

# *The* LOOKOUT



OUR PLACE ON THE NEW YORK WATERFRONT

SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTION

OF NEW YORK

VOLUME XXIII

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JULY, 1931

PLEASE NOTE: We wish to announce that the Board of Managers of the Institute has decided to omit the August issue of THE LOOKOUT. This is in keeping with our policy of retrenchment because of our limited funds. The Institute is facing a large deficit and must therefore economize at every point. Subscribers, however, will receive twelve issues of THE LOOKOUT for one dollar—the date of expiration of their subscription will be moved ahead one month. The September issue will appear on schedule.

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 25 South Street

#### LEGACIES TO THE INSTITUTE

You are asked to remember this Institute in your will, that it may properly carry on its important work for seamen. While it is advisable to consult your lawyer as to the drawing of your will, we submit nevertheless the following as a clause that may be used:

I give and bequeath to "Seamen's Church Institute Of New York," a corporation of the State of New York, located at 25 South Street, New York City, the sum of.....Dollars."

Note that the words "Of New York" are a part of our title. If land or any specific property such as bonds, stocks, etc., is given, a brief description of the property should be inserted instead of the words, "the sum of.....Dollars."

It is to the generosity of numerous donors and testators that the Institute owes its present position, and for their benefactions their memory will ever be cherished by all friends of the seaman.

# The Lookout

VOL. XXIII

JULY, 1932

No. 7

## ETERA, CHILD OF NATURE



—Photo Morris Rosenfeld, N. Y.  
 The 32-foot Ketch "Svaap" Which Sailed 'Round the World.

A SHY little man, a wrinkled, happy-go-lucky Tahitian. Such is Etera, pearl-diver, navigator and banana-grower who sailed with William A. Robinson on his 32-foot ketch across all the oceans of the world.

For a month after his voyages, Etera stayed at the Institute and so modest was he about his exploits and adventures that no one knew of them until the day he left on the Panama-Pacific liner, *Virginia*, to return to his native island, Papeete.

Across thirty-two thousand miles of heavy seas Robinson and

his "crew", the faithful Etera, traveled, blazing a trail of their own. "We lived healthily and magnificently, made our own laws, moved according to whim instead of the office clock," said Robinson. "The seas of the world were our highways, and the sun and stars our guide. My little boat, the *Svaap*, is the smallest boat that has ever sailed around the world. A thousand exotic lands passed in endless pageant before our eyes. We followed the trails of Captain Cook, Marco Polo and at last sailed in the wake of Odysseus himself."

When Etera and Robinson arrived in New York they were officially received at City Hall. Robinson left for his home. Etera came to the **Institute**. He speaks only "pidgin English", a little French and Tahitian. Two outstanding events, however, marked the Papuan's stay in New York. One was a ride in the subway. The other was a musical comedy with two Tahitian girl dancers. Etera was there in the upper balcony. He recognized Reri and Mary, the South Sea dancers whom he had known as children in Papeete. Their joyous reunion in the dancers' dressing rooms was a sight to behold, with the pearl-diver chattering away in his native tongue.

The subway ride was more exciting to Etera than dodging pirates or weathering a hurricane. He spoke of the subway with awe. Being a child of nature he did the natural thing. When he was oppressed by the heat he simply removed his coat and trousers and was bewildered when people stared. "We had barely entered the harbor in the *Svaap*," said Robinson, "when I pointed out the skyscrapers of the metropolis and explained to Etera the immense achievement of rearing these lofty towers of modern industry. He was silent for some time. Then, in his curious pidgin language asked:

"But why go to all that bother? It is a lot of work."

Robinson related the way he met Etera. "On the Tahitian waterfront I was looking for a good sailor, when I found him, a strange little fellow with golden skin wrinkled and weatherworn by years of sea roving. He is forty-eight years old and stands only five feet tall. His hair is long, black and curly, and he possesses only three or four teeth, of extraordinary length. Although his business was pearl-diving he had also been a cook on trading steamers throughout the South Seas. Five minutes after I engaged him, Etera had collected all his worldly possessions and was ready to sail 'round the world."

