

The Lookout



CHRISTMAS IN NEW YORK HARBOR

SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK

Vol. XXXVI No. 12

December, 1945

THIS MONTH'S COVER shows a freighter at a New York pier with two little Yule trees lashed to the rigging of a mast high above the deck, in accordance with an old maritime Christmas tradition.

N. Y. World-Telegram Photo.

Sanctuary

A SEAMAN'S PRAYER

Dear Friend of Man:
Give us this day our daily bread
That we might the nobler, stronger, be,
To live each day with no fear or dread,
To face life's tasks courageously.
Lend us this day Thy guiding Hand
To lead us home across the sea
Enroll us in Thy mighty band,
We'll follow Thy course faithfully.
Hearken to the prayer that falls
From lips of seamen fervently,
Open Thy gates when the spirit calls
Of some merchant sailor lost at sea.

By Seaman Jim Durkin.

The LOOKOUT

VOL. XXXVI, DECEMBER, 1945

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Director

MARJORIE DENT CANDEE, Editor

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CHRISTMAS *At* SEA

By Cecil Jones, Engineer

The holiday got off to a bad start, but the crew found a Christmas present at the end.

WHEN we cleared Newport News late in June with troops and stores for North Africa we all decided that this would be another two and a half months trip. Six months later we were still outward bound, still on the shuttle run from Oran to Algiers, to Salerno, Barri, or Bizerte, with Naples thrown in for good measure.

Early Christmas morning we dropped anchor in Palermo roads having cleared Naples the previous day.

Hopes were high that we might be able to get ashore in Palermo. At Naples shore leave was off the cards and, as we had been there a couple of weeks discharging an Algiers shuttle cargo, no one was in too pleasant a mood.

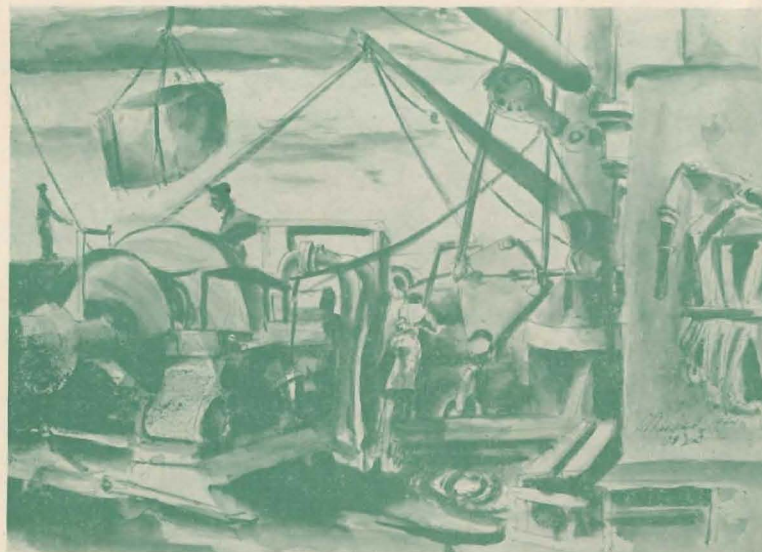
If anyone greeted you with a cheery "Merry Christmas" you promptly questioned his sanity or asked "What's wrong with you"?

But worst of all was the food situation. When we left Virginia with sufficient stores for only a three months trip we were all elated. The stores were usually a good indication of the length of the trip.

And now five months had passed and all the little luxuries that go such a long way to make a plain meal a banquet had long since vanished. Once we ran out of salt.

However, here we were, December 25, 1943 in the beautiful Bay of Palermo with very little to eat and very little hopes of getting anything.

Soon after a breakfast of pow-



Painting by Lt. Reginald Packard, USMS

"Early Christmas morning we unloaded cargo . . ."

Merry Christmas to Lookout Readers

dered eggs and Spam our hopes were temporarily raised when a small launch left the breakwater and made a beeline for us only to shoot around our stern and shoo away a couple of bum boats manned by a few of Palermo's more enterprising but less honest traders. Then a second launch sped toward us. But all she brought along was more trouble for us engineers. We were apparently anchored in the wrong berth although we had the entire anchorage and the bay to ourselves and we had to pull up the hook and drop it again about three hundred feet further ahead of our present position. It wasn't so funny. It meant going down below again, getting on the boiler tops and opening up the main stops and after it was all over turning out the day men to wipe the job down. And all this for a three hundred foot change in anchorage.

