The LOOKOUT

DECEMBER 1956

SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE of NEW YORK

THE SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK is a shore center for merchant seamen who are between ships in this great port. The largest organization of its kind in the world, the Institute combines the services of a modern hotel with a wide range of educational, medical, religious and recreational facilities needed by a profession that cannot share fully the important advantages of home and community life.

The Institute is partially self-supporting, the nature of its work requiring assistance from the public to provide the personal and social services that distinguish it from a waterfront boarding house and give the Institute its real value for seamen of all nations and all faiths who are away from home in New York.

A tribute to the service it has performed during the past century is its growth from a floating chapel in 1844 to the thirteen-story building at 25 South Street known to merchant seamen the world around.

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The
LOOKOUT

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SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK

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THE COVERS (front and back): It takes a whole team to handle preparations for Christmas. The story on page 11 describes how the Institute gives Santa a heave ahead.

Carvers to the Sea

Who is she? The sea does not give up its secrets, and neither does this mysterious figurehead guarding the entrance to the Institute's Marine Museum.

THE young woman who stands at the entrance to the Marine Museum of the Seamen's Church Institute remains a woman of mystery. No one can really get to know her. Old salts who come and go at the Museum have been trying to date her, with no success, for three years now, ever since she got stationed at her present post. The blue-eyed maiden doesn't seem to mind the discussions, though, since her ears — and all the rest of her — are made of wood. Once the proud figurehead of a sailing ship, she now stands alone and aloof, her origin and background still an unsolved question.

"She reminds most of the older sailors," says Museum Curator W. E. Greyble, "of the figureheads of the ships they sailed on. One look at her and they want to know where they can find the statue of the Indian princess or captain's daughter who used to grace the prow of their ship." Of the thousands of figureheads carved in this country, only a few remain, standing quietly in museums or dusty attics, silent reminders of the days of tall ships and sentimental sailors. To these men, a ship was a living thing; it was unthinkable that she should not bear a symbol of life — a figurehead.

Joseph Conrad understood just how strongly the sailor of his day felt about figureheads, and in his story, *A Smile of Fortune*, he tells what happened when someone suggested to a captain whose figurehead had been lost that he replace it with a new one. The captain, a sensitive fellow, flushed red with embarrassment, as if something not quite proper had been suggested. He would as soon think of getting a new wife, he said. Did he seem the type, he asked, who would "pick up with another man's cast-off figurehead?"

To the sailor, the figurehead was almost a person, with a person's delicate feelings. It is reported that in 1778, when England's Channel Fleet had been badly beaten by a very inferior force, a bosun's mate of the *Royal George* clambered over the bow and blindfolded the figurehead of King George II with a hammock. When an officer angrily asked him what he was doing, he replied, "We ain't ordered to break the old boy's heart, are we?"

This special reverence in which sailors held their figureheads was the product of a blending of superstition and tradition which dates back to the childhood of the world. In those days of animistic beliefs, the sailor thought that, by appropriate rites, he could invoke a deity to dwell within his vessel and give it protection and guidance. Whether he painted eyes (oculi) on the bow of his ship to search

out good luck for him, or put up the carved head of a lion or dragon, he did it with the faith that a guiding spirit would insure the vessel's safe return.

The use of the oculi and the carved animal's head can be traced back to almost all the ancient seafaring peoples — the Phoenicians, who decorated their ships with horse heads, the Vikings, who preferred serpents and dragons, and the Romans, who liked to adorn their vessels with the graceful, gilded head of a swan or goose. Although the Romans may have used carved images on their ships, the full use of the human figure as a figurehead has not been authenticated before the 15th century. At that time, figures of the Christian saints were seen on the European ships, their haloed statues standing high on the masts or on the stern. At the same time, men in non-Christian lands paid tribute to other idols and adorned their vessels with the full figures of animals.

Besides placating a deity, the figurehead of ancient times had another important function — to terrify an enemy on the high seas, or at the very least, to symbolize the strength of the ship's native land. Enough to give any enemy a bad scare was one of the figureheads the Northmen might have used — the head of a human victim of a sacrificial ceremony lifted high on a pole and bearing a curse of evil upon all enemies.