There is a great deal of misunderstanding as to the safety of a small boat in storms at sea. The reason the *Svaap* lived through so many terrific storms is that she moved through the water at a comparatively slow pace. When a huge sea came along she lifted with it, like a small piece of wood. In a breaking sea she was flexible and buoyant and could recoil with it instead of being driven remorselessly against it.

So Etera has left the city of man-made wonders to return to his world of freedom and beauty in the enchanting islands of the south.

## "BEDTIMERS"



U. S. Marine Hospital at Staten Island, N. Y.

"**B**EDTIMERS" is the name which oldtimers at the U. S. Marine Hospitals call themselves. "When a chap has had three major operations and has been in hospital more than a year, then we start callin' him a 'bedtimer,'" explained John S . . . . one of the cheeriest bed patients we have ever visited.

John has been in and out of Marine Hospital No. 21 on Staten Island for the past five years. We'll agree that he has had his share of hospitalization and now he hopes that before long he'll be able to sail the high seas again. "In my long confinement in hospital I've had a wonderful opportunity to observe seafaring men of every nationality, color, class and creed," says John, "before and after they have been hit by the ebb and flow of the tide."

"All the bedtimers feel the same as I do about Chaplain Mitchell", wrote John to Dr. Mansfield. "He has devoted his time to our care and wants, both spiritually and entertainingly. Many a patient whom I have seen worried and lonely would be cheered up and begin to look on the bright

side of life after the **Institute** chaplain had sat at his bedside, read the Bible, and given the patient a good, old-fashioned, comforting talk. Many a sailor in this hospital can thank Dr. Mitchell for the cigarettes, crossword puzzles, writing paper, et cetera, he brought them from the **Institute**."

The Staten Island Association, Seamen's Church Institute of New York, helps to finance the social service department of the hospital so that such comforts as radio, books, concerts, moving pictures, checkers and dominoes can be given the unfortunate seamen who have succumbed to illness or who have been injured in accidents aboard ships. The U. S. Government supplies all medical and surgical care. There is a recreation "Hut" where our chaplain holds services on Sundays for the "up" patients. And there are many other important services rendered, such as arranging for compensations, locating lost baggage, writing letters, notifying relatives, getting clothes and shoes for patients about to leave the hospital. And, too, there is the matter of carfares and trainfares.

One can't turn a sailor lad out into the street and say, "Goodbye." He must eat and sleep and have lots of rest before he can expect to get another ship. In the meantime—if he has no home, or it is too far away, the **Institute's** Social Service Department arranges to send him to a convalescent home.

When the LOOKOUT editor made a visit to this hospital recently, accompanied by the chaplain, she was privileged to witness several touching incidents, among which was the spectacle of an old salt leaving the hospital. As he bade farewell to Dr. Mitchell his eyes filled up when he voiced his thanks for the spiritual aid and comfort our chaplain had given him during his darkest moments. Penned up in the surgical ward for eleven months,

the old fellow waited eagerly for the Chaplain's visits.

One young seaman, clad in bathrobe and slippers and weakly walking from bed to bed, trying to regain his strength, remarked: "Chaplain Mitchell sure does understand a sailor's likes and dislikes—makes us forget our aches and pains." Another chap proudly displayed an electric percolator at his bedside and a can of a well-known brand of coffee. "I like to make my own," he explained, "one-handed, kind of awkward, you know. The other hand—well—it ain't any more. The chaplain'll tell you what a good coffee-maker I am. He's a fine man."

Dr. Mansfield has been the official chaplain of the U. S. Marine Hospitals in this Port for fifteen years.

## THE END OF THE TRAIL

**F**ORTUNE tellers told Mrs. H. . . . that her son, Raymond, was dead. He had gone to sea, written home regularly each week, and then, suddenly, the letters stopped. Three, six, nine months went by. Finally, in despair, Mrs. H. wrote to Mother Roper as she had heard of the **Institute's** success in locating missing seamen. She also wrote to the Shipping Company where Raymond had been employed. The Company promptly sought Mrs. Roper's aid in "relieving the mind of a distressed mother". Raymond's name was carried on

our Missing Men's Bulletin for many months, but not a word came from him.

