

The LOOKOUT



CONRAD LIBRARY ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

Photo by A. Eriss

SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK

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The
LOOKOUT

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

A copy of the Institute's "Information Book for Donors and Testators" will be sent upon request.

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British Merchant Navy Club



"THUMBS UP!"

Photo by Wide World

Lord Halifax, British Seaman and Mrs. J. B. Wilson, hostess of the new Club make the confident gesture, accompanied by a "NO!" when asked "Are we down-hearted?" The "M.N." (Merchant Navy) badge is worn to show that they are in the service of their country even though they do not wear uniforms.

GREAT excitement stirred the waterfront on March 26th when word went around among the seafarers that Lord Halifax would visit the Institute to open officially the newly completed British Merchant Navy Club.

It was a busy day for Mrs. J. B. Wilson, hostess of the new club rooms which occupy a large portion of the second floor. The furnishings and maintenance of the Club are financed, as are the Netherlands and Belgian rooms at the Institute,

through committees of the respective nationalities, the Institute providing the space. Mrs. Wilson's husband is a member of the Maritime Board in London.

Curtains of bright Jacobean chintz make a colorful background for leather-covered chairs and sofas in the lounge, library, writing room, game room. Flags and flowers heightened the festive aspect, the American and British flags and the British red ensign, and a great silver tea tray



Photo by Black Star
Miss Lila Stanley and Mrs. J. B. Wilson welcome a mate from a British freighter to the new Merchant Navy Club.

with pot and kettle and cups and saucers and sandwiches for the several hundred British seamen present at the official opening, and for the distinguished guests.

Lord Halifax while posing for the news reels in the Club's billiard room, holding a cup of tea, made all the seamen feel at home as he answered their questions and asked them about their families. When the cameras began to grind the face of the Ambassador lighted up and with a grin, called out to the seamen: "Are you downhearted?" "No" they shouted gaily and hoisted their thumbs in the gesture which has become so popular with British people today. Six of the seamen who had been torpedoed in both this war and the last war were formally presented to the Ambassador.

In his radio address, after he had been introduced to the gathering by Godfrey Haggard, British Consul General at New York, Lord Halifax paid tribute to the courage displayed

by Britain's merchant seamen and their officers in the face of wartime dangers. Following are excerpts from Viscount Halifax's address:

"I count it a great privilege that on my first visit to New York there should fall to me the task of inaugurating the British Merchant Navy Club. It is appropriate that the new Club should be associated in this fine building with the Seamen's Church Institute whose kindness and cooperation have contributed in so large a degree to make this new venture possible. Our warmest thanks are due to them.

But we also owe a debt of gratitude to New York so long and so rightly famed for its hospitality, for providing a center at which the men of the British Mercantile Marine can find rest and relaxation. No body of men need it or deserve it more.

Here is a place where merchant officers and men can feel at home and meet their fellows; and this is perhaps the more necessary since many of those who will use this Club have not been in regular service in the United States before and have had no opportunity to form their own friendships among the people of this great city. Now they will have a Club which will become their home away from home on this coast, and the fact that I have been invited to open it today is yet one more sign of the friendship and partnership between the American and British peoples.

British seamen are well known for making friends wherever they go, and it is largely thanks to their American friends here that the money necessary to start and maintain this Club has been provided. To all those who have contributed to this enterprise, either by money, help or offers of various kinds in the future, I say most sincerely "Thank you" on behalf of Great Britain and the British Merchant Navv. I can guess how much plea-



Photo by A. Eriss
Tea-time in the new club rooms is always popular among British seafarers.

sure it will give to the women of Great Britain, whose sons and husbands are holding in their hands the life-line of our foreign trade, to think that their menfolk will be so well provided for in New York.

For life-line indeed it is: and you may be quite sure that Hitler will leave nothing that savage ingenuity can devise untried in the attempt to break this life-line. He won't succeed—and the reason that he won't succeed is because the men of the sea who are working for Britain have got something to put into this struggle stronger than anything Hitler can bring against them. Small wonder that we are proud of them—and I can assure them that the best brains of this country, as of the British Empire, are working night and day to find means to defeat the dangers which they have to face as they do their duty. The discharge of that duty is vital for our people, for the work done in carrying valuable cargoes in and out of British ports is beyond all price, and their country knows how to appreciate their services.