Seventeenth-century England flaunted its warriors and heroes on hundreds of ships, and the practice passed down to many succeeding generations. The armored knight who guards the entrance to the Seamen's Church Institute, and is thought to be either Sir Galahad, Sir Launcelot or King Arthur, undoubtedly stems from that tradition.

The art of the figurehead, and of ship carving in general, reached a height, of sorts, in 18th-century England. Rococo geegaws all but smothered the ships; lions (the most popular figure), men and gods, warriors, dragons and heraldic symbols, all carved in elaborate detail, jostled each other for every available inch of space. The art of the American ship carver, which developed in the same period, brought a stroke of simplicity to the picture.

Untainted by the decadence of European art, early American ship carving was a fresh and vital expression of the flowering American democracy. It remains as one of the best examples of the folk art of the new world. In every coastal town, in Boston and Salem, Philadelphia and New York, wherever shipbuilding thrived, the ship carver was a highly honored craftsman. Working on the waterfront, usually in a discarded sail or mold loft, he constantly brushed fingertips with shipping folk and kept abreast of all the activities of the trade. The early ship carvers had a marvelous feeling for their material, and learned to cut their figures in keeping with the grain of the wood. Some of the best American ship carving dates from this early period, from about 1785 to 1825; after that, it became the fashion to give wood sculpture the finish of stone.

This figurehead of Andrew Jackson, which once got beheaded, now reposes peacefully at the Marine Museum of the City of New York.

The ship carver, unlike the sculptor, had a great many practical considerations to pay heed to; his work was not designed for a comfortable resting place in an art gallery. It had to be sturdily constructed, strong enough to stand the lashing of wind and waves and the beating of the sun. Its beauty had to be expressed in simple lines, and no detail could be carved in such a way that it would hold water. The figure could not be stiff; it had to have an eagerness for flight in its lines, and its eyes fixed on distant seas. Since the head decorations were often composed of many separate pieces, the actual placing of the statue on the ship called for an enormous amount of skill and knowledge.

The subject matter of the figureheads reflected the culture of the growing America. Statesmen and generals, merchants and shipbuilders, celebrities and American Indians were all popular subjects. Jenny Lind, Donald McKay and Admiral Farragut were a few of the varied crew who found their way to the prows of American ships. Clipper ships favored sleek Indian princesses or goddesses to blend with their trim lines. It was left to the frugal owner of the whaling vessel to introduce the plump, homey figure of his wife or daughter, or the captain's wife or daughter, to serve as an emblem of a ship. To the whaling crew, with three or four years to spend at sea, the figure of the little New England homebody was a sweet promise of homecoming.

Figureheads were important to the general public, too; important enough to cause riots when they failed to please. Pandemonium broke out in staid old Boston when a figurehead of Andrew Jackson was placed on the illustrious *Constitution* in 1834. Jackson had just removed the United States Bank from Boston, protesting that it was controlled by Eastern and European monopolists, and furious Bostonians could hardly stomach the thought of his countenance on their beloved "Old Ironsides." A group calling itself the North Enders of Boston put out a handbill reading, "Freemen Awake! or The Constitution Will Sink. It is a fact that the 'Old Glory President' has issued his order for a colossian Figure of his Royal Self in Roman costume to be placed as a figurehead on 'Old Ironsides'!!! Where is the spirit of '76? . . . for God's sake, *Save the Ship* from this foul disgrace." Their protest was to no avail; up went the figurehead. But a few months later, Captain Sam Dewey, a merchant marine skipper, rowed out to the ship under cover of night and avenged the honor of Boston. The next morning a beheaded figurehead caused a national sensation. Eventually, the President's head was restored, but not until a great many Jackson-haters had had their day of glory, and a newspaper had been moved to comment:

"Slowly and surely from the bows we
dropped,
As we gazed on the headless Tory.
Then we wrapped him in canvas for
want of a cloak,
And left him alone in his Glory!"

The end of the era of figureheads was at hand. With the coming of steam, ship carving, like other forms of art no longer functional, was doomed. On the river steamer there was no place for a figurehead; carvings on the bow would be injured in making a landing. The symbols of protecting spirits and good luck moved indoors, to the pilot house and paddle box. A few attempts were made to give the ships erect figureheads, but they were stiff and static, like the cigar store Indians to which the wood carver, with his dwindling ship business, now turned.

