

The LOOKOUT



SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK

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The LOOKOUT

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EDMUND L. BAYLIES
President

FRANK T. WARBURTON
Secretary-Treasurer

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Address all communications to
ARCHIBALD R. MANSFIELD, D. D.
Superintendent

or
ELEANOR BARNES
Editor, The Lookout

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Your Red Letter Day

Would you not like to recognize some day which has a special sentimental significance for you, by befriending several thousand homeless seamen?

You may do so by assuming responsibility for the daily deficit in the Institute running expenses—only \$260.27.

It would be a real Red Letter Day for you. You would surely be gratified to receive the report we would send you of activities on your day—all made possible through your own generosity.

The Institute lodgings are always booked to capacity. You would therefore be sure of providing clean, comfortable beds for 949 men.

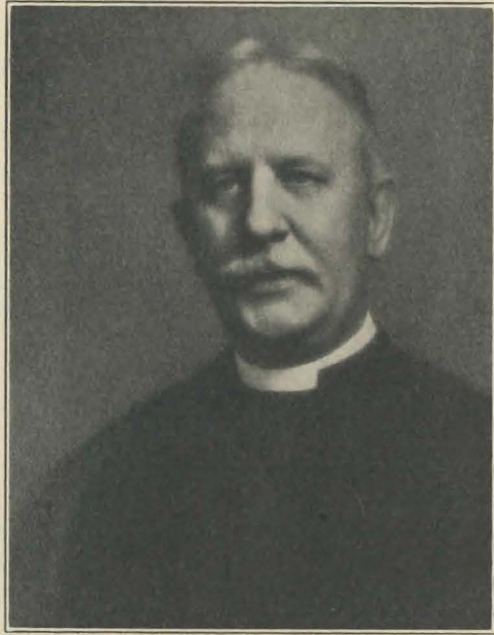
You would also open our doors to between *five* and *eight thousand* other active seamen who come to us during the course of a day for one thing or another—perhaps to get their mail, to deposit hard-earned wages in our bank, to play a game of chess, to receive treat-

ment in our clinic, to locate a missing shipmate, to get straightened out on a naturalization problem, to write a letter home, to get a job, to strum on the piano, to wash and dry their underwear, or just to sit with friends and feel at home.

Were you to undertake this one-day responsibility, you might wish to visit the Institute on your day to see your several thousand protegés.

You might wish to entertain your friends at luncheon or at tea at the Institute, as one of our Red Letter Day donors has already done.

There are still many unassigned days scattered here and there on the calendar, and the chances are that your day is still available. Would you not like to reserve it now? Your check for \$260.27 may be mailed with the reservation, or later, to Harry Forsyth, Chairman, Ways and Means Committee, Seamen's Church Institute, 25 South Street, New York City.

Dr. Mansfield

This is indeed a season of thanksgiving for all of us at the Institute, for Dr. Mansfield is well on the way to renewed health and strength after a critical illness.

In mid-September, quite without warning, he was suddenly confronted with the necessity for a serious operation.

Anxious days followed during which his courageous soul battled its way through the valley

of the shadow. Life hung in the balance, but Dr. Mansfield's thoughts were of the Institute, which is more than life to him. And so, in his excruciating pain, his prayer was that he might continue the great work he has been building up through the past thirty-three years.

Again his faith and courage have won. He is free from pain and his strength is rapidly returning. An unsuspected malady

of long duration has been remedied and he looks forward to better health than ever.

In this crucial moment of our history, therefore, our prayers

of thanksgiving ascend to the Great Healer for the restoration of Dr. Mansfield to the Institute whose life is so closely interwoven with his own.

Benefit Plans Changed

Our Fourth Annual Benefit is to be the performance of "This Thing Called Love" at the Bijou Theatre, 45th Street, just west of Broadway, Monday evening, November 19th.

We had expected to have Mr. William Hodge in "Straight Thru the Door," but after our preparations were well under way, it was decided to take this play on the road.

We were distressed that we could not promptly fill the orders for tickets which began

to pour in upon us, but it's an ill wind, etc.

We feel confident that everyone will find "This Thing Called Love" fascinating entertainment, and we hope all will wish to keep the tickets which we are sending as substitutes for the play originally chosen.

There are a few good seats left for last-minute reservations. We would suggest telephoning the Benefit Performance Committee at Bowling Green 2710 as the most satisfactory procedure.