Last night I had an opportunity

to tell the Pilgrims of America some of the reasons why I feel complete confidence about the outcome of this war. Today I would like to tell you what I believe to be our greatest asset in this fight for everything that we in Britain, and you in America, hold most precious.

Our greatest strength lies in the heart and the spirit of the British people. That is Britain's chief bulwark, which more than anything carried us through the dark days of last year when our weapons were scarce indeed. It is this spirit which has never failed the men of the Royal Navy, the Army and the Royal Air Force. It is the spirit of men, women and children throughout the country; they have shown that they can undergo a baptism of trial and terror without flinching; and it is found at its highest among the men at sea in our merchant ships who keep long watches day and night, through fair weather and foul, guarding ceaselessly against the elements and against the endeavors of the enemy lurking under-sea or in the sky.

The common front of all who

love freedom is also deeply indebted to the indomitable seamen of our allies. Their help is proving invaluable and will not soon be forgotten.

Never before has a nation shown itself more united than ours in its determination to carry on, whatever the cost till victory has been won.

It is not merely the lives of British people that are being defended. It is their whole way of living. It is the bedrock of Liberty, the belief that a man has a right to say what he likes, to listen to what he likes, to worship as he likes, to choose the government that he likes. These things are at stake before a pernicious doctrine which denies all rights to the individual and makes a new religion of the all-powerful state. The British peoples will have none of this and they are prepared to die to the last man, if need be, to preserve their own way of life and help those other peoples who feel the same way and who are the victims of Nazism.

In all our history there are no brighter pages than those which tell plain tales of the courage and devotion to duty of British seamen. From the days of Sir Richard Grenville and the "Revenge" one could

recall story after story which, as they bring old names to life again, make our blood run faster. But none has moved me more I think than that which was told in the unromantic atmosphere of the Admiralty Court last month. It is the plain tale of the "San Demetrio,"* attacked on the afternoon of November 5, 1940, by the armed raider which sank the gallant escort, the "Jervis Bay." Let me give it in the language used by counsel in the Court.

The "San Demetrio", a tanker of 8,073 gross tons, laden with a full cargo of petrol, was damaged severely, and, as it was highly dangerous for the crew to remain on board, the captain gave the order to abandon ship. The convoy, of which the "San Demetrio" was one, had previously been ordered to scatter.

Her complement left in three boats, one of which was commanded by an officer, Mr. Hawkins, and was manned by some of his shipmates. The boats rapidly dropped astern of the ship, which a few minutes later was seen to be struck

* See February Lookout for a further account of the *San Demetrio*.



Photo by A. Eriss

Cribbage, pinochle and bridge are popular games while British seamen are on shore leave in New York.

by a heavy salvo and to burst into flames.

The weather steadily deteriorated, and by dawn on November 6, there was a strong gale and high seas. The boats lost touch and nothing further was seen of the other two boats. During the whole of that day this small boat was kept by her crew head on to the great seas. In the early hours of the afternoon the tanker was sighted again. She was still on fire and surrounded by petrol floating on the water.

At dawn on November 7 the weather had moderated. At noon the boat reached the ship and the crew boarded her with considerable difficulty. There was a fierce fire still burning aft and the ship was glowing hot amidships. The bridge and all its surrounding structure were destroyed; compasses, steering-gear, charts and wireless had all gone; and the only alternative method of steering, the steering-gear aft—was partially destroyed and only four spokes of the wheel were left.

Throughout the night of November 7-8 the little band fought the fires and succeeded in extinguishing them in the early forenoon of November 8. A temporary steering platform was constructed and in the afternoon the main engines were put in operation. A speed of about nine knots was maintained.

After a whole week on November 14th, a British warship arrived, put a party of officers and ratings on board and rendered great assistance. Escorted by the warship, the "San Demetrio" then set a course for the Clyde, where she arrived on the night of November 16th, with 10,000 tons of cargo still remaining in her.

The value of the "San Demetrio" in her damaged condition together with the cargo and freight, was nearly a million and a quarter dollars.

I know no greater story of the sea than this, and I can think of no



Photo by Marie Higginson

Lord Halifax broadcasts from the new British Merchant Navy Club at the Institute.

better reason why we should be proud today to do our utmost for these splendid men who are doing so much for us. Their work is what the arteries of the human body are to men. Through these lanes across the ocean they bring the very life-blood of the nation; the food, the raw materials and increasingly, I rejoice to say, the splendid equipment of all kinds which is being sent to us by the great United States, well termed by its Chief Representative the arsenal of democracy.

