

The
LOOKOUT

JULY, 1948



TIME BALL: 12:00 NOON — STANDARD TIME

SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK

Sanctuary

A SEAMAN'S PRAYER

By John Masefield

Our lives are passed away from any land
In waters, in the hollow of Thy hand.
Our ways are found by sun and moon
and star.

But ever in Thy hand our fortunes are.
The dangers hem us in, of every kind.
The seas that shatter, and the fogs
that blind.

The wind that heaps the sea, the rock,
the shoal

Collision and fire, those dangers
of the soul.

Save us from these, yet if that may not be,
Grant us the manhood fitting to Thy sea.

"The Flying Angel"—Feb./March 1948

The LOOKOUT

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THIS MONTH'S COVER . . . the Titanic Tower and its Time Ball. Receiving time signals through Western Union from the Naval Observatory at Washington, the Time Ball drops to the base of the pole at exactly noon, standard time.

The Lookout

Vol. XXXIX

July, 1948

No. 7

Dr. Kelley to Retire August 31st



was superintendent of the Seamen's Church Institute of Los Angeles at San Pedro which he built up to be the third largest Institute in the United States. In 1931 Bishop W. Bertrand Stevens of Los Angeles appointed Dr. Kelley headmaster of the diocesan Harvard School, for boys, in Los Angeles, which position he resigned to come to New York. He served in 1928 as Chaplain of the S.S. "City of Los Angeles" on an excursion voyage around South America. Dr. and Mrs. Kelley recently returned from England, where at the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury, they visited institutes of the Missions to Seamen in the British Isles, Belgium and Holland.

AFTER serving fourteen years as Director of the Seamen's Church Institute of New York, and a total of twenty-five years in seamen's welfare work, the Rev. Harold H. Kelley, D.D., in his 65th year, will retire on August 31st. He and his wife will return to their native state, California.

Dr. Kelley has been Director of the Institute since 1934, when he succeeded the late Rev. Archibald R. Mansfield, D.D. He was graduated from the University of California in 1907 and from the nearby Church Divinity School of the Pacific in 1910, from which in 1941 he received the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity. He spent his earlier ministry in California seaports, except for three missionary years in Alaska and Nevada. From 1919 to 1922 he was assistant superintendent of the Seamen's Church Institute of San Francisco and from 1922 to 1931

Dr. Kelley received many honors for his war work for seamen in extending hospitality at the Institute's building to British, Danish and Dutch crews. He was appointed an officer of the Order of Orange-Nassau by Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands; an Honorary Officer of the Order of the British Empire by King George VI and was awarded the King Christian X Medal of Liberation (Danish). Long an active member, he was elected in 1947 an Honorary Life Member of the Propeller Club of the United States, Port of New York.

The 310 employees at the Seamen's Church Institute of New York presented Dr. Kelley with a gold clock and the Board of Managers presented him with a silver tray with the seal of the Institute, both with appropriate inscriptions. The gifts express deep appreciation of Dr. Kelley's years of faithful service in behalf of merchant seamen.

WHO SAID TUGS DON'T GO ADVENTURING?

Radio Operator Chris Hansen supplied story and pictures of this sea experience.



The tug *Gloria*

IN October, 1947, the tug *Gloria* was en route to Portugal with a "dead ship" in tow. The ship had been purchased and was to be repaired by business interests in Portugal. A hundred and fifty miles out of Charleston, South Carolina, the tug developed boiler trouble and was left helpless with no electricity, no radio contact. To add interest to the situation a fierce storm overtook the wallowing ships and did not loose its hold for four days. Imminent danger that the dead ship might plough into them and sink both itself and the tug, made every man aboard the tug pretty nervous. Finally, the first assistant engineer battled his way out on deck against wind and water and cut the towline, setting the dead ship adrift. For six days the *Gloria* waited for help and finally made signal contact with a passing ship which notified the Coast Guard. Because of the lack of electricity, the food in the deep freeze refrigerators could not be used and the men were without any food save oranges and dry bread for six days. The Coast Guard tug brought sandwiches and coffee and towed them back to Charleston. Later the Coast

Guard found the "dead" ship and brought her in, too.

There were some good sailors aboard . . . the Skipper, Mate, First Ass't. Engineer, Bosun and an A.B. were seasoned seafarers. But a number of the working crew were Portuguese who had signed on without previous sailing experience in order to work their way back home. They were dismally seasick during the storm and prayed fervently for rescue throughout the ordeal. One of them, on stepping ashore in Charleston, knelt down and kissed the ground in his emotion.



"Dead ship" in tow



Food tastes good after six days of hunger

When Radio Operator Hansen was asked what part of the experience seemed the worst, he said the inability to make contact and the fear of running aground because they had no way of knowing their position.

CARD PARTY AIDS WOOL FUND

The Manhattan Association, of the Institute's Central Council, held a card party recently to raise money for its wool fund. About 300 women attended most of whom played bridge at tables set up in both rooms of the Janet Roper Club. Others "manned" the tables on which a variety of merchandise for sale was displayed.

Over \$600 net profit was made on the benefit most of which will be used to buy wool which the members of the Association will later turn into hand-knitted watch caps, gloves and socks for seamen.

Mrs. Douglas Collins, president of the Manhattan Association, managed the benefit with able assistance from her associates.



Open House

CONTINUING the celebration of Maritime Day, May 22, the Institute held Open House on Sunday, May 23rd. The building was open to guests for guided tours, motion pictures, tea in the Janet Roper Club, music and entertainment by merchant seamen, and Chapel Service at 7 P.M. with special music by the S.C.I. Quartet, and a sermon by Dr. Kelley.

About 350 people turned out for the occasion, drawn by the chance to see a shore home for seamen in operation and by the fine Spring weather.

Many people especially enjoyed the magnificent view of New York harbor from the Institute's flying bridge and Titanic Tower. As luck would have it, the Norwegian-American Line ship, the *Stavangerfjord* was tied up at her South Street pier so guests could look down upon her spanking clean paint and neatly coiled ropes on the main deck.

