

THE LOOKOUT

*Christmas
Greetings*



TITANIC MEMORIAL LIGHTHOUSE TOWER

Seamen's Church Institute of New York

25 South Street, New York, N. Y.

A Christmas Prayer

"God help us every one to share the blessings of Jesus;
In whose name we keep Christmas:
By remembering our kinship with all men,
By well-wishing, friendly speaking and kindly doing,
By cheering the downcast and adding sunshine to daylight,
By welcoming strangers (poor shepherds or wise men),
In the sharing of joy and the bearing of trouble,
In the steady glow of love and the clear light of hope,
God keep us every one."

HENRY VAN DYKE

CHRISTMAS IN DUNGAREES

By John T. Hunt
Port Agent, N.M.U.

*What lure is in the mighty deep
That a man from his loved ones
it does keep
And why on Christmas Day when
he should be home
Is he in a ship upon the ocean foam?*

*While the world celebrates the birth
of Christ
With feasting and rejoicing that
is gay
Why is he in dungarees and rolled
up sleeves
Standing his watch as just another
day?*

*On Christmas Eve he may have a
drink or two
And laugh and in singing take his
part
But this is only a veneer
That hides the loneliness of his
heart.*

*There's no other profession I'm sure
With the heartaches a sailor must
endure
But a man must take this within
his stride
When he makes his living upon
the tide.*

*So cheer up my sailor boys
And on this great day rejoice
For even if you are in dungarees
It's the calling of your own choice.*

The LOOKOUT

VOL. XLII, DECEMBER, 1951

Copyright, 1951, by the Seamen's
Church Institute of New York

PUBLISHED MONTHLY

by the

SEAMEN'S CHURCH
INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK

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\$1.00 per year 10c per copy

Gifts of \$5.00 per year and
over include a year's subscrip-
tion to "THE LOOKOUT."

Entered as second class matter, July 8,
1925, at New York, N. Y., under the act
of March 3, 1879.

Address all communications to
SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE
OF NEW YORK
25 SOUTH ST., NEW YORK 4, N. Y.

Telephone BOWling Green 9-2710

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The Lookout

VOL. XLII

DECEMBER, 1951

NUMBER 12

Christmas Eve — at Hungnam

IT was Christmas Eve, 1950, when the *Meredith Victory*, a cargo vessel operated by Moore-McCormack Co. under contract to the MSTs (Military Sea Transportation Service), set a startling world's record.

The scene for this dramatic achievement was the harbor of Hungnam, in North Korea. The leading role in the drama was played by Captain L. P. LaRue and the supporting cast were the members of his crew. Hungnam goes down in history to mark the first time an entire army with all its supplies and equipment was successfully redeployed by sea in the face of enemy pressure.

Thousands of Korean refugees were huddled on the frozen beachhead. It was a bitter Christmas Eve for soldiers and civilians alike.

Then came the order from the bridge to the crew of the *Meredith Victory*, a freighter built to accommodate 12 passengers:

"Load 'em on until she can't take any more!" ordered Captain LaRue.

Fourteen thousand shivering Korean civilians jammed the decks, filled the holds of the freighter for the three-day trip to Pusan — and safety. This task was equivalent to transporting the entire population of Emporia, Kansas from Baltimore to Jacksonville, through the open seas in winter weather, in a ship only 450 feet long and 57 feet wide—and without a single fatality.

When the *Meredith Victory* pulled into Pusan, Captain LaRue's log entry was one of the most unique since Noah grounded the Ark on Mt. Ararat:

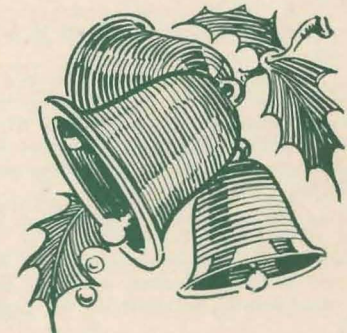
"Five births, no deaths, enroute. Disembarked 14,005 persons safely."



For 14,005 refugees Captain LaRue was more than a ship's master—he was Santa Claus—who had brought them the priceless Christmas gift — freedom.
M. D. C.

THE LOOKOUT editor was privileged to read some of Captain LaRue's personal journal. After the Koreans were safely on board, he wrote:

"The nearness of Christmas carries my thoughts to the Holy Family—how they, too, were cold and without shelter. Like the crucified Christ these good people suffer through the actions of evil men."



By Helen McCombs

PURSER Pharmacist's Mate Paul Beagan sat in the sick-bay on board a freighter dabbing paint onto a canvas. The ship was at anchor in Pusan Harbor and it was Christmas morning—the eighth Christmas he'd spent away from Staten Island—away from his wife and two sons. He sighed heavily. It was times like this that he wished he had never chosen the sea.

Now he couldn't even get off the ship in Pusan. They were unloading and he had to stand by.

"Better off here," he mumbled. The milling refugees ashore made him sick to see them. They were everywhere—ragged, miserable. There were little kids in the bitter cold with no shoes . . . with pleading eyes . . . silent, too silent. Not like his own youngsters who would be jumping and yelling around a laden Christmas tree today.