Those men of whom I speak, officers and crews alike, have behind them centuries of careful training. Today the fruit of this training is evident in the work that our Merchant Navy does to meet the exacting necessities of the war. They know, every man of them, what it means to keep the sea lanes to Britain open. We are confident they will not fail.

This club will serve as assurance to seamen of all ranks that wherever they may be on their country's service, they are not forgotten, and that their country is profoundly grateful to them."

Conrad Library 1940 Report

By Anne W. Conrow, Librarian



MEN STUDYING FOR LICENSES — Note on the table the model of the "Miles Barton", one of two fine ship models given to the Library by Mr. Charles Dunlap of the Institute's Board of Managers. *Photo by A. Eriss*

IT would be quite impossible to review the work of the Conrad Library for 1940 without a deep consciousness of what Archibald MacLeish calls "the nature of the times in which men live". In the early months we read of Finland's defeat after a gallant stand against Russia, we saw the American vessel "City of Flint" publicly welcomed in Baltimore after her 116 day voyage through perilous waters, we met and talked with proud officers of the "Queen Elizabeth" at the end of that epoch-making dash from the Clyde to the Hudson. Then April 9th saw Norway invaded and Denmark "protected" by Germany. A sad-faced Dane sat all day in the big chair opposite the librarian's desk, once shyly coming over to show photographs of his family in Copenhagen.

May 10th brought the invasion of the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxemburg. It was one of those interminable days the staff will never forget. Two of our Hollanders were in and out of the library at intervals all day, picking up the latest copies of the Dutch newspapers with which Dr. Hendrik Willem van Loon had continued to keep us supplied, as if to find some last tangible link with home. One of these men, a quiet man of perhaps fifty, was completely inarticulate now that "it" had happened. The other, younger and always more emotional, now turned hysterical with anxiety over a sister in Rotterdam. Our thoughts went also to Antwerp and a Belgian radio operator many times a visitor to the Institute. He had been cited for bravery in the last war and four



Photo by A. Eriss
Mrs. Inger Acheson, assistant librarian and Miss Anne Conrow, librarian and a radio operator on a British freighter. Note in the background the painting by Charles Robert Patterson of the ship "Torrens" on which Joseph Conrad served as chief mate.

times since for rescues at sea. Would he be in it again? And where? Two weeks later a young Dutch radio operator bringing some books on South America which he had borrowed for the trip seemed bewildered more than anything else by the news he had received while listening to an American broadcast station in Curacao. He told of a brother in the Navy, a father also at sea, and left with "Northwest Passage" under his arm as his escape literature for the next uncertain weeks. This lad has borrowed during the year an interestingly varied group of books which not only he, but other officers of his ship have read. (An excerpt from his letter of appreciation is on page 13.) . . .

The retreat from Dunkerque. Seamen in rowboats—ferryboats—destroyers—troopships—cruisers—making possible the most fabulous retreat an expeditionary force has ever known. The Conrad Library

was pleased to pay a small tribute to the men of the British Navy by sending some books to Lieut. Alan Villiers, long its friend, now serving in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve. (See page 13.)

August brought the first concentrated bombing of London. A British Apprentice, "first-tripper" and very young, was sent over by the Consul for some books. He was thoroughly dejected at being "away from my people now that it has come" and quite evidently disappointed in America. He had seen "all six of your skyscrapers", were "all Americans as pro-Nazi as the watchman on the dock?" and did we have "any good books by British authors?" The librarian mustered all her patience and understanding, he was so very young and bitter—and was pleased to have him come back next voyage for a somewhat happier chat and more books.

On August 28th the U. S. Army Transport "American Legion" re-



Photo by A. Eriss

The window overlooking South Street brings one close to the bustle of shipping. Here the photographer has caught a glimpse of a little Icelandic freighter being loaded and Brooklyn Heights in the background.

turned from Petsamo, Finland. We had been particularly anxious here as she made her way through mine fields because of a young American well on the way to becoming a good Engineer. For several years now he has used every available moment ashore studying and has taken books each trip for study in the watch below. The telephone rang and a cheery voice said "Hello! It's Jerry. I'm on the dock and I thought I'd let you know I'm O.K." Several hours later he burst into the library and told his story of that trip with a vividness impossible to recapture

on paper and with a mature sympathy for those people in Finland which amazed us. . . .