The Institute movie "Home is the Sailor," and the U. S. Maritime Commission film, "Hannibal Victory," drew people into the auditorium where they were shown continuously. Three hundred guests were served tea and sandwiches in the pleasant, breezy rooms of the Janet Roper Club where an exhibition of seamen's paintings was on view. A young merchant seaman named Jack Modlin, just discovered that day by Chaplain Evans to have a fine voice, sang several songs during the tea. It was the first time he had ever sung in public. A young singer and music student, Doris Smith also sang several songs. Both were roundly applauded.

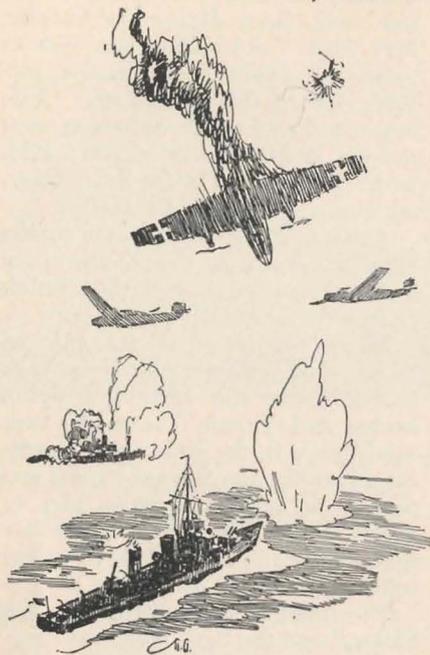
About one hundred people stayed for dinner in the Officers' Dining Room and attended the Chapel services.

Kings Point cadets assembled for the Maritime Day Ceremony on the steps of the Custom House. Behind them is Bowling Green Park and "steamship row" where many shipping companies have their offices. Dr. Kelley gave the invocation.

My Most Unforgettable War Experience — First Prize*

Action in the Arctic

By James G. Harrington



Gordon Grant

"**S**AY, Mr. Schurig, what is that? A flock of sea gulls?" The Mate, one of the best I've ever sailed with, peers through the glasses. The flock of sea gulls is a swarm of Junkers 88 torpedo planes, and they're coming in in beautiful formation. A deadly silence reigns over the plodding merchantmen, for the planes are well out of range of our 3-inch and 20 mm's.

So this is what raised havoc with the last Murmansk convoy! This is why the British Navy insisted upon an escort of forty naval vessels for our forty merchantmen! Heavy destroyers, the cruiser *Scylla*, corvettes, ack-ack ships, submarines and the *Avenger*, our lovely little aircraft carrier with her 20-odd Hurricanes aboard. To us on the bridge of the *John Penn*—this array of warcraft seemed impregnable yesterday.

In they come, seemingly slowly—but Lord, how swiftly! Fifty torpedo

*Reprinted from BLUE BOOK Magazine

planes, with fifty times two torpedoes—and it takes only one to blast us to atoms! One pilot seems to have his mind set on the *John Penn* and swoops in on our starboard side, 20 feet above the sea, his machine guns blazing. The boys back aft have his number, however; 20 mm. shells are literally streaming into his engines and fuselage. Red flame leaps from his starboard engine, and with one final salute from his machine gun, he plunges into the sea.

The gunners aft are jubilant. They have plucked a Nazi on the wing; but wait—when one gets that close, his mission has been accomplished. His torpedoes are somewhere out there speeding toward us.

There goes the *Empire Stevenson*. What a sight! A torpedo must have hit her munitions hatch. A sheet of flame leaps half a mile into the sky. Parts of the hull, superstructure, and fragments of what had once been living men, are blown in all directions. A huge, white-hot side-plate, catapulted a quarter of a mile, narrowly misses the gang on our fo'c'sle head, and with a vicious hiss drops into the sea. The four ships astern of the *Stevenson* have been hit also, and are sinking very fast. Their survivors are over the side in the lifeboats, and the destroyers and corvettes are racing in to pick them up before another wave of planes comes over.

Each explosion, particularly the *Stevenson's*, has sent violent tremors throughout the entire length of the *Penn*. The Second must be having a devil of a time below. Picking up the engineroom 'phone, I let him know that all is well on deck, but that a lot of the boys astern of us have been catching hell. Suddenly a particularly violent shock hits the *Penn*. Knocked off my feet, I drop the 'phone, but quickly recover it and ask the Second if all is well below.

"Yes, we're all right down here, Jim, but what hit us? Get the Old Man on the 'phone, will you?"

Calling the Skipper to the 'phone, I head out toward the wing of the bridge, when the deck beneath us leaps a foot; solid, green water cascades over the entire midship section. Those of us on the bridge are engulfed and buried beneath icy water. Huge pieces of steel crash around us. Another violent explosion hurls us to the deck again, and hard upon it, great clouds of steam billow into the wheelhouse and bridge wings. The second torpedo has smashed into the engine room, blowing up the boilers. The "General Alarm" sounds briefly, then dies, the lights flicker out, and so do the lives of the Second, Texas, Steve.

Rushing from the bridge, we make for the boats. Back aft and up forward they are already releasing the rafts. We have only one boat on the port side, the other having been smashed off the Orkneys. Filling her up, we lower away, then rush for the starboard boats. Here an act of heroism occurs that is commonplace in the Merchant Marine, but rarely related.

The Mate a Hero

The Mate, in spite of 375 pounds of T. N. T. blasting in the engine room, in spite of the clouds of steam pouring from every opening, and oblivious to the fact that the old *Penn* is sinking beneath our feet, descends calmly into the Stygian blackness below to see if, through some miracle, any life has been spared among the crew. And what is more—he insists upon going alone. We stand by the hatch where we can dash for the boat if she takes the final plunge. The long relentless Polar seas surge endlessly and unimpeded over the half-submerged after-well deck. Our cargo of tanks, Boston bombers, and cased munitions are tossed about as though they were so many pieces of dunnage. A huge roller smashes in the port bulwarks, shatters a cased Curtis P-40, and picking up a bomber in its wake, hurls it self over the starboard bulwarks. The end can't be long in coming now. A sudden blast of gunfire right over-

head shatters the unnatural quiet. Young Frank Delorey, sighting a Ju 88 heading home, has slipped up into the gun turret unobserved, and has given him one last blast. For scaring us out of our wits, we threaten to leave him aboard. We have quite enough on our hands at present without taking on any more 88's. This is 16-year-old Frank's first trip, but he has taken to seafaring like a duck to water, and he has never been happier than he is in his gun turret, behind a 20 mm., with a tin hat on his head.

