

"I'd rather see the old ship broken up than converted into a coal barge, or made into a museum-cabaret like the old 'Benjamin Packard'" he said. "When the Three Hours For Lunch Club purchased the 'Tusitala' in 1923, I was entered at the Custom House as her owner and I held that distinction for a few days while the ship was incorporated. When Mr. Farrell bought out the subscribers, all of the stockholders were paid off in cash, without the loss of a cent, a truly remarkable outcome of this adventure in owning a sailing ship. I know that all those stockholders will grieve, with me, at her passing. She was a grand old windjammer".

THE LOOKOUT was almost on the press when the following good news about the "TUSITALA" appeared. The preceding poem and article by Miss Candee, *THE LOOKOUT* Editor were too good to lose, however, and, with all the joy of a change from a funeral to a wedding we supplement them with the following item from the *New York Herald-Tribune* of August 20th.

H. H. K.

WASHINGTON, Aug. 19.—Plans to give American seamen who enter the projected merchant marine schools the advantage of training under sail were disclosed today by the United States Maritime Commission.

The commission announced that it had acquired two famous three-masted, square-rigged ships for use in the new program. Both ships have had long and romantic careers and have been familiar sights in years past in the harbors of the world. The *Tusitala* has been purchased from the Marine Liquidating Corporation, of Fall River, Mass., and the *Joseph Conrad* has been presented to the commission by Huntington Hartford, of New York and Newport, R. I.

Both ships will be stationed, temporarily at least, at Hoffman's Island, New York Harbor, the Eastern base of the training program. It is hoped that eventually they may be operated in training cruises between east and west coasts, with bases on both.

The *Tusitala* was formerly owned by James A. Farrell, of New York, former president of the United States Steel Corporation. Mr. Farrell offered her to the commission some time ago. Congress, however, had not authorized the training program at that time, and Mr. Farrell subsequently sold her to the Marine Liquidating Corporation. The commission's purchase of her for \$10,000 saved her from the scrap pile. She is 261 feet over all with a gross tonnage of 1,748, and 1,624 net. She was built in Scotland in 1883.

The *Joseph Conrad* is equipped with a Diesel motor of 160 horsepower, is 147 feet 6 inches over all, was built in Copenhagen in 1882. She has a gross tonnage of 212, and 182 net.

Icebergs

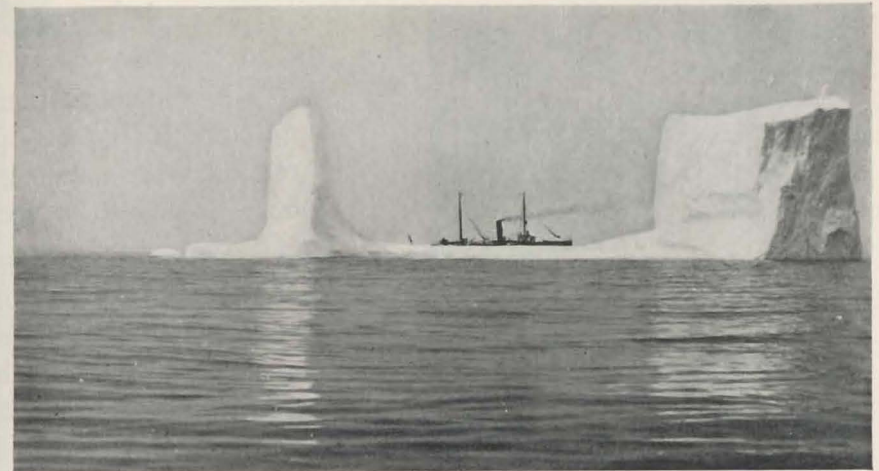


Photo by Seaman Emil George Andersen

A RECENT news dispatch told of the passengers of a transatlantic liner being "thrilled" by sailing through a narrow passage between two icebergs. There is something mysterious and fascinating about those gigantic white masses of ice. Talking with a member of a Coast Guard crew in the Ice Patrol, THE LOOKOUT editor learned that from May 8th to June 30th, shipping must follow the North Atlantic routes laid down by the International Ice Patrol from Fastnet Light to Nantucket Lightship. Only last week the cutter "Tahoe" reported "chasing" a big berg off the coast of Newfoundland and of warning ships of its position, its speed and the direction of its drift. The cutter "Pontchartrain" continued the chase after this particular berg, and finally reported that it had reached the warm waters of the Gulf Stream and was fast melting. Radio broadcasts from the Patrol to nearby steamers to "proceed with caution" are the means of preventing a repetition of such

