

# The LOOKOUT

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SEAMEN'S  
CHURCH  
INSTITUTE  
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# The LOOKOUT

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EDMUND L. BAYLIES  
President

C. G. MICHALIS  
First Vice-President

FRANK T. WARBURTON  
Secretary-Treasurer

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or

MARJORIE DENT CANDEE  
Editor, The Lookout

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Frontispiece by Ewing Galloway, courtesy of "The Congregationalist."

# The Lookout

VOL. XX

OCTOBER, 1929

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## Jack Tar To The Rescue!



*The heroic crew of the "Saguache."*

"S O S. Our ship sinking fast."

Five hundred miles east of Cape Race, the American freighter Saguache heard the call of the German freighter Rodelheim and sent over the winter air a reassuring message.

The story of the Saguache's rescue of 27 members of the sinking German freighter is not a familiar one. It did not make the front pages of the newspapers. But to the sea-weary German sailors the gallant crew of the Saguache are all heroes, meriting more than the glory of

headlines in the dailies.

To the Institute came an opportunity to recognize the valor and heroism of one of the rescuers—Seaman Eric Bolin. One Sunday evening last month, long after the rescue had occurred, he was presented with a medal "For Bravery in Saving Human Life in Peril," awarded by the Life Saving Benevolent Association of New York. Bolin is a modest sort and he received the applause of the audience of seamen and the chaplain's words of praise with quiet appreciation. He didn't want to go into much de-

tail concerning his share in the understand the thoughts that rescue, but bit by bit we gleaned went through their minds as they rescued the rest of the half-frozen, half-starved German crew. Heaving lines were lowered and made fast around the waists of the sailors and they were hauled safely aboard. Again the valiant crew rowed to the wreck, bringing back safely the captain and mates.

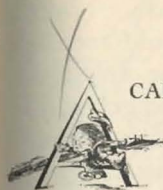
Several ships heard the call of the stricken Rodelheim, and made an attempt to locate the sinking vessel. Aboard the German ship lookouts strained their eyes through the driving snow and gale. Hours passed. Night was coming fast. Then out of the darkness appeared a welcome sight—the S. S. Saguache. In a terrific gale the Rodelheim launched her first lifeboat in the icy waters and successfully reached the American rescue vessel. But on its next trip the lifeboat capsized and two seamen were drowned.

Every member of the German crew was fully dressed in his best clothes—the officers in their newest, bluest uniforms and the sailors in their shore liberty clothes, when they came aboard the Saguache and ran into the reviving warmth of the engine room. Whether drowned or saved, they wished to be dressed for such an occasion!

Captain Bendetti of the Saguache called for volunteers to man a lifeboat to go to the aid of the sinking ship which by this time had broken in two. Then it was that the true mettle of seamen was tested. Every member of the crew, to a man, volunteered. For such is the code of the sea. Chief Officer L. Sederholt was chosen to command the boat and Eric Bolin was one of the six sailors selected to accompany him.

If you have ever been at sea during a severe storm you can

## Travelin' East



CAKE of soap—and the resourcefulness of a sailor—what a lucky combination, they turned out to be for Chief Steward Frank J. Brook! Marco Polo's travels in the East may have been more romantic, but they could not have been any more thrilling than those of Brook with that cake of soap in his pocket, as he journeyed from the Golden Gate to 25 South Street, <sup>the S. S. Sungentko</sup>

The S. S. Sungentko, bound for New York, was steaming out of San Francisco as Brook, dressed only in shirt and trousers rushed through the crowd, reached the end of the dock, stared fixedly at the departing ship and then gave vent to his feelings. He had missed his boat and on it were his clothes, his money, and his papers.

His first fury gone, he took stock of himself and looked himself over. No coat. No hat. Hopefully he turned his pockets inside out. The right yielded nothing but some stale tobacco, and the left—a cake of soap!

How to get back to his ship

was the question. He knew that the ship's run to New York was twenty-three days. He decided to hitch-hike to New York.