After what seems hours, Mr. Schurig returns to the deck, covered with fuel oil from head to foot. Threading his way through the shattered engine room, aided by a flashlight, he had climbed down to the level of the rising flood. All below was a shambles. The only human trace he saw was the shattered arm of one of the watch. They must have died instantly from the concussion, or have been trapped by the flood under the gratings.

To the Boats

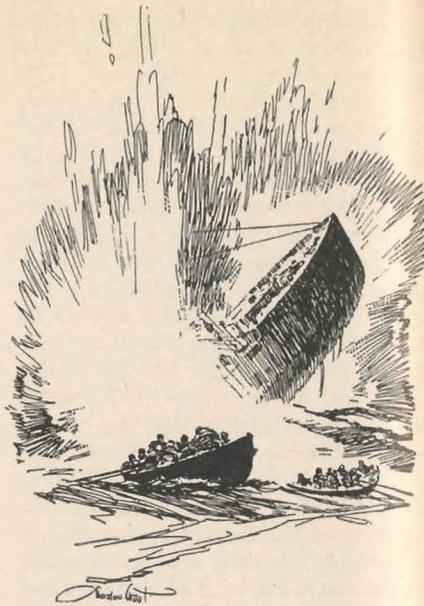
We all take to the boats now. I jump in with the Old Man, the Chief and Sparks. The Mate and the rest leap into the Second Mate's lifeboat, which has rounded the stern and come up on the weather side. Hardly have we shoved off when the *John Penn* gives one last convulsive shudder, and slides slowly beneath the sea. Fighting valiantly, she had refused to die until all her remaining boys had pulled away.

The Old Man is just about all in. Sitting in the bow, dazed by the furious action of the last hours, the sinking of his second ship, the loss of his men, he seems paralyzed. One of the naval gunners is leaning over the gunwale working on the damaged rudder. Another, Ensign by name, has leaped over the side and is trying to place the rudder pintles into the gudgeons. Just as I reach them, young Ensign throws into the sea what appears to be a perfectly good glove. This seems almost too much to bear, for my hands are stiff with cold. But this is no time for argument. (Ensign later told me that he,

himself, had picked up the glove as it drifted by, and had tried to put it on to protect his own freezing fingers, only to discover that the mangled hand of its former owner was still in possession.) Pulling Ensign into the boat, we throw the rudder overboard — the steering oar will serve just as well.

Guiding the lifeboat into the seas, I have a good opportunity to survey the appalling scene surrounding us. Flaming ships, slowly sinking ships, burning lifeboats and rafts, life jackets supporting horribly burned and broken corpses. Off the port bow a Nazi torpedo plane drifts. Two of her crew beckon to us to pick them up. But we are some distance away, and two more men would swamp us. However, the boys agree that we can at least tow them on the lifeline, so we head in their direction. Before we can reach them, however, their plane throws her tail into the air, hurling them into the sea. Passing the spot a few minutes later, we can find no trace of them. Lashed to the wing of the plane is another German — dead, a huge hole in his neck. He could not have been more than seventeen or eighteen years old. A fair-haired, rather fine-looking kid.

A big British destroyer is now heading for us. Urging the boys to bend their backs, we head for her, but she turns about a quarter-mile from us, going full speed ahead. She probably has “pinged” a sub, a CPO on her fo’c’sle head waves us in the general direction of the convoy. Great blobs of viscous fuel oil now dangle from the blades as the oars are lifted from the sea. Debris from the sunken freighters smashes into our sides. In addition, overloaded as we are, each drop into the troughs spills gallons of icy, oil-covered water over the gunwales. Sitting on the thwarts, the men are buried in the sticky fluid to their knees. Aft on the gunwales, beads of sweat roll into my eyes — cold though it is, for the steering oar now weighs a ton, and it becomes increasingly difficult to keep the boat from falling into the



Gordon Grant

troughs broadside to the sea. Three bodies float down to windward. One, a headless seaman, with outstretched arms, washes gently with each swell against the shoulder of a German airman, the lower half of whose body has been torn away by a shell. A third is another seaman, his arms and legs blown off. A flock of gulls follows this gruesome procession of mangled humanity, tearing at the seared and bloody flesh.

We look away only to sight a Blohm and Voss Reconnaissance plane, flying very low. He can't be more than fifty feet above the surface. Idling along on two of his four engines, he is a mean, vicious-looking bird of prey. The same thought occurs to all of us simultaneously — he is going to riddle the lifeboats! He is very close now—so close that we can easily distinguish three of the crew, gazing intently at us from the bow port.

The men have ceased rowing except for alternating port and starboard strokes to keep the boat out of the troughs. What is the use breaking one's back when in a few minutes we will be, like the lads far astern, food for the scavenging gulls?

Save for the sloshing of water in the bottom, the slap of the sea against our bow, there is no other sound. The plane is about 100 yards ahead and we stare straight into four machine-gun ports. The crew points to us, their faces expressionless. Why in Hell don't they get the filthy job over with? She is broad on our beam, fifty feet off and up. All four of her engines are now turning and five of her guns are trained on the boat, but she still holds her fire. For the love of Heaven! She is now well astern, and yet no shot has been fired. A German in her after-turret actually smiles and waves to us. Tension relaxes, and the men bend to the oars. We head again into the seas. Thanks, boys, maybe we'll be able to do the same for you someday!

