

# The LOOKOUT



SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE of NEW YORK

NOVEMBER, 1929

Volume XX

# The LOOKOUT

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Editor, The Lookout

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of March 3, 1879.*

## Who Will Give the Chapel Floor?

\$5,000 will pay for the chapel floor. It will be made of *zenithern*, an imitation stone which matches the stone columns. We hope that someone will choose this floor as a Memorial Gift. A tablet will be inscribed according to the wishes of the donor. What a beautiful memorial it will be for someone! To think of the thousands of sailor feet that will march across it on their way to worship!

# The Lookout

VOL. XX

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No. 11

## A Tribute

By John Masefield

It is very difficult to overpraise the work that Seamen's Institutes and Missions have done in the great seaports during the last forty years. When I was young, sailors, on reaching port, were almost invariably beset by harpies of different kinds, who drugged them, robbed them and then sold their unconscious bodies for what they would fetch from captains in need of crews. Ships which paid no wages from year's end to year's end were frequent; and sailors who touched no pay for many years together were common. The change in the condition of the sea-ports is almost unbelievable. It is almost entirely due to the earnest, self-sacrificing work of people like Mr. Bell and Father Hopkins in the great Seamen's Missions and Institutes.

All good luck to your own splendid Institute.

*J. Masefield*





## A Delightful Evening in Store for You

WE are planning our Fifth Annual Theatre Benefit for the Seamen's Church Institute of New York, to be held on

TUESDAY EVENING,  
NOVEMBER 19TH.

We have bought out the orchestra, boxes and mezzanine of the Erlanger Theatre, 446 West 44th Street, where

MINNIE MADDERN FISKE

is playing in "Ladies of the Jury"—a rollicking comedy.

Mrs. Fiske is supported by an excellent cast, and the critics agree that she herself is at her best in this mirthful play about mixed juries.

For charm, good acting and wholesome humor there isn't a



better play in town. A delightful evening is in store for all the friends of the Institute who see "Ladies of the Jury."

Orchestra Seats:  
\$10.00, \$7.50 and  
\$5.00

Mezzanine Seats:  
\$5.00 and \$3.00

Please get your reservations in early as tickets will be assigned as ordered.

Kindly make checks payable to the Seamen's Church Institute of New York and mail to:

Theatre Benefit Committee,  
Seamen's Church Institute of  
New York,  
25 South Street, New York.  
Bowling Green 2710.

We shall be ever so grateful for your help in making this theatre party a success.

## A Poet of the Dumps

THIS is a story of contrasts; the sublime and the ridiculous; the beautiful and the ugly; the poetic and the prosaic. It concerns itself with a seaman who is mate on a garbage scow but who happened to be born with a gift for poesy. To make matters even more incongruous, his name is John Cabbage.

During the day he dumps garbage in the sea off Ambrose Light from one of the Department of Street Cleaning scows; at night he writes poetry on a portable typewriter by the light of a kerosene lamp. The staff of the U. S. Public Health Clinic, on the mezzanine floor of the Institute, have the distinction of having "discovered" Cabbage. For several years Cabbage has used the Institute and the Public Library for what he calls "hang-outs" whenever his "dump" docks near the Brooklyn Bridge.

At the age of thirty-two "Captain" Cabbage, as he is known,



can look back on twenty years spent on the high seas. It is a year and a half now since he settled down as mate on garbage dump "F." His reason for choosing this unlovely but necessary work is that it gives him more leisure and more privacy for writing poetry than he would be able to enjoy on an ocean-going vessel. Since his scow goes far out to sea, he gets quite enough of rough weather to suit him, and when the boat comes into port twice a week he can revel in the pursuit of learning at the library. He displayed a library card covered with dates as evidence of his scholarly habits.

As he drew from his pocket a handful of typewritten poems, his brown eyes sparkled and his weather-beaten face lit up. He said that his greatest joy is to sit on the deck when his day's work is done watching the sunset, and then, after an hour of quiet meditation to go below to his little



cabin and there try to put the rhythm of the wind and the waves and the ever-surging voice of the Sea into verse.