Leaving the engine room no one was particularly nice to anyone else. Someone mentioned that all this talk about brotherly love was

never lived up to when the facts of living were worn a bit thin.

About noon a Higgins boat pulled out from the harbor. She came alongside and yelled that she had some Christmas presents in the shape of cigarettes, a gift from the Navy Port Captain for us.

This was indeed a little like that Christmas spirit and good will to all men that the Padres talked about. But overexuberance was our undoing. The sling broke or the knots of our first tripper 'extra-ordinary seamen' slipped and we all underwent agonizing moments as we watched the cartons in their bright Christmas wrappers sink slowly and peacefully into the blue waters of the Mediterranean.

Lunch was the next best thing to an old Greek tragedy in modern form that I have ever witnessed even though I was one of the players.

The turkey arrived with certain comments from the messman that anyone who ate it should be awarded

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The Lost Christmas Story

(as near as I can remember it)

By George Noble, Chief Steward*

ONCE UPON A TIME, a great many years ago — when ships were still built of warm, living wood and not dead iron and cold steel, and moved thru the water quietly under a towering pyramid of white canvas, and before man's destructive ingenuity had invented the steamship, wireless, turbines, or the cowardly submarine that shoots its lethal torpedo unseen like a poisonous snake striking at us from the concealment of green grass, hidden from view until it is too late for us to defend ourselves from it: it was in this time that a fabulous argosy, a sailing ship, belonging to the equally fabulous Dutch East India Company, was moving across the tumultuous Indian Ocean, deep-laden in the water with her cargo of sweet-smelling spices, traditional "spoils of the Indies", bound round the Cape of Good Hope — Homeward to Holland. Holland . . . quaint, pretty land of the windmill, the tulip, incredible sea wall dykes and those charming, endless canals that are the living veins of the country through which flows incessantly the life blood of their commerce . . .

Now it had been the original intention of the Company to have the ship home for the Christmas season but Fate in the form of contrary headwinds, perverse tides and currents had decreed differently; and St. Nicholas's day (December 5th) found the vessel still at sea many miles from home. It was a fat, round, jolly, little barque, typical Dutch merchantman of the period — and so was the "Schipper". In observance of the Day, the fat, round, jolly little Captain caused a hog's-head of rum to be broached in the waist — whereat his many panta-

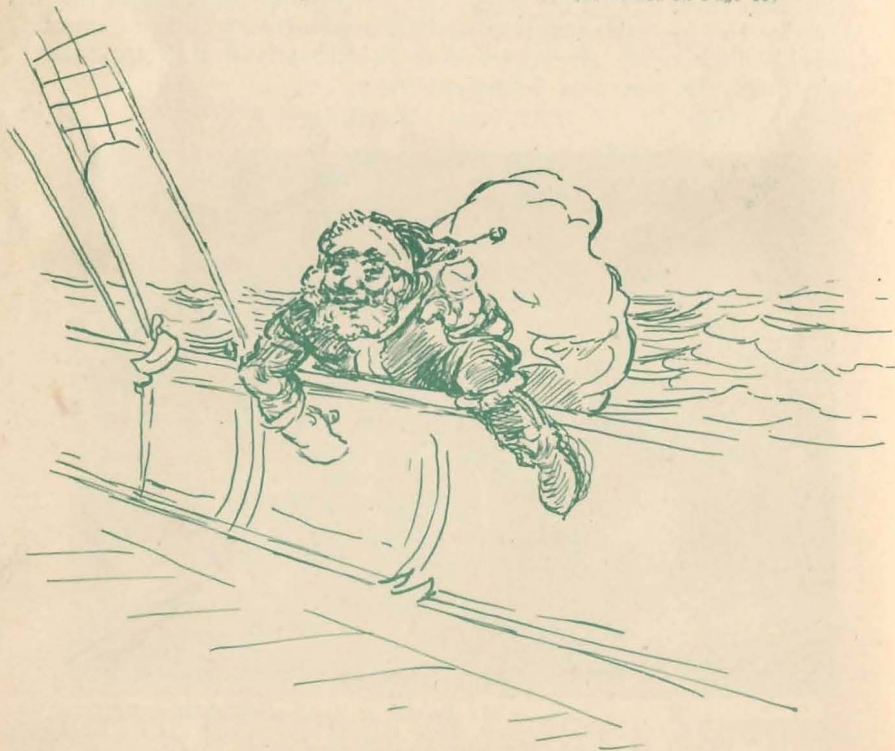
looned crew might refresh themselves and drown their collective disappointment at not being home for the Holiday, might lift the worry of wives from their minds and forget for a time the quaint, pretty, little sweethearts faithfully tending their tulips and daily offering up devout prayers for the safe return of their loved ones.