disasters as the "Titanic", which collided with an iceberg on her maiden voyage, April 15th, 1912. As a result of this disaster, the International Ice Patrol was established and is now maintained by fourteen nations: United States pays 18% of the cost; Great Britain 40%, Germany 10%, France 6%, Canada 3% and the balance by smaller nations. Another reminder of this iceberg-catastrophe is the Titanic Lighthouse Tower, atop the *Institute's* roof.

In the officers' reading room at the *Institute* the other day there was a great discussion going on about icebergs. Listening in, we learned that there is a difference in opinion as to what proportion of an iceberg is submerged. Encyclopedias differ, too: some say $\frac{3}{4}$, some say $\frac{9}{10}$ and some say $\frac{7}{8}$ are below the surface of the water. Seamen report having seen icebergs as high as 250 feet above the ocean, off the "Grand Banks". Iceberg derives its name from "ice" plus the German word "Berg" meaning hill



A cool picture for a hot day . . . taken by one of the *Institute's* seamen while on an ice patrol trip.

or mountain. Captain Edward H. Smith of the Coast Guard cutter "Spencer" stationed at Cordova, Alaska always refers to an iceberg as "He", (same way a ship is "She", perhaps!) "He" has been described by seamen observers as "blue-white monsters", as "snow-white cathedrals or castles", as "crystal fortresses", as "lonely", as * "forbidding and silent", as "strangely fascinating".

We asked Commander J. S. Baylis of the Coast Guard whether it was necessary to "dynamite" or "shell" icebergs very often. He replied that neither of these methods is very satisfactory, as the bergs are so big that there are still huge

pieces left after the blasting, which are still a menace to shipping. The usual procedure is for the patrol boat to follow the berg out into warmer waters where it disintegrates.

Many bergs are over-turned or at least tilted when they set sail. As they gradually melt, they change their shape. The sun strikes back from the whiteness of the bergs with a brilliance that hurts the eyes. An old diary of Antarctic explorers, dated 1870, refers to the fact that the officers and crew wore "snow goggles" for protection against the glare (thus showing that sun glasses were in vogue long years ago).

*See "Below the Roaring Forties" reviewed below.

Book Review

"BELOW THE ROARING FORTIES"; An Antarctic Journal by F. D. Ommanney.

Longmans, Green, N. Y. 1938. \$3.00.

F. D. Ommanney was a lecturer in a London medical school when he was offered a place on the staff of a government scientific expedition. He enlisted at once for four years of service in a whaling station in South Georgia, a small frozen island a few hundred miles north of the Antarctic Circle. He not only did research in the insides of whales, but he went off on trips on the whale

catchers, and was a member of expeditions to catch the elephant seals. He was also one of those aboard the steel ship, DISCOVERY, when it went to Little America in rescue of the missing Lincoln Ellsworth. Mr. Ommanney writes well, whether he is describing the courtship of the Ringed Penguins, or the dangers men faced in isolated regions of the Antarctic. BELOW THE ROARING FORTIES is a book for those who like to read tales of constructive adventure. I.M.A.



Officers standing watch on the port bridge of the Grace Line "Santa Lucia."



Transfer at Sea Off Cape Hatteras. Photo by Seaman Orville Handlon aboard tanker "Woensorecht." (Courtesy "Cord Age" Magazine)

Symbols of Safety

ON shipboard there are many symbols of safety: the life-preserver, the life-boat, the life-ring. These are constant reminders to passengers that alert and able seamen are on duty—ready to protect you when emergencies arise.

Your life on shipboard is made enjoyable and comfortable and SAFE because of the strong seamanship of the Captain and crew. On the bridge, in the engine room, in every department of every ship that sails seaward seafarers are on duty, pledged to the gallant code of the sea, safeguarding lives and cargoes.