September and the first peace time conscription became law. With this came added interest in defense generally, inquiries about the services, even more poring over "Jane's Fighting Ships"* than ever before. The daily papers were also in great demand, seamen frequently bringing in extra copies of afternoon papers as invasion of Britain seemed almost certain.

* The 1941 edition costs \$25. Will some reader contribute this to the Library?

(We had a request for books from one of the officials of the French line, and these were sent at once for the men forming the skeleton crew of the "Normandie".) Naturally the principal foreign group served was British, and this in the main through the Apprentices' Room (there were also some direct appeals to the Library from crew members both in person and by telephone). The librarians have formed the very pleasant custom of dropping in for tea in the Apprentices' Room, talking with boys and men and learning their reading tastes and interests so that next voyage we are better equipped to meet their needs. Recently, at tea, a young British Second Mate made a casual remark about Southern Greenland, which led to the revelation that he had spent a winter there as Meteorologist for an expedition. The librarian recommended Nevil Shute's "An Old Captivity" (the story of an ancient civilization in Greenland written by a flyer in the Royal Air Force) and the officer was able to finish it before his ship sailed. . . .

The master of a British cargo vessel borrowed books for three voyages to the Far East and reported that they were read by all of his officers and formed the basis for many a lively discussion.

October brought Greece into the conflict and "Jane's Fighting Ships", once more consulted, showed six pages of naval strength! Again the weeklies "Life" and "Time" had their waiting list and daily papers were in constant use. . . .

It may appear that we have stressed unduly our relation to the war in Europe and to foreign seamen. This has been an exceptional year and the work has of necessity been adapted to the changing times. Men from our own ships have come in constantly and we have tried at all times to maintain the regular function of the Library as an educational factor in the life of seamen

in this port. An awareness of the training program of the U. S. Maritime Commission has led us to study its recommendations for textbooks and courses and new reference texts have been purchased. The bulk of studying has been done as in other years by men studying independently for raise-in-grade or new licenses in all three departments: Deck, Engine and Radio. The preponderance of these has been in engineering, although the renewed activity in the U. S. Naval Reserve has brought in a great many men wishing to brush up on seamanship and navigation.

In 1940 a number of seamen residents withdrew 1,924 books to read in their rooms. The magazines have been more popular than ever this year. Subscribers graciously renewed all subscriptions for a second year. The leaders among general periodicals are consistently "Life", "Time", "The Reader's Digest", "Saturday Evening Post", "The New Yorker" and "Fortune". There is widespread interest in the Marine journals and two more have been added in compliance with many requests: "Motorships and Diesel Boating" and "Pacific Marine Review".

We have continued the established policy of sending books each month to the two United States Marine Hospitals and for the U. S. Coast Guard recruits at Ellis Island. Many of our regular readers (American and foreign) come to us upon shipping out with requests for books.

IN CONCLUSION

In retrospect (after five months into 1941) the year 1940 was an exceedingly active one and never have the services of the library seemed more important. We hope that in a small way, by maintaining this library for seamen of all nations, we may have made some contribution towards preserving some of the spiritual values which are so vital to the life of any people.

Reading in the Nineties

By Captain Harry Garfield

SEAMEN are fortunate these days in having access to many fine books in the ship's library. A few years ago the type of literature that found its way into the ship's Foc's'le depended entirely upon the source of supply.

I recall a "sailing day" in San Francisco some years ago. We were anchored out in the stream. The crew had been brought on board the night before in various stages of intoxication and now were eyeing wistfully the distant shores. We were waiting for the "old man" who was making his final visit to the agents ashore. He would probably make the trip from shore to ship aboard the tugboat that was to take us clear of the harbour.

In the meantime we noted another boat heading our way. Soon it was alongside and the Mate called for a couple of hands to lay aft to give the Sky Pilot a hand with his bundles. The Minister suggested that if the Mate was willing we should all join him in prayer and maybe sing a couple of hymns. This was customary in many ports on sailing day.

All hands were called aft and under the critical eye of the Mate a few hymn books were distributed among the crew. "Grab hold of them" said the Mate, "if they had glass handles you would reach for them fast enough." The short service over, the Minister with a wave of his hand and a blessing departed.