The Maine "Down-Easters" of the '70's and '80's, a few survivors of which still remain, were the last to carry the full-length wooden figures. An attempt was made to affix wooden figureheads to ships of steel around the turn of the century, but it turned out to be impractical. In 1907, a Navy order abolished figureheads from all vessels of the Atlantic fleet. In 1948, according to *The Lookout,* steel figureheads made a comeback on the ships of a Norwegian line. Since then, however, there has been no word of new figureheads being built. The old wooden figurehead, standing proudly and gracefully at the prow of a ship is a collector's item now, an antique, like the Marine Museum's winsome maiden, remembering another day.

— Faye Hammel

Captain Alan Villiers tries to explain to Maureen Reis of Brooklyn why there won't be room for any women — no matter how small or how pretty they are—on the replica Mayflower which will sail to America in 1957.

The *Mayflower's* Captain

SINCE asking our readers last month "What kind of sailors were the Pilgrims?" we have had a chance to talk with the skipper of the new *Mayflower* and find out a few things about the sailors who will be bringing the full-scale replica to America early next summer. A few weeks ago Captain Alan Villiers shattered all comparison with his prototype on the original *Mayflower* when he swooped in from England by Super-G to reconnoitre Plymouth Harbor. No doubt, Christopher Jones would have flown at the chance to do the same thing – had he known exactly where he was going, as Villiers will.

For his part, Captain Villiers, a husky six-footer with a touch of Cockney, was pleased to discourage the idea that he will be playing the role of Christopher Jones in a re-enactment of the original *Mayflower* crossing. In New York he told a group of school children who met him for breakfast one morning at Abraham & Strauss, "That would just be a lot of hokum – and we don't want any of that, now do we? In the first place, where could we find pilgrim fathers? My crew and I will simply be bringing a ship to this country as a gift from the English people."

Villiers acknowledged that he, too, had read in the papers that the crew and passengers would be dressed in costumes of the period. "Oh, if clothes are brought around and they're good, something we can use, we'll put them on, I guess. But I think that's getting a little bit cheesy – now don't you?"

He confirmed that the ship itself would be authentic in every detail except that she would have no cannon. "The original *Mayflower* needed cannon for protection from privateers and pirates. But we'd have no use for that," he smiled, "because the pirates have now all gone ashore."

How about radar? "Oh no. We don't want any of that stuff. There wouldn't be a place for it. Anyway, it doesn't always work – if we're to judge by the way these big ships bash into each other."

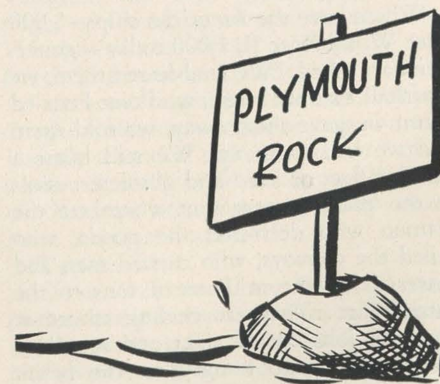
For his crew Villiers has selected 24 men from among literally thousands of applicants. "I haven't even read all the letters; life just isn't that long. Naturally, I preferred to stick with men I've sailed with before on the *Conrad* and elsewhere – yachtsmen and sailors who know their business. Things will be strange enough, without having a crew of strangers."

Villiers predicted that the biggest navigation trick he and his crew would face was that of trying not to get run over. He recalled how he faced similar trouble with his square-rigged ship, *Joseph Conrad*. "We were coming into New York one time after 106 days out of Melbourne and we were doing all right until a big bloomin' ship nearly knocked us over right in Ambrose Channel. We had only oil running lights – same as we'll have on the *Mayflower* – and it seems they just weren't looking for anything that dim. We managed to scare him off at the last possible minute by firing flares from aloft."

Villiers started to sea at the age of 15. His home port was Melbourne and from there, in 1920, sailing ships were still picking up a few cargoes for the Cape Horn trade. In the years since, he has gained the experience as a sailor that made him the obvious choice for skipper of the *Mayflower* replica. His many books and articles are the prime source of first-hand information on recent sailing ships.

