

The LOOKOUT

The New Annex Building is nearing completion. In fact, it is progressing more rapidly than the fund required to pay for it.

Each appeal brings a generous-hearted response from friends who give what they can and fervently wish it were more.

If you have done all possible to help, won't you try to interest someone else?

Our need is acute and you no doubt recognize its urgent claim.

A. R. Mansfield

Superintendent

SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK

The Lookout

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Our Relief Problem

Despite the mild weather, this is what is known as a "hard winter"—the worst, from the standpoint of unemployment, since 1916. Perhaps the comparatively mild weather is a special dispensation from a kind Providence to ease the lot of the patient breadlines and of those who necessarily must roam the streets by night.

While the situation is more or less general, it is most acute in New York. Of course there is likely to be more of everything in New York—more good, more bad, more wealth, more poverty, more shipping, more sailors, more unemployment.

An expert on labor conditions attributes our land unemployment situation to a general influx of men from other states, especially because of the coal strike in Pennsylvania, and the closing of textile mills in New England.

Sea unemployment is due in large measure to the uncertainty surrounding oil lands in Mexico,

which has cut the tanker trade just about in half. In addition, there are the usual causes which contribute to winter unemployment for seamen, such as the decrease in shipping to northern ice-bound ports, the decrease in passenger traffic, and the influx of "sweet water sailors" from the Great Lakes, due to decreased shipping there.

It is the land unemployment that creates the real problem for us, because land unemployment always produces "trip-ers." These are men whose avocation is the sea—men who are willing to go to sea for a trip or two when they cannot find work ashore. They can usually manage to get hold of discharges, which technically entitle them to our consideration.

Of course, the "survival of the fittest" holds in the present situation—in general. On the whole, regular sea-going seamen are holding their jobs from trip to trip. Ordinarily from ten to fifteen men pay off from each

freighter of any size when it enters port; but nowadays it is quite the usual thing for a ship to keep its entire crew intact for the next voyage.

There are, however, many worthy regular seamen who are victims of winter conditions—not only of unemployment but also of various ills attendant upon cold weather. These men are legitimately our charges and these men constitute our immediate problem.

The Seamen's Church Institute, of course, is not essentially a relief organization. We are a shore home for self-respecting, self-supporting merchant seamen who welcome the opportunity to pay cost price for their comforts. Our relief department exists for these same men, to serve them when misfortune overtakes them temporarily as it is likely to overtake men in any walk of life at one time or another.

When unfortunate men present themselves to us in throngs each day, our first move is to establish careful identification—to make sure that each man qualifies for consideration under our policy. We find an average of seventy such cases daily, which means that our facilities

as well as our funds are taxed to the utmost to provide for them.

Unfortunately the restaurant in our new building is not yet ready for use, and sending our men to even the most moderate priced lunch rooms in the neighborhood adds slightly to the cost of feeding them. We now have tickets, however, for which we pay only ten cents and which entitle the holder to a large bowl of soup with three thick slices of bread and butter. For twenty-five cents the same restaurant serves meat with three vegetables and bread and butter. Sandwiches are six cents each. Thus we can manage to keep a man fairly comfortable for thirty-five cents per day.

Lodgings are a more difficult matter. We have practically nothing to offer at the Institute, except in a case of illness which is not serious enough to warrant hospitalization and still needs rest and protection from the cold.

Some men we send to the municipal lodging house where they can usually find shelter.

To furnish shelter and food for these obviously deserving men, we are spending two-thirds of our year's relief funds during

the first three months, but it is with the faith that misfortune will disappear with the coming of warm weather and the opening of our new building.

We have frequently mentioned the *camaraderie* that exists among seamen. It amounts almost to chivalry, and it shows at its best in time of misfortune.

Our Chaplain happened upon an instance of it in our overcrowded lobby.

"Can you let me have a dollar, Jack?" The fellow who asked was a victim of the present hard times.