Now the bundles brought on board by the Minister were opened. They contained reading matter.

After a careful examination the Mate decided the crew could have it all. There were several packages of small circulars or tracts as we called them; each one breathed brimstone and fire and foretold dire happenings to the unwary seafarer whose sinful feet lead him from

the path of virtue.

In one package was a cook book. We decided to give this to the cook. After reading it awhile we came to the conclusion that about the only thing the writer of the book and our cook had in common was a stove, he lacked the other ingredients. He did try Chicken A-La-King according to the book but as he had to substitute salt pork for the chicken we asked him to quit making fancy dishes and give us the pantiles and salt horse straight.

We also had several copies of the *Ladies' Home Journal*. These had a strange fascination for some members of our crew. They would argue about the merit of some article they had read. One old fellow whom we called John would have made a capital nurse. He read and reread all the articles on babies. Another member of the crew took up knitting. Another fellow had a pair of curtains well under way by the time we ran into bad weather. Then of course all reading ended.

Fine weather brought the readers on deck again and I came to the conclusion that enjoying a book was somewhat similar to enjoying food. It depends entirely upon how hungry you are. Even the most humble food is seasoned by hunger. The same applies to reading matter.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

In contrast, Captain Garfield's article reminded the Institute's Director, the Rev. Harold H. Kelley, of his own student visits to British sailing vessels in San Francisco Bay in the nineties. Sailing ships would often lay up for weeks and months, awaiting cargoes, chiefly of wheat, and from the Seamen's Institute of San Francisco a Chaplain and volunteer singers would go by launch from ship to ship on Sunday afternoons, holding services on deck and also taking good reading matter which the seamen really enjoyed, for that Institute, like the one in New York, was practical and progressive even in those days.

Reading in 1940

By Kermit Salyer

THE man who chooses to follow the sea must sacrifice a great many of the small pleasures and joys that make life what it is, for the sea is a world apart. The thing a seaman misses most is reading matter, not just any reading matter, mind you, but current magazines and books.

Father Neptune doesn't put out a daily paper, or a weekly magazine; Davey Jones doesn't publish a best seller every few days. And it is this lack of publishing activities on the part of these two worthies that leads me to rejoice every time my ship puts in at the port of New York. For there I can visit the Conrad Library at the Seamen's Church Institute and mend the huge gap which the current voyage has left in my reading.

Losing contact with the contemporary printed word is, I believe, the worst of the vicissitudes of the life of the sea. It is worse than any storm or hurricane; for a storm is soon over, for all its violence, but the bookless days go on and on.

Everytime I go ashore for a few weeks I always look forward to long

hours of enjoyable reading in the Conrad Library. Everytime I shoulder my seabag and step ashore for a short vacation or leave I think of all the books and magazines I will have read by the time I put out to sea again; I think of all the contemporary writers with whom I am going to renew my acquaintance; I think of all the best sellers I will now be in a position to read; and I think of all the serials I can begin with the sure knowledge that I won't miss half the instalments.

Thanks to the Conrad Library, by reading the news magazines I can learn what has happened in the world of men during my absence from it.

Just to illustrate the sublime dither in which I found myself upon coming ashore between ships recently, I quote the following incident.

Someone asked me, "How do you like *Oliver Wiswell*?"

"What ship is he on?" I answered in all my bliss.

But now, thanks to the Conrad Library, I know who *Oliver Wiswell* is.



Photo by Marie Higginson

"Magazines more popular than ever this year".

What the Library Needs

WE believe that loyal friends of the Institute will be interested in the Conrad Library's accomplishments since its opening in 1934. It will complete on May 24th seven busy years during which the yearly attendance of seamen has averaged 20,000.

The splendid books which you and other friends have sent us have added greatly to our collection which now includes about 8,000 volumes. Each year has seen an expansion of our work, and particularly since the War has its usefulness been demonstrated and greatly increased attendance noted. In line with the Government's program for a selected and trained personnel in the merchant marine the Library assists hundreds of ambitious seamen each year by providing reference books and a quiet place for study.

The Library always needs funds for the purchase of technical books, additional shelves and other equipment, and sufficient staff to carry on an adequate schedule. Friends who have expressed a keen interest in the Library and its program may wish to help.