Amid all the current excitement about the *Mayflower* project, Villiers reveals absolutely no tendency to confuse his own role with the glory of the first *Mayflower* passage, one of the world's great human adventures. "Certainly this will be a unique voyage and we'll learn something about the galleon rig. But otherwise, there shouldn't be anything really difficult about it. For example, "he said, "the *Mayflower* trip ought to be a picnic compared to the four months I spent as master of the *Pequod,* working with John Huston on the filming of *Moby Dick*. Gregory Peck played Ahab; I was the real captain and John Huston was a perfectionist."

The degree to which public fancy has been caught by the proposed voyage has been impressed on Villiers by the attempts various newspaper, magazine and newsreel people have made to wangle passage aboard the *Mayflower*. "If we took one of them, we'd have to take dozens, and even if we had room, it would just make a lot of phoney publicity. Figure it out: the man has to file a story every day. After forty days things would get pretty ridiculous. The *Mayflower* is a gift from the English people to the American people to honor the ties that exist between. It's a fine gesture and we certainly don't want it to go unnoticed. We don't intend to land at Plymouth and hide under a bollard, but at the same time we don't want to have something fine turned into something foolish."



TELEVISION

On January 13, 1957 the CBS television program "Telephone Time" will feature a story based on the paratroop days of the Institute's Director, Dr. Raymond S. Hall. It will deal with his training period at Fort Benning, where he gained the respect of the 101st Airborne by becoming, at age 33, the first paratroop chaplain of the U.S. Army.

GOING, GOING . . .

"The American flag, American ships and American seamen are disappearing from the seas of the world," Captain Amos B. Beinhart wrote in a recent letter to the editor of the *Baltimore Sun.* On a 48-hour crossing of the Suez Canal last year, he commented, his was the only American-flag ship in sight. In the Panama Canal, another great cross-section of world-shipping, he saw only one other American vessel. Ships of the runaway flags have replaced American ships everywhere on the sea, he wrote.

Where have the American ships—5,000 after World War II, 1,000 today — gone?, Beinhart asked. "We lend-leased them, we Marshall Planned them, we Point-Four-ed them, we gave them away, we sold them and we laid them up. We still boast a sizeable fleet of slow and obsolete vessels in the 'ready reserve' but where are the seamen who delivered the goods, who sailed the convoys, who carried men and materials by the millions of tons to the battlefront... They are chafing ashore at picayune jobs out of sight and sound of the sea. They go hungry on the beach awaiting their turn to ship through their hall when the scarce jobs come up. The officers try to eke an existence at relief jobs on ships in port, pieced out with part-time jobs ashore. They can work only a few months of the year, if there are ships enough to employ only half the men.

"The Merchant Marine," he continues, "is the only industry engaged in world competition unprotected by duties or tariffs. The subsidy is to merchant shipping what the tariff is to our internal industries; it enables it to meet the threat of cheap competition from abroad. It is no longer possible to operate American ships maintaining American standards of living and safety without Federal assistance."

THIS CHANGING WORLD

Having gained a place in the Madison Avenue sun, tattoos may soon flourish in many unexpected places. This will happen not because the cigarette ads have taunted the public into braving the needle point, but because a coward's path has been found.

A few days ago a troupe of fabric designers visited the Institute to analyse the flesh and blood results of the tattooer's art. Ordinary Seaman Bob Faucett stepped up brandishing two gilded arms, and a chorus of approval went up. One of the fabricators began making notes, another began sketching and a third fired questions. "Were any of these hand done? (Yes, these two by Charlie Wagner) How old is this one? (Two years) Where did you get them? (Japan, Chinatown, South Street) How long does it take? (Fifteen minutes) Does it hurt? (It smarts)"

The designers recoiled upon being told that the blacks in one tattoo were achieved with shoe dye and that the reds in another contained mercury.

When satisfied that they had captured the texture, color and style of real tatooing on real flesh, the designers closed their notebooks and announced that fake tattooing on fabrics would soon be available.

Two eavesdropping sailors looked at each other. Said one, "It ain't gonna be the same."