Here is an excerpt from one of his poems, entitled "The Undertakers of the D. S. C.":

*"From the highest to the lowest, from the richest to the poor,  
We take away what they picked up from their door,  
The refuse of Park, Fifth and Second Avenues,  
meet on our boat,  
Out at sea soon side by side they will float."*

He has been writing poetry for over twelve years. "In all I have written about 1,000 poems, varying from ten lines to several hundred," Captain Cabbage said. "Most of them deal with the life at sea, but many also describe the work I am doing and the surprising things that are dumped into the sea. But there are also some about beautiful things. My last poem was to a painting found in the general debris." He proceeded to read a few lines from a long poem entitled "A Poet Amid the Garbage":

*"And now comes a big wave—takes more of the precious cargo of the garbage boat.  
Here you can see them—how they swim, how they float.  
Here is a broken chair—there's part of a table.  
Here's a hat from a sweet dear—there's a part of a Ford—Oh!  
Here's a lady's dress and a flapper's dancing shoes  
There floats a pail which was made for home-made booze.  
Here's a manicure set—there's a by-gone cat.  
Here's a toy submarine—there floats an old-fashioned stovepipe hat.  
There floats a dead rat—there is a young girl's picture  
With a new big frame.  
The empty egg boxes drop from the load.  
With them drop old rags,*

*And spoiled onions in big bags.  
And now a pile of old bottles  
Hit the rough, harsh but clean green sea—  
They make a rare sight  
On the top of the greenish, greyish  
Dancing, up and down jumping sea."*

And the contrast of this extremely realistic poem with the following is remarkable:

*BURY ME NOT IN A PAUPER'S GRAVE  
"Bury me not in a pauper's grave  
Cast me out to the wild, wild sea  
Let her waves be my lonely grave  
For I was in life free as the sea.  
So when I die  
Anchor my soul in the sea.  
Rough as the sea, so has life been to me,  
So forever in her arms let me be.  
So bury me not in a pauper's grave,  
But cast me out to the wild, wild sea."*

Captain Cabbage exhibited many of his poems. One was entitled "Harbor at Night," "with a thousand little stars abreast"; another was a chanty on life "down deep at the bottom of the sea, where no hyacinths will grow over me."

The poet said he had no intention of publishing his poems in book form. His dream is to save enough money to rig a schooner and go to the South Sea Islands where he can read and compose poetry while he listens to the wild waves singing. But Captain Cabbage really has greater aspirations than that. In one of his poems he writes:

*"I long to be a Captain on one of the stars,  
To steer her with her glittering, reddish blue light.  
Their light breaks my heart.  
They urge me, call me to sail up there  
their sea;  
To come up there and be ever nigh,  
Up in the bottomless sea that we call the sky."*

## The Log of the El Dorado



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Mr. Wilson Came Aft to Report Half of the Crew Seasick!

"I am a lucky man. I have lost my ship and her cargo, but I have saved all hands and my ticket. My nerves are as steady as they were but my hair is white. I have been a sailor since early boyhood and this white thatch is a relic of my Great Adventure.

I merely took the hazard of the sea and won because I was lucky and a fairly good seaman."

The speaker was a tall, elderly man with eyes of a sea-blue hue, dressed in clean, but shabby clothes. His weather-beaten face classified him immediately as an



"Old Salt." He came to the Institute looking for a job on a ship, but his old eyes had failed him and he was unable to pass the physical examinations.

He told his story simply and modestly, but in its very essence it was replete with drama. Therefore we tell it here as Captain N. P. Benson told it.

"I was master of the schooner 'El Dorado.' It was on the afternoon of March 31st, 1913. We had finished loading at Astoria, Oregon, with a cargo of rough fir lumber for discharge at Antofagasta, Chile. My crew had all been signed for the voyage by a crimp and there wasn't a sailor in the lot. Eight green hands for the price of eight A. B.'s.

"We'll teach 'em to steer and manage to make out somehow," said my mate, Mr. Wilson, hopefully. But there was a jinx on us from the very start, for no sooner had the tug towed us out when Mr. Wilson came aft to report half of the crew seasick! I have never been a superstitious sailor but I couldn't help reflecting that we had sailed on a Friday!

"We were scarcely clear of the

lights before we encountered bad weather. The South Pacific seas were running unusually high. The wind increased in violence until I was forced to take in and make fast the tops'ls and spanker. My mate reported the 'El Dorado' was making a little water so I put a couple of men at the pumps. For days and nights the wind kept up and the ship was straining and opening her seams. Although both steam and hand pumps were going steadily the water was gaining in the hold. Every little while an unusually big sea would grip the vessel, shake her as a terrier shakes a rat and heave her over on her beam ends. At daybreak my Jap cook managed to serve us some sandwiches which were miraculously not watersoaked. That was our last meal aboard the 'El Dorado.'

"I ordered the lifeboat made ready and ran below to the cabin where I seized blankets, oilskins, a case of corned beef, 38 cans of soup, water and a box of soda crackers. This constituted the provisions for eleven hungry men on a voyage of thousands of miles in a 22-foot lifeboat in the teeth of a hurricane!"