He picked up a cigarette, pulled out his lighter, then remembered . . . No, that wouldn't do. Orders were "NO SMOKING on any part of the ship when unloading." If he wanted to get back home, he'd better not light up with those drums of high octane gasoline being moved to the docks from the forward deck.

Throwing down his brush, he sauntered onto deck. Below, on the dock, he noticed a group of Korean stevedores. One big Korean was looking up at him, watching.

"Merry Christmas, Buster," Beagan bawled. The poor jerk, he thought. What does he get out of life? About like me . . . nothing much. Beagan was in a mood as black as the freighter's fuel tanks.

"Cigarette . . . cigarette—you cigarette?" The big Korean grinned back at him.

He was the biggest Asian Beagan had ever seen. He looked like "Big Stuff" in "Terry and the Pirates." His broad face was nearly covered by a hairy fur cap pulled over his head and ears. His large, almond-shaped eyes met the tremendous mouth as he grinned at Paul.

"Come on up here. I'd like to take your face home with me."

The Korean amiably called out to him . . . "Cigarette?"

Paul had an idea. Ever since he had a "one-man-show" of his paintings at the Seamen's Institute, he'd wanted to do a portrait of a face like that. He'd have to, or back home they would never believe anyone like that existed.

Pulling out a package of cigarettes, he waved it. "Christmas present, Buster, if you come aboard and sit down awhile." He motioned and the Korean, grasping the idea, came heavily, seriously up the gangplank.

Paul took his subject into sick-bay and started to paint. For an hour the big fellow sat quietly, wonderingly, watching his own features materialize on the canvas. They couldn't talk together, but Beagan liked him. Paul found himself chatting—telling about Christmas in New York . . . About his kids and wife . . . About the holly-decorated streets and houses, street corner santas, and about presents. Then, the man's fierce Oriental face would grin sympathetically, and he would answer with his favorite and only English word.

"Cigarette!"
When the artist's subject rose, he bowed several times, and started out onto deck. Spying a fresh carton of cigarettes from a Christmas package that had been placed on board by the "Ship Visitors," Paul thrust it into the Korean's hand. Then, cautioning him not to smoke as he pointed to the red explosives flag "Baker," they parted.

Beagan felt much better. The Korean was happy, clutching the carton . . . He'd probably never before had so much of any one thing, Beagan thought—and time had been killed doing the sketch. But more, somehow he felt he had extended a touch of the Christmas spirit out in that barren hole of a country.

Just as he started to step back into sick-bay, a frantic roar of voices arose from the deck.

Looking back, Paul saw a stretch of smoke trailing from his friend who slowly swaggered down the gangway, two lighted cigarettes hanging from his mouth! Behind him lay a still smouldering match stick.

The Third Mate rushed to the Korean, grabbed the lighted cigarettes and crushed them in one swoop.

"Beagan, you idiot," he shouted, "You want us to be blown to kingdom come? Why'd you give that character those cigarettes?"

"Just a little Christmas spirit," Paul murmured sheepishly, "but I hadn't intended becoming a spirit myself," he grinned, as the Mate leaned against a bulkhead, mopping his brow.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The painting of the Korean Stevedore by Paul Beagan is now on exhibit at the "American Relief for Korea" offices—133 E. 39th St., New York City.



By Jack Reynolds, Ship's Electrician

First Prize Essay Contest

EDITOR'S NOTE: Winners in the Institute's annual contest were: Jack Reynolds, ship's electrician; Captain Gordon Messegee and James Parsons, Able-bodied Seaman. The judges were John Hutchens, Book Reviewer, New York Herald Tribune, John Mason Brown, Saturday Review of Literature and Harry Hansen, Editor of the World Almanac.

EACH man's life is a quest, although too many of us do not know what our personal quest is. Whether we be Ahab on the bridge pursuing evil or Yank storming out of the engine room with a desire to belong, the quest is there. And perhaps because so much of the writing about the sea and men who sail upon it is concerned with some quest is the reason I like this particular type of reading.

In the long-lonely watches of the night, in the close confines of the foc'sle, in all the toiling, living, and mere existing of seafaring, is that eternal question of why men go to sea, and in what we read we search for that which we do not know. When we read we begin in the hope of being entertained, of pleasantly spending a few hours. Beneath each man's desire to read, however, there is, I believe, a hope of obtaining some enlightenment, of finding out something about the world, and more particularly, his own world. We all desire to hear the Bell of Truth ring clear and strong.

Some time ago I came across a paragraph in *Two Years Before The Mast* that will illustrate my point. The paragraph read:

"Yet a sailor's life is at best but a mixture of a little good with much evil and a little pleasure with much pain. The beautiful is linked with the revolting, the sublime with the commonplace, and the solemn with the ludicrous."

Although these lines were meant to apply to the seafaring life of one hundred years ago, there was enough truth remaining in them to give me



"Reading becomes the balancing factor in a man's life."