LOOK, NO SAVVY

Although ocean-going vessels are subject to the most stringent safety requirements, the same does not apply, unfortunately, to pleasure boats. A fact-finding group of the House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries was shocked to learn in New York last month that a man with absolutely no knowledge of boating can hire a fancy cruiser and head for the open Atlantic.

A company operating a livery service that rents 28-foot, 120-horsepower boats told the committee that they had sent 150,000 customers off to sea since 1938. None of them had had more than "a few minutes indoctrination on the rules of the road, so to speak," the company head reported. But, he added, "Well, I would certainly look a man over, and if he was sober and sensible, there would be no reason why he shouldn't go out."

Most of the witnesses appearing before the committee — yachtsmen, small-boat owners, association spokesmen, municipal and state officials — were in favor of boat registration, but there was disagreement about the necessity for licensing boats and their operators.

According to New York's Harbor Police, unskilled yachtsmen are a constant menace to safe boating.

HOST TO THE COURT

Pre-trial hearings on the collision between the *Andrea Doria* and the *Stockholm* will enter their fifth month when the sessions re-open on January 7 at the Seamen's Church Institute after a holiday recess.

Faced with a space problem and the prospect of massive and prolonged testimony, the Federal Court transferred the proceedings to a room at the Institute's Marine Museum on November 7. The hearings are preparatory to a trial involving more than $50,000,000 in claims.

Federal Court Judge Irving S. Kaufman, who presides over the hearings via telephone (a deputy clerk and a stenographer represent the court at the actual proceedings), has ruled that all testimony must be in by the end of February. The actual trial will get under way in April.

. . . AND A BOTTLE OF WHAT?

"Well, shiver our timbers!" howled a recent editorial in the New York World Telegram and Sun. "Consider now the plight of Canadian seamen, chronicled at Vancouver in the official organ of the Seafarer's International Union:

" 'At a meeting aboard the motor vessel *Coastal Creek,* crew members passed unanimously a motion to have the two female cooks stop using profane language in front of the crew members — especially when there is no justification for it.'

"Can this be?

"If so, we can forsee Canadian cafe owners posting signs: 'Ladies will please watch their language when sailors are present.' And the sailors, no doubt, will be huddled in a corner respectably chanting, 'Yo-ho ho and a bottle of Coke.' "

Caribbean seas smash against the after housing of a tanker.

Ordinary's Berth

By Tad Sadowski

Nov. 5, New York. Back to work after 32 days on the beach. I ask the dispatcher to ship me to a warm place; he makes the inevitable suggestion. After a physical checkup, I'm told to have my gear in the hiring hall at 0830. Ordinary's berth open on the *Esso Everett.* No schedule for the ship; evidently a tramp.

Nov. 6, Port Newark, N. J. Signed foreign articles and stowed my clothes in the 4-8 foc'sle. Two familiar faces aboard. Sailed with bosun and crew messman on the *Springfield,* my last trip. Orders have been received for Albany, Baytown and ports in Puerto Rico. The crew, mostly from the South, likes the idea of getting below Cape Hatteras and the cold weather. The *Everett* is a T-2 tanker, a clean oil ship carrying a mixed cargo of Esso, Esso Extra and heating oil. Ship is in very good condition, which means plenty of work for the deck gang.

Snow flurries in the early part of the afternoon; posted time for crew to be aboard is 1900.

Looking back on 50 ordinary days at sea, what would you remember? Tad Sadowski, from an Ordinary's berth on a tanker, offers some notes about his work, his shipmates and his time ashore. These are remembrances of late 1955. Christmas of 1956 finds Sadowski at the South Pole aboard a supply ship for Operation Deepfreeze. He is one of 480 sailors down there who will open gift packages from the Seamen's Church Institute on Christmas Day.

1800. Snow falling heavily, wind rising. Cargo has been discharged and the balance will be pumped at Albany. The only work our watch has is sprinkling sand around the gangway. There is speculation whether we sail tonight.

1930. Pilot comes aboard. Blinding snows and high winds. Purser reports everybody aboard except second mate.

2020. Standby called. To the messhall for coffee.

2030. Gangway pulled in. Bosun calls gang fore and aft to let go. Deck fixtures are mantled in white. Snow has subsided, wind has died, visibility is good. Still damned cold.