We are now miserably cold in our soaked clothing, and nearly exhausted. The eyes of Walter Flan-

nelly, at stroke oar, are popping from fatigue, when, thank God, we sight a big British Tribal destroyer heading for us. What a beautiful heart-warming sight she is, and how she cleaves the ocean! All trace of weariness disappears. We row for her as though no effort were required. In a few seconds we are tied up alongside and twenty-six survivors have climbed from the lifeboat into the sturdy deck of *R.M.S. Eskimo*. As luck would have it, she had also picked up the Mate's boat, and we learn from him that the rest of the crew is aboard the *Scylla*.

We are soon racing at top speed—35 knots — for the convoy. The *Eskimo* had been detailed to pick up survivors of the morning's holocaust, and we are the last to be sighted. If there are any more out there? Well — maybe they will be able to reach Bear Island or Spitzbergen's North Cape.

“Unlucky Ike and Kelly's Eye”

ALTHOUGH at least 250 seamen are bent over their scoreboards laid out on the green baize of the pool tables, there is but a low murmur of voices in the big third floor Game Room. The game is about to begin. Trevor Barlow, the Institute's veteran recreational supervisor, is ready to roll the wire basket and call out the numbers. It's the Tuesday night Bingo Game in which seamen of all ratings, all ages, and all nationalities participate. “Round and round she goes, where she stops nobody knows. All paid, well paid, I've got your shore pay, and off she goes again.”

Mr. Barlow adds plenty of punch to the game by calling out numbers in original and nautical language. The men get a kick out of this and wait for the uninformed to start yelling for explanations. Here are samples of his salty lingo: Unlucky Ike is 13; Kelly's eye refers to a shipmate with only one eye so . . . 1; one little duck means 2; blind mice . . . 3; pickles . . . 57 (referring of course, to Heinz's 57 varieties); skidoo . . . 23; Times Square . . . 42; Downing Street . . . 10;

Dog House (as the men affectionately call the Institute) . . . 25; Winter's Nite means 55, harking back to an old sea chantey, “In fifty five of a winter's nite cheerily me lads yo-ho”; Judge Duffy means 30 in memory of a judge who always sentenced offenders to “thirty-days”; and Doctor's orders is number 9 as in old sailing ship days a man with a toothache or a broken back got the same treatment—a no. 9 pill! The old hands at the game or at life at sea are quick to grasp all these hidden meanings; younger men or newcomers often yell out for information even before Barlow explains his mysterious language as he does immediately before rolling for the next number.

Prizes are made up of packets containing a razor, a comb, razor blades, shaving cream, tooth paste and a pack of cigarettes. About twenty of these are won every performance. Their value is about 65c apiece. Other prizes are mending kits, cologne, cartons of cigarettes and other items . . . many of which are supplied by the Central Council of Associations.

It's really worth a visit just to watch these men participating so wholeheartedly and with such absorption in a common pastime. When the going gets tense and someone is bound to come up with bingo in another minute or two, you can hear a belaying pin drop! Visitors are advised to be wary, though. The associate editor was maneuvered into putting up a carton of cigarettes for a bingo prize before she knew what had hit her. Barlow is a fast worker! Seriously, they can use more prizes.

Joe McCrystal, assistant Game Room supervisor, spells Mr. Barlow at the bingo games, calling out the numbers in a ringing baritone and watching with amusement as unlucky players exchange their score boards for new ones thinking that a different grouping of numbers may bring them luck.

The Game Room supervisors feel that this is one of the greatest "mixers" that can be found as the element of chance has a universal appeal. No money is involved and every man has a chance of winning some very useful articles. A record attendance at the Bingo games is 325 chalked up one evening.



Clem Kalischer Photo

Seamen intent upon their bingo cards wait for the winning number that will bring them a warm knitted sweater or cigarettes and toilet articles.

MESSROOM SALTY TALES

By Carl Frederick Sigmund

The Captain had spent nearly 30 years with the Company and it was his last voyage before being pensioned off. He fervently hoped and prayed that nothing would happen to mar his perfect record.

During the voyage, however, they lost their starboard anchor and the Old Man asked the Bos'n and Carpenter to make a wooden replica and hang it in place of the lost anchor. The ship returned to the states, the Old Man got his pension and a new skipper took over.

The new Captain proved to be quite fond of the bottle and a trifle officious at times. They made their first voyage without mishap and as they pulled into quarantine, with the passengers on deck, the Captain decided as it was too foggy to proceed to the pier to anchor for the night. "Let go the starboard anchor," he ordered. The Bos'n yelled back, "You mean the port anchor, don't you Cap?" "No—you dummy, I mean the starboard anchor," snarled the Captain. The skipper was gazing over the side when the anchor came floating by and he yelled, "GAD" and ran down to his stateroom and threw half a case of Canadian Club overboard. He is still a teetotaler and a charter member of Alcoholics Anonymous.



From Ships to Station Wagons

By Polly Weaver

IN the old days when New York had the reputation of being one of the worst seaports that ever echoed to the jingle of a sailor's shekels, the Seamen's Church Institute of New York waged a valiant war against crimps and prowlers and waterfront saloon characters bent on robbing seamen of their hard-earned wages.