"The Hard-Boiled Skipper"

The greatest tragedy that can befall a skipper came to Captain Oldfield. He lost his ship. It was rammed amidship and went down in half an hour off the Florida coast.

The Captain and the entire crew of 37 officers and men were picked up and brought to New York and the Institute, whither most shipwreck survivors find their way.

After Captain Oldfield had given his report to his ship's company, and after he found

that we had fitted his boys out with warm sweaters and other necessary clothing, he took his first comfortable breath; and in the intimacy of Mother Roper's office he indulged in his first thought of himself.

"I've lost something I never can replace," he confided. "It was a scarf—a knitted wool scarf—just an old gray scarf, but my little girl made it. Four years old she was at the time, mind you, only four years old. She's fifteen now and could knit

me a proper scarf, but it wouldn't be the same. There wouldn't be any mistakes in it. It was the mistakes in my old scarf that I loved. They always reminded me of the scalding tears that must have gone into the making. If the mistakes were too bad, her mother would make her rip it out and do it over, and she'd cry and say, 'But my daddy won't get it for Christmas.'

"They all call her Sunny on

our street," he continued irrelevantly. And then he told proudly of his home over in Cardiff—of his fine boys and girls and their wonderful mother, and he brooded further,

"No, I never can replace that old gray scarf. Everytime I used to put it 'round my neck, I could feel her chubby little hands"—

Here he wiped his eyes quite frankly, this "hard-boiled skipper."

A Sailor's Mother

Jack Munro's mother is as staunch a woman as ever smiled and blinked back her tears when she sent her boy to sea; but even her brave heart gave way when Jack made the Port where sailors sign off never to ship back home.

Jack "slipped his cables" in the Marine Hospital a year and a half ago, and back in Glasgow his mother received Mrs. Roper's informing letter, incredulous that so hearty a boy as hers could succumb to any malady in only four days, and bewildered to know why a boy with a mother to adore him should be snatched away when there are

so many homeless sailors.

For a year and a half she brooded, trying to combat grim reality with her Christian faith. She was bitter and she inwardly chided herself because her belief in the wisdom of God did not sustain her.

She cast about desperately for relief from her sorrow and restoration of her faith. She decided to come to America. She felt that if she could see Jack's grave and talk with those who cared for him during his last hours, she might become reconciled.

So Mrs. Munro came to the Institute a few weeks ago.

Her husband took her to Liverpool, where she was to embark. There she sprained her ankle, but resolutely told the hospital surgeon who strapped it that she would sail that day. Nothing could delay her once she had set out on her mission.

While she was being attended at the hospital, Mr. Munro picked up a magazine in the waiting room, opened it at random, and proceeded to read idly to while away the time. The article was about "the busiest woman in the world." To his amazement it was an account of Mother Roper and her work at the Seamen's Church Institute of New York!

But Mrs. Munro was not to be deterred by that article. Had not "the busiest woman in the world" written her stating that she would be ever so happy to welcome Jack's mother to America?

They became great pals, these two mothers of the same sailor-boy. Jack was an outstanding youngster—the kind who would be remembered by anyone who had ever known him. Thus Mrs. Roper was able to regale his bereaved mother with a dozen little incidents for which she begged so eagerly. Mrs. Roper

remembered the chair where Jack had sat to talk with her in her office and even the spot where he had stood smiling, cap in hand, when she had last seen him.

The visit to the grave was not depressing after all. The Chaplain who had buried Jack took his mother there. She was almost happy to discover that the only clump of wild daisies in the cemetery was growing where her Jack lay.

Everywhere Mrs. Munro went, the people she encountered seemed to reflect her own kindness and friendliness. Even the landlady of the rooming house where she stayed welcomed her with a dainty tea tray—by no means a typical procedure in cold New York.

The tailor who used to make Jack's suits outdid himself to recall his various visits and his special little preferences.

The mate on Jack's last ship let his mother sit in the seat he used to occupy at mess, and he pointed out the exact spot where Jack had stood at the rail to have his picture snapped. (This picture had accompanied Jack's last letter home and was the most cherished possession of the Munro family.)

The sailor's world is the whole wide world, but it is a small place after all. So when Mrs. Roper posted a notice on the Institute bulletin board to the effect that Jack Munro's mother was visiting us, three Glasgow boys who had shipped with him immediately came to meet her. One had worked for Mr. Munro at one time. All three tried to tell Jack's mother in their ineloquent sailor fashion that there never was anyone quite like Jack—"straight as a die and clean as a whistle."