Later. All lines forward free of the dock except the spring line which is our job. We stand by it watching a tug on the outboard side having difficulty maneuvering the choppy waters. Hail, now, and wind blowing furiously in gale proportions.

A car skids to the dock's edge. From the bridge the Old Man calls for a pilot ladder to be put over the side and the second mate practically leaps up the rungs. His mother has been seriously ill. He laughingly agrees with an AB's comment, "Bet that's the closest pier-head jump you ever made!"

The tug is still in trouble and unable to respond to the pilot's signals. Weather has become extremely dirty and finally the pilot calls to make everything fast. We'll try again at daylight if the weather lets up.

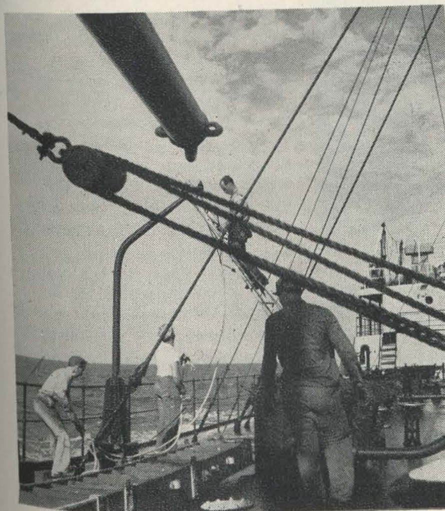
Nov. 7, Kingston, N. Y. Dropped the hook at dusk. No ship's permitted to travel the narrow channel after sunset.

Nov. 11, At Sea. The crew approves of holidays in the middle of a work week.

Nov. 21, Ponce, Puerto Rico. Half a day's run from our last port, San Juan, and much cleaner and smaller. The cab I hired for a look-around has a friendly driver. I finally became accustomed to his accent; he has been trying to tell me how well he speaks English. From the countryside Ponce gradually converges on a social and business center. The commercial community, consisting of modern, neat stores equipped with flashing neon signs, surrounds a small park. Colored lights border the tree-shaded walks and in the center is an illuminated fountain. Tonight a concert is in progress. The older citizens sit on the benches softly exchanging gossip and the younger generation stroll about hand in hand.

Rubin, my driver, brings me to several bars to meet his friends, roughly about 99% of the population. Off the beaten seamen's track I'm surprised to learn no one knows how to mix a Cuba Libre and Rubin gives instructions. From a consumer's standpoint he did a good job, and I was drinking a mixture consisting mostly of rum with a few slivers of lime and a drop of Coke at ten cents a glass. I went back to the ship earlier and dizzier than I had planned.

Rigging a ladder for the pilot.



Nov. 28, Baytown, Texas. One place Texans don't brag about. A large refinery, a dusty road flanked by a half dozen crummy saloons, and the usual last-chance-for-a-little-lovin' establishment the cops sometimes frown on. Small wonder Texans leave home. Ashore for a haircut and right back to the ship.

On watch we are 'topping off'. The *Everett* has nine sets of tanks, the foremost divided into two compartments. All the others have three sections: port, starboard and center. Loading usually starts forward and continues aft, all tanks – except those reserved for ballast being filled to within a few feet of capacity. When a tank is loaded, a seaman directed by the mate on watch turns a valve stopping the cargo flow, and almost simultaneously a valve diverting the cargo to another tank is opened. When all tanks have been filled to near capacity the few remaining feet are loaded or 'topped off'. This trims the ship to her Plimsoll mark and the operation is one that causes mates to get ulcers. The valves switching the cargo from one tank to another must be turned quickly as soon as a certain level is reached. Spilling the cargo onto deck may occur because of improper coordination and the mate has to explain in writing to the company just what happened. While their merchant marine licenses require the mates to read and write, they can't be considered men of letters.

Dec. 2, At Sea. All in all, this is a happy ship. We have a good Old Man aboard. He sounds off with a voice like a foghorn and vocabulary that is liberally sprinkled with choice expletives that would shock Hemingway. The classic story kicking around the fleet concerns the time he was taking a ship alongside a dock. He saw his wife standing there and yelled down, "Hello, Mama!" "Don't 'Mama' me,

you fat slob!" she yelled back. "Where's the money?"