The first leg of his journey to Sacramento, however, turned out to be more hiking than hitching. Few motorists were willing to give him a lift. Though a novice at this sort of travelling, he soon learned the rules of the game. He would approach a man and say, "Excuse me, gentleman, but I'm financially embarrassed." This would net him a quarter or dime, a cup of coffee from a station lunch counter or flat refusals of aid. The most he ever netted was fifty cents.

He set out for the Roseville freight yards near Sacramento for a train going to Reno, Nevada. He found plenty of companionship on the trip—eight tramps, one of whom entered into a discussion of Nietzsche with him.

Every three or four hundred miles he would change freights. He experienced the mountain coldness and the desert heat. He slept standing up.

And this is how the cake of soap proved invaluable to him! Whenever the freight stopped near any water, he washed his face and his shirt. Sometimes a freight would leave in a hurry and he would have to dry his shirt in the wind while he stood in an open box car. His clean appearance in several instances saved him from being arrested for vagrancy or as a suspicious character.

He had one thrilling experience on a freight of the Chicago and Alton Railroad. While riding atop an oil tanker a storm blew up with plenty of accompanying lightening, thunder and rain. He saw a tree crash in the distance, and pictured himself at any moment being sent high into the air by an exploding oil tank. The discomforts of hunger and dampness made his feet swell, and he was forced to cut openings in his shoes. Several times he tried to get work but everywhere he stopped off the answer was the same. No work for strangers.

At Corning, New York, he managed to hop a train in spite of a scowling police officer. The next morning he awoke at three-thirty to find himself in the Jer-

sey City freight yards. There across the river he could see the friendly lights of the Institute where he knew he could get a bed and help. But he had spent his last cent for food long ago and hadn't the price of a ferry ticket.

But a sailor who had come across the continent on nothing could not be discouraged. He washed up with the remaining sliver of soap and went out on the highway. It was Sunday morning and a car came zigzagging by with four drunks in it. "Hey, bud, give us a dollar," he called. They gave it to him. With it he breakfasted in splendid style and took the ferry across the river. He appeared at the Institute at 7:30 and asked for a room to sleep. It was an unusual request for that hour of the morning, but the Institute is used to strange things and he got the room. He slept for the first time in four nights.

When the S. S. Sunugentko arrived in New York, and Brook came aboard the Captain demanded, "Where've you been?"

"Been in a little trouble," was all the information Brook volunteered. He had made the trip from the west coast in thirteen days, beating his ship by ten days.

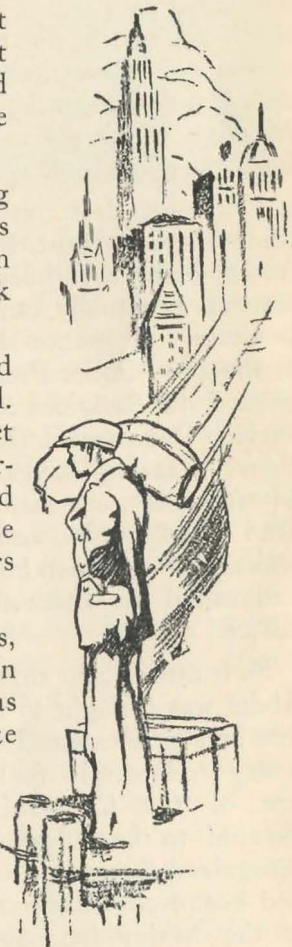
## A Stranger Within Our Gates

SEAMAN ABDUL MAJID BIN ABDULLAH, outwardly so self-possessed, found himself in a puzzled state of mind. Try as he might, his eyes could not recognize the familiar name of the *Comlidbank*, the British freighter which had brought him to America from Singapore, among the ships docked at the pier. And yet, he told himself, it was at this very same pier that the *Comlidbank* had docked just two hours before he went ashore to have a glimpse of New York.

His bewilderment increased, and accosting a friendly looking chap, he asked, in his native Malay tongue: "Tuan, sayah sudah hilang sayah punya kappal. Engkow boleh kaseh tahu mana itu ada skaiong?"