"Sorry," said the man he had tackled. "I've got just a dollar

left. But I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll split with you."

And when a fifty-fifty split had been effected, our Chaplain spoke to the erstwhile possessor of the dollar. It was his last dollar and he didn't know where the next one was coming from but—"O, fellows have done that for me, and now it was up to me," he explained.

Thus some of the sailor relief problem is taken care of by the sailormen themselves, but it is still our privilege to befriend many of them who come to us hesitant to admit their desperate circumstances, but confident of a sympathetic hearing.

Midships

It is some time since THE LOOKOUT has had much to say about ships' officers, although they are a most important cog in our merchant marine, and we not only harbor them at the Institute, but really "make" them in our Merchant Marine School as well.

They come to us for lodgings, but in much greater numbers for mail and for recreation in our officers' reading and game room, for licensed men with jobs have

port duty and live in their regular quarters on shipboard.

They make little stir—these quiet, self-reliant, cool-headed men who govern the destiny of our ocean-borne commerce. They come and go unobtrusively, grateful for a clean inexpensive home ashore, and especially appreciative of our large sunny officers' room where they may sit about with their pipes and swap experiences or enjoy a game of pool.

Occasionally a pool game gets hilarious with much ragging of the loser and jocular slaps on the back; sometimes someone will start a general singing bee; but on the whole quiet reigns. Letters are written home, technical magazines are consumed avidly from cover to cover, and the conversation savors of the bridge and the deck and the engine room.

There are stewards and mates and captains bold, and radio operators, and pilots and engineers, and they range in age from the fresh-faced "fourth" who has just completed his apprenticeship on a British merchantman to the picturesque old-timer who is the proud owner of an unlimited pilot's license good anywhere on the Atlantic seaboard.

Most of these officers have risen from the ranks by dint of hard training and study, and many of them have been prepared in our Merchant Marine School.

Our School, like the other departments of the Institute, serves first the seaman and through him the merchant marine and through that the economic welfare of the nation.

Thus, in providing officers with a decent home ashore and a school where they may improve their rank, we aim to contribute to more efficient ship operation.

The personnel of our American-flag merchant marine gets all too scant attention and encouragement. Our successful officers rise and distinguish themselves rather in spite of any incentive than because of it.

A deck officer recently took pen in hand and in the *Marine Journal* made a plea for better officers. Speaking from the inside as he did, he took liberties in the matter of criticism, but made constructive suggestions.

"We do not need sailors, as the term is generally understood, any more than the army needs archers. We do need officers who are familiar with one or more foreign languages; understand modern appliances aboard ship; have a working knowledge of sea transportation as a business, electricity, maritime law, and operate radio, in addition to their duties as watch or engineer officers; but at the present writing the outlook for procuring this type of officer seems very poor indeed.



THE FIRST MATE WRITES HOME

"The average officer would have considerable difficulty in acquiring higher professional knowledge, even if he were encouraged to do so, which he emphatically is not. Little modern or useful knowledge is required for his license, and as for developing professional pride of an officer, a suji rag and a paint brush soon take that out of him. There is almost no personal contact between the office and the ship's officers, aside from the captain, chief mate and chief en-

gineer."

And the final cry of this discerning deck officer is this:

"Give us officers who do not have to be brought back to the ship or bailed out of foreign jails; give us deck officers to whom unavoidable accidents, bad luck and acts of God do not happen so frequently; give us engineer officers who can foretell and direct repairs before it breaks."

We hope the Institute is answering his plea.

“John Paul Jones—Man of Action”



This is the title of a recently published book* by Phillips Russell.

Like a true biographer, Mr. Russell gives us many interesting and hitherto unknown incidents in the life of his “man of action.”

He shows him to be “a compound of Tom Sawyer, Don Quixote, Alexander the Great, and Sandy McPhairson,” but to us at the Institute, the outstanding points are the master seamanship of John Paul Jones and his humane consideration of seamen.