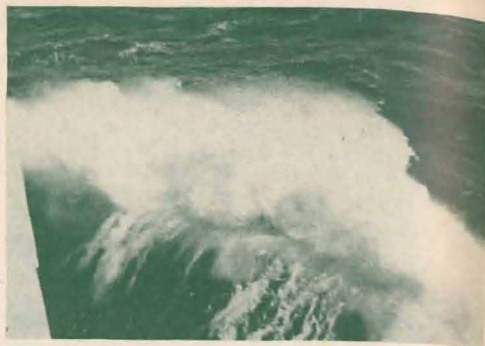
more enjoyment than a reading of a paragraph of greater literary worth in another book could have given me. Through the reading of such lines we learn a little more about the world, about our place in it, and occasionally gain an insight into the nature of our own quest.

The pleasure of reading is more than in the mere reading or in the memories we carry away from the reading. There is the pleasure—when we meet a Norwegian seaman and hear him speak of his years away from home, but that some day, "Oley go home." The words ring resonantly because they were once spoken by a character created by Eugene O'Neill. There is the pleasure in hearing the men who sailed with Melville and Conrad speak once again, here in the twentieth century, their idiom changed somewhat, but their character the same. There is that pleasure—and again the sadness—of watching O'Neill's *Moon of the Caribbees* enacted not in the make-believe world of some stage but upon the forward deck of a very real cargo ship. There is the pleasure in watching the search-

ings of all these men of the sea as once Ahab and Yank were watched, for life enriches the reading and reading the life.

Even when the books I read do not specifically deal with the sea, there is a pleasure to read a line which aptly catches a moment upon that great heaving deep. Who but a seaman could fully enjoy Browning's line, "Some isle with the sea's silence on it," or Tennyson's, "The moanings of the homeless sea," or Virginia Woolf's "The waste of waters running away into the open, like some old stone lying on the sand."

If our quest is to find out more about ourselves, we find it in others as well as in ourselves. I know what Conrad meant and what he felt when he spoke of the seafaring life as a life of which, "There is nothing more enticing, disenchanting, and enslav-



ing." And whether the book has been read at sea or ashore, the Bell of Truth has once again been cleanly struck, and in finding this there is enjoyment for me.

Perhaps some day the bell will be struck again, and we will learn why men so seldom take *The Long Voyage Home*, simply remaining *Casuals of the Sea*.

What Books I Like to Read at Sea

By Captain Gordon H. Messegee

Second Prize Winner

MY reading is as lop-sided as that of most seamen. Much of it I have selected according to mood and what was available. I read Conrad for the beauty of words and the complete spell he created. I liked Tom Wolfe because he was to me like a refreshing, endless river. I enjoyed Rostrand because he was an artist who painted with wit and color and Cervantes for his humor and wisdom. I liked the clarity and insight of Hazlitt's essays, the music of Tennyson's poems, and the fresh reality of Browning's portraits.

Sometimes I feel I have not read entirely by mood but rather with a kind of unconscious purpose—to compensate for the deficiencies of a seaman's life, to give meaning to the mystery of life, to clarify the role of the individual, and to interpret and correlate the many things I saw and learned in foreign ports.

It is in the character of literature that I have seen mirrored the many people I have known in travel—sailors, stevedores, B-girls, fishermen,

officials, tradesmen, beachcombers, thieves, businessmen, priests, students. The cunning Iago, the bawdy Wife of Bath, the great witty Cyrano, the naive Candide, the sad, sensitive, Werther, the searching Larry, the envious Joaquin, the loyal Sancho, the inspired, mad Don Quixote, the sensual, genuine Fra Lippo Lippi. I have known them all, if but for an instant, in reality.

It was the authors themselves who gave perspective to their own age and who in turn gave perspective to my own. The bleeding Keats, the confused Tennyson, the cynical Voltaire, the robust Browning, the radical Shelley—each had an individual message. To some change was a hope, to others a fear. But they all shared the plight of the talented, sensitive individual who felt a responsibility towards changing a world they didn't make nor didn't like—a world that didn't understand them and didn't hear.

I like to read philosophy. I like it either direct such as in the works of Plato, Aristotle, Des Cartes, or John

Dewey or in fiction such as Samuel Butler's "The Way of All Flesh" or Calderon's "La Vida Es Sueno." Calderon's theme—life is a dream—is particularly appealing to a seaman. Was not the dream during the lonely lookout or the watch on the bridge frequently sweeter than the reality? And didn't it seem as we followed the always receding horizon that we lived for a dream and in a dream and that only the dream was real?

If a seaman—and by this I mean a deck man—favors the timeless and absolute in philosophy it is because he is actively and deeply concerned with them. The seaman lives and works with the stars, the sun, moon, plants, the sea, the wind and weather—elements that haven't changed and won't change for hundreds of thousands of years. The seaman exists in a pause in time and time and space. He can not belong fully to the past for he knows it only by reading. He can not belong fully to the present for by the nature of his occupation he can not participate. He is suspended between past and present, land and land, sea and sky. Below him lies the jungle of the sea, a place of complete terror where the too old, too young, or too slow perish quickly. Above him,

in complete contrast, hangs the universe—tranquil and patient.