The friendly looking chap grew wide-eyed in amazement as he stared at Seaman Abdul. "Save your breath, old scout. I don't get you." And so it went the entire day. Wherever Abdul wandered, as soon as he opened his mouth to speak, his listeners would gaze at him wonderingly, shrug their shoulders and go on their way.

Now those of you who have visited Paris, or Berlin or Rome where your fluency in speaking French, German, or Italian was nothing to brag about, can easily sympathize with Abdul's predicament. But no doubt, when you found yourself vainly trying to carry on a conversation with any of the natives of the aforementioned cities, you had only to dip your hand into your pocket and bring forth a quantity of francs or



marks or liras; and your money would begin to talk for you.

Not so with Seaman Abdul. No American dollars or quarters or dimes jingled in his pockets, for he had not yet been paid off by the British ship owners. Without money or food or a place to sleep and with no means of verbal communication, he wandered up and down the streets of Manhattan for several days as lonely as a lost soul.

Until—at last, as chickens come home to roost, so Seaman Abdul, being a full-fledged able seaman, eventually came to the Institute. A police lieutenant of the 42nd Police Precinct telephoned the Religious and Social Service Department that a foreigner wearing dungarees and whose arms were tattooed had been found by him, and since he looked like a seaman he logically had called the Institute to ask advice.

So it came about that Seaman Abdul was brought to the Institute by a policeman. He looked weary and utterly forlorn till one of the Chaplains who chanced to hear him speaking recognized the man as a Malay and began conversing with him in the Malay language! The

poor fellow was overjoyed to hear his native tongue spoken. The chaplain had lived in Singapore in a mission school for several years where he had become acquainted with the language.

He learned that Abdul was twenty-four years of age, of Singapore, Straits Settlements. He had shipped to this country aboard the *Comlidbank* carrying sugar and rubber. It had been transferred to another pier which accounted for Abdul's not being able to find it. From the ship's owners it was learned that the boat had gone to Philadelphia and they consented to send an escort to put Abdul on board this ship which would take him back to his distant homeland. All their instructions to the seaman had to be translated by the chaplain and the company was very grateful to the Institute's interpreter. On the night before his departure, Abdul was comfortably housed and well fed at the Institute and outfitted.

Seaman Abdul will not soon forget the welcome he as a stranger in a strange land received at the Institute. His parting remark was, in translation: "The Christian white men in America have been so kind."

## Davey Jones Loses



Again the Institute has been privileged to act as host and guardian angel to a crew of twenty-six sailors who, after drifting three days and nights in the open sea, managed to escape Davy Jones' Locker. The crew of the "Quimistan" knew that their ship was fifty-seven years old, bound from Norfolk to Genoa to be scrapped as junk.

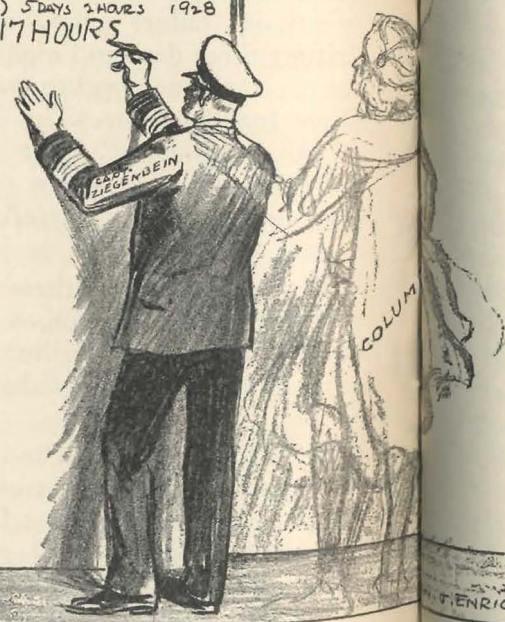
But so eager were these seamen to go to their homes that they agreed to risk sailing the ancient freighter across the Atlantic.