The overwhelming urge behind most of his naval exploits during the Revolutionary War was to capture enough prisoners to exchange for the American captive seamen who were languishing in British jails; and from his sick bed shortly before

his death, he wrote a pressing appeal to Thomas Jefferson in behalf of the American seamen imprisoned in Algiers.

In August, 1776, when Jones sailed for Bermuda on the *Providence* on the first extensive open-sea cruise ever undertaken by a lone American warship, one of his first acts was to throw the whip overboard. He preferred to punish his men either by “talking to them like a father,” as he himself said, or by stopping their grog for three days. Perhaps the men might have preferred the whip!

“John Paul Jones—Man of Action” is a fascinating chronicle of the life of a picturesque but tragic character about whom all too little is known.

He won his fame largely through his capture of the British warship *Serapis* on its

own coast with an inferior ship which was foundering, manned by a hybrid crew.

“Vicissitudes” would seem to describe the rest of his life—first the peaks of hope and then the deep valleys of despair. How he kept his faith and his ideals through all the jealousies and treacheries and disappointments it was his lot to encounter, is not easy to understand. Ten times he was deprived of a coveted command.

Each triumphant moment amidst the pomp and splendor of the Court of France had its antithesis in the hours of despair alone in St. Petersburg, the innocent victim of the mad Potemkin who resented his employment by Catherine the Great for her

Black Sea Navy.

All in all, Mr. Russell has given us an entertaining and convincing account of as colorful a seaman as ever paced a bridge.

A raid on the English coast, an audience with the dazzling Catherine of Russia, an accidental murder in Tobago, a filial devotion to Benjamin Franklin, a madcap trip through ice blocks in the Baltic Sea, a persistent appeal to the powers of France for a fleet of warships, a simple friendship with the Duchess of Chartres, a heartbreaking career in “unholy Russia”—all this and much more is well worth reading about the turbulent seaman whom Benjamin Franklin described as “not a man but a nor’wester.”

It was during the war. Young fellows from the Hinterlands appeared in droves to offer their services at sea. They were herded into training ships and merchant vessels in numbers far exceeding the capacities of the ships in peace times. The officers were at their wits’ end to find work enough for all of them. But work they must.

Young Isaac, of a race of nomads, scorned the ancient tradition and determined to go

down to the sea in ships. His ship was crowded past all hope of comfort. On the second day out the Atlantic became uneasy. Isaac went to his bunk with a determination to stay there.

On the third day Isaac refused to move. The Third Engineer called on Isaac, then the Second and, finally, the Chief.

Isaac raised his weary head. “I’ve seen one of the seven seas and I don’t care to live to see the other six.”

* Brentano’s \$5.00.

The Beginning*Photo by Schoenthal's*

A STRAY "SHOT" OF OUR \$4,500,000 PROPERTY INCLUDING THE NEW ANNEX BUILDING

Last Chapter

The new building begins to live.

By the time this LOOKOUT reaches you the dormitory floor will be open, the new soda fountain will be functioning, with its luncheonette service, and we shall be using the new main entrance.

The huge Annex which for many months has towered above its surroundings, a thing of brick and stone, is now beginning to fulfill its purpose—to live and breathe service to the sailorman.

What this will mean to the sailor, who has been roaming the waterfront in search of a home ashore, no one save this same sailor can ever know.

To those who have so generously contributed to our building fund, it will be the fulfillment of the purpose for which they gave.

To the members of the Institute staff who are "on the firing line"—those who come into daily contact with the sailorman and his problems—it will be the culmination of years of hoping

and planning for an opportunity to really carry out what they feel to be our duty to the merchant seamen on the East River waterfront of Manhattan.

But—to those whose responsibility is the completing of the building fund, it is an occasion for deep concern and faith-testing.