All day long and well into the wind-swept, star-studded Indian night the broad clean decks of the rolling, jolly little bark re-echoed to the clogging of many jiggling "Paar Klompen" and the merry music of accordions blended with the droning sounds of the blowing gale that was wafting them swiftly homeward at last. Astern, sheltered from the wind by the break of the high poopdeck and the ornate stern with its shining lanterns, the steersman stood, wrestling with the kicking "halmstock" that moved the huge tiller below-decks on its greased

beams with an ingenious arrangement of multiple relieving tackles rove off to starboard and larboard. The tremendous following seas, crested all feather white, came roaring on, crashing against the huge rudder—broad as a barn door it was, and thrice as thick—with a fury that threatened to tear it loose from its stout fastenings, the gudgeon-irons and thick pintle pins. Then the restraining chains it hung in thrashed madly from time to time and the great rudder-posts — cut from a live oak tree—thumped in its confining encasement with a noise that echoed the smash of the seas bursting against the broad, streaming, planked stern as it came settling down in a welter of foam

*Such was
Christmas at Sea
as celebrated 300
years ago—or at
least, as this
writer imagined it!*

* Member, Artists and Writers Club.



and froth in the dim sea. Her bows lifting, each straining sail swelling to the point of bursting, her brave spirit, stout as her oaken ribs, with a frolic welcome took this rough treatment the boisterous elements sent against her and with a jocund air about her the ship leaped ahead responsive to the thrusts of wind and wave.

The helmsman, grizzled old seadog that he was, muffled to the ears in a crimson woolen scarf, struggled with the vertical stick that sought to whip itself free from his mittened grasp. He was further fortified against the "koude nacht wind" by numerous potions of jenever, daily allowance, drunk down during the course of the day's celebrations.

The steersman sweated, the sailors danced, their accordions wheezed and sobbed tunelessly and the song of the wind in the rigging ever sought a higher note as the round, jolly, little ship flew like a spanked mare before the storm.

Below, in the Great Cabin, was a jovial scene of considerable conviviality. "Bols en Cots" flowed freely and all was gaiety. At the head of a large table heaped high with good things to eat, "de Kapitein" in a sort of St. Nicholas costume, sat emanating benign hospitality and good cheer. Wreathed in ceaseless smiles, his broad, good-humored face, full bearded, was like a rubicund moon shining round and bald behind torn dark-grey clouds, his uncovered haldpate reflecting the light from a smoky Slons-lantern swinging from the low deck beam above his venerable head. All day long de Kapitein had kept Jacob, the oldest seaman in the ship, playing his battered harmonica. The sometimes merry, sometimes melancholy, music of this instrument filled the room and mingled with the sounds of the ship, the clatter and thump of the steering gear, the creaking of tired oaken timbers, the occasional squeal of a brace-block high overhead in the darkness, the dull moan of the wind and the rush and gurgling of parted

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ADDRESS TO SEAFARERS

By Chaplain

Kenneth Boulton-Jones, R.N.R.

Preached at Evening Prayer on Sailor's Day, Chapel of Our Saviour, Seamen's Church Institute of New York, October 28, 1945.

"They that go down to the sea in ships, and occupy their business in great waters; these men see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep." Psalm 107:23-24

This evening, we have come to Evensong with a special intention of thanking Almighty God for the fine service of the merchant navy and of offering our deep respect to the unselfish devotion and the comradeship of our merchant seamen during six years of world war.