*Captain Benson will continue his narrative in the December issue.*

## When Death Comes to a Sailor

One of the greatest tributes ever paid to the Institute was paid by F. E. Moll, ship's carpenter, as he lay in the Knickerbocker Hospital dying. It was a tribute that carried with it a grave responsibility and it revealed a seaman's dependence on the Institute even in the sacred hour of death.



F. E. Moll left his body and all his earthly possessions in the care of the Institute, and died with the faith and confidence that his wishes would be carried out.

At seven-thirty P. M. a telephone message was received at the Institute's Hotel Desk from the Knickerbocker Hospital stating that a seaman who gave his address as "Room 1029, 25 South Street" had fallen from a scaffolding and died from the resultant injuries, and that just before passing away he had requested that all his effects be care-

fully safeguarded by the Institute. He tried to give some information about his relatives in Philadelphia, but died before disclosing enough facts to be of any value in tracing his heirs.

Among his belongings the Institute Chaplain and the Public Administrator discovered two bank books containing the total sum of \$2,000. In a small notebook found in his baggage the following was written on the flyleaf: "Please notify my beloved sister in case of my death." On the back page of the same notebook the Chaplain discovered some cryptic numbers which, upon investigation, turned out to be the numbers of additional bank books. In the meantime Seaman Moll's brother heard of his death and came to claim the possessions, showing the additional bank books belonging to Moll. It was arranged that the money be given to Moll's sister according to his wish as written in the little notebook. The Institute was privileged to be of assistance to her in time of sorrow and her gratitude to us justifies the faith which a dying ship's carpenter placed in us.



# Thanksgiving Christmas



THE Holiday song is singing its way into the hearts of people everywhere. Even the sailor sailing the high seas remembers, with a pang, that he will be away from home and loved ones on Thanksgiving Day and Christmas.

He thinks of his home in Vermont, or Kentucky, or Ohio, or California, and while he stands long watches on heaving, wave-lashed decks with icicles dripping from his spray-soaked clothing, his more fortunate landsmen brothers enjoy the cheering warmth and comfort of home and hearth.



Many of these brave seamen will spend Thanksgiving Day and Christmas on shore—alone—in the loneliest city in the world—New York. The Institute has resolved to extend to over 1,500 homeless seafarers an invitation to a Christmas dinner, with all the holiday fixings; to supply an entertainment and musical program and moving pictures for every sailorman who enters our doors on Thanksgiving Day; to send holiday greetings and comfort bags to over 2,000 sailors in marine hospitals and on the "laid-up" ships in the Port of New York.

It takes very little to make a sailor happy—just something to "make a fellow feel that he belongs somewhere." What days are more appropriate than Thanksgiving day and Christmas to

*Remember the Lonely Seafarer through our Holiday Fund*

bring happiness to others? Your check this holiday season will show more than 1,500 of these brave seafaring men that they do "belong somewhere." Will you help this Institute to provide a generous welcome to all mariners who cross our threshold on these two happiest days of the year, when all the world radiates that spirit of "Peace on earth, good will toward men?"

Each dollar mailed to the Seamen's Church Institute at 25 South Street, New York, and marked for the *Holiday Fund*, will make one sailor-boy happy, and will make you thrice happy for sharing your holidays with him.

"It is Christmas in the City  
It is Christmas on the farm;  
In the rugged snowy highlands  
In the sunny South-lands warm.  
It is Christmas on the Sea  
And the sailor's heart is lonely  
While the land is filled with glee.

*It is Christmas,  
too, remember*

While the white-winged snows are falling  
Softly mingling with the brine,  
Love-winged thoughts are speeding home-ward,

Where the Christmas greens entwine,  
Let us not forget the sailors  
On the ocean far away  
Let us ask that God will bless them  
Through the lonely Christmas Day."

*An Old Song.*





## Hans of Hague



Sixteen year old Hans Toetenel, from the Hague, Holland, said good-bye to his father and mother, his brothers and sisters and shipped on board the British freighter "Granthly Hall" bound for New York. He had heard of the wondrous sights to be seen in that great metropolis, so he was glad of the chance to work as a scullery boy and thus earn his passage across.

His ship arrived at a Newark pier, and seamen directed young Hans across to Manhattan where he had the time of his life looking at the tall buildings and attending a "talkie". Then back through the tubes to Newark went Hans, proud of his ability to take care of himself in a strange city. He proceeded to view the lesser sights of Newark

until suddenly he remembered that his ship was sailing back to The Hague at five P. M. His sense of direction seemed to have deserted him, for after walking round and round he found himself back in the center of Newark once more. Frantically, he sought aid from a friendly policeman, who showed him the way to the pier.