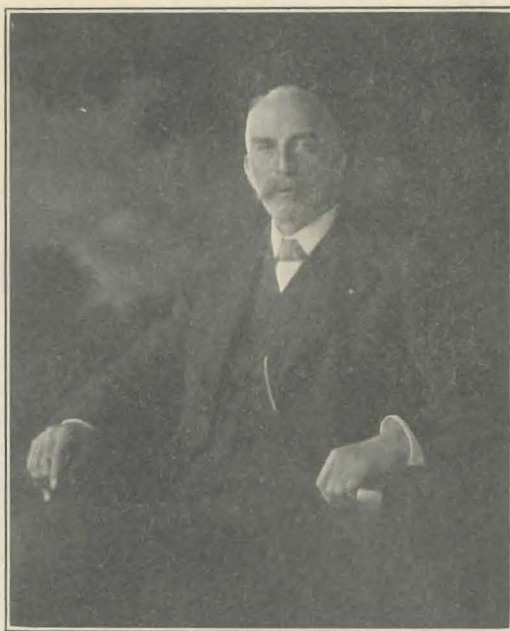
Funds will be required to finish the building, whether contributed or borrowed from banks.

Borrowings will be difficult to pay off. The plea in behalf of a homeless sailor is obviously more effective than one in favor of a solvent bank, even though prompted by the best of motives in tiding us over.

We pride ourselves upon having helped the sailor to recognize his financial obligations.

Will you help us to meet ours?

Checks in any amount mailed to Junius S. Morgan, Jr., Treasurer of the Building Fund, 25 South Street, will all help to make the last million dollars melt away.

James Wells Barber

It is with sorrow that we record the death of Mr. James Wells Barber, February 18.

Mr. Barber, who was well known in the shipping world, had been a member of the Board of Managers of the Seamen's Church Institute of New York since 1916 when he succeeded his brother Herbert.

He was born in London 74 years ago, came to America at the age of 24 and was engaged

in the shipping business until he retired in 1922.

As set forth in the minutes of the February meeting of our Board of Managers:

"Mr. Barber was a devoted friend and always a generous supporter of the work of this Society. His personal participation in its management and sincere interest in its activities were ever appreciated by his fellow members."

Getting Our Bearings

Another nautical note was added to our already nautical Institute on February 20th when a most attractive compass was set in the floor of the vestibule at the new main entrance.

Mr. J. C. Negus of the firm of T. S. and J. D. Negus of New York, who made the compass, gave his personal attention to adjusting it, and a most fascinating procedure it was for landlubbers.

Bearings were taken from the sun—a perverse sun that shone brilliantly all the morning until the compass arrived, and then sojourned behind a cloud for an unconscionably long time.

Mr. Negus took our imaginations for a flight when he suggested that hundreds of years hence archaeologists in their diggings may unearth the Seamen's Institute, and some astronomer, by carefully sighting by the sun and comparing the Magnetic North of our compass, may determine that it was set on February 20, 1928! And all because the Magnetic North changes constantly and will never again be caught napping just where we found it when our compass was placed.

Incidentally, someone may wish to donate this very appropriate gift.

Inactive Accounts of New York Banks

By FREDERICK D. ROBBINS
 Manager, Dormant Accounts Department,
 Seamen's Bank for Savings

EDITOR'S NOTE: We are occasionally told that there are millions of dollars in New York banks deposited there by seamen and never claimed; and the suggestion is made that such funds should be given to this Institute. The following article from an unquestioned source is published to correct any such false impressions.

A popular impression has prevailed that millions of dollars are lying idle in savings banks and that these institutions are able to build new buildings with unclaimed funds at the expense of the lost depositors. This idea is, however, not well based.

Once every year the savings banks advertise for claimants of deposits which have been untouched for twenty years and every effort is made to locate these depositors. Such accounts are constantly being eliminated and the amount of unclaimed moneys steadily reduced.