This year and in this city, Merchant Marine Sunday has a special significance because it comes at the end of Navy Week. Yesterday the banks of the Hudson River were thronged with New Yorkers gazing in awe and wonder at the great fighting fleet lying out in the stream. We all know of the magnificent job these grim monsters have done, that they represent the military might of America, and the means whereby security is assured "for such as pass on the seas upon their lawful occasions." But there was a very real danger that New Yorkers would be so thrilled with this naval sight, that they would forget the familiar masts and smokestacks of the merchant ships tied up to the teeming wharves . . . now the church bids us remember them and thank God for them and the brave men who kept them at sea.

Dr. Kelley has told you that I am particularly suited to pay this tribute. I do not know that this is so, but I have spent two years at sea during this war as a Chaplain in a British light cruiser so that I have had a good opportunity to see the merchant navy in action. We sailed along with American, British, Norwegian, Russian and other merchantmen through the dark, icy

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The Contrary Coffee Pot

By John Hodakovsky, A. B. Seaman*

OF all the ships that sail the seas, none are without that magic beverage called coffee. In a sense a ship and its crew revolve about a coffee pot. A lookout, coming in from a cold, black night, looks for coffee to stimulate him. The relieving watch must have hot liquid that will wake them up, and many a ship has been helped through dangerous stormy waters by a captain whose sole stand-by was a piping hot cup of coffee.

When the freighter SS ACHILLES HEEL sailed from Frisco, she had a crew of old hands. The chow was plentiful and good, and the topside officers were all men from out the foc'sle who knew and understood seamen. All in all, it looked like a good trip.

We were only a few days out when the percolator went bad. It worked only spasmodically, sometimes brewing coffee regularly and sometimes not. Mostly not. The trouble was first noted on the 4 to 8 watch who on being awakened to go to their respective jobs found no coffee awaiting them. As a result they were irritated and jumpy during the entire watch, making themselves and others around them miserable.

From then on Old Rust Pot continued to act up. Sometimes she made weak coffee, other times too strong, too bitter or full of grounds. Most always it just wasn't fit to drink. We repaired the old pot again and again only to have it go bad within a short while. It seemed to tease the entire crew with its absolute contrariness and it affected us, too. Our tempers became short, we barked at each other. We cursed Old Rust Pot frequently and often, and many of us were helped to get close to Hell by the blistering epithets we would shower on that inanimate hunk of aluminum. We became certain that Old Rust Pot was

A tall, tall tale of the sea with a "funny" burial at sea and a marriage not so funny—for Slim!

an agent of the devil.

One night the bosun was kibitzing in on our poker game. Right behind him was Old Rust Pot. Someone with high optimism had prepared it for brewing. This same optimist looked up from his cards and asked the bosun "Is that coffee perking yet?" The bosun didn't even bother turning around, saying, "That darn thing won't perk for another hour."

Just then, as if Old Rust Pot had resented this kind of talk and was going to teach the bosun a lesson, a miniature geyser of hot liquid spouted from it, landing unerringly on the seat of his pants. "Y-e-ow" yelled the surprised bosun, startling all the poker players. The poor fellow was hopping around, rubbing the injured spot and looking so ludicrous.

One night the ship's carpenter was playing poker. As he picked up his cards one by one, he was surprised to see that the first four were all clubs in consecutive order—ten, jack, queen and king. One card remained to make it a royal flush—the hand of a lifetime, a poker player's dream. That last pasteboard lay on the table and Chips nervously reached for it. The suspense of realizing the perfect poker hand filled him with excitement. His heart seemed to beat so loudly that all present must hear it. There was a lump in his throat as if something



Cartoon by Si Goldsmith

* Member, Artists and Writers Club.

had gotten stuck there. He looked at his last card and it was the ace of clubs. A royal flush! He couldn't believe his eyes, so he closed them and looked again. This time he saw nothing, nothing save pitch blackness. The cards were in his hands, he could feel them but he couldn't see them. A realization came to him. He had gone blind—something had snapped in his head due to the tenseness he had felt in holding that perfect hand. Fear and hysteria gripped him now.

"I'm blind," he shouted. "I can't see. I've gone blind."

"What goes on here?" he heard an irritated voice ask.

"I've got a royal flush and I can't see it. I've gone blind," Chips was almost sobbing.

"Take it easy, Chips. The lights just blew out. They'll be on in a minute," someone reassured him.

Old Rust Pot with her faulty instinct had chosen this critical moment to blow out the fuse, dousing all the lights completely. Of course, we believed Chips because he was so sincere. But we couldn't resist laughingly accusing him of switching cards during the accidental blackout.