It is our earnest hope that friends of the Library will wish to make an annual contribution to a special CONRAD LIBRARY BOOK FUND. Designated checks should be made payable to the Seamen's Church Institute of New York. May we count on your support? Gifts in any amount will be deeply appreciated.

Since the Institute's policy is not to duplicate the work of the American Merchant Marine Library Association or the American Seamen's Friend Society in placing libraries on ships, we refer seamen to those organizations for books in quantity, at the same time permitting each man to make his own choice of a few books from our own uncatalogued shelves. We extend the same privi-

lege to seamen in hospitals, volunteers assist in making selections of books for seamen patients.

In order that there be no confusion, we would like to point out to readers that the Conrad Library is a *shore library* for seamen of all nationalities whereas the American Merchant Marine Library Association services American vessels and lighthouses with boxes of books. The Institute is happy to provide both books and magazines to individual seamen and crews from both American and foreign vessels in the Port of New York.

ENCYCLOPEDIAS NEEDED

Our *Britannica* is of the vintage of 1911 and we greatly need a more recent edition, preferably, of course, the supplemented 1914 issue. The *Americana* is also in demand by readers, and the 1941 edition of this encyclopedia would be welcome.



Photo by Marie Higginson
Members of the Signal Units of the U. S. Army which were quartered in the Institute in January, 1941, frequently used the Conrad Library.

Seamen's Letters

From a Dutch radio operator—G. L.

"You know one thing I miss very badly are the books Miss Conrow used to give me to take along on the trip. I can get plenty of Dutch books here, but English books are very hard to be had and most of them are translated into Dutch. For one thing I do not like translated books. Translating books to me is like wiping the cream off the milk. There are always expressions and sayings in a book that cannot be translated because every language has its own idiomatic peculiarities. These are lost in the translation."

From Lt. Alan Villiers, R.N.V.R.

"It was awfully good of you to send over those books, they are very welcome to us in these days. It's pleasant to read through a book and live a while in a wholesome world. We have been pretty busy lately but there's always time, some way or other, to dip into a book. They're about the only link with the normal world."

From an American Quartermaster

"Last Sunday, a week ago, I paused for a brief while at your Library, but unfortunately you were not there. I left an old copy of "Pacific Marine Review" which I asked the Librarian on duty to give to you. On Monday evening I had more time and spent a couple of hours there * * * in the course of my observations in the magazine rack I found the current issue of "Pacific Marine Review" which leads me to believe that you have so gracefully fulfilled my request. Please allow me to express my warm thanks."

REMINDER OF DONORS OF MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTIONS:

Next month your subscription will fall due. This year as never before magazines have meant a great deal to our seamen readers. May we count on you to renew your subscription for another year?

The New York Times

SUNDAY, MARCH 16, 1941.

NOT MACHINES ALONE

At first sight this is a war of machines: of machine tools, of armored cars, of mechanized transport, of air-planes, of intricate firing weapons. We get to thinking in machine terms. We count planes downed, with a second thought for the men in them. We count man-made marine disasters by the ton. The Germans say they have sunk nearly 9,000,000 tons of British shipping. The British admit the loss of nearly 5,000,000 tons.

It is a good thing to remember that the machine is nothing without men—men to make it, men to operate it. War still demands the qualities needed when the weapons were bows, spears, swords and clubs. It demands other qualities not required then, for now the noncombatant faces as great a danger as the soldier, and must do an exacting kind of work, with none of the emotional release that comes from being able to hit back.

Consider shipping alone. On the British estimate, nearly one-seventh of the British-controlled shipping afloat at the beginning of the war has been sunk. We do not know how many seamen have gone down with it. We do know that when a British apprentice, wiper, fireman, deck hand, engineer, radio operator or deck officer goes to sea in these times he runs a considerable risk of not coming home. Nevertheless, he goes.

Seamen have long been considered a reckless, unruly lot. Sea fiction, often written by landlubbers, rounds out the picture. In recent times they have fought the captains and the companies to improve their status. Agitators have sometimes corrupted discipline. But now they are dying, anonymously, for small pay, to feed hungry people and supply a defending army. It may be said of them, as Admiral Jellicoe said of their fathers in the other war, that "they have founded a new and a glorious tradition in the teeth of a new and undreamed-of peril." They are common and ordinary men, some of them natives of the conquered countries, untheatrical, embarrassed by praise; but Drake would take off his hat to them and Grenville and Nelson bow them into glory.