The Seamen's Bank for Savings in New York City, founded in 1829 as a savings institution for seamen and others, is one of the oldest and largest savings banks of the United States. The total amount of its unclaimed

deposits approximate much less than \$300,000. and of the dormant accounts there are but some 600 credited to seamen, with an average deposit of \$285., while many of these are for sums varying from \$10. to \$50.

Several explanations are to be found for such dormant accounts:

Sometimes a depositor intends to withdraw his entire account but fails to ascertain the exact balance and leaves a few dollars on deposit, this residue remaining untouched.

The death of a depositor may leave a deposit unclaimed, the family not knowing of the account.

Then there is the man who opens accounts in a large number of banks and has so many such accounts that he eventually forgets some of them.

Some depositors have died at sea or in foreign lands and nothing is known of their heirs or that they had money in savings banks.

Others have been seized with wanderlust and on reaching foreign shores have decided never to return, forgetting the few dollars left behind.

There have been cases where the depositor designedly concealed the fact of having money in the bank and hid the bank book in some old trunk, the lining of a chair, inside a mattress or behind the drawer of a secretary and years after some accident brought the book to light.

Again, there are those who treasure their bank book for memory's sake and will not have the account disturbed, overlooking the fact that it has become dormant.

Some too there are who lose their pass book and mistakenly think that without this proof they have also lost the money credited to them and so never go near the bank.

After the bank carries an account for twenty years in the active ledger and there have been no additions or withdrawals and the book has not been presented for the entry of interest the bank transfers the account to a special ledger where it is carried as a dormant one and reported to the State Banking Department in its general total of deposits.

There is not much formality in settling small accounts when proof of identity or legal ownership is established. When the sums are under \$500. the bank can liquidate the claim without special requirements, but amounts over the maximum stated require legal proceedings, letters of administration, etc.

A case of this nature came to the Bank's attention recently. The depositor died in Lille, France, many years ago and a long time prior to her death had given her bank book and some other papers to her granddaughter who put them carefully away in a trunk. They were forgotten and only recently came to light when the granddaughter chanced to look through the trunk for other things. She communicated with the bank regarding it and after proving her identity and presenting the bank book, was paid the amount standing in the name of her grandmother.

Claims after twenty years are not unusual although sometimes considerable technical procedure is required in the way of proof of the claimant's identity.

Strict regulations cover unclaimed or dormant accounts. The State Banking Laws forbid the bank's taking over the money

no matter how long it has remained unclaimed in its vaults. The law also required the bank to advertise for the owners or their heirs of all accounts that have been dormant for twenty years or more. Every year many of such depositors turn up, either of their own accord or as a re-

sult of the bank's advertisements and investigation and thus gradually these unclaimed funds are returned to the original depositors or their next of kin. Some banks maintain special departments devoted entirely to the locating of the owners of funds in dormant accounts.

Vignettes of the Seaman

"Eventually, why not now?" Big Billy asked himself when his ship, loaded with groceries and flour, ran aground on the Alaska shore. He had been thinking longingly of a life ashore for some time and the ship herself had settled the problem for him.

Big Billy had been the most saving and frugal of men. He invested his money in the ship's flour and dreamed of a bakery such as Alaska had never known.

The flour was really very cheap. Great quantities of water had poured over it and gummed up the outside into a solid sticky covering for the dry flour in the center of the mass.

Billy persevered. He cleaned his flour and took the speediest steps possible to bring about a bigger and better bakery.

When it was accomplished he surveyed the result with pride. The other two bakeries in town were simply not in it for looks. Competition was keen and soon Billy was heading for disaster.

Billy shrugged his shoulders philosophically. He concluded that the ship had been a wise old lady. She knew Billy had been a good sailor but he needed a lesson. Back to the sea went Billy, and except when he's at the Institute he's there today. No more land ventures for Billy!

It may be the season and it may be hard times or it may be loneliness that makes men want to stop going to sea at this time of the year. Sometimes they have plans for the future, sometimes not.