It was plain to see that we just had to get rid of Rust Pot, for her very presence was slowly demoralizing the whole crew. We held a meeting one night and made a tarpaulin muster which gathered us about \$25. With this we intended to buy a new percolator in the next port. Since the port was a small one of about 30,000 inhabitants, we devised a plan by which we were sure we could canvass the entire place. Each man in the exploring party was allotted a certain district of the town and instructed to allow no single little shop to go unvisited in his territory. The meeting ended with complete confidence and satisfaction that at last we would have good coffee again.

Upon arriving, those not detained on ship's business sallied forth in the "treasure hunt". We who re-

mained behind wished and hoped heartily that they would be successful.

The day dragged. One by one our expeditionary force came back—empty-handed. Hopes sank lower and lower and a gloom descended upon the whole ship. To look at us, one might have thought we had been condemned to spend the rest of our lives ashore, and if that isn't gloom to a seaman, then there is no such thing.

Only one of our explorers hadn't returned. He was Slim, the handsome O.S. Maybe, maybe, we hoped in spite of the fact that the returned ones were old, experienced hands at bargaining in foreign ports and had failed.

Slim searched everywhere, in every dismal hole in the wall, any place that had the least semblance of a shop. But all in vain. Tired, disgusted and thirsty, he saw a pub and ventured in to refresh himself. The first beer he downed quickly and ordered another to drink more leisurely. Then Destiny walked in. It came in the shape of a buxom

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THANKSGIVING DAY

Early morning showers did not spoil the first peace-time Thanksgiving Day in five years to be celebrated at the Seamen's Church Institute of New York by merchant seamen. In a spirit of thankfulness, the weather cleared and the sun shone brightly. Holy Communion was celebrated in the Chapel of Our Saviour, followed by a service with hymns and sermon. Between 12 noon and 3 p.m., 1,226 turkey dinners with the traditional "fixings" were served. About 1,000 seamen enjoyed the moving pictures in the afternoon and evening. The Janet Roper Room on the 4th floor of the Institute, and the Janet Roper Club at 3 East 67th Street reported large attendance of seamen and hostesses, with everything very festive, Thanksgiving decorations, turkey sandwiches, singing and entertainment.

All this was made possible by the voluntary gifts of our friends to the Institute's HOLIDAY FUND. A similar program of entertainment and good cheer is planned for Christmas Day.

PERHAPS it was a dream or a kind of crazy illusion that at one time or another we all create ourselves—yet for practical and scientific reasons what happened must be given a name, a name that would bring it into the realms of reality—*Storm*. A monosyllabic five-letter word that upset every known perspective and brought its own version of jumping jive and discordant, wild music. For three days and three nights it unleashed its thundering fury on our ships. In its wake it left a completely scattered convoy and one ship whose main deck had been split in two because of consistent pounding and minor damage to our ship and probably others.

The day previous to its arrival had been calm, quiet and too peaceful—for some unknown reason you could feel something was going to happen—we all commented on the calmness. Towards evening the wind began to increase its velocity, the waves became more choppy and the ship rolled more pronouncedly.

By morning, the storm after sending in its calling card of sharp windy blasts, made a personal appearance—rain shot down at a sharp angle, piercing the air and pounding the deck in staccato rhythm. The waves breathed in deep gasps as though in anguish and the wind howled and uttered weird cries as it raced through the masts, stays and cables. So entered the storm and with it beauty, savagery, indifference, music, noise and a dream-like quality.

At the wheel, I had to turn her hard right, then hard left constantly. My arms grew tired and my head throbbed with irregular pitching and thirty-four degree rolls. As I was steering, I sensed something was wrong. What happened to the horizon that had been dead ahead? Now huge rearing waves made my ideas

The ocean shook the ship as a terrier would a rat . . .

seem kind of foolish—now my body shifted into acrobatic position as I walked—now I had to lean forward to advance on what, hours ago, had been a sloping surface—downwards was upwards, sideways was lengthways and here was there—what's the truth I wondered—and outside the elements pushed their way through the world.

"Get out of my way", howled the wind, like a human being. "I'm not goin any place, but I'm in a hurry to get there. Slap, crash, bang, squish" sang the waves—"wild music is our specialty." "Mine too", beat the rain, and they all joined in a crazy, clamorous charivari.