Entering New York harbor at night, passengers and crew observe a green light, surmounted by a white light from the roof of the Seamen's Church Institute of New York, at 25 South Street. The green light shines from the Titanic Tower and the white light shines from the Cross, and both are "symbols of safety" ashore for seafarers.

They signify safe haven and fair anchorage at their journey's end. For more than 100 years this Institute has provided "Safety", "Comfort" and "Irritation" for tens of thousands of deserving seamen annually—friends who help to support and maintain the work thus payable to the courage and seamanship of the crews who carry America's commerce.

When you budget your benevolence gifts, will you plan to include the seafarer? He is essential to *your* comfort and safety at sea. The Institute is essential to *his* comfort and safety ashore. Even if you rarely travel on ships, it is the sailor who brings you goods from abroad who carries letters and American products to all the far ports of the globe. He speeds the wheels of commerce. Please help us welcome him when he is ashore in the Port of New York.

Kindly Send Contributions to
THE SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK
 25 South Street New York, N. Y.



An assistant engineer checks the dials in the engine room of the Grace Line "Santa Clara."



Life-boat Drill
 Courtesy Jeannette McMillan

Old Ocean Keeps Her Secrets Well*

TEN years have passed since the Danish training ship *Kobenhavn* disappeared in the South Atlantic with a crew of forty-five cadets and fifteen officers. A new five-masted steel bark and the largest sailing vessel in the world, the *Kobenhavn*, bound for Australia, sailed from Montevideo, Uruguay, on December 14, 1928, never to be seen again for a certainty by human eyes. And thus was born in the lonely South Atlantic one of the world's outstanding maritime mysteries.

The *Kobenhavn* was equipped with a powerful radio and auxiliary engines, and because of this her sudden dropping from sight seems the more remarkable. Perhaps the most plausible theory to account for her disappearance is that she collided with an iceberg and sank before word could be flashed to the world. At that time it was the season for icebergs in the south seas. On December 21 when she was seven days out and 400 miles east of the River Plate she wirelessed "all's well," and then—silence.

Capt. Theodore Juel Skjoldam, master of the *Mexico*, spent five months searching the south seas for trace of the missing ship without avail. A faint echo of the strange disappearance was contained in the report of the Rev. Philip Lindsay some days later that he and a handful of inhabitants of Tristan de Cunha, an island halfway between Brazil and the Cape of Good Hope, had seen a sailing vessel float past the island. One light sail was set and she was riding far down at the stern. There was no evidence of life on board. Could this apparently aimless wanderer have been the lost *Kobenhavn*? The natives were of the opinion they had seen the mythical Flying Dutchman.

In 1934 speculation was revived as to the fate of the *Kobenhavn* when wreckage was washed up on the coast of Australia. Again, in September, 1935, a possible clew to the mystery was brought to life in the finding of seven skeletons and the ruins of a small boat on a beach in southwest Africa. But the theory that these might be clews collapsed when the Danish consul at Johannesburg reported that the boat was longer than any the bark had carried.

It is an interesting sidelight on the disappearance of the *Kobenhavn* that just before she sailed from Montevideo one of the cadets captured an albatross. According to an ancient superstition disaster is invited by harming one of these birds.

*Reprinted from "The Sun", June 22, 1938, by special permission.

*As we go to press we learn the sad news that the 2,738 ton four-masted bark, "Admiral Karpfanger," with 60 German cadets aboard, has disappeared, leaving no trace.

Old sailors, wise in the lore of the sea, foretold disaster for the ship because of the capture of the albatross.

This year also marks the twentieth anniversary of another unsolved mystery of the sea—the disappearance of the American collier *Cyclops* which put out from Barbadoes, British West Indies, for Baltimore in 1918 and failed to reach her destination.

Perhaps the greatest sea mystery of all time, however, lies in the unknown fate of the crew of the *Mary Celeste*. The brig put out from New York Harbor bound for Genoa on November 7, 1872. Her hold was filled with a cargo of alcohol. Aboard was the captain, Benjamin S. Briggs, his wife, their two-year-old daughter and a crew of seven men. Five weeks later the British brig *Dei Gratia* overtook the *Mary Celeste* 300 miles west of Gibraltar. The master of the *Dei Gratia*, Capt. Morehouse, recognized the brigantine, hailed her but there was no answer. The sails of the *Mary Celeste* were set on a starboard tack and the ship was sailing eastward in an erratic manner.