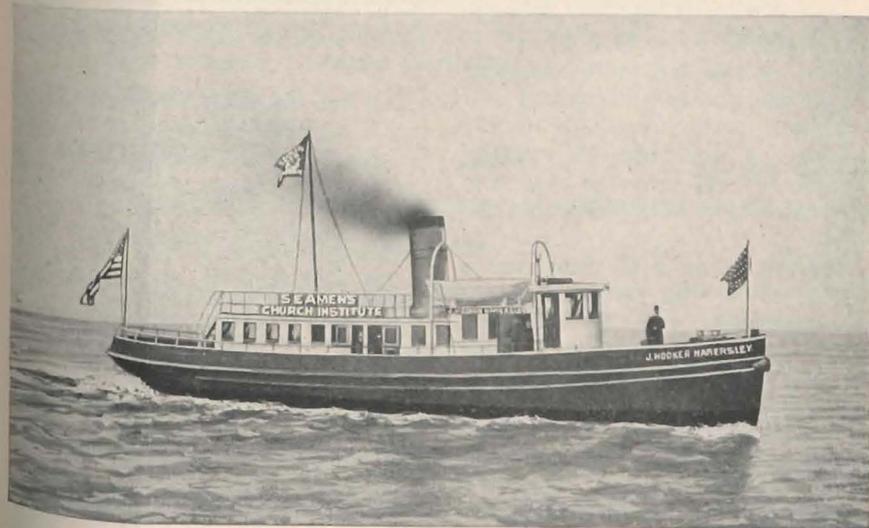
The service of protecting seamen's wages is still one of the most important functions of the Institute... now the largest shore home for merchant seamen in the world. Originally this function was performed by staff members who set out in boats owned by the Institute. The *Sentinel* and, later, the *J. Hooker Hamersley*, met incoming ships and brought the crews ashore thus protecting them from the crimps who were ready to get them drunk or dope them and relieve them of their earnings.

Now, this vital service is performed by seven Ship Visitors who cover the hundreds of miles of New York waterfront from Red Hook to Erie Basin in station-wagons and meet incoming ships at the pay-offs. By selling Travellers' Cheques and Savings Bonds and receiving seamen's

pay for deposit in banks or forwarding to their families, the Ship Visitors encourage thrift and provide safety measures to men whose arrivals and departures make routine business transactions impossible.

The station-wagons are used also to carry "sea-going libraries," maps, knitted watch caps and bon voyage packages supplied by the Institute to ships' crews of all flags. The Institute's Conrad Library, named for the great sea writer, supplies a reading library by request to any merchant ship leaving the harbor. To do this, it must constantly appeal for donations of more books as the crew members are asked to circulate the books to other ships which may lack them. Seamen consider a ship without a library a poor ship indeed and books on board soon become dog eared and worn from being passed around from skipper to third mate, from the bo's'n to the galley boy.

Standing at the tip of Manhattan Island where the East and North Rivers pour into New York harbor, the Institute's 13-story building is one of the interesting sights for out-of-towners. On its roof, the Titanic Tower (which commemorates one of the worst sea disasters of all time



... the sinking of the Titanic in 1912) throws a welcoming beam of light visible to ships six miles down the Narrows. Code flags flying from a halyard on the roof spell out "Welcome" to active seafarers of all races and creeds. Known from Keokuk to Rangoon as "25 South Street," by the men who use it as a home and club, the Institute entered its 105th year of service in April, 1948.

Seamen check their seabags and other gear in its basement baggage room for about a penny a day. The U. S. Post Office, Seamen's Institute Branch, handles mail equivalent to that of a town of 25,000 population and is the only post office in the country that will hold mail for six months. A Curio Room in the Nautical Museum holds a collection of souvenirs gathered from the seven seas. Tattooing equipment jostles oriental headrests, shark backbone canes gleam whitely against old pewter mugs and lacquer boxes. When a piece of baggage has been left unclaimed for a year it is "broken out," papers are filed for safekeeping, clothes are cleaned and sent to the Slop Chest to be given to seamen in need; and the curios are sent to the Museum.

In the big game room staff members often hear seven or eight languages in a day. Meeting and mingling in the simple brotherhood of men of the sea are ships' carpenters and captains, mates and oilers, engineers, bo's'ns and radio operators.

Last year the Institute served over a million meals, supplied 360,157 lodgings to men between voyages, checked 137,781 pieces of gear, and received wages for safekeeping for 6,572.

Bowling along with their station wagons piled with stacks of books and magazines, with their bulging briefcases and voluminous papers, the Institute's Ship Visitors forge a link between landmen and the sea. Roving business men, official greeters and well-wishers, they represent the Institute's successful opposition to unscrupulous seaport leeches.



S.C.I. Ship Visitors

INSTITUTE VOLUNTEERS PACK BOXES FOR BISHOPS

Many of the sixty-eight United States Bishops who will attend the Lambeth Conference in London, opening July 1 and continuing through August 8, will provide a supply of food for themselves and for gifts to their hosts. Members of the Central Council of Associations of the Seamen's Church Institute of New York volunteered to pack such boxes when the suggestion was made by Dr. Harold H. Kelley, director of the Institute, who recently returned from England.

The Archbishop of Canterbury had told Dr. Kelley he was afraid some bishops might not attend out of consideration for food-short Britons.

The food parcels, packed and forwarded by Institute volunteers, were paid for by the Clergy.

The Seamen's Church Institute volunteers have had experience in packing such boxes in quantities because each year they pack about 7,000 Christmas boxes for distribution to merchant seamen aboard ships of all flags.

TO THE GRADUATING CLASS, U.S. MERCHANT MARINE ACADEMY, KINGS POINT:

"I have known as you have, and with you hope to know again, the starlight on the tropic seas, the sweetness of the landfall, the breath of soft air over the blue waters. I have likewise known, as you have, the churning of the Western Ocean swells, the scream of the headwinds and the shrouding of the swirling fog. These are components of that universe we call the sea, and enter into the being of those who serve upon it. Smooth sailing and rough sailing—both are there. I believe you are ready to accept both with pride, with courage and with distinction."

—RICHARD PARKHURST, Commissioner
U.S. Maritime Commission



From "Focs'le Days" by Anton Otto Fischer

This illustrates a tragic incident which occurred in 1901 and described by Anton Otto Fischer in his biography "Focs'le Days." He tells of a sailor falling from the royal yard to the deck and dropping overside. The First Mate put the helm down hard to throw the ship up into the wind. The Captain threw a life preserver over the Poop rail. Four sailors and a bosun pulled away from the ship. They made a wide circle and picked up the life preserver but there was no sign of their shipmate, Timothy O'Sullivan.

GOING to the aid of those in distress is part of the stern tradition of the sea. Many times in a lifetime of seafaring, a seaman risks his own life for another's. More often than not "standing by" and "lending a hand" demand the utmost in courage and self-sacrifice on the high seas.