The Dollar line, "President Harrison" brought the crew of the "Quimistan" to the Institute. The seamen were given meal tickets and rooms until they could find employment on other

ships. They looked wearied but in no way injured by their long exposure. They told a story of struggling to keep the "Quimistan" afloat for fifteen hours but at length the rusty old plates buckled under the force of the sea and they abandoned her. The shipwrecked men spent seventy-two hours in two small lifeboats with top-heavy sails, under miserable conditions in squalls and heavy seas, endeavoring to reach the nearest land, Sable Island, 300 miles away.

It was due to the keen eyes of Third Officer Norman on board the "President Harrison" who sighted the lifeboats five miles away, outside of the usual steamer lanes, that the lives of the "Quimistan" crew were saved.

HONOR LIST		
COLUMBUS	- 71 DAYS	1492
MAYFLOWER	- 63 DAYS	1620
SAVANNAH	26 DAYS	1819
SIRIUS	- 18 1/4 DAYS	1838
GREAT WESTERN	13 1/2 DAYS	1838
BRITANNIA	14 DAYS - 8 HOURS	1840
PACIFIC	9 DAYS - 19 HOURS	1851
PERSIS	9 DAYS - 1 HOUR	1851
SCOTIA	8 DAYS - 2 HOURS	1866
CITY OF BRUSSELS	7 DAYS - 22 HRS	1869
BALTIC	7 DAYS 20 HRS	1873
CITY OF BERLIN	7 DAYS 15 HRS	1875
ARIZONA	7 DAYS 7 HOURS	1880
ALASKA	6 DAYS 18 HRS	1882
ETEURIA	6 DAYS 1 HOUR	1888
MAJESTIC	5 DAYS 18 HOURS	1891
LUCANIA	5 DAYS 7 HOURS	1894
MAURETANIA (QUEENSTOWN)	4 DAYS 10 HOURS	1910
MAURETANIA (CHEROBURG)	5 DAYS 2 HOURS	1928
BREMEN	4 DAYS - 17 HOURS	



NEARER AND NEARER.

Courtesy "The World"

## Seaman, Ahoy!

Hail to the crew of the *Bremen*—fireman, steward, engineer, sailor—each in their various capacities! And we dip our flag in all homage to the gallant crew of the *Mauretania* and all the crews of the merchant ships that have brought the continents of the world nearer and nearer to each other!

Without your devotion to duty, your skill, untiring efforts and valiant endeavors—these modern ocean greyhounds with all their marvelous and intricate machinery could not convey thousands of human beings and millions of tons of cargo safely from one port to another.

It is for men such as these, the crews of the merchant marine, that the Institute exists. For their comfort and happiness and protection while on shore leave men and women have given generously and voluntarily. The new Annex is now complete. It is partially paid for. It is filled almost to capacity each night with merchant seamen.

But—the Institute has to pay interest each year to the New York banks which loaned us the money to complete the Annex without further delay, as the demands for rooms increased daily. Will YOU help us to reduce this large debt? Will YOU ask your friends who have benefited by the services of the merchant seamen to send their contributions? It is a large sum, but if every friend of the Institute will give *something*, however *small*, we can wipe out this debt and leave the Institute free to carry on its ever-expanding program of service for the men of the sea.

EDMUND L. BAYLIES, *Chairman,*  
*New Building Committee.*

*S. C. I. Associations*

Mrs. H. Schuyler Cammann, Chairman, Central Council, Seamen's Church Institute Associations.

"It is with much pleasure that I take this opportunity of extending a greeting to the officers and members of the Seamen's Church Institute Associations, with a cordial invitation to attend the meeting of the Central Council, to be held at 25 South Street, on October 22nd. Items of importance will come up for decision, of prime interest being the disposition of the proceeds of the Ruth Draper Benefit amounting to over \$2,500.00. Dr. Mansfield will confer with us.

"We rejoice in his recently improved health, and hope for a large attendance to welcome him to our first meeting of the season.