Puzzled by the lack of response by the *Mary Celeste*, members of the crew of the *Dei Gratia* first, and Capt. Morehouse later, sailed along side and boarded the queerly behaving ship. To their astonishment they found the *Mary Celeste* completely deserted. Everything was in order and there was no sign of struggle, mutiny, murder or robbery. The captain's money, watch and compasses were intact in the cabin. In the forecabin the seamen's chests, money and the remnants of a meal were found. On a table stood Mrs. Briggs's sewing machine with a garment partly stitched. The ship's log was lying open, the last entry having been made eight days previous. Missing were the chronometer, sextant and the ship's boat—an open yawl.

It seemed obvious that the *Mary Celeste* had been abandoned in great haste. But why remains a mystery to this day. Perhaps those aboard feared an explosion in her hold and put off hurriedly without taking time to gather provisions. In any event, Capt. Briggs and his crew never reclaimed their ship.

The *Mary Celeste* sailed to Gibraltar and later discharged her cargo. She finally returned to the United States where she was sold and later wrecked on Roshells Reef. This was the end of the ship but not of her unsolved mystery.

Mystery of Abandoned Vessels

EDITOR'S NOTE: Mysteries of the sea attract seamen. The subject never becomes boring. Talk to any group of officers here at the Institute, and each will have a pet theory to advance—just as each has a favorite theory as to the mysterious origin of our "Sir Galahad" figurehead mounted over our main entrance. Such mysteries as the "Mary Celeste," "Kobenhavn" and "Cyclops" provide inexhaustible topics of conversation among seafaring men when discussion of the weather, baseball, prize-fights or the latest transatlantic speed record begins to pall.*

IN attempting to solve the "Mary Celeste" mystery, it is useful to notice various other instances of abandoned vessels. For example, on April 31, 1849, the Dutch schooner "Hermania" was picked up about ten miles south-east of the Eddystone Light by a fishing vessel, the "Fame," of Rye. The schooner was dismasted, and had obviously been in collision, but was quite sound. Valuables were found on board, and clothing indicating that the captain's wife and child had been with him. Her only boat was lying in its chocks, intact. Nothing was ever heard of the crew.

Another instance (told us by a chief officer staying here at the Institute) was that of the three-masted schooner "Marion G. Douglas" of Nova Scotia, with a cargo of timber, was found drifting, on November 27, 1919, off Bryher Island, in the Scillies. Ship and cargo were in good condition, and all the boats, including a motor launch, were on board. At first, this looked like another "Mary Celeste" mystery, but investigation revealed that she had been abandoned in heavy weather, her crew having been taken off by another vessel.

Still another similar situation occurred during the World War. The three-master schooner "Zebrina"

*See also article, "Ships That Disappear", March, 1936 LOOKOUT.

was discovered aground off Rozel Point, near Dielette, France, in October 1917. She was in good order, but abandoned. It was surmised that her crew of five had doubtless been washed overboard during bad weather. One more instance: on February 28, 1855, a good-sized sailing ship, the "James B. Chester" was discovered in about 30 degrees North and 40 degrees West. She, too, was in perfect order, but abandoned. According to accounts in some contemporary books which we have here in the Institute's Conrad Library, all her boats were on board.

I believe that Lieut. Com. R. T. Gould of the British Navy has advanced one of the most logical theories in connection with the "Mary Celeste" and all of these other vessels. He writes, in a recent issue of "Shipping Wonders of the World," published in London: "There is a certain measure of agreement among the best of the theories. If they agree in nothing else, they agree upon the cause which drove the men and women of the 'Mary Celeste' pell-mell over the side of a perfectly staunch ship into a frail open boat, or raft, to take there their chance of life or death in mid-Atlantic. That cause was not rebellion against authority, or greed of gain. It must have been stark fear, that panic terror against which even the bravest have sometimes no defence. But whether it was, as seems most likely, the fear of imminent death, or the fear of the hereafter, or those darker fears engendered by the many superstitions to which seamen are prone—that, we do not know. It is not likely that we ever shall know."

Steamship "Labrador" Reminiscences



Approaching the Coast of Ireland.—The First Sight of Land.

Reprinted from Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper—June 25, 1887.