In the turmoil of the sea I found proof for Schopenhauer's battle of the wills, and in the heavens, evidence of platonic forms. But it was only in the philosophies of the east, particularly in the writings of Vivekenanda where I could bring the sea and sky together and find unity where before there were only contrast and confusion. Here was something that appealed to the practical, respected the artist, gave freedom to the dreamer.

Too much philosophy is like too many martinis. One needs earthly things like Beard's controversial "Roosevelt and the Coming of the War" or the amazingly inaccurate presumptions of a Frederick Jackson Turner frontier thesis, or the amazingly accurate predictions of a De Tocquville, to wash it down.

A ship is a few hundred feet of floating steel. The lack of daily decisions and diversified associations and an over-abundance of time can prove warping and destructive. Those who think, think too much, and those who don't think, don't think at all. Reading frequently becomes the balancing factor in a man's life. It is always his surest link to other worlds.



Photo by Dr. I. W. Schmidt

Alma Doettinger, commentator, radio station WQXR, with the Institute's Director, Dr. Raymond S. Hall, and Seamen Jack Reynolds and Gordon Messegee, 1st and 2nd prize-winners in the Essay Contest sponsored by our Artists and Writers Club. Announcement of the awards was made on Miss Doettinger's program.

MOORE-McCORMACK LINES, INC.
 Five Broadway, New York 4, N. Y.
 SS Mormachawk
 Rio de Janeiro
 January 12th, 1951

VOLUNTEER WOMEN OF THE
 SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE
 25 South Street
 New York City, N. Y.

Ladies:

The SS *Mormachawk* sailed from New York the night of December 22nd, just three days before Christmas. Outward bound on a 2½ to 3 months voyage to South America, Christmas and New Year's would be spent at sea. The officers and ratings who make up her crew foresaw little if any of the cheer and high spirits naturally associated with the Christmas holidays.

On sailing day afternoon, your representative boarded the vessel at Pier 32 North River, and upon ascertaining that there were 50 men in the vessel's crew, left 50 beautifully Christmas wrapped packages with the ship's purser. One for every man aboard.

Christmas Day in latitude 24° 14' North, longitude 69° 22' West, a Christmas tree was set up and decorated in both the officer's dining salon and the crew mess room. The ship's Steward

Department bent every effort toward an excellent Christmas dinner.

It remained for your brightly wrapped gifts to achieve the warm personal feeling characteristic of Christmas. Each man had his own individual present, his pleasure increased by the unexpected surprise of receiving it. Nor were the gifts alone, attractive and useful as they all proved, the only consideration. The personal care with which they had been wrapped and packaged caught every eye, registered on every mind. The knitted sweaters, socks, scarfs, and gloves were held in especially high esteem, repaying in some small measure the effort that went into their making.

The entire crew has authorized (requested or commissioned would perhaps be a better choice of words), me to express our combined appreciation and gratitude of your efforts and thoughtfulness. When we consider the planning so obviously necessary for your project, the gathering together for personal wrapping and individual packaging of all these gifts, and finally even their safe delivery aboard the ships, we must accord your organization a full measure of respect, in addition to our most sincere gratitude.

(Signed) E. G. INNES, Master
 S.S. Mormachawk
 (for the entire crew)

The Seamen's Unknown Friend

J. Christopher "Kit" Juhring IV, seventeen-year-old athlete at the Pomfret School, spends much of his free time conducting a "one man campaign" among his friends to help swell the Christmas Fund for merchant seamen at the Institute. He has been doing this since he was nine years old. For eight years the youth has collected gifts and money, sending them to the Central Council of Associations, a volunteer group at the Institute, who fill 5,000 boxes with sweaters, socks, stationery, books, candy and other things.

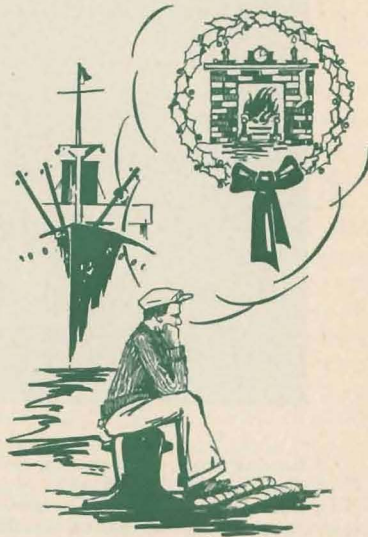
At the beginning Kit signed himself, "A friend of the seamen." He has tirelessly appealed to friends, family and classmates each year, explaining the need for Christmas packages that the Institute sends to ships of all flags that will be at sea on Christmas Day.

Last year Kit's name found its way into a package that was opened by a seafarer far at sea on Christmas Day. A letter of gratitude to Juhring followed, and the anonymous young man forgot his shyness in giving.