It must not be thought that Mrs. Munro was depressed and gloomily obsessed. On the contrary, in spite of her recently sprained ankle and her sixty-two years, she set out to see the various points of interest that Jack had described in his letters home, just as gaily—outwardly—as if he were accompanying her.

We must therefore record that she and Mrs. Roper "did" Coney Island one evening during Carnival Week, got their mouths full of festive confetti, and arrived at their respective homes at a scandalous hour.

The high spot of Mrs. Munro's American trip was an eve-

ning uptown. She has always adhered to a set of dyed-in-the-wool scruples and so, contemplating a possible departure therefrom, she had visited her clergyman before leaving home to ask his advice. Jack had written her about going to the movies, and if her Jack had gone to the movies, could they really be so very wicked? The old pastor had apparently absolved her to her satisfaction, so when the time came, she lured Mrs. Roper to Jack's favorite movie house. Our cherished Mother Roper was whisked through precarious traffic in the theatre district with the assurance that there are no traffic lights in Glasgow and still nothing had ever struck Mrs. Munro there!

Through all these brave attempts at levity, of course there were occasional (but brief) tearful reminiscences; but when the time came to go home Mrs. Munro had pretty well fulfilled her purpose. Her bitterness was gone, and she was as happy as a bereaved mother ever could be; for she had discovered that her Jack lives in the hearts of his shipmates and of all who knew him at the Institute.

Thanksgiving and Christmas Should Bring Happiness

Most of our sailormen will be tossing about in their ships on Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Many of them will be in foreign ports—heaven ports, perhaps, where the spirit of Thanksgiving and Christmas has never penetrated.

About nine hundred of them will be cheered by the memory that they were ashore at the Institute last year—that they had a bit of holiday fun here, and a real Christmas dinner.

About nine hundred others will be under our roof this year. It will quite likely be the only time in their sea-going careers when they ever have been or will be ashore for either of the holidays.

We want to give them a bit of the joy and gladness that Thanksgiving and Christmas should bring. First, there should be service, and then a real holiday dinner for the nine hun-



THE SAILOR IS JUST AS LONELY AS THE REST OF US WHEN HE IS AWAY FROM HOME, ESPECIALLY AT THE

dred who lodge here the night before; there should be some sort of evening entertainment for those who could not come to us that night; there should be holiday bags for about two thousand sailormen in hospitals or on the "laid-up" ships in the Port of New York.

It takes very little to make a sailor happy—just something to show him that someone thinks of him.

Someone always has thought of him in years gone by. Someone has always made it possible for us to give him a real Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Will you be one of those "someones" this year?

Each dollar mailed to the Seamen's Church Institute at 25 South Street, New York, and marked for the Holiday Fund, will make one sailorboy happy.

Remember the Lonely Sailors through our Holiday Fund

A Sailor Afield

We have a little mechanical counting device that registers the number of men who come to our building, but the machine has not yet been invented that tells to how many sailormen our building goes.

The spirit of the Seamen's Church Institute travels far afield over land and sea in a dozen and one ways to reach our boys, and most often it is through the letters of Mother Roper. No one will ever know what these messages mean unless perhaps the Recording Angel keeps a special log book with entries showing how many lonely sailor hearts have been gladdened with letters from Mother Roper; how many sailor footsteps on the verge of taking the wrong path have been turned about; and how many a despondent man has started life anew when perhaps he was about to destroy it. And all because of Mother Roper's simple, effortless, sane and tender letters.

But we started out to tell the story of Fillmore, ex-seaman and seaman-again-to-be when his term of service in the Army expires. According to his own con-

fession, he joined up in a moment of mental aberration which occurred on one of his trips to Honolulu. The idea was that camp life in sunny Hawaii would be paradise after twelve years of seafaring in all sorts of adverse weather. There had been long watches in a bobbing crow's nest when Fillmore had dreamed of possessing a chicken farm (as many a sailorman does), but that longing was quite eclipsed by Uncle Sam's offer to train him for a motor mechanic under the peaceful blue skies of Hawaii.

It was all right for a while, and then came a letter to Mrs. Roper containing this:

"The Army is not half bad, but still I miss the great rolling waters O, so much! It is the place for me."