Time passed, the rain was slight and intermittent, but the ocean was still shaking the ship as a terrier would a rat. When I went off-watch, I found that sleep was impossible. Like a well-haunted house, noises filled the night—pots,

pans, and dishes each groaned as something solid stopped their sliding progress. My head slipped off the pillow as the ship jerked and strained in an effort to right itself. My thoughts were far from peaceful ones—I wanted to fight back against the dizziness that dulled my mind, but I was helpless. Pound, pound, throbbed my brain as the blood drained from my head at each alternate roll. Maybe I was dreaming—maybe the rolling and the pitching and the 70 miles an hour wind and the jumping-jack waves and the wonderful rain and the topsy-turvy world and the shifting skies and the dark swelling clouds and the twisting, turning ship were all part of my dream—and although it was an actuality, Time, the greatest destroyer of truth, might prove it an illusion—who knows?

*Blow,
Wind,
Blow*

By Mort
Alper,
Able Bodied
Seaman*

Christmas Around the Globe



*Photo by Dr. I. W. Schmidt,
Miniature Camera Club*

Ensign George O. Stevens, of Syracuse, N. Y.

**"There's Where I Spent Last
Christmas—near the top
of the Globe!"**



Photo by Marie Higginson

Seamen's Lounge decorated for Christmas

Christmas at "25 South Street."



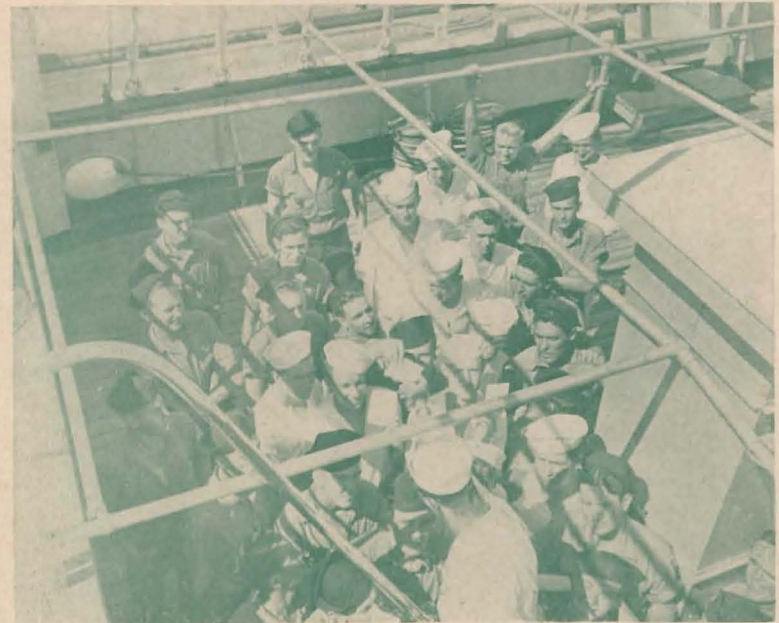
Christmas Carols sung in the Baylies Lobby, led by Dr. Kelley, Institute's Director, and Mrs. Anne Conrow Hazard, Chapel organist.



Photo by Marie Higginson

Two boys from the Society For Seamen's Children

**"There's Where My Daddy will be aboard his ship on
Christmas Day!"**



U. S. Maritime Service Photo

Christmas letters from home are delivered in Oran

Christmas at "25 South Street."

WE are pleased to have a big peace-time Christmas dinner at "25 South Street." We expect to welcome over 100 merchant seamen of all nationalities for the holiday services, and entertainment.

Your gift to the Institute's HOLIDAY FUND is a way of saying

"MERRY CHRISTMAS" to these seafarers from their own homes on a great family holiday.



Christmas in the Institute's Cafeteria



Seamen help Hostess Mrs. Hardesty trim the Christmas Tree, Janet Roper Room.

Even Jocko has Christmas.



These Christmas scenes were photographed by THE LOOKOUT photographer, Marie Higginson, a year ago when the world was still at war and ships were being sunk and seamen were being lost.

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

All contributions are tax-exempt.

Aboard the S. S. Albert K. Smiley

By Captain Walter Thomas Wieder

Excerpts from a letter from a Liberty ship Captain in the Pacific run.