On being asked how he came to be interested in contributing Christmas gifts for seamen, he said:

"I, myself, have never carried the dream to someday go to sea. I have always suf-

fered from hayfever when in the salt air. But I feel that those who do sail must be lonely at a time when we are all having fun at home. I couldn't enjoy myself remembering this on Christmas, if I didn't at least try to help a little."



Courtesy of "Polaris"

Returning from these long voyages to the Pacific, seamen who have no homes of their own and those whose homes are far inland, spend their time ashore at the SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK. On Christmas Day we expect to be host to about 1,200 seafarers. Here are some quotes from staff members' reports of last year's celebration of Christmas at "25 South Street":

"Everyone still talks about the wonderful Christmas celebrated here. It will certainly go down in history as one of the brightest they ever had at the S.C.I. Women volunteers were hostesses and how the men appreciated having them presiding at the tables! A real touch of home!"

* * *

"On this beautiful Christmas Day a wonderful thing has occurred. Seamen have discovered that warmth and love can be felt even in a huge Institute like this. Turkey dinner was served to the seamen in such a way that it made them feel important. In the dining room some of the men couldn't stop looking at the decorations and admiring them."

* * *

"We had a jolly Christmas Eve party in the Janet Roper Clubrooms with the singing of Christmas carols. Three soloists led the singing and the seamen responded beautifully and sang with zest. A huge decorated cake and coffee were served."

"I enjoy playing the role of Santa each Christmas and distributing the Christmas boxes to the seamen after the dinners are served. After the last box has been given, I then go to my regular work and supervise the game room and moving pictures in the Auditorium where we put on a gala Christmas show." All this is made possible by YOUR annual gift to our HOLIDAY FUND.



We are counting on your loyal and generous support at this holiday season. May your own Christmas be happier in the knowledge that you are sharing it with our seafarers . . . afloat and ashore.*

Please make checks payable to the
 SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK
 and mail to HOLIDAY FUND, 25 South Street, New York 4, N. Y.

*Seamen in hospitals will be remembered, too, and many on shipboard will receive Christmas boxes from the Institute through the Central Council.

That Green-Horn Emerson

By Daniel Henderson

(who wrote the book "Yankee Ships in China Seas," etc.)

THE year was 1832. The time set for the sailing of the brig *Jasper*, (Captain Ellis, Master) was *Christmas Day*. The wind and the tide being right, the skipper took no account of the city of Boston's celebration of the holy event, but instead sent word from the Long Wharf for his five booked passengers to come on board.

One of these was the young minister Ralph Waldo Emerson, who had recently resigned the pulpit of the Second Church of Boston. When his young wife Ellen had died, he had turned to writing, and now he wished to stimulate his mind by visiting famous persons and shrines. The *Jasper* was bound for Malta, and Emerson hoped to visit Landor in Italy, Coleridge in London, Wordsworth in the Lake Country, and Carlyle in Scotland.

Lonesomely, Emerson obeyed the Captain's summons. The *Jasper* was a small vessel, 236 tons. It was an ordeal for the minister, whose delight had been to wander through meadows and climb over mountains, to endure for weeks the restricted deck space; the bewilderment of sail, ropes, and tackle; the unappetizing food; and the cramped, dark, foul-smelling quarters, but he was prepared to share the common fortune, and was developing in himself the quality of resignation.

As if he were a youth entering a new class, he brought with him a notebook for his ship and travel experiences. The first entry was a list of the commodities the *Jasper* carried. Ships from the West Indies had deposited most of these on the Long Wharf, and the merchants who owned the goods were transshipping them to ports of Europe. He wrote down logwood, mahogany, tobacco, sugar, coffee, beeswax, cheese, etc. The "etc." was probably a mask for casks of rum, which he, with his ministerial training, felt a delicacy about traveling with.

The testing of the spirits and stamina of the passengers came soon after the glinting dome of the State House

had faded behind them. Emerson made this entry: "A long storm from the second morning of our departure consigned all five passengers to the irremedial chagrin of the stateroom, to wit, nausea, darkness, unrest, uncleanness, harpy appetite and harpy feeding, the ugly 'sound of waters in mine ears' . . ."

But in the voyage of five weeks to Malta, many balmy days came, and the minister found most of the passage enjoyable instead of irksome. He wrote: "I have nothing to record. I have read little. I have done nothing. What then? Need we be such barren scoundrels that the whole beauty of the heaven, the main, and man, cannot entertain us . . . ?"

His idle occupations were such as this: "I rose at sunshine, and under the lee of the spencer-sheet had a solitary, thoughtful hour . . ."

While the skipper was cursing because there was no wind to push his sails, Emerson was pleased with the weather: "We have sauntered all this calm day at one or two knots (an hour), and nobody on board well pleased but I . . ."

In the period of storm, when there was danger of foundering, there had come to his remembrance the poem *Lycidas*, by John Milton; it was appropriate, because it was dedicated to a youth who had been drowned in the Irish seas. The Lament contained these apt lines:

"Ay me! Whilst thee the shores,
and sounding Seas
Wash far away, where e'er thy
bones are hurled,
Whether beyond the stormy
Hebrides,
Where thou perhaps under the
whelming tide
Visit'st the bottom of the mon-
strous world . . .
Look homeward, Angel, now,
and melt with ruth:
And O ye Dolphins, waft the hap-
less youth . . ."