"The following report, covering the first six months of this year, is a record of which we may be justly proud. May we continue the work with renewed enthusiasm, as we share in the splendid task of the Seamen's Church Institute, in providing a Home in the Port of New York for the Merchant Seamen of the World."

Mrs. Cammann has been an active worker for the Institute for many years. For the last two years she has served as Chairman of the Central Council of the Seamen's Church Institute Associations. These groups of women have been and are being organized for the purpose of promoting the work of the Institute by personal service and financial support and are continually increasing in members and usefulness.

The report referred to in the Chairman's greeting must be brief, for we are saving our thunder for the Annual Meeting

in January. We think this half yearly summary promises well for the yearly one.

The women's associations in the first half of 1929 have sent to the Institute 4113 pieces of household linen valued at \$571.85; they have knitted 354 pounds of yarn into sweaters, caps, scarfs, socks, etc., to the number of 680 articles, conservatively valued at \$1,023.00. They have contributed to the Mansfield Fund, New Building Fund, Chapel Fund, to which one group alone has given over \$4,000.00, and general expense of the Institute. This financial help added to the value of the linens and knitted articles amounts to over \$7,000.00 and this figure does not include the Benefit proceeds of over \$2,500.00 at present fattening in the Central Council treasury but soon to be relinquished to the Institute.

The associations have supplied the reading-rooms with thousands of magazines and books, the Clothes-Room ("Slop-Chest," to be nautical) with overcoats, under-clothes, suits, shoes and what-not, all "God-Sends." They supply the Apprentice Room boys with afternoon tea and biscuits, as

well as music, the ever popular American ice cream and prizes for their evening dances. They have helped to pay for the twice weekly movies.

Beds for the destitute on cold winter nights, tobacco and pipes for the smokers, canes for the weak-kneed, candy and cookies for the sweet-toothed, shaving sticks and tooth paste for the fastidious, shall we say? Kindly visits, plus flowers, magazines and delicacies for the sick in Marine hospitals; an Ampico, a piano, a phonograph and quantities of records and sheet music for the musically inclined! Yes, all this and more may be credited to their account. We have not run out of breath, facts, nor figures—space only is lacking in which to tell of the many kindnesses which bear witness to heart interest these women have in the Institute.

The Seamen's Church Institute associations desire to expand. Would-be members are urged to pay a visit to 25 South Street. Many of our visitors, and we have had nearly 400 since January, have said, as they completed their tour, "I had no idea!" And we say to those in that same boat, "Come and see."

## An Institute Neighbor

Pat O'Connor, the Coenties Slip clam man, cocked his white yachting cap over one ear and surveyed his clam stand with a proud eye. "It does look kind of strange, I guess," he admitted, "but you've got to keep up with progress."

After eighty years of existence the old stand, anchored on the windward side of Jeanette Park, just across from the Institute, has taken on a dapper appearance quite in keeping with other improvements along South Street. It has a green roof and four walls, with windows in them, and doors, and decorated in white paint—as fine a looking shanty as you could see anywhere. Pat says that he rather likes the cut of her jib, now, and regrets that he hadn't had the roof put on years ago.

"It was no fun standing out in the wind and the rain as I used to do," he explained obligingly. "But now I think it's going to be a cozy, snug place in winter," and he continued contentedly shucking clams.

"All along the beach here things aren't like they used to be," he said reflectively. "Now



that the Institute, with its grand new Annex, is finished, it wouldn't be natural to expect sea-going men to eat their clams out in the open air. When I first started working with this stand it was different. Seamen weren't so particular in those days. I understand that the new sailors, though they be soft, compared with the old salts, still show a lot of grit and courage when a wreck comes or something on the ship goes wrong.

"But thirty-five years ago, when I started helping old Bob Peach with this stand—you've heard of him, I guess. He was

the best grappler along the beach. Why, if you should lose a gold ring overboard he could go down with his irons and pick it up out of the mud. And maybe you've heard how he used to race Bill Kaiser, the ballet master, in a rowboat every summer? The two of 'em would sit and argue which was the best rower when both of 'em were so old they could hardly walk.