When you "lend a hand" to the *Seamen's Church Institute of New York* you help us to maintain the health, recreational, social, and religious services provided at 25 South St. for active seamen of all faiths and all nationalities.

"Superstitions of the Sea"

By Ralph Childs, *Professor of English at Cooper Union*



A SAILOR'S life is a solitary one. He has many hours on watch both day and night, alone with the sea, the sky, and his own thoughts. He has long hours to mull over and try to construct an order out of the chaos of his own experiences. This loneliness is realized by many of them. I remember the one question the veteran Coast Guard officer asked me before swearing me in was "Can you stand long hours with your own thoughts?" But more cogent than either the lack of education, or the lonesomeness is the fact that sailors are pitting their skill against the elements which even yet behave in strange and unaccountable ways. Discomfort, danger and disaster can and do arrive suddenly and unaccountably and always they lurk around the corner. In an uncertain world of this sort, false relations of cause and effect, omens and tokens of good and bad luck, and belief in supernatural are the result of man's efforts to make more understandable an environment which seems to be completely haphazard.

Gulls fly in the morning in the direction the wind will come from in the afternoon — so they won't have to fight their way home against a bad wind when they are tired. This, like so many superstitions, both land and sea, endows animals with a super-human sense about the weather.

Many sailors say that "Long swells foretell a coming storm." A more universal belief is that over-clear weather indicates a storm.

The third superstition Longfellow brings in is St. Elmo's fire as an omen of foul weather. St. Elmo's fire is a glow caused by slow discharge of electricity to the earth and appears on pointed objects such as masts and yards or even the fingers of the hands. It was known to the

ancient Greeks; Pliny reports it in his natural history.

Such a one is the superstition about the port list. An east coast friend tells that his boat has always leaned slightly to port and he has never corrected it because it brings good luck.



Definitely good luck, however, are some fish such as the porpoise or dolphin, the pilot fish or pomolilus which guides lost sailors to shore. Sunday is a lucky day on which to set sail, much as Sunday is a lucky day to be born on and is in line with the New England saying, "the better the day, the better the deed." If a water glass is set ringing by being hit, one should always touch it to stop its ringing rather than let the ringing note die gradually. If you do this a man falling from the rigging will save himself and not drop to the deck or into the seas. A more modern device to bring good luck concerns the propellers. Whereas the fear of sailing seamen was falling from the rigging, the fear of sailors in screw driven ships is losing the propeller. To prevent this the propeller is married to the ship by a daub of the same paint as the hull of the ship. If you visit a boat yard during fitting out time in the spring you will note that no matter how smooth or shiny the propeller may be, somewhere on it, usually on the forward side, is a small daub of the hull paint to bring good luck by wedding the screw to the ship.

It is bad luck to whistle on board. Whistling must be sparing when a breeze is wanted, otherwise the careless sailor will whistle up an un-

wanted hurricane. Although Friday was not considered an unlucky day in England until after the reformation, it has long been held an unlucky day on which to start a voyage. No regular Friday sailings from New York were scheduled until the American Line dared to do it in the 1890's with their new crack liners, the St. Louis and St. Paul.

Women on the sea are bad enough; but to many sailors, women on board are worse. Although this superstition is being abandoned, fishermen in the northwest Pacific coast will not let their wives aboard on the day before they sail.

Also corpses on board bring very bad luck. Stories concerning this are too numerous to repeat.

PHANTOM SHIPS. The story of phantom ships, if traced back, vanishes in a cloud of early Christian, Hindu, Norse, Russian and Chinese legends. Phantom ships have been widely publicised in comparatively recent literature — Marryat, Cooper,



Hoffman, Coleridge, Bret Harte, Hood and Wagner, are well known authors who have based stories on them. Best known is perhaps the Flying Dutchman. Captain Vanderdecker is supposed to have sailed in her from Holland about 1750 for the east. Adverse winds prevented him from rounding the Cape of Good Hope. When asked by passengers and crew to put into Table Bay he is said to have replied, "May I be eternally damned if I do though I beat about here until the Day of Judgment." So he is beating about there yet.

The ghost of a flagship sent by Queen Ann to reduce French forts in Canada which was lost with all hands, is frequently seen in Gaspé Bay in the



Gulf of St. Lawrence. This is a harmless phantom just out for a pleasant sail.

The Dead Ship of Harpswell, Maine, is more fearful. Whittier celebrates it in his poem of that name. She sails in under full sail with no one on board, and then retreats against wind and tide; stern first, to sea again. Its appearance is an omen of a coming death in the neighborhood.

Off Cape Ann, near Gloucester, the *Alice Marr* sails around on the anniversary of her sinking.

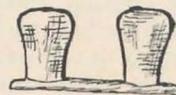
At Salem a ship sailed in the 18th century on a FRIDAY with a beautiful girl on board. She was lost at sea and after three days:

"The spectre ship of Salem, with the dead men in her shrouds Sailing sheer above the water, in the loom of morning clouds."

The local minister exorcised her by prayer and she has not reappeared.

In 1752 the *Palatine* taking emigrants to Philadelphia was driven off her course and either lured ashore by false lights or driven ashore by the storm on Block Island off the Rhode Island coast and either some souls were saved, or none, depending on the version one is reading. The ship was pillaged and set afire as it drifted off. The light of its burning is still seen on the anniversary of its burning and at other times. The *Palatine* light is an omen of bad weather.

(To be continued in next issue)



I Suddenly Became a Father*

By Commander S. M. Riis



LL through the black-swelting tropical night we were embarking crying women and children on board the s/s *Winchester Victory*. This was in January, 1946. We were anchored a few miles off the shore of Java. Blinking lights on shore indicated the location of the once-prosperous Dutch trading town Semarang.

This town had been for the previous four years a Japanese concentration camp for some fifteen thousand Dutch women and children, gathered together from an area of over ten thousand square miles of the sprawling Dutch East Indies Colonial Empire, in the Southeast Pacific.

The night before our arrival, six thousand women and children had been massacred—in cold blood—by the natives, armed by the Japs and led by the Moscow-trained “native liquidators.”