On every ship there's always one clown aboard, and ours is one of the day workers. He was locked up in Puerto Rico for shooting fireworks, rolled in a waterfront dive and came close to missing ship in Texas. The bosun who spends his time talking about the ship or his wife — it's hard to tell which he cares for most — usually assigns him work away from the rest of the gang because he has a genius for fouling up any job. The Old Man supplied his nickname. They were coming down the cat walk from opposite directions. The dayman was carrying a bucket of paint. Head down, he didn't notice the captain until he jostled him showering him with a covering of tanker green. When the Old Man coughed the paint out of his mouth, he sputtered, "Got your head stuck up your tail like one of them ki-yawr birds." After that the dayman was greeted with the seagull's "Ki-yawrrr" cry by the crew.

Dec. 24, Approaching New York. Thirty-day payoff tomorrow. When the paymaster starts counting those big bills into my palm, it makes this life seem worthwhile — for a day or so. Can't sleep tonight; probably suffering from the traditional ailment of sailors — channel fever, the seagoing version of homesickness. New York is the only port that excites me that way. From the first faint flash of light at Ambrose until the large loom of light of Manhattan's wonderland, I silently urge the ship to hurry to port.

"Home is the sailor, home from the sea . . ."

HE'D CHANGE ALL THAT

Where do we go from here? Well, Thomas Cooper, a chief steward, has cooked up plenty of answers. An incurable inventor with 17 years of seafaring behind him, Cooper pitches his efforts mainly toward the marine line. His plans include: electronic substitutes for the Jacobs ladder and the mooring line, new hatches and hatch guards, a noiseless replacement for the chipping hammer, an arctic boat, a 60-knot jet-powered experimental craft, quick conversion of transports to escort carriers, fully protected lifeboats and rafts that are not gravity launched. Cooper says his marine designs are all compatable with his ultimate goal: an unsinkable ship.

In other lines he has devised: a new concept of aerial rescue, automatic subway doors, a pistol that can either kill or stun, an insecticide, a specific for hemorrhoids, a plan for evacuating New York and a better mouse trap.

Cooper is presently searching for a plan that will bring any or all of his previous plans to fruit.

The Days Before Christmas

THERE'S an air of excitement that overtakes every household before Christmas, and the Seamen's Church Institute is no exception. Only here the family numbers up in the hundreds, and the business of planning the holiday festivities is multiplied accordingly. Scores of heads and hearts and hands are busy—weeks before Christmas — making December 25th a day to remember for seamen in New York.

Preparations get under way early in November, when the Business Office begins to place orders for the hundreds of decorations that will adorn the building's public rooms during the holiday season. Christmas trees and glittering angels, snowflakes and green wreaths, winter plants and frosted bells and yards and yards of ribbons and streamers will go up a few days before Christmas and remain until after New Year's Day.

Throughout the month, women volunteers come and go at the Women's Council's Christmas Room, packing the thousands of boxes containing knitted garments and other useful presents that will go to men on the high seas on Christmas Day. As fast as they are packed, the boxes are loaded aboard ships in the harbor by the Institute's Ship Visitors. Every seaman at 25 South Street will also receive a gift package on Christmas morning, as will old friends of the Institute scattered in hospitals or homes for the aged.

By the end of November, it's time for the Business Office to start talking turkey — turkey prices, that is. The traditional Christmas dinner, served free to all men staying in the building, will require approximately 560 lbs. of the succulent bird. Twelve hundred seamen guests will also consume some 600 lbs. of turnips, 240 lbs. of peas, 1200 lbs. of potatoes, 150 pumpkin, apple and mince pies, three cases of cranberry sauce, five cases of tomato juice, 84 dozen rolls, 30 lbs. of coffee and 30 lbs. of butter. They will also smoke some 23,000 cigarettes. All the items must be planned and ordered well in advance.

Along about this time, most of the departments of the Institute are feeling the full blast of the Christmas rush. Men stop by often at the Personal Service bureau to pick up Christmas cards donated by various greeting card companies and church groups, to have a package wrapped with "bows and fancy paper," or to get help in buying a present for a special "lady friend." At the barber shop and tailor shop and clinic, men are anxious to have their hair cut or their suit mended or a new dental bridge put in "for the holidays." Christmas mail for seamen swamps the Post Office, and the Administration office is busy readying 800 Christmas cards that go out to seamen in the building.