Then one day the Superintendent of the Institute in New Orleans wrote Mother Roper that a seaman had recognized Raymond's name and reported that he was in jail in C. . . . Immediately the jail authorities were queried.

On the same day that Mrs. Roper received word from the jail confirming her fears that Raymond was there, (he was tried and convicted to serve 8-10 years in the state penitentiary for the

offence of highway robbery) she had a pitiful letter from Mrs. H. "In all my grief", wrote the distracted mother, "I write to you hoping for better news. Raymond's father has been at death's door for seven weeks. He asked for Raymond all the time. I have just now come from the funeral."

Mother Roper was in a quandary. Should she tell the mother that the boy had been found—in jail? The shock might prove too great, after the loss of her husband. Not knowing exactly what was the right step, she sat down and wrote a letter to Raymond:

"Naturally, I am at a loss what to do, as I know that your mother's heart is already full. On the other hand, my dear boy, you have a long sentence ahead of you and when a boy is in trouble the mother heart goes out to him the more. While you may not be able to see her, I am sure that a letter once in a while from her would be a great comfort to you, so will you give me permission to write your mother? After all, it would be a great relief to her to know that at least you are alive and the suspense of not knowing where you are and whether or not you are hungry or homeless would be allayed."

But young Raymond replied that he was ashamed to have his mother know his whereabouts and begged Mrs. Roper to keep his secret. He wrote that he had been sent to prison through a frame-up, of which he was entirely innocent. Our chaplain wrote to a minister in C. . . . asking him to visit Raymond.

For several months Mrs. Roper corresponded with both Mrs. H. and the boy, always trying to

persuade the latter to write to his mother. Then came a letter from Raymond's sister telling Mrs. Roper how desperately ill the mother was and pleading for word of Raymond.

At length, Mrs. Roper's patience earned its reward and the boy wrote that he write home. But somehow or other, he must have lost his nerve, for the sister wrote another appealing letter to Mrs. Roper. So Mrs. Roper made a grave decision. She decided to tell the family that he was alive, but in jail. Then she wrote and confessed to Raymond what she had done—for what she believed the best.

As always, her judgment proved correct. The mother and sister took the news bravely and immediately wrote to Raymond.

A recent letter from Raymond's sister follows:

"Dear Mrs. Roper:

I want you to know how much I appreciate all you have done for us. Raymond writes to us on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month. You can imagine how we expect those letters! We are working on the case to have him released. A lawyer in town here is helping us. This morning I mailed my brother a box containing towels, soap, tooth brush, tooth paste, talcum powder, handkerchiefs, cigarettes, cakes and candies. Every other week I send him \$1.00 in a letter. He always tells us not to worry about him, as worrying will not do him any good. I will keep you informed about the progress we make on the case."

And so the **Institute** reaches out far beyond South Street and the East River to befriend unfortunate sailors and their families.



A Typical Institute Bedroom

**D**INGY freighters wallowing in tempestuous seas with cargoes of nitrate from Chile, cotton goods from Manchester, silks from China, motor cars from the River Rouge, tobacco leaves from Macedonia, "ivory, apes and peacocks" from the "palm green shores"—what you will—that is world commerce. That and pages of tabulations (in long tons, 000's omitted) is the commerce that builds cities, feeds nations, propagates factories.

**L**UXURIOUS ocean "greyhounds" speeding through the North Atlantic with a passenger list that includes opera stars, statesmen, artists, architects, bankers, lawyers, internationally known athletes, moving picture actresses, novelists, playwrights, merchants—all depending on the efficiency and loyalty of the crews and the safety of the great vessels to bring them home to port.

**W**HEN you sail the high seas it is thanks largely to the merchant seamen, whether officers, sailors, firemen, engineers or stewards, that you are able to do so in safety and comfort. Many generous people have felt that much is owed these brave seamen, and so they have given liberally, making possible the great shore home for seafarers at 25 South Street: the SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK.