But when Hans reached the pier he learned to his chagrin that he had missed his ship by half an hour! A compatriot seaman took pity on him and directed him to the Institute. Hans explained his predicament to one of the chaplains, who endeavored to get consular passage back to Holland for Hans, without success, for Hans was branded by that awful name "deserter". It was a pretty hard blow for such a youngster, and Hans' big blue eyes filled up. The United States immigration law permits a foreign seaman, after he has been "on the beach" sixty days and proves himself to be destitute, to be deported to his own country.

But the disadvantage of this law to Hans was that, if deported, he could never apply for

American citizenship papers and could never again enter this country as a seaman. And what would be the fun of hanging around on a ship every time it came to New York and not being able to go ashore? Furthermore, Hans confessed that he was already destitute, so why should he wait around sixty days to prove to the Government that he was out of funds?

For two days the Institute

gave Hans board and lodging, while the kind-hearted chaplain telephoned numerous foreign shipping companies; but as most of these lines hire their crews on the other side there are seldom ever any vacancies to be filled here. Luckily, however, an officer of the Holland Lloyd line said he could find a berth for Hans as pantryman at 50 gilders a month. Hans has shipped out, somewhat a wiser sailor boy.



*Thank You, Sir!*

An Episcopal clergyman sends us the following encouraging letter:

"I am indebted to you for my pleasant and comfortable quarters while in New York as a guest at the Institute. I have most happy recollections of my visits there and of how refreshing the salt breezes that played around the twelfth floor were after the heat of uptown streets.

"My more intimate contacts with the Institute did not decrease my respect and admiration for the marvelous work you have done there in the slightest. On the contrary, I never came or departed without a deepening consciousness of the stupendous task being done there and of the great vision that had in the early and formative days created its present stature. Next to the human element pouring

in and out of doors, I was impressed by the high type of workers making up the Staff and by the atmosphere of efficiency that prevailed both in its equipment and personnel.

"Constantly I had a feeling that this was some new and alluring work in the first flush of its initial enthusiasm. Everything always seemed so bright and burnished and the eagerness of the Staff to assist and serve seemed to reflect this material efficiency. The evenings I spent with the young seamen after Sunday night service remain a vivid picture. Their fresh, eager faces come before me as I recall having teas together. Some of them could not speak our language but they understood the language of the Cross and found themselves happy and contented under its loving care though far from home and friends."



## His Seventieth Birthday

After nearly half a century of a stormy, colorful life Thomas P. Hara on his 70th birthday hesitantly entered the lobby of the Institute and presented evidence of forty years' service as a seaman.

In 1883 Hara joined the American Navy, the old wooden navy and from then on the story of his life reads of blood and thunder, of wars and royal festivals, until the long years of activity have finally taken their toll and a doughty venturesome soul must find a quiet haven for a tired body.

To Mrs. Janet Roper, House Mother of the Institute, Hara wrote a quaint letter, relating the glamorous events of his life on the high seas and in foreign lands, and the physical pains and ills of old age and poverty.

In his hey-dey he had a box seat at many a thrilling event. He has lived through six wars and revolutions. He saw the coronation of the Russian Czar when Admiral Baldwin, his commander, received a gold box studded with jewels. Queen Victoria stood beside him on the deck of the Lancaster watching

the Regatta when she turned to him and asked, "What nationality are those men who are winning?"

"And I spoke up and said, 'Yes, Madam, they're Irishmen.' 'Oh, no,' she says, 'They're Brit-ishers!'"

He was in the winning boat in the last regatta held by Don Pedro, last Emperor of Brazil and "a grand old man he was, and what a celebration that was!" He and the crew of the "Omaha" stayed in the palace of King Calico of the Sandwich Islands, and had a grand time protecting him from the Insurrectionists. He was one of twenty men who went ashore at Seoul to smuggle the Prince of Korea aboard and bring him to Washington and "we put him in the hen coop until the natives left the ship."

But read about his doings in his own words, in the letter he sent to Mrs. Roper.

"I hope you will excuse me for writing to you—it is this way Madam, I, Thomas P. Hara, a old ex-navy merchant sailor 70 years old—for 40 years sailing out of the U. S. First experience I joined the U. S. Navy, the old wooden navy in the year 1883—after doing nine in the

## Musings of the Mate

### A Nickname

Many nicknames have been endured good naturedly by one of the young seamen in the Apprentice Room because nature endowed him with a height of six feet three and a small, knob-shaped head. But the latest is by far the most unique, and furthermore he likes it! Whenever he comes into sight he is hailed by his fellow ship mates with the title, "Hello, Galloping Hat-pin!"