Albert Ackert has plans. He is only a youngster but he has been at sea for five years. And he says ruefully that all he has to show for it is a little money and a fine collection of snapshots.

Albert should be rather blasé about going to foreign lands but he isn't in the least. He doesn't have the feeling that so many seamen have that there is only a very superficial difference between any one spot and another. Albert himself was born in Australia, lived as a boy in Chile and went to school in Germany. He wants to go back to Chile to start farming.

In the letter Albert had just opened he found a check—the first check he had ever received in his life, as a present for his twenty-second birthday. He went out of the Post Office rather like a little boy rejoicing because the Institute bank had closed and the following day was a holiday. He would have just that much more time to decide how to spend his money. We have a faint suspicion that he would buy rolls and rolls of films and "snap" New York.

Seamen are good sports who

don't mind telling jokes on themselves. A group of them were sitting around talking about crossing the Equator—crossing the Line, in the language of the sea.

It is customary to initiate every one on board who is crossing the Equator for the first time. One of the crew—usually the bosun—is chosen to impersonate Father Neptune who presides over the ceremonies. The little group laughed over the various Neptunes they had known, and laughed even more hilariously over the brides of the Neptunes. By tradition the homeliest man on board is chosen as the bride.

One jolly, chubby sailor asked if any of them had ever had the privilege of cutting the Line as the ship crossed. A meek little man said that he had had the honor. The chubby seaman laughed heartily.

"I crossed first in a sailing vessel, of course, and I was sent up to cut the Line when we got to it. You know, I found out afterwards that my shipmates had taken a vote among themselves to pick the dumbest one for the job and they picked on me." He rocked with glee and

peered suspiciously at the meek little man who looked quickly at his shoe tips before he answered with a shy grin.

The real courage and ingenuity of a sailor is brought out more often by a desire to please a Lady Fair than by the rigors of the briny deep. Words to this effect were spoken by a strapping young tar. He knew from experience.

He had had a Lady Fair whose demands in the way of gentlemanly dress and behavior were meticulous. The young tar's stay in port was very short. He would be back but the picture he left behind should not lack one vital detail.

The only opposition that he might encounter would come from his buddies on the ship. They had their own ideas of what the well-dressed sailor should wear. Under no conditions must they see him in the new togs purchased for the big event.

When his toilet on the night of The Date was completed he stepped from his cabin and peered carefully down the com-

panionway. His luck was with him. A boy was scrubbing industriously. He maneuvered quickly. In two leaps he tipped over the boy and hopped on the narrow steps leading to the deck carrying the pail of scrub water.

He dashed to the deck and splashed those shipmates he met with the water before they could take a look at him. Others came running from all corners. Only speed and a sure hand with the pail of water saved his own clothes from a soapy bath.

The hero vanished down the gang-plank. Hoots and cat-calls came after him. When there was a safe distance between him and the injured ones, he bowed gracefully, extricated his cane from its hiding place on the dock, flecked a speck of dust from his spats and marched triumphantly to his Lady Fair.

Bell-Boy: "What do they mean when they talk of 'Dead Reckoning'?"

Deck Boy: "It's no use me explainin'. Neither you nor the purser would understand it, but me an' the captain does."—*Punch.*

DON'T READ THIS

if you have subscribed for THE LOOKOUT for all your friends who would be likely to find it of interest.

Through its pages we aim to acquaint our readers with Jack Tar of the Merchant Marine for whom the Seamen's Church Institute exists. He is a likable fellow—picturesque, debonair, deeply philosophical, courageous, open-hearted and selfless—but the loneliest man in the world.

The true stories about our Institute sailormen as published in THE LOOKOUT are stranger than fiction and, we venture to say, just as entertaining.

In subscribing for THE LOOKOUT you are helping us to serve our seamen.

THE LOOKOUT,

25 South Street, New York City.

Enclosed find one dollar for which please enter a year's subscription for

(Name)

(Address)

(Date)