WHEN a passenger liner comes into port battered by storms and gales, the usual remarks about its being "the worst storm in the history of shipping" are made. THE LOOKOUT editor has been reading a diary kept in 1881 by a 10-year old lad which described a severe "storm aboard the old steamship *Labrador*". This lad, Gordon Knox Bell, is now grown up, and is a member of our Board of Managers. We believe LOOKOUT readers will be interested in his youthful description of a storm:

"We sailed for home on November 19, 1881, on the French liner, "*Labrador*" and after a tempestuous voyage of 19 days arrived in New York. The "*Labrador*" was an iron single screw vessel of about 4500 tons, and in fair weather used her square sails as well as steam. The continuous head winds which she experienced on this trip for 19 days

made her one week late.

"During the roughest days my mother would not let me leave my berth, and indeed, I had no great desire to do so. The highest run we made was 350 miles the last day, when the sea was smooth, and the lowest runs were 68, 66, 89, 40 and 36 miles a day, respectively. Following are remarks from the *New York Press*, Dec. 8, 1881, reporting our final arrival:

"The houses on the promenade deck were utterly wrecked. The heavy seas broke through the wood and iron partitions alike and found their way down into the steerage, twisting iron bars as though they were green willow branches. The salon and staterooms were ankle deep in water. On November 21st heavy seas broke over the ship, fore and aft, carrying away the house over the steerage companionway, the port and starboard houses on

the main deck (the latter heavily sheathed with iron) and part of the starboard forward iron railing, the captain's bridge, and front of the pilot house, also the skylights fore and aft. The waves broke amidships, and, crashing through the skylight of the aft hatch, found their way to the pistons, where after becoming heated by contact, they percolated through the machinery down to the engine room, deluging Chief Engineer Bonnival and his assistant who yet stood bravely to their posts. Mr. Bonnival said that the waves were 22 metres in length with a pitch of 22 metres, THE WORST HE HAD EVER SEEN IN OCEAN TRAVEL.

'The passenger list included 70 first cabin, 30 second cabin and 415

steerage. The purser said that the ladies in the cabins behaved most heroically, while many of the men were almost beside themselves with fear. When the first fury of the storm was experienced, the steerage passengers, who were principally peasants from the interior of France, huddled together and prayed incessantly, but the cool demeanor of the officers soon reassured them and they gave no further trouble. Six members of the crew sustained painful injuries.'

A subscription was raised by the passengers for the benefit of the crew, and a set of resolutions was presented to Captain Joucla, commending him for his manly conduct during a most trying voyage."

Mrs. Roper Writes a Letter:

MR. LAURITZ MELCHIOR
c/o Metropolitan Opera House
39th Street & Broadway
New York, N. Y.

My dear Mr. Melchior:

I have just received from Denmark a letter from a seaman who lived here for a considerable time at our Seamen's Church Institute and in whom we were all tremendously interested. His name is Arnold Andersen.

I recall that before he went home, and by the way, I might say that oft times he was a terribly home-sick chap, he told me of a glorious evening he had spent with an old schoolmate of his who was at that time engaged at the Metropolitan Opera Company. It did not occur to me at that time, in fact there was no need

of my doing so, to ask him the name of his friend but in a letter to me fairly recently he told me that you were the one with whom he dined. And I just want you to know how much happiness you brought into the life of a very lonely sailor on the evening he spent with you and in his letter referring to you he states "he never forgets his old cronies".

I felt that I must write you this because undoubtedly you receive many letters in praise of your glorious voice and I wanted to tell you that even more than that, although you have risen to great heights, I appreciate the fact that "he never forgets his old cronies".

Very sincerely yours

(Mrs.) JANET ROPER

House Mother.

And Receives a Reply:

MRS. JANET ROPER
25 South Street
New York, N. Y.

My dear Mrs. Roper:

Your letter has pleased me immensely, and may I return your compliments to me by telling you, that I consider every

homeless seaman fortunate to find a harbor at your Institute, and have you for their House Mother. I send my very best wishes to you, and hope that your chosen work will bring you all the satisfaction and happiness it deserves.

Yours sincerely

(Signed) LAURITZ MELCHIOR

Letter to a Lady

EDITOR'S NOTE: On July 12th Mother Roper completed 49 years of service to merchant seamen.