The skipper was a sharp-tongued fellow, and it pleased him greatly to discover and exploit a gap in the minister's Biblical knowledge. Emerson made this amiable note of the teasing: "The good captain rejoices at my ignorance. He confounded me the other day about the book in the Bible where God is not mentioned (it was *Esther*), and last night upon St. Paul's shipwreck . . ."

The voyage with its human contacts and common dangers and hardships brought Emerson closer to men and their labors. He came back with a better understanding of the world's work and the people employed in it. The book, "*The Heart of Emerson's Journal*," edited by Bliss Perry, (Houghton, Mifflin Co.) discloses that after this voyage he made a fruitful adjustment of his personality to everyday life. Indeed, the final entry he made before landing at Malta indicated that the adjustment had already begun: "If the sea teaches any lesson," he said, "it thunders this

through its throat of all its winds: 'There is no knowledge that is not valuable.' How I envied my fellow passenger who yesterday had knowledge and nerve enough to prescribe for a sailor's sore throat, and this morning to bleed him . . ." (The bleeding may cause a chuckle, but then Emerson was a sage of non-scientific times.)

The traveled philosopher, fresh from his experience with sailors and ships, returned to Boston in a mood to attend with sympathy the preaching of the popular home missionary, "Father Taylor," who as an orphan had been befriended by a sea captain and trained as a sailor. Taylor was noted for his use of nautical allusions, and Emerson bowed his head and said Amen as the sailor-preacher prayed God "for His servants of the brine, to favor commerce, to bless the bleached sail, the white foam, and through commerce to Christianize the universe."



"COFFEE-TIME" — Painting by Paul Beagan, Purser-Pharmacist Mate

Mr. Beagan's avocation is mural painting and four of his murals may be seen at these Manhattan restaurants: El Patio, 107 Water Street; Fornos, 236 West 52nd Street; El Flamingo, 133 West 52nd Street, and Johnny Hogan's, 235 West 52nd Street . . . His subject matter ranges from Irish motifs to Andalusian gypsies. The Institute's Artists and Writers Club gave a one-man show of Mr. Beagan's oil paintings upon his return from Korea. The plight of the Koreans moved the seaman artist to pity and to his recording his impressions of the horrors of war.

A Christmas Rendezvous at the Equator

By Captain Peder G. Pedersen

THE six apprentices aboard the barque *Skomver* were in a dither. A lot of mysterious things were going on about the ship. The morning was hot and calm but there was adventure in the still air on the Equator that Christmas day in the year 1895. In the fo'c'sle head the sail maker and the carpenter had been working for hours. The only sound we heard was the voice of the carpenter and the grunting and squealing from the three pigs. The captain had bought five in New York but we lost one in a storm and the aroma drifting out of the galley bore evidence of the fate of the other pig—CHRISTMAS dinner.

All of a sudden we heard a booming voice from off the starboard bow, "SKOMVER A-HOY." The second mate came to the fo'c'sle calling, "All hands on deck! King Neptune is coming aboard." On deck we heard the voice much clearer, seemingly it came closer and closer to the ship, "SKOMVER A-HOY." A face appeared over the ship's side, the head was covered with seaweeds and barnacles, the face had a greenish color.

It was an imposing figure standing on the gunwale, over six feet tall, with a dripping wet oilskin that covered his lanky frame to his seaboots. His right hand was holding on to the shrouds, and he waved a three pronged trident with the left.

Crouching on the rail by his side were two of his helpers, one with a pail and a swab and the other with a long sword.

The Captain stood by the railing on the quarter-deck and addressed the trio, "Welcome aboard my ship, King Neptune, Ruler of the Deep, and you two Lords of the realm. Barque *Skomver* out of New York 43 days bound for Anjer, 24 men aboard, request certificate for nine of the crew to pass the Line."

Neptune came on deck and seated himself in a big chair on the main hatch. Near the edge was a small chair. The two helpers stood by.

Between the hatch and rigging a sail was stretched like a bag and full of water. Stripped to the waist, the nine men ready for the initiation were lined up behind Neptune's chair. The crew stood around the hatch, waiting for the ceremony to begin.

The oldest was the first to be seated and the swabberman went to work. It was no pure soapsuds that was put on that fellow's face; as the swordman started shaving there was a big black patch of tar and grease. Suddenly the chair was tilted backward and he was dumped into the sail. There was much ribbing and laughter as he lay there splashing in the water. All of us got the same treatment. I was the youngest one and came last. As I came out of the water the



Drawing by Gordon Grant

CROSSING THE "LINE"



Drawing by Gordon Grant

CHRISTMAS DINNER ABOARD A SAILING SHIP

2nd mate came around with a telescope. Anyone who cared could have a look at the "Line." My eyes were full of soap so I could not see anything.