Launching the Rio de la Plata

ON Saturday, March 1, the freight and passenger M. S. "Rio de la Plata" was launched by the Sun Shipbuilding and Drydock Company at Chester, Pennsylvania. Built for the United States Maritime Commission, the ultra-modern and comfortable two million dollar vessel is to be operated by the Moore-McCormack Lines between New York and the east coast of South America. Those of us who had the privilege of witnessing the launching shared in a remarkable experience.



Madame Felipe Espil, wife of the Ambassador from Argentina to the United States, just before christening the new Moore-McCormack liner "Rio de la Plata" and Bishop William T. Manning who blessed the ship before she was launched on March 1, 1941.

A heavy snow of the previous day glowed under a bright sun and in this Christmas card setting and with the blessing of the Bishop of New York, who is also Honorary President of the Seamen's Church Institute of New York, the great hull gracefully slipped into the eternal sea in which she will fulfill her mission in peaceful commerce and in strengthening fellowship between the United States and Latin America.

As one who has been privileged to sail around South America and to visit most of her countries, it is entirely proper to urge all Americans to avail themselves of the opportunity for travel to those romantic and beautiful countries.

Bishop Manning included in the following prayer a clear expression of the highest hopes for a successful future for the "Rio de la Plata".

O God our Heavenly Father, Lord of the earth and sky and sea, Whose power is manifested in all the world and Who art present in the great waters.

We pray Thee to bless this ship, Rio de la Plata and to look graciously upon her officers and crew and all who shall travel on her.

Grant that this vessel may be an Ambassador of Good Will and a symbol of true fellowship between the peoples of North and South America and that she may carry this message on all her voyages and into every port which she shall enter.

And grant we beseech Thee that the day may speedily come when Peace with Justice and Liberty shall be established in this world and the ships on every ocean shall be engaged in true and lawful commerce for the benefit of all men everywhere.

We ask this in the Name of Him Who calmed the tempest by His word "Peace, be still", and Whose Divine power can now bring peace to the lives of men, Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Home for Belgian Seamen

ON April 15th, His Excellency, Camille Gutt, Minister of National Defense, Communications and Finance of Belgium, who arrived here from London by clipper, officially opened the club rooms recently completed at the Seamen's Church Institute of New York for the officers and seamen of the Belgian merchant marine who call at the port of New York.

The new club, to be known as the Belgian Seamen's Home occupies a portion of the third floor of the Institute and thus, with the Home for Netherlands Seamen and the British Merchant Navy Club, joins the "international group".

M. Gutt, speaking in Flemish, then in French, and finally in English, paid tribute to the courage displayed by Belgium's merchant seamen and their officers who sail their ships into the war zones, carrying important cargoes for England, under the supervision of the British Ministry of Shipping. These men cannot return to their homes in Belgium because of the Nazi occupation, and the club rooms will provide pleasant surroundings reminiscent of their homeland before the war. The Belgians asked for space in the thirteen-story Institute, which is the largest shore home in the world for merchant seamen of all nationalities. The Belgian seamen thus have access to the extensive facilities such as 1,600 dormitory beds and private rooms, commissary, baggage room, barber and tailor shops, laundry, seamen's funds bureau, social service bureau, writing room, clinics, merchant marine school, library, U. S. Post Office, chapel and many other activities



Photo by A. Eriss

A group of Belgian seamen spin yarns in front of a photograph of their beloved King to whom they are still loyal.

such as moving pictures in the auditorium seating 1,000, athletic events, concerts, etc.

The special features of the Belgian room include a fireplace, a lounge, writing desks, a pantry for light refreshments, games, books, etc. Madame Josee Defoy is the hostess in charge of the room to welcome Belgian seamen.



Camille Gutt, Belgian Minister of Finance and Defense and H. E. Georges Theunis, Belgian Ambassador Extraordinary at the main entrance of the Institute.

Home for Belgian Seamen



Photo by A. Eriss

A tense moment in a lively game of backgammon in the new Belgian Club.