HOW YOU  
CAN HELP  
THE  
INSTITUTE



A Busy Corner of an Institute Game Room

**W**HEN ashore between voyages or when ships are tied up thousands of these sailors find a haven at the Institute. For 89 years it has befriended seafarers, serving as their home, hotel, club, church and providing them with the friendship and protection they so greatly need. Since January, 1927, the Institute has been able to welcome thousands more than it did before the Annex was completed. This thirteen-story addition to the original building is filling a real need. It contains reading and game rooms, an Auditorium, a cafeteria, besides eight floors of dormitories and rooms which are always well patronized.

**O**VER this scene of activity and usefulness is the shadow of DEBT. Each year, through our loyal and generous friends, we are able to reduce to some extent this debt of more than a million dollars. We earnestly hope that the interest now paid on bank loans can eventually be used for more constructive purposes. Many friends have given sacrificially to our Building Fund. If YOU have not already done so, or if you can find it possible to give again, will you please give now? A contribution of even \$1.00 will be most welcome. By so doing, you will help to cancel the debt principal.

**K**INDLY send your contribution to JUNIUS S. MORGAN, JR., Treasurer, Annex Building Fund, 25 South St., New York City.

## 'ROUND THE WORLD IN ? DAYS

**A**BURNING ship in Gray's Harbor, Aberdeen, Washington, thwarted the ambition of Oliver Schenk, age 28, and Glen Bartlett, age 23, to travel around the world in 1927. The ship was the "City of Nome" and had just been loaded with a cargo of oil and gasoline. At about 1:00 o'clock in the afternoon, one hour before sailing time, the ship caught fire. Oliver Schenk, who was night-watchman, was sleeping at the time and was forgotten in the excitement which followed. Suddenly, however, his pal remembered the sleeper below and hurriedly rushed to his rescue. These two seamen now plan to continue their jaunt around the world. "We might as well", said Oliver Schenk to the editor, "because there is no work for seamen out of the Port of New York today. If we stay here, we'll be bums, but if we start on a world-wide tour, we'll be travellers."

So with \$50 each, which they had painfully and patiently earned, the two globe-trotters said goodbye to their friends at the **Institute** one Spring morning and embarked on board the freighter "Poughkeepsie" which took them as far as Albany, from whence they hoped to get on a canal barge going to Buffalo, then down the

Ohio River to Pittsburgh and possibly down the Mississippi.

Oliver Schenk has been studying at the Art Students' League and has developed his talent for drawing. On page 13 of this issue is a reproduction of one of his etchings. He hopes on his world-wide tour to be able to make sketches of the various types of homes of natives. Bartlett hopes to write a book about his travels. Both will keep diaries of their experiences. Their parents fully consented to the proposed tour.

"We expect to be gone about three years", said Schenk, "and whereas we are not in any sense an expedition to bring back bones of prehistoric men—nevertheless, we consider that our 'round-the-world trip has a mission, and that mission is to get as much information as possible on how the depression has really affected the inhabitants of other countries. In order to learn this, we must associate with the real natives of each country and not the floating population." The two young men are completely optimistic about their chances of working their way around the world. "We started it", said they, "and now we are going to finish our tour." Let us hope that no burning ship will stop them again.

## "THE SEA DEVIL" VISITS THE INSTITUTE



Photo of Count Luckner  
Courtesy, G. P. Putnam's Sons, Publishers "A Boy Scout With the Sea Devil", by David Martin, Jr.

**FELIX COUNT LUCKNER**, commander of the famous *See-Adler* during the World War, and now commander of the four-masted schooner, *Mopelia*, is a man of tremendous energy and prodigious strength. He is also a man with a sincere love of humanity and hatred of cruelty and oppression. Although a popular lecturer, greatly in demand, he gave up an evening in May to the **Institute** and entertained with accounts of his sea adventures an audience of 1,000 seamen and staff members in our Auditorium. Dr. Mansfield introduced Count Luckner as "a citizen of the world

—outside the narrow boundaries of nationalism."

The surface characteristics which impress the observer most about the Count are the small pipe, his constant companion, and his famous expression: "By Joe!" which accents every remark. Beneath his jolly banter and show-man tricks he has the real sailor's deep love of the Sea, devotion to duty and dauntless courage. Story telling is one of the greatest accomplishments of Luckner—his sense of humor, his realistic descriptions and his skill at pantomime combine to make him a master yarn-spinner.