We all received a certificate stating that we had complied with the formality of inauguration and were now full-fledged sons of Neptune. As I got my certificate, there was a sudden commotion forward. The ship's bell began ringing, the pigs were squealing and heavy boots tramped the deck. Above the clamor we heard a deep voice, "Hi Donner, Hi Blitzen, little to port there, now steady, Hi Donner, go easy on the cabbage there, don't be a hog."

Down the port side deck came SANTA CLAUS himself, red cap, coat and all. His reindeer were two pigs outfitted with horns made from wire and dragging a small barrel of wine on a sled. To induce his reindeer to more speed Santa had fastened a head of cabbage to a pole from the sled dangling it in front of their noses. The team came to a stop by the main hatch, Neptune rose from his chair and in an angry voice challenged the newcomer. "Who are you, pot-bellied stranger, are you coming to steal my thunder? I can see you have

no pass for King Neptune's domain, you haven't been shaving for years."

Smiling broadly, Santa stroked a long oakum and cotton beard. "Ho, Ho, you don't know me, because you don't leave your old Line. You have to hold on to it or you will get lost. I, Santa Claus, have sailed the seven seas. I have known Leif the Lucky, I was with Columbus. The North Pole is my homeport and I"—There might have been a jolly good scrap between the two, but the Captain came as a peacemaker and made them shake hands. Then he invited all to a Christmas dinner, ready to be served in the fo'c'sle.

We had the most delicious pork chops* I ever tasted. Neptune presided at the table for the starboard watch and Santa for the port. Someone had painted a Christmas tree with all the trimmings on a large piece of canvas and tacked it to the wall. It was a nice and appropriate gesture. A toast was drunk to the Captain, to Santa and to Neptune. Funny thing though—neither the lanky sailmaker nor the fat carpenter showed up at the table!

*In those days fresh pork was a rare treat. Salt pork was the usual fare.

EDITOR'S NOTE: "The Cruel Sea," "The Sea Around Us," "The Lost Sea" and many more books about the sea, about seamen afloat and ashore, problems of Merchant Marine and Navy, have been published in recent months. Space does not allow us to give comprehensive reviews of all. We are grateful to the publishers who send us these books. After they are reviewed they are sent to our Conrad Library where seamen can enjoy them.

THE QUEST OF THE SCHOONER ARGUS

By Alan Villiers

Charles Scribner's Sons, \$3.75

The author of "The Cruise of the Conrad," "Grain Race," "Falmouth for Orders," "Sons of Sinbad," "By Way of Cape Horn" and "The Coral Sea" has left his beloved square-riggers (since so few remain) to sail on a four-masted commercial fishing schooner in a fleet of thirty of these deep-sea sailing vessels. Owned by Portugal, and manned by dorymen whose ancestors fished the same way five hundred years ago, these graceful ships wrest a living from the Greenland codfishing grounds in Davis Straits.

The author's usual excellent photography graces the pages, and his text holds the reader with its account of the hardworking men who fish from four A.M. until dark, and then clean and salt the cod to feed their families and the people of Portugal. On the decks of each schooner in the fleet are fifty dories, frail flat-bottomed craft which are manoeuvred miraculously in mountainous seas, their owners each catching a ton or so of fish each day of the six months away from their homes. Here is an epic tale of hardship—men against fog, storm and iceberg.

M. D. C.

THE CRUEL SEA

By Nicholas Monsarrat

Alfred A. Knopf, \$4.00

This book will stand as a monument to the 30,000 British seamen and 3,000 British ships which lie at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean, victims of the Nazi submarine warfare. It tells the story of "one ocean, two ships and about a hundred and fifty men" in World War II. Courage and comradeship, a thousand times tested to the breaking point, are described. Memorable word portraits of the Ericson Captain, and Lockhart, his first officer, are painted. In these days when the future may bring with it a repetition of vast convoys to the beleaguered, and the threat of enemy attack, we should do well to remember that there are seamen like those portrayed, whose instinct for seamanship and whose love for a ship and for one's anonymous fellowmen, surmount other loves. The book was written in blood, sweat, tears—and loneliness.

M. D. C.

Book Reviews

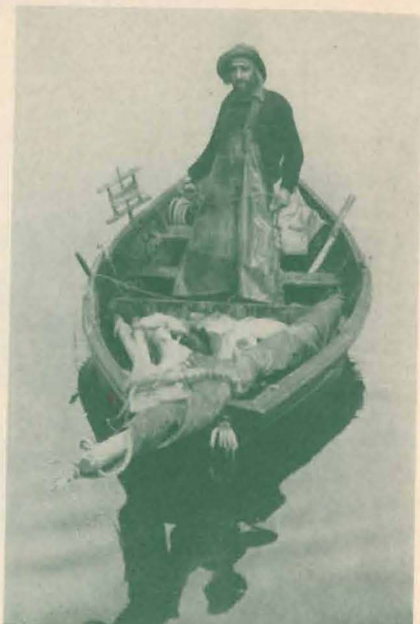


Photo by Alan Villiers

PORTUGUESE DORYMAN

THE LOST SEA

A Novel by Jan de Hartog

Harper & Bros., \$2.50

The title refers to the Zuyder Zee, once covered by the sea, now reclaimed land. The story is woven around a little Dutch boy, a "sea mouth" who is shanghaied as a cabin boy on a fishing boat. The lives of the fishermen are seen through his eyes. A delightful part of the book is when the "Liars," dockside minstrels, come aboard and tell tales of mermaids, of turtles, sea monsters and submerged islands, for a fee paid in bottles of gin. A sensitive story, as appealing as the aroma of hemp and tar to a ship-lover.