As the embarkation proceeded, the British cruiser *H. M. S. Norfolk*, lying shoreward from our position, was firing salvos on shore. The thunderous reverberations of the gun fire added no little to the general confusion and the excitement. Fires broke out on shore, sending flames and sparks skyward, as some of the shells exploded among the native forces, massed for another attack upon the defenseless women and children, huddled around the water front and near the docks.

My main troubles, during this hasty embarkation of some two thousand women and children — screaming nerve-racked humanity — were to get them safely off the barges and settled on board in quarters primarily designed for war time transportation.

During all this pandemonium — suddenly two little bare-necked girls came running up to me—crying . . . I gathered that their mother was dying in Number Three Hold.

*Reprinted from BLUE BOOK Magazine



We had no doctor on board. It had been understood that the Dutch officials would supply one, but he had not shown up as yet.

When I reached the bunk-side of the dying woman, I soon realized that she was about to give birth to another child. Never having assisted births before, I endeavored to enlist the aid of some women standing near by and crying. None would help. Apparently all were too worn out and nervous . . .

I ordered that the stretcher be brought down. By the time the stretcher-bearers reached us, fighting their way through the confused masses on deck, the child was born—with no other assistance but the mother's and mine. Then the mother, through tears of pain on her haggard face, said in a weak voice in pidgin English, “Be a good father to the baby. She is not to blame.” I nodded in agreement and squeezed her hand.

I knew that these unfortunate Dutch women and children had been separated from their husbands and fathers for over three years. The Japs had sent all the men prisoners to another concentration camp somewhere in Borneo.

After some of the older women had partially washed the baby in a fire bucket of cold water, I looked the baby over. It was a girl! She had European features with slightly slant eyes and a yellow skin. I thought perhaps another “Mata Hari” was born.

Though faintly breathing, the newborn was apparently unconscious. Fearing that the little one would die,

I baptized her on the spot and on the spur of the moment named her—Genevieve Winchester Victory.

An hour later, when the Dutch doctor came on board, he reported that both the child and mother were doing well. I then asked if I could be supplied with information regarding the family of the child for ship's records.

In due time, an elderly Dutch Army Captain came on board and handed me the family record. The family name was Riis. To say the least, I was dumbfounded, for my family name is also Riis. So I signed the birth certificate to GENEVIEVE WINCHESTER VICTORY RIIS.

BROADWAY COMES TO 25 SOUTH STREET

THEATRICAL people are a generous lot, as is well-known. Recently when entertainers at the Iceland Restaurant, on New York's Broadway, came down to the Institute to put on their complete show for merchant seamen, they had just finished a performance at Iceland and had to return to put on another show at midnight. Noel Lee, owner of the popular restaurant, was responsible for this generous program for men of the sea who gather in the Institute's lounges of an evening. The seamen were delighted with the show and had a fine time discussing with the Institute hostesses various acts and performers. One seaman said: “If this is the kind of shows you have here, I'll never go uptown.” Another commented: “It was a treat. Now my shore time has one high spot to remember.”

RADAR VIA TELEPHONE

Visitors to the National Marine Exposition which opened May 17 in midtown New York's Grand Central Palace were able to watch the movement of ships in New York harbor by an ingenious hookup of microwave relay and marine radar. In the display booth of Sperry Gyroscope Co., a twelve-inch luminous scope drew a picture of shorelines, buoys and ship movements as “seen” by a radar scanner installed on the Titanic Tower of the Seamen's Church Institute more than three miles away.

The radar on the Institute Tower scans a 270-degree arc covering the East River and the entire upper and lower New York Bay. By arrangement with the New York Telephone Co., the radar echoes from harbor targets which are normally projected on the scope at the Institute were relayed by television techniques to the telephone building at 101 Willoughby Street, Brooklyn, re-relayed back across the East River and over Manhattan rooftops to the Marine Exposition roof.

From there the signals were carried by coaxial cable to the Sperry radar in the exhibit booth and appeared on the radar scope installed there. Equipment in the Tower downtown and exhibit uptown were standard commercial radars used aboard maritime ships for piloting, position indicating and as an anti-collision aid.

Thus, while exposition visitors stood in Grand Central Palace, they actually “saw” via radar such harbor activity as ocean liners heading out the Narrows for Europe and South America, tugs shuttling railroad cars across the bay and Staten Island ferries making their frequent runs between the Island and New York terminals. By means of a direct telephone wire to the Institute Tower, the Sperry engineers on exhibition duty told visitors, tower visibility permitting, the names of nearby vessels moving in the harbor. The radar, however, reaches out 30-40 miles from lower Manhattan, or the scope can be made to show only ship movements within one mile from the Institute.

The radar at the Institute is normally used by Sperry for training ship's officers and technicians on the operation of radar. Antenna for the equipment there is located on the seaward side of the light of the famous Titanic Lighthouse Tower on the Institute roof at a height of about 218 feet above sea level. Appropriately, the Titanic Tower memorializes one of the greatest sea disasters which, had radar been in existence in 1912, would undoubtedly have been avoided.

Book Reviews

CARIBBEAN CRUISE

By Kate and Richard Bertram

W. W. Norton & Co., \$3.75

Two resourceful young people with plenty of sailboat experience undertake a cruise in a 36-ft. sloop across the Bahama Banks and to the islands of the Greater and Lesser Antilles. Since the Caribbean is one of the most interesting cruising grounds in the world, with each island having its own individual charm, their report makes most interesting reading to armchair sailors and to seamen and yachtsmen. This reviewer, having just completed a similar cruise via inter-island trading schooners and freighters, can well understand why their cruise extended from one to five years. Out of their experience the authors have compiled practical information on port entry requirements, helpful suggestions on supplies, galley equipment and the like.

M.D.C.

SHIPS OF THE U. S. MERCHANT MARINE

By S. Kip Farrington, Jr.