Book Reviews

THE EPIC OF DUNKIRK
By E. Keble Chatterton

To those who know and love the sea, the name of E. Keble Chatterton cannot fail to bring a friendly echo. His historical works, ranging from the story of sailing ships to ship models, roll up to an impressive total that must be in the twenties; and through them all there rings the note of one familiar with his element and with his subject. In "The Epic of Dunkirk", Mr. Chatterton has brought the hawser ashore and has shown that he understands the splash of breakers on the beach as well as the swish of the open sea. The story of this great event is simply told without hyperbole or balderdash, and rightly so, for the subject needs no embellishment. The straightforward language of the ship's log will be appreciated by every reader, and especially by sailors. Our advice to you is to read it. M.H.

SERVICE MANUAL—
STEWARD'S DEPARTMENT
Compiled by United States Lines
New York, 1941. Cornell Maritime Press.
\$1.00

This small volume comes as a boon to librarians who have been asked so often for a "book for stewards". It gives clearly and concisely the rules for all members of the steward's department,

including kitchen, as drawn up by one of our major shipping companies. The adherence to these rules should certainly bring superlative service.

The format is good and content presented in such a way that stewards will find direct answers to many questions. That it casts a new light on the sanctity of the passenger is perhaps beside the point. It might be interesting reading for the traveller!
A.W.C.

Greetings from Christopher Morley

To the Conrad Librarian:

"Just this morning I saw the photograph of *Tusitala* under full sail. It gave me a pang because it seemed to show with such tragic emphasis what the Seven Seas might be like if the human race were more fortunate . . .

"Now as a word for the library: On shore, books play the same part as charts do at sea. They give us the soundings, the magnetic variations, and the dangerous coast-lines. I guess it is as dangerous for any human mind to set out on its course without the valuable books as it would be inconceivable for a modern seaman to navigate without benefit of chart.

"What happens inside those clearly annotated coastlines must remain, I suppose, the secret of the individual."

Book Review

THE ORDEAL OF THE FALCON

By Gosta Larsson

Vanguard Press, 1941. \$2.50

At seventeen, Gösta Larsson ran away to ship in the engine room of a freighter. He relates his experiences in "The Ordeal of the Falcon"; in the story of Sten, the young boy who signed on the Falcon as a coal passer, and as if in remembrance of things past, Mr. Larsson writes of the brutal captain, of Janne,

the stoker, who tries so vainly to escape the sea, of the tragedy of Martin with his club-feet. The Falcon, snub-nosed and sullen looking, is more than a ship battering its way from port to port—it is a world in which men undergo hard work and danger and try to work out their destiny as best they may. Mr. Larsson's description of the life aboard ship is well done, but the tale is really of the men who sail it.

I.M.A.

SERVICES RENDERED TO MERCHANT SEAMEN

JANUARY 1 - MARCH 31, 1941

71,080	Lodgings (including relief beds).
21,267	Pieces of Baggage handled.
196,607	Sales at Luncheonette and Restaurant.
59,814	Sales at News Stand.
6,511	Calls at Laundry, Barber and Tailor Shops.
3,486	Total attendance at 179 Religious Services at Institute, U. S. Marine Hospitals and Hoffman Island.
9,877	Social Service Interviews.
74	Missing Seamen located.
24,379	Total attendance at 76 Entertainments, such as Movies, Concerts, Lectures and Sports.
2,426	Relief Loans to 991 individual Seamen.
14,887	Magazines distributed.
1,439	Pieces of Clothing and 807 Knitted Articles distributed.
778	Treatments in Clinics.
941	Visits at Apprentices' Room.
570	Visits to Ships by Institute Representatives.
3,714	Deposits of Seamen's Earnings placed in Banks.
493	Jobs secured for Seamen.
4,946	Attendance of Seamen Readers in Conrad Library; 932 Books distributed.
2,099	Total Attendance of Cadets and Seamen at 257 Lectures in Merchant Marine School; 500 new students enrolled.
3,814	Incoming Telephone Calls for Seamen.

BOOKS RECENTLY REQUESTED BY SEAMEN

"My Sister and I"—Van der Heide

"Random Harvest"—James Hilton

"Between Two Worlds"—Upton Sinclair

"They Went on Together"—Robert Nathan

"This Is London"—Edward Murrow

"This Above All"—Eric Knight

"Allenby"—General Sir Archibald Wavell

"Collected Edition of Heywood Broun"
—by Heywood Hale Broun

Westerns and detective stories always!

Please send books directly to the Conrad Library, 25 South Street, New York City.

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