"Well, as I was saying, an open stand was all right in those days. In 1917 Bob retired and I took over this stand. But lately I've been noticing that we weren't keeping up with the times. Men from the seven seas eat their seafood at this stand, and listening to their conversations would surprise you, indeed it would! They are more studious and more intelligent today, if you want my opinion.

They talk about such things as psychology and philosophy and the economic and political conditions in the countries they last visited. The other day a young fellow came in here who tried to explain that Einstein theory to me over a dozen clams.

"Why, when I first came here," reflected Pat, "seamen would go swinging up the street

to find lodging at the Institute wearing their pea jackets and their sea bags slung over their shoulders. And at night you could hear them playing their accordions and guitars anywhere you listened.

"But it's different, now. They come off their ships wearing tailored suits and carrying suitcases, and if you hear them playing any instruments at night it's usually the saxophone.

"When they went to sea in the old days sailors carried a palm and needle to sew canvas. Today, they carry toothbrushes and toothpicks like real gentlemen!"

"So that's how come I decided at last to make this into a regular seafood house with a roof to keep the rain out. You got to keep up with progress. But I would like to say that even with all this progress, that seamen are just as smart as they ever was. Why, only last week a fellow in here ate four dozen clams without stopping! That was a good record, but it isn't as good as the fellow who ate 200 of them in that contest we held here a few years back, but I would like to say that it is good clam eating considering it was done impromptu with no preparation."



O'Connor is an authority on South Street. He can point out any building at random and tell what used to be there. He has a stock of reminiscences which include the time when former Governor Alfred E. Smith and the present Superintendent of Docks were rascally young boys. Old Bob Peach, in charge of the clam stand, made it his custom to keep a pail of ice water outside his shanty so that drivers of wagons and canal boat crews could stop by on hot days and get a refreshing drink. One day young Al Smith and his boyhood chum decided to play a prank on old Bob, so when he wasn't looking they filled the pail with salt water from the river. Then along came a driver, thirsty and warm. He took one big gulp of the briny drink and began to lay old Bob out with a tirade of foul epithets while the two boys stood on the other side of the street laughing their young heads off.

Next to Bob Peach, the most picturesque character along South Street in the old days was a woman called "Apple Mary." It was her peculiar custom to wear 14 or 15 dresses and 3 or 4 hats all at the same time—although how she managed to do this—

styles being what they were in those days—we cannot help but wonder. The poor old soul was demented because she and her lover, a sea captain, had had a quarrel which was never straightened out. The captain went off to sea and Mary took to wearing multitudinous dresses and selling red apples, to which, Pat O'Connor confesses, he and the other South Street boys helped themselves liberally.

Pat recalls Bob Peach telling of the dreadful ferry boat tragedy way back in the seventies, when the ferry boat "Westfield" blew up, and all the bargemen and canal boat men along South Street (led by William Quigley and James O'Connor) rushed to the rescue. They worked so bravely and saved so many lives that the United States government presented them a haven for their barges, where they could keep their boats free of charge for the rest of their lives.

Another old landmark was Castle Garden, where the Aquarium is now, and Pat remembers hearing Jenny Lind, the beautiful Swedish singer, there. "The immigrants were allowed to enter this country through the Castle Garden," he explained, "and

how well I recollect the wooden doors which swung in and out, allowing the foreigners to come in."

The clam man remembers the momentous day in 1911 when ground was broken for the Institute. "It's the tallest building that has ever been on South Street," he declared, "and I want to tell you that Dr. Mansfield has certainly been a great benefactor to seamen. Sailors don't say much but I know that they appreciate this wonderful building built just for their comfort."