... We discharged all our cargo, troops and prisoners at Marseilles and reloaded for the South Pacific.

... Shipboard jargon sometimes is a bit bewildering or difficult for the average landlubber to comprehend. For instance, aboard ship few are known by their names, not even the Captain, for instance if the Captain's name was Smith, in all probability if you were asked for Mr. Smith no one on board would know to whom you were referring. However, if you were to just ask for the Captain or the Chief Engineer or the four-eight or the eight to twelve Watertender you would be directed right to the party you asked for. In other words, every man is known by the title of his position, and so goes the ship's jargon.

"IT AIN'T FUNNY"

... Our messman is a colored boy and a born actor if there ever was one, and a real Harlem knight with a flair for elegant and flowery language and he was using his accomplishments with wicked effect this particular morning. We were loading cargo and we were all at mess. I had nick-named him Chauncey, because he said he was of Irish descent; he would say, smoked Irish. He is a tall slim Negro, one of Father Divine's followers. As Chauncey came waltzing in with a graceful Lenox Avenue glide his fine teeth flashed and he said, "Yes Sir, eggs comin' right up, I'm laughin', but it ain't funny, I mean I'm laughin', but it ain't funny!" Inevitably someone asked Chauncey

what were his troubles. His jacket was open, with one hand he grabbed the belt that rode so high up on his chest, and with the other he pointed dramatically towards an open porthole saying, "Have you noticed them little two-tons pills that are being wafted aboard this ship this mornin'? Yeah man, I mean they are being, oh so gently lowered into the holds of this mighty ship! What will give out at the seams if one o' them pills should go off? "Everybody glanced through the porthole and grinned at the crane carrying a large shell to be lowered into the hold with the rest of the munitions. Somebody said, "Why, Chauncey, those are headache pills for 'Toio' and his 'Friends'. "Yeah", replied Chauncey quickly, "but they are givin' the members of dis crew a distinct heartache. If we gets tagged this time time I'm laughin', but it ain't funny! We'll all be ridin' the clouds with them pretty little angels". Somebody said "Yeah Chauncey better bring along a parachute instead of a 'life-jacket'". "You ain't kiddin', Man", Chauncey replied, "Las' time we was in a life-boat twenty-two days befo' we landed on the coast of Madagascar. Boy that was somethin'". I was the only man in the crew what could talk their language. I mean I was the head-man. I had pretty little gal's fannin' me jus' to keep me cool. Honest, sometimes I though it real worth it. I'd lay there in the grass eatin' fruit and then order dem gals around like I was de boss and think to myself I'd be a sucker to leave that Madagascar paradise for the storm an' strife of Harlem. An' now look. I succumbed to the call o' the wild, if we get it dis time, there won't be no Madagascar paradise, we will all be angels, an' I don't know o' dem'. I'm laughin', but it ain't funny!"

"A. A." A Salvage Job

Editor's Note: For several years the Seamen's Church Institute of New York has been cooperating with the Seamen's Branch of "Alcoholics Anonymous" in its efforts to rehabilitate merchant seamen suffering from alcoholism. Regular meetings are held at the Institute, conducted by a staff member, and a number of men of all ratings have become interested in salvaging themselves. The world now recognizes alcoholism as a disease, just as sugar is dangerous to a diabetic. The following article is written by a seaman, a former alcoholic, who is now helping seafaring men to resume their careers, to return to their families, and to take their place again as useful citizens in our society.

I THINK I may best explain my relations with these seamen who reach me by presenting them as a group, as their individual experiences are strikingly similar. These men, for varying reasons have been drinking for periods of from a few days to several weeks, have, for the most part, been in fights and arguments, usually requiring both medical and surgical attention. Their money is invariably gone, papers lost or stolen, and many are on the verge of the "shakes" or delirium tremens. At this stage I take them to the alcoholic ward at Bellevue Hospital, where they are kept from one to three or more days until their medical condition is corrected and their appetite at least partially restored.

Upon release from the hospital many are placed in a rest home for an additional period. Others are obtained lodging and meals, and a temporary shore job until they are once again fit to return to sea duty. While attending to their immediate needs, I also take care of their personal problems of every nature, assist them in their financial dealings, and, among the most important to them, obtain duplicates of their papers which usually takes from one to two weeks. As the majority of these men lose even their personal belongings and become untidy and disheveled, it falls to me to replace their gear from razor and comb to new clothing.