DEAR MOTHER ROPER:

You may think that writing you this letter is a slightly mad gesture because I saw you on the stairway only this morning, and I shall probably see you again to-morrow. When I passed you this morning you smiled and said, "Good Morning", and somehow I knew the day would be happier and more pleasant for me.

I thought it might be nice to write you a note so that I might tell you some things that I have never been able to bring out in our conversations. I want to be frankly laudatory, and I hope that you may not be embarrassed. The things that I say are not only my individual opinion, but the consensus of opinion of every seaman that I know, and that is a very large number of men.

This week you will have given very nearly fifty years of your life to the cause of distressed and needy seamen and their families. Five decades is a long time; and in that period of time you have accomplished more practical and lasting good for human beings than any other person I know.

What I want to say now, you, in the light of your broad philosophy and experience, will understand, and you will not be offended. When there comes an end for you of all earthly things as it shall come to me and to all of us, (and God grant that the contingency be extremely remote) they will say kind words of you, and they will bring you flowers, and gracious thoughts and deep, sincere regret.

And so I thought it might be nice to tell of some thoughts that we have for

you while you may understand them in a worldly sense.

Do you remember one winter night two years ago when you were walking to the Wall St. subway station? It was quite late and the streets were very slippery and a bitter wind was blowing. I chanced to be walking that way and I took your arm to help you over the dangerously icy streets. I thought then that you had given up a pleasant evening at home, and a warm fire, and your well earned privacy in order to be of some service to a seaman in trouble, and to make him a little happier. You did not know it, but I was very proud to hold your arm and to walk with you. I thought of all the families and friends who had been torn apart, and whom you, with infinite trouble and patience, had brought together again, and I thought of all the young men and boys whom you had rescued from an aimless, drink-blighted existence, and set upon a fairer course; and I thought about the shattered, down-trodden souls that you had comforted and patched together.

I wonder whether you know how many men, scattered over the seas in ships, recall your face in the long watches of the night, or how often your name is spoken with a kind of familiar reverence. I wonder whether you know what unexpressed affection they have for you and the good that you do.

I know of no other person in New York or anywhere who is more respected, nor more sincerely loved than you.

And so when I see you on the stairway or in the corridors I always say to myself, "There, indeed, goes a Great Lady".

DONALD SNYDER, A. B.



Where seamen's baggage is stored.



Where seamen call for their mail.

SUMMARY OF SERVICES TO MERCHANT SEAMEN BY THE SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK FROM JANUARY 1 TO JULY 1, 1938

- 144,435** Lodgings (including relief beds).
- 54,418** Pieces of Baggage handled.
- 394,085** Sales at Luncheonette and Restaurant.
- 158,450** Sales at News Stand.
- 11,886** Patronized Barber, Tailor and Laundry.
- 6,960** Attended **307** Religious Services at Institute and U. S. Marine Hospitals.
- 2,426** Cadets and Seamen attended **313** Lectures in Merchant Marine School; **85** new students enrolled.
- 26,207** Social Service Interviews.
- 6,675** Relief Loans.
- 4,765** Individual Seamen received Relief.
- 3,197** Books and **44,452** magazines distributed.
- 2,666** Pieces of clothing, and **653** Knitted Articles distributed..
- 1,793** Treated in Dental, Eye, Ear-Nose-Throat and Medical Clinics.
- 53,639** Attended **107** entertainments, moving pictures, athletic activities, concerts and lectures.
- 1,479** Attendance in Apprentices' Room.
- 174** Missing Seamen found.
- 480** Positions secured for Seamen.
- \$120,913.** Deposited for **1,698** Seamen in Banks.
- 10,478** Attendance in Joseph Conrad Library.
- 5,677** Telephone Contacts with Seamen.
- 1,020** Visits to Ships by Institute representatives.

A Sailor's Tribute to Mrs. Roper:

What a wonderful life Mother Roper has led
When she gets to Heaven she won't even need to knock
St. Peter will see her coming and fling the gates open
And all the sailor angels will sing "Anchors a-weigh".

SAILOR JACK



A picture of Mrs. Janet Roper taken 49 years ago when she was Miss Janet Lord and had just begun her work for seamen.

SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK



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