The Count was only fourteen years old when he ran away from home to go to sea "because he wanted to meet that famous American hero, Buffalo Bill." His first job was on an American sailing vessel bound for Australia. At a seaport town Felix saw an American ship in the harbor and made his way to the Captain. Luckner sailed from Australia to San Francisco in this ship. He learned that Buffalo Bill lived in Denver and was advised by a friendly tramp to "walk the railroad ties". For six months he walked the ties, working his way for food. At last he came to the home of his hero in Denver.

"What do you want?" asked a lady who opened the door.

"I want to see Buffalo Bill", replied young Felix.

"Why, lad, didn't you know that Buffalo Bill is in Germany!" she exclaimed.

You can imagine the boy's disappointment. Later he found that his hero, while in Germany, had spent two days in his father's house. He had sailed 21,000 miles and had tramped 1,200 miles of railroad ties in vain!

The Count's adventures during the World War are probably familiar to LOOKOUT readers: how, on a German ship disguised as a Norwegian windjammer, he was able to run the blockade, to pass the British inspectors and to

get through the North Sea into the Pacific, where he sunk many ships of the Allies but not without first taking the crews on board the *Seeadler* so that not a life was lost . . . even saving six dogs and thirty-four cats.

"I know how much every sailor loves his mother. I thought of my mother and I decided that not one of those sailors' mothers should know sorrow on my account. Every other sailor in my position would have done the same thing. They were actually prisoners of war, but I treated them as friends, for we were all 'seamen' together." Thus the Count explained his humane method of warfare.

The *Seeadler* was shipwrecked and crew and prisoners landed on the beautiful little island of Mopelia, about 2,300 miles from the Fiji Islands. Just as the war ended, Count Luckner and a part of his crew were taken prisoners.

"By Joe!" exclaimed the "Sea Devil" at the conclusion of the lecture, after our sailor audience had stood and given three rousing cheers for "Count Luckner — a good sport and a true sailor", led by Dr. Mansfield. "We sailor-fellows are always longing for the feel of the deck under our feet. But we look forward to the next port the moment we get to sea again. Such is the sailor's quaint philosophy!"

## FROM THE INSTITUTE LOG

### Service

An example of the kind of service rendered by the Institute which is not classed under relief, but which is nevertheless most important is the following incident. Our Dental Clinic is closed on Saturday afternoons, as it is open every weekday and two evenings. Seaman George T..... had an appointment for Saturday morning but was delayed. He arrived about five o'clock in the afternoon and told his tale of woe to a sympathetic policeman at the door. It seems he had a job, was leaving for a three months' cruise, and he needed that set of false teeth which were waiting for him in the dental clinic so badly. So the sympathetic policeman telephoned the hygienist and she came all the way down from her home in Yonkers to fit the set of teeth in George's mouth. Then off he went to his job, and a happier, more grateful seaman it would be hard to find.

### Re-Rigging at Sea

EDITOR'S NOTE:—One of the Institute's Board members showed us a rare old book entitled "Voyages Around the World," which records the experiences of Captain Edmund Fanning on his voyages between 1792 and 1832 in command of the "Betsey." The following excerpt describes one of the experiences while on the voyage from New York to the South Seas for fur seal skins, thence to China across the Pacific and back to New York with silks.

July 15, 1797—While on the passage to the Cape de Verds, by the expressed wish and counsel of the officers, it was thought advisable to alter the rig of the Betsey, and change her into a ship. This, it was supposed, and afterwards ascertained to be the fact, would be

greatly to our advantage, for while laying off and on at the seal islands, to procure our cargo of fur seal skins, the cabin boy alone could tend and work a mizen-topsail, who certainly would be altogether unable to do anything with the heavy boom of a brig's fore-and-aft mainsail. At this place the alteration was carried into effect: the mizenmast, top, spars, rigging, sails, et cetera, were already in readiness, and the armorer, at his forge erected on shore, forged and made the chains, and all the other requisite iron work, so that the mast was stepped, sails bent, and the Betsey rigged into a ship all ready for sea, in five days' time. This was accomplished without one dollar extra expense to the owners.