This decision was arrived at soon after his enlistment, and ever since then Fillmore has been looking forward to the time when he will again be free to follow the sea. Meanwhile he has been appointed post plumber. Whether this is in any measure a substitute for contact with "the great rolling waters,"

Fillmore does not say in his letter. after reading that message? Or this one:—

The Fillmore correspondence is a touching record of loneliness, misfortune, yearning and hope on the part of Fillmore, and of solicitous understanding on the part of Mother Roper.

This from the boy:—

"I have just returned to my post after 9 weeks in The hospital my eyes have completely gave way on me. I was just this am aloud to read again. We have a most wonderful specialist here so tender and truly com-pi-ment."

And this in reply from Mother Roper:—

"I like the tone of your letter very much because it seems to me no matter where you are you always find that people are of the right sort, and you close your letter by telling me that where you are now, your Chaplain is the most wonderful on earth. I think that all this, however, is really a reflection of what you are yourself, and it is probably because of your own innate goodness that you succeed in seeing the good in others."

What fellow wouldn't buck up and take a new grip on things

after reading that message? Or this one:—

"I know by the tone of your letter that you will be the sort of chap who will try to maintain the honor of the 13th Field Artillery."

There was a dark period when Fillmore desperately sought to solve his problem thus:—

"I have thought of writing to some of the magazines and ask for Pen Pals of the opesite sex. Would that be alright or is it to silly?"

What Mrs. Roper thought of the plan may be guessed from the fact that Fillmore's next letter contained a statement that he would like to correspond with some seaman, and this in the nature of a promise:—

"Your advise is just opesite to my desires, but you are perfectly right and I am going to follow your advise to the letter."

The Fillmore correspondence is by no means all sermons. There are real mother-and-son letters in which the enthusiastic boy tells how his team won the football game; and his sympathetic mother writes back that with a score like the one he re-

ported, the losing team couldn't have been anywhere near a match for Fillmore's. There are poetic attempts to describe Hawaiian moonlight and amusing accounts of knocking about with another merchant sailor in his outfit, and always the Hawaiian names accompanied by phonetic spelling. Oahu (Wahoo) is constantly mentioned, but always double-spelled.

The pith of the whole Fillmore situation and of the tremendous correspondence which Mother Roper somehow manages to find time to carry on

with her boys afield is perhaps contained in this recent missive from Hawaiiia:—

"I have from six to eight hours per day for recreation. Those are long and lonely hours. No place to go and nothing to do. I have no correspondents or letter pals so I read Mother Roper's letters a good many times. They seem in some way to make me truly realize that there is somewhere beyond the blue sea a place dear to me. Otherwise America would be merely a dream."

Vignettes of the Seaman

Way back in 1920 Buck bought a railroad ticket from Boston to Hamilton, Ohio. But he didn't go. He suddenly changed his mind and went to sea instead.

In 1924 he ran across the ticket in his bill-fold, and took a notion to mail it to the railroad company. Then he shipped out.

The railroad sent Buck a check in our care and we for-

warded it to Singapore. He had no luck in cashing it there, however, so he returned it to us with his endorsement. We put it through our bank and sent an American Express check to Sidney, Australia, whither Buck was then bound. Thus the coming of spring, 1925, enriched Buck by the price of a ticket from Boston to Hamilton. It was a case where everybody passed the check, but for-

tunately nobody passed the Buck!

From somewhere on the vast expanse of the Pacific there has come to us by way of an amateur in Union Springs, New York, a radiogram from John Jacobson. Away out there on the S.S. *City of New York* of the Byrd Antarctic Expedition our Jake, the sail maker, thought about us and sent this message into space:

"Accept mine and the crew's thanks for our useful ditty bags. We are on a seven-thousand-mile trip from Panama to Pego, Society Islands. Best regards to all."

"Hey, Joe!" one of our boys hailed a shipmate on South Street.

"If you see Seidler anywheres, you tell him where he can find me. Tell him I'm staying over here at Mother Roper's Academy as usual."

Thus we add to our long list another synonym for the Seamen's Church Institute.

Whitey dropped in again the other day, just having completed another voyage. This time it was "just a ferryboat ride to

LeHavre—no deep sea stuff." He had never seen Paris, so he and his pal took advantage of their five days in port to see "what it is about that place that people go cookoo about."

Having spent three days and many francs there, Whitey is still in doubt as to the attraction. He prefers Galveston, Texas, should anyone inquire.

"We walked all up and down the rue de Main Street," he reported, "and we didn't see a blessed drunk American, so of course we didn't bust the good record."