M. D. C.

NICHOLAS MONSARRAT knew The Cruel Sea well. "I am doing an extraordinarily cold and monotonous job in this small ship," he wrote his publisher in the days when he was serving on a corvette during the Battle of the Atlantic. "I used to think I was an author: now I'm a small spark of indifferent life underneath layers of wool, oilskin, bridge-coat, blanket-coat, sea-boot, stocking and beard." *H.M. Corvette*, which came out in 1943, was written every night for one hour after Monsarrat came off the bridge at 4:00 A.M.—"the original manuscript a mixture of pencil-scravls, sea-water, fuel-oil, cocoa and rum."

Roger S. Phillips, President of UN World Magazine, making a token presentation to seamen in our Conrad Library. 6,000 copies of the publication were donated to the Institute to be included in Christmas packages distributed to both active seamen as well as hospitalized Merchant Marine veterans. Seated from left to right are seamen Melvin Ashley, Walter Mergenthaler, J. Smyth, and Robert G. Hauptisch. Standing are Dr. Raymond S. Hall, Director of the Institute, and Roger S. Phillips.



THE SEA AROUND US

By Rachel Carson

Oxford University Press — \$3.50

This is a searching and beautifully written story of that unconquerable and dominating element of the world in which we live—the sea.

All that we are and have come from the ocean, and to it we return, even the continents themselves in eons of time, eroded and torn by wind and water, pulverized and borne seaward in the timeless rivers. Miss Carson, now editor-in-chief of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, has drawn a rich and colorful portrait with compelling imagination and style. In a setting of limitless space and time, she presents the sea's history from the beginnings of the earth, opening her account some two billions of years ago. It is a story of man, too; indeed of all living things plant and animal as they developed through millions upon millions of years from the primeval sea's first living cells.

First, our planet was a whirling sphere of incredibly hot gases plummeting through sidereal space. It liquefied, became molten and, as Miss Carson says, things began to get sorted out in a definite pattern.

The reader will have to let his mind expand and permit his perceptions to roam star-wise to stay with the author all the way on this incomparable journey. He will never have a more satisfying and instructive experience. It took say, a hundred million years or so for the cooling of the earth's crust somewhere between two and three billion years ago. The oldest rocks known are 2.3 billion years old, but Miss Carson warns against the placid assumption that this is the final word. It's just a minimum estimate of the age of the earth, and rocks antedating these may be found at any time, she adds.

These were what she calls "The Gray Beginnings" and from there we take off to watch how mountains were formed, after the rains fell in a brief storm that lasted only for a few centuries, and tides beyond

comprehension swept the new planet until one day the whole affair became unstable and gigantic forces pulling and tearing and a great mass was torn away and hurled into space. That would be the moon, and the measureless scar left behind is what we call the Pacific Ocean.

Moon tides, the great currents of the seas, the surprisingly thick mass of plant and animal life abounding in the waters of the earth, the ceaseless rise and descent of water, the mysterious creation of islands, and their subsidence, the man's modern probing with 20th Century equipment of the bottom of the seas through some two miles of silt—this is the story of "The Sea Around Us."

But it is only a part of it. And as far as this reviewer is concerned, any attempt to describe this book in a few paragraphs is unfair to the author. He can only say put aside your novels and histories for the time and plunge into the glorious adventure that lies between the covers of this delightful volume.

GEORGE HORNE

TWO CHRISTMASES—OR NONE!

Out in the Pacific, crews of American Pioneer Line and American President Lines ships are keeping their fingers crossed as Christmas approaches. The International Date Line was set up along the 180th meridian to reduce confusion caused by time differences. A ship crossing the "line" westward bound jumps 24 hours ahead; eastward bound, a ship is 24 hours behind. And that's why, bound east, crews can enjoy two Christmas Days in a row, while those bound west will have no Christmas Day as such at all! However, the stewards' departments of most ships have turkeys in the deep-freeze.

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CHRISTMAS GIFT SUGGESTIONS

Oil paintings, water colors and black and white drawings by merchant seamen will be on display until Christmas in the Janet Roper Club, on the fourth floor of the Institute.

Ships-in-bottles will be exhibited on the fourth floor mezzanine. Here is a chance to buy—at reasonable prices—Christmas gifts for your friends.

* * *

Give THE LOOKOUT to your friends for Christmas. One dollar annual subscription. Just send us their name and address and we'll mail an attractive Christmas card to them announcing your gift.