### A Mysterious Postcard

A perplexed frown wrinkled the brow of young Charles G..... as he approached our Information Desk clerk. "Can you help a fellow out with this puzzler, Miss?" he queried. "My buddy sent me this postcard and I can't make out where he is." The postcard read as follows: "If you want to see me I'm with the gang. Take a bus from the Dixie Hotel and get off at the Red Apple. Fare is \$1.10." The postmark was nearly obliterated. But our young clerk proved her sleuthing ability by finding that the Red Apple was the name of a tea room where busses stopped. Next she procured a half dozen time-tables and by diligent searching discovered a bus that stopped in Southfield, New York, at the Red Apple, and the fare was \$1.10. So off went Charles G..... to meet his buddy and grateful to the Institute.

## Sightseers

Allen H..... had just celebrated his 16th birthday by coming to New York for the first time, as a mess boy on the B..... Our Apprentice Room hostess found it impossible to leave her work at the Institute to conduct Allen on a sightseeing tour around New York. And she was insistent that he did not go alone. Suddenly, the smiling face of old Bosun Peter A..... appeared in the doorway. It was arranged that the old bosun should be Allen's personal escort to all the wonders of the great metropolis. So off they went, two kids, one 16, the other 60, to see the sights.



Courtesy, Miss Jeanette MacMillan

## Mother's Day

The officials of Whitman Candy Co. wrote to Mother Roper telling her that a seaman in a marine hospital had sent them an order for a big box of candy for "Mrs. Roper, at 25 South Street. She's the only mother I ever knew. My own mother died when I was a babe. Mother Roper sure is a square-shooter. Send her the nicest box of candy you have in the store. Here's the money for it." Another old seaman brought her a bunch of flowers, saying, "I don't remember my mother, but I know if she were anything like you, she was sure great!" A father, whose seaman son Mother Roper was able to find when he disappeared six years ago has, ever since that time, come to see Mrs. Roper personally each Mother's Day and has brought her a bouquet of roses. Due to Mrs. Roper's coaxing the son left the sea and returned to college and finished his course. He graduated this June.

## Unusual Jobs

In these days of job-hunting, two of our seamen have learned that when no job is to be had, it's a wise plan to go out and make a new job. Robert J. decided to use the experience he had gained washing decks to good advantage ashore. He was able, through the assistance of our Information Desk clerk, to get the names of owners of Colonial homes. Whereupon he visited these homeowners and convinced them of the necessity of letting him wash the paint on their houses. His sales talk must have been effective, for he has secured several orders. Sam W. sought help at our Information Desk on the proper wording of a letter applying for a job with the St. Louis Zoo to join a snake-hunting expedition in Arkansas. Sam had learned how to get along pleasantly with snakes and had worked, as he said, "both in the legitimate and show business."



FISHERMAN'S FO'C'S'LE

Drawn by Seaman Oliver Wendell Schenk

## Some of the services rendered to worthy sailormen by the SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK from January 1st to June 1st, 1932:

- 176,030 Lodgings Provided in Dormitories and Rooms (including emergency beds)
- 160,450 Meals Served in Cafeteria and Dining Room
- 310,060 Sales Made at Soda Fountain
- 18,028 Pieces of Baggage Checked
- 22,972 Books and Magazines Distributed
- 28,391 Special Social Service Needs Filled
- 6,849 Relief Loans to 3,191 Seamen
- 41,487 Emergency Relief Transactions
- 2,324 Cases Treated in Dispensary, Dental and Eye Clinics
- 753 Positions Procured for Seamen
- 96 Missing Seamen Located
- 109 Religious Services Attended by 6,400 Seamen
- 12,473 Services Rendered at Barber Shop, Tailor Shop and Laundry
- 21,805 Information Desk Interviews
- 2,952 Pieces of Clothing and 2,045 Knitted Articles Distributed
- 104 Entertainments in Auditorium Attended by 72,279 Seamen
- \$139,075.59 Received for Safekeeping or Transmission to Seamen's Families



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\*The Board of Managers of the Seamen's Church Institute of New York announces with profound sorrow the death of their member, the Rev. Caleb R. Stetson, rector of Trinity Parish, who was a clerical vice-president of the Institute during the past ten years.