After attending to their obviously important, immediate needs I then approach them with the A.A. program, give them literature to read, invite them to meetings, and en-

deavor in every way possible to sincerely interest them in the movement. I am very happy to be able to state that the great majority of these men not only take an active part in the A.A. program, many even bring their former friends and drinking companions. Often, under the strong psychological influence that a return to sobriety brings, a great number of these men once again turn to religion.

My office at the Seamen's Church Institute is open to any of these men at all times, any of whom wish to consult me concerning their problems, and my hand is extended to one and all. I find that the men are of all ages, of all nationalities, and of all sea ratings from A. B. seaman to Captain. Helping them to "salvage" themselves is a real challenge and real privilege.

"A NEW FREEDOM"

Dear Mr. A. A.

I think a report of progress is about due at this time, and am happy to say that today begins my sixth week of absolute drought.

There was much of value to me in the talks with you, but the one thing outstanding was the imparting of confidence, which up to that time I never had. In fighting this thing alone I never once was able to consolidate a gain, but consistently lost ground.

Up to the time I attended the meetings I had a very poor opinion of the value of so-called group therapy for anything, but you may be sure that this opinion has been decidedly reversed.

It is an inspiration to see and know and talk with those who have won this battle; no group of released prisoners of war are any happier, and I myself can see the door opening on a new freedom which

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One Well Remembered

Christmas Day

By Seaman James A. Durkin*

WE had sailed from Townsville on the north-east coast of Australia, on December 22nd and knew we would spend Christmas Day at sea. The ship was thus stored fully and abundantly for the celebration of this day of days. That is, Christmas was then the day of the year to which everyone looked forward. There were about 250 passengers aboard, many of them hoping against hope a miracle would land them at their destination in time for Christmas. The trip was only a short one, being a return trip from Townsville to Brisbane, a run of some 900 miles, with four Ports of call, Bowen, MacKay, Rockhampton and Gladstone.

Christmas Eve dawned quiet and beautiful in Whitsunday Passage. The sea was as calm as an inland lake. Hanging twixt sea and sky were mirages of wondrous beauty. Castles of design and architecture one might dream of and never see. Castles it would seem wrought and built by the magic hands of an unknown Creator for the purpose of housing the second coming and birth of the Great Redeemer.

The passengers and crew were chiefly people of the British Isles or extraction I was probably the only American born, certainly the only American born among the crew. As the day wore on, a certain far away look could be discerned in many eyes. A nostalgia seemed to have gripped the heart strings of every one aboard.

Certainly, to those from other lands, including the writer, atmospheric conditions were very different. The weather here was extremely hot and sultry.

How different from the quiet countryside of home, (meaning the British Isles) could be heard every

now and then even amongst members of the crew. They were no doubt longing for snow covered grounds and streets, Christmas trees and candles, holly and the berries, and the love and peace that reigned in those by-gone years in every home no matter how wealthy or how humble.

About 3 p.m. we cleared the Passage. The heat was now intense and stifling and a storm seemed threatening on the eastern horizon.

Soon the ship's carpenters were hard at work and we of the crew knew that the Old Man was taking precautions against that unwelcome visitor, a cyclone at sea. Nowhere in the world are they more vicious or destructive than along the coast of Queensland, Australia.

The fury of hell broke loose about 6 p.m. when we ran head on into the storm. Lightning flashes appeared to split the heavens. Peals of thunder crackled and rolled from the other end of the world, while the gale howled and shrieked in frenzied force, carrying lifeboats and everything movable with it. Seas ran mountains high and tossed the ship about as if it were a bit of drifting debris. Fearing panic, passengers were taken to the saloon, where efforts were made to quiet their fears. Prayers were audible amongst them. Soon their expression changed when it was rumored and murmured from lip to lip that an expectant mother was laboring in childbirth in her cabin. With no Doctor aboard a Steward was aiding her delivery. For some unaccountable reason and it was plainly visible, a look of sympathy and wonder replaced the one of tenseness and fear. Shortly after, while the storm still raged, smiles of relief were noticed among the people. News soon

(Continued on Page 18)

TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF PHILADELPHIA