"Before the Institute was erected there were four saloons right on that corner. And next to the saloons was the Herrick Building. Mahoney, a ship chandler, owned the first floor, and Alonzo Chase, a sail maker, the top floor; steamship owners had their offices there, too. Across the street was an old mission run by "Doc" Isaac McGuire, who used to spread a big tent up each Sunday morning for the seamen. He'd bring a chorus of young ladies to lead in the hymn singing.

The odor of South Street in those good old days (so-called) reeked of dried codfish (which sailors called hogsheds of kin-

gles) and molasses and rum. The Street was full of holes and was later paved with cobble stones. It was so narrow that the bowsprits of the clipper ships would extend across the street and reach the windows of the shacks. Canal boat trade thrived, each canal boat being pulled by teams of four or six mules that walked along the river bank. At South Ferry, where the people went to Governor's Island for a penny, were stands selling coffee, baked beans, Washington pies, coconuts and rice pudding for the amazing sum of one cent each!

The Institute is glad to have so congenial a neighbor as Pat O'Connor, for we know that he, too, is interested in the welfare of the men who go down to the sea in ships.





## Musings of The Mate

A clerical tribute was paid to the Institute by the Reverend Frederic Matthews, Port Chaplain of Hull, England, in a sermon preached at Grace Church, New York. "There is no greater force for bringing the spirit of Christian brotherhood into the lives of men and of nations than the work that is being done for the merchant seamen," said he, "for in many ways seamen are the missionaries of today. They carry to all ports of the world the spirit of the lands from which they come. The moral order of the universe should be on the side of such an organization as the Institute that is inspired by the brotherhood of man."

### Our Father

In an effort to avoid repeating the Lord's Prayer as if it were a speed contest, the Institute chaplain has devised a plan to make the prayer more meaningful. At the Sunday evening service for seamen the chaplain

recites the prayer phrase by phrase, and the men respond. The great volume of sound which is heard as the sailors repeat after him, "Our Father," and then, after a pause, "Who art in Heaven," and so throughout the entire prayer is most impressive and turns a recitation into an act of devotion.

### A Sea Poem

One of the Institute's friends sent us these little verses:

*OVER THE BLUE-GRAY SEAS*  
*Our ship rolled with the billow,*  
*We drank of the salt, salt breeze,*  
*From a blue-gray sky—the great red sun*  
*Sank into the blue-gray seas.*

*The nearby sails grew dim—*  
*A part of the same blue-gray,*  
*And my once true heart did seem a part*  
*Of the sea—and drifted away.*

*My soul was of the waters—*  
*A pulse of the throbbing seas,*  
*While a gull's shrill note did o'er us float,*  
*To drift—with the salt-sea breeze.*

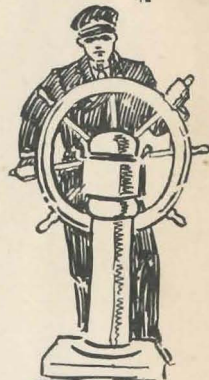
By CAROLYN B. LYMAN.

### No Ladies' Man

Jed lit a cigarette. "Ah! it works!" said Mother Roper, referring to the trim little nickel-plated lighter in Jed's hand. Jed displayed with great pride the lighter, explaining apologetically, "This is from a boy friend. I don't get along so well with the ladies, except with you, Mrs. Roper!"

**S**OME of the services extended to all worthy sailormen by the Seamen's Church Institute of New York, during the first six months of 1929:—

- 189,826 lodgings registered.
- 153,119 meals served.
- 395,390 sales made at the soda fountain.
- 38,639 pieces of dunnage checked and protected.
- 210,500 pieces of mail received and held or forwarded.
- 30,775 special needs administered to by the Social Service Department.
- 677 seamen treated in the Institute Dispensary.
- 4,626 seamen placed in positions by the Employment Department.
- 180 missing men located.
- \$268,710.00 received for safe keeping and transmission to seamen's families.
- 3,732 seamen attended 26 religious services. (Chapel still under construction.)
- 11,371 seamen made use of the barber shop, tailor shop and laundry.
- 2,894 seamen attended religious services held at two Marine Hospitals.



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