One of our seamen recently met with a serious accident on board his ship, and as soon as he was able, he filed a suit for damages. Through certain intricacies of the law, difficult of understanding for the layman, his claim depended upon proving residence at the Institute over a period of five years.

We delved through files of room reservations, bank deposits, inquiries at the Social Service desk, etc., and were finally able to piece together a satisfactory continuous record so that our man won his damage suit.

The ship's radio man "Sparks," alias "the guy in the shack," is quite likely to be the center of attraction on his ship. Our Vickers is one such. He "ferryboats" between Europe and America on a freighter that carries six passengers, all of whom can usually be counted upon to gravitate to the "Shack" in the hope of there finding some excitement.

On his last trip Vickers reports the passenger list as follows: a professor of biblical history from Bryn Mawr; a French waiter; a circus snake-charmer; a professional baseball player; a Shakespearean actor; and a peanut raiser from Nicaragua.

"What do you do when you ain't here?" Louis demanded of our Relief Secretary.

"O, I live at home with my family," she told him.

"Your family, such as——?"

"O, my sister and my father."

"Your father?" Louis repeated incredulously. "Gee, he must be a hundred."

"Not quite," corrected our Relief Secretary.

"Well, of course," Louis went on, "some people do look a lot older than they really are."

We had at least three boys on the oil tanker *David C. Reid*, whose tragic end we can only speculate upon.

"Going fast," was the last desperate wireless message her operator sent out through the hurricane, having first reported "twenty degrees list."

There were thirty-four men on board, but no trace of them has been found.

Two rescue ships that rushed to the scene found only a crude oil patch five miles in diameter—mute evidence of the tragedy. Somewhere beneath it are our three sailorboys and thirty-one others.

The following letter has a special significance because it comes from a retired Navy commander—one who knows seamen afloat and ashore:—

"Nothing will give me greater pleasure than to contribute to your noble Seamen's Church Institute of New York. No one can estimate the good it does and the mantle of protection it throws around sailormen.

"I wish your institution were twice as large as it is and appropriately endowed.

"I take pleasure in enclosing

herewith my mite, with best wishes for continued success of your glorious achievement."

A comely sailor lad with a broad Scandinavian accent gave his name to the New York City police as Pete Murphy, so they wouldn't make a fuss over him by following him up.

Pete rescued a man who tried to commit suicide one cold night recently by jumping into the East River. A few of Pete's sturdy strokes brought the unfortunate ashore, and then Pete worked over him for half an hour to revive him.

The would-be suicide was not particularly pleased to find himself alive, and Pete questioned the wisdom of his rescue until he went to church the following evening.

It so happened that the preacher touched upon the subject of taking one's own life, and Pete came away from the service quite pleased to know that the minister agreed with him as to the inexcusableness of it. So much for that.

"Wasn't the water cold?" Of course someone had to ask the obvious question.

Pete admitted that it was.



PETE

"Well, what did you do, Pete—come back to the Institute and get some dry clothes?"

"No," he said almost impatiently. "Don't you know clothes dry quicker out doors? I just walked around till I got dry."

Pete left his home in Copenhagen ten years ago when he was only fourteen, and went off to

sea. He lost track of his mother and the rest of his family, and he had given up hope of finding them. He somehow felt that that was the price he paid for American citizenship—that the authorities in Copenhagen would not help him in his quest.

Mrs. Roper has assured him that this is not the case, however, that she has unravelled worse snarls than this appears to be, and Pete has gone off to sea with hope in his young heart that he may yet see his mother again.

Jake set his suitcase beside a post in our lobby and stepped up to the soda fountain for a sandwich. Along came one of our pan-handling cats whose beat is the soda fountain. Satiated with

the many hand-me-outs she had coaxed from her sailor friends, she elected to doze on Jake's suitcase.

There he found her five minutes later. He made a move toward the suitcase, changed his mind, and stood off and looked at her. Then he pulled out his watch, looked at it apprehensively, walked around the post, drew out his watch again, and finally decided upon action.

He approached the cause of his uneasiness and doffed his hat respectfully.

"Sorry, cat," he said, "but I've got just twenty minutes to get my ship."

Then Jake carefully set a very indignant little animal on the floor, and departed with his suitcase.

Funds for the New Building are still vitally needed and will be most gratefully received by

JUNIUS S. MORGAN, JR.
Treasurer

Annex Building Fund
25 South Street
New York