Courtesy of the Elliott Company

### Qualified

After forty years of roaming the seven seas, old Tom Craig craved solid ground under his feet. He accosted the Institute's police officer on duty and came directly to the point: "I wants to git into Sailors' Snug Harbor. I got all me papers here so I'm illegible!"

### P. S. He Got the Job

A lad shyly and hesitatingly entered the office of the senior chaplain, and stated that he had been sent by a Roman Catholic priest to get a job on a fireboat.

The Chaplain accused the boy of having liquor on his breath. His reply was: "I never before had talked to a Protestant minister. So I went and got a drink to give me courage to come and see you." "This," laments the Chaplain, "is the first time I ever drove a man to drink!" And he gave the youngster a stern lecture.

### A Fishy Tale

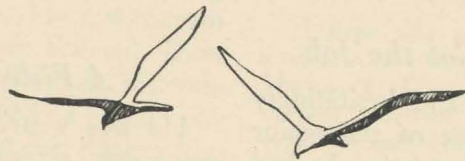
He was wearing a coat that was several sizes too big for him. When Mother Roper spoke a friendly word to him he con-



fessed that he and a sailor had swapped coats; and that in the pocket of the sailor's coat were his discharge papers and other valuable certificates. "I want to find him and give him back his things; he left all his papers in this here coat and I bet he's wonderin' where he lost 'em," said the boy. To a cynical listener it sounded like a fishy tale. But Mother Roper liked the honest look in the chap's blue eyes, so she set out to find the owner of the coat. When she did, the story was verified. And the older seaman was so glad to get his papers back that he managed to get a job for the younger chap alongside him on the deck of a coast-wise steamer.

### *Dear Brown Eyes*

He lodged on the 7th floor of the Institute for a few days, a romantic, dreamy sailor boy. When he left, a half-finished note was found on the floor of his



room, that read so charmingly we print it here:

"Dear Brown Eyes:

"Here is being recorded from a Pent House overlooking New York and its environs the ramblings of a tired mind. I am so high that the Brooklyn Bridge which in reality is two miles distant appears below. The cars crossing are like black ants with luminous eyes, darting hither and thither; even from up here and in the dark the recklessness of the drivers is incredible. I am wondering why all the hurry? Perhaps a date? Or is it that we are, as a whole, just chasing Butterflies as you accused me of doing? . . ."

### *A Welcome Letter*

The following extract of a letter is from one of the Institute's many friends:

"It is always a privilege and a pleasure to write the address of the Seamen's Church Institute on anything from a cheque to a package, and I'm sure my husband joins me in these sentiments, which are traceable to the wonderful personality of two individuals, Dr. Mansfield and Mrs. Roper."



Has it ever occurred to you that one of the finest opportunities for adventure ever offered is the giving of money? As you sit in your comfortable home, you may have the satisfaction of knowing that by the magic wand of your contribution you are bringing thousands of sailors off the docks and waterfront places into the friendly and wholesome environment of the Seamen's Church Institute of New York.

For the sum of \$273.97 you can commemorate some significant day in your life in a very beautiful and a very practical way. This money represents the daily deficit in the Institute's running expenses. (In other years the cost of a Red Letter Day was only \$260.27, but since the opening of our wonderful new Annex this year, our maintenance expenses have naturally increased.)

One of the Institute's friends, who has reserved March 20th for her Red Letter Day writes: "The comparatively small sum of money required to run that wonderful building for twenty-four hours, brings the heaviest rate of interest in satisfaction

that the writer has ever received from any investments."

Through a Red Letter Day contribution you would be helping to provide 1,450 cozy, comfortable beds for as many sailors. Your generosity would also open our doors to *thousands* of active seamen who come to the Institute each day for entertainment, recreation, relief, advice, to get mail, to deposit money, to check baggage, to get a job, and above all to enjoy the atmosphere of kindness and friendliness that has earned for the Institute its popularity among seafaring men.

Will you undertake this one-day responsibility, and if you choose, visit the Institute on your Red Letter Day, possibly entertain your friends at luncheon or tea here, and see for yourself the great work and the many useful and helpful activities in which you have a share?

There are still some unassigned days on the calendar so won't you reserve a day now? Please mail your check for \$273.97 to Harry Forsyth, Chairman, Ways and Means Committee, Seamen's Church Institute, 25 South Street, New York.



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