Illustrations by Jack Coggins

E. P. Dutton & Co., \$3.75

Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, writing the introduction to this book, pays tribute to the Merchant Marine: "Not one of us who fought in the late war can forget—nor should any citizen be allowed to forget—that had it not been for the steady stream of personnel, equipment and supplies brought into the rear of the combat areas, and often directly into those areas, by the ships of our own Merchant Marine and those of our Allies, the fighting fleets and Marines of our Navy, the ground forces of our Army, and the aircraft of both would have been helpless to pound the enemy into defeat overseas."

Mr. Farrington's informative story of our present-day ships, and Jack Coggins' 22 full-color oil paintings of the S.S. *America*, *Brazil*, *Veragua*, *Santa Cecilia*, *Washington*, *President Polk* and other passenger-liners and freighters, should focus attention of Americans on a subject which, according to Admiral Nimitz, "it is perilous to neglect and a matter of pride to remember." The brief, non-technical text concerns 21 shipping lines and describes their accommodations, cargo, history of the company, war record and details of peacetime conversion. Stack markings and house flags of each company are helpful in identifying ships. A welcome addition to every maritime library.

M.D.C.

THE SAILING SHIP:

Six Thousand Years of History

By Romola and R. C. Anderson

McBride, \$3.50

This book covers the gradual development and improvement of sailing ships beginning with the primitive ships of Egypt from 4000 to 1000 B. C. through the years up to and including our nineteenth century clippers.

The early Egyptian ships are first described and as they sailed to Phoenicia and Crete the sailing craft of the Mediterranean are next considered. The first ships of northern Europe are known from the actual remains and these were built on different lines from those of the south. In the fifteenth century these two types merged and the standard full rigged ship became general. The chapters on frigates and historical ships of the line are especially interesting. Much information was obtained from the early seals of the seaport towns which usually had a ship on them. Ships of the Far East are not described and the North American ones are included as they followed the European pattern.

This is an all inclusive book and is so well illustrated with drawings, diagrams and full plates that it will prove invaluable as reference material.

M. ACHESON

SIX BELLS OFF JAVA: A NARRATIVE OF ONE MAN'S PRIVATE MIRACLE

By William H. McDougall, Jr.

Scribner, \$2.75

This is another true account of personal achievement in World War II you will not want to miss. The author was a United Press correspondent in Shanghai when war broke out, and his story concerns his escape into Free China, India, Java, and, when at last safety seemed assured, capture by the Japs in Sumatra.

His "private miracle" occurs in the Indian Ocean when his ship, the luxury freighter *Poelau Bras* is sunk by Japanese planes. His graphic chapters on the sinking of his ship, and the endless hours before he is picked up by a lifeboat, make compelling reading. Never again will Bill McDougall doubt the power of prayer, for he was "saved from tumbling into eternity only by what seemed to him a very special Reaching Hand."

L. NOLING

Marine Poetry

THE COWBOY SAILOR

By H. W. Corning, Chief Engineer

He signed on in the Lone Star State
Where wild blue bonnets grow,
A bashful, lanky country boy
Of six feet two or so.
Our crew all knew that he was green
But what most sealed his doom
Was when he said: "Please mister Capt.,
I'd like to see my room."
He did his work quite well indeed
Though on his time below
The fireman, sailors, cook and mess
All kept him on the go.
They had him search for kilson keys
For oil both green and red,
And ask the Mate about mail buoys
And sougey down the head.
They made him scrub the fo'c'sle
And wash their dirty duds
And mop the deck and chip the paint
And peel a million spuds.
Our first out port was Port-au-Prince
And as we touched the pier
Like all the rest he hied to town
To quench his thirst with beer.
The gang returned with him in tow
And gaily one did shout
"Hey, come on, old Boots and Spurs,
And mop the quarters out."
"Aye, Aye!", said he, "I'll do just that."
Then with a cowboy roar
He grasped a chap with each his hands
And flung them through the door.
The firemen were the next to go
In quite the self-same style;
The cook and mess sailed through the air
And landed on the pile.
Meanwhile the deck hands scuttled out
Like greyhounds on the run.
"Well, that is that," said Boots and Spurs,
"My 'nitiation's done."
Then going to the captain
He said (and gently smiled)
"I'm not quarrelsome but your crew
At last have got me riled."



Capt. C. E. Umstead, principal of our Merchant Marine School, comes up with some information about the anonymous story "Thirty-two Days in a Lifeboat" which appeared in last month's LOOKOUT.

Capt. Umstead knows the Captain of the ship which was sunk: Captain Edgar A. Waaler, and had heard the story from him. She was a ship of the Kerr Line and her name was *Hoegh Silver Dawn*. As to who wrote the story and left it on the editor's desk . . . ?

THE CONSTITUTION

By Charles Malam

(May 14, 1787)

These are the specifications for a ship—
Such craft as ride the roaring seas of time
Easy as gull's flight to the helmsman's grip,
Stauncher than mortal tides on which they
climb.

These are the master work plans, keel and
wall
And rib and deck and stack and soaring
spire,
Close knit as light yet mighty overall
To ferry a people to its heart's desire.
And when there rise such storms as Ships
of State
Have fled before, full rigged and all aware,
One shall go forward with its precious
freight
As steady as the heart commanding there,
While snugly set each finite arch and plate
As here set forth, and riveted with prayer.

CHARLES MALAM

New York Herald Tribune



SEACOAST TOWN

By Beatrice H. Oakes

At the foot of each street
If you chance to look
Is a patch of ocean
As wide as a brook.
In a seacoast town,
Wherever you stand
There's always more water
Than there is land.
The seaside sun
Is a trifle brighter.
The square-rigged houses
Three shades whiter.
Summer visitors
Wonder why
Roses run riot
To touch the sky,
Why the housewife spends
Her busy hours
That a salvaged boat
May be filled with flowers,
Why little girls watch
For a pretty shell
Or whitewash an anchor.
Who can tell?
Yet the women are grave
And the children wise
With a faraway look
In their blue-green eyes,
And the men always wear
On their sunburned faces
Remembrance of dim
And distant places.

Maine Pine Cone

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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."