The hub-bub of activity reaches its peak on December 25th. Men find their gift packages in their rooms on Christmas morning. Religious services are held at the Institute's Chapel of Our Saviour, and then dinner is served, with an accordianist providing background music. In the afternoon, men congregate in the Game Room or the Janet Roper Club, where cider and apples and popcorn are handy for munching, or catch the afternoon movie in the Auditorium (another film is shown in the evening). In the Dutch Room, whose ceiling has now become a sky of paper stars, Netherlands sailors are holding another Christmas party, and there is Dutch Christmas music and dancing and the traditional holiday sweets. By evening, the activity is subsiding throughout the building. Men sit around quietly in the club rooms, listening to music or talking. The planning and preparation and fever pitch of the day are over. The only work left is for the cleaning crew, whose brooms the next morning will sweep away all but the memories of another Yule at 25 South Street.

Book Watch

POSTED MISSING

Alan Villiers

Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, $4.75

Anyone who thinks that the stories of ships vanishing at sea without a trace are tales out of a dead past had better brush up on Alan Villier's latest book. Here are the curious facts behind the disappearance of hundreds of ships in recent times. All kinds of ships — passenger ships and fish trawlers, oil tankers and battleships, new motorships and plodding, aged tramps — have disappeared into the deep in the last few decades. Since the war alone, over a thousand men have gone down with missing ships. On the average, writes sailor-author Villiers, at least one big, well-found ship and a number of little ones are "posted missing" at Lloyd's of London every year. Thoroughly researched and authenticated, Villier's new book is a pertinent comment on the dangers still facing men who go to sea. Illustrated with maps, photographs and diagrams.

EXPLORING THE DEEP PACIFIC

Helen Raitt

W. W. Norton & Co., New York, $3.75

The mysterious world that lies beneath the oceans, with its jagged mountain peaks and vast caverns, its disappearing islands and strange sea life, has only just begun to be explored. Since 1946, a number of countries have sent their oceanographers and marine geologists to draw the maps of this unknown world and write its history. On one of these expeditions, the Scripp's Institution of Oceanography's 1952-1953 Capricorn Expedition to the South Seas, Helen Raitt joined her geophysicist husband, as a curious visitor and then stayed to become an enthusiastic member of the oceanographic team. Her log of that voyage, which turned into *Exploring The Deep Pacific,* records her personal observations to the highly specialized scientific world of the ship, to the complex maneuvers carried out by the geologists, chemists, geophysicists, engineers and divers, in their continuous observations of the sea. This painless introduction to oceanography is interspersed with charming reports on the ship's visits to the exotic lands of Siva, Pago Pago, Tahiti and the Marquesas.

Mrs. Raitt is an engaging writer and her book is a next-best to a trip on an oceanographic vessel itself.

THE LAST GRAIN RACE

Eric Newby

Houghton, Mifflin Company, Boston, $4.00

Enthusiasts of the days of the great sailing ships will relish Eric Newby's lively tale of an apprenticeship at sea — one that sounds as if it took place in another century, but actually happened less than 20 years ago. Newby was 18 in 1938 when he quit his job in a London advertising agency to sign on board the four-masted barque *Mosholu,* bound for Australia in the last of the great grain races. The story of that voyage and of the blending of monotony, hardship and ecstacy that goes into the life of a young sailor is told with humour, intimacy and a ready appreciation of what it meant to go to sea in the days of the great square-riggers.

CAROL SUNG TO THE STARS

Though I stand again in the ocean's world
Thinking alone on the Christmases that are gone,
Reading the murmuring swerve of every wave
Where light gleams of memory have fondly shone,

I see crimson berries on a white boyhood hill;
A tiny church, jewelled windows aglow;
Old friends walking to their simple prayer
Across the misty fields of a dreaming long ago.

On tree and the time-smoothed shelter of home
The lace of frost weaves a luminous light,
And eyes meet in friendship and in love
As bells peal across the happy night.

In the secret hearts on every ship
The deep joy of Christmas will ever be;
In a ship-mate's clasp; carol sung to the stars
Or a prayer whispered over the quiet sea.

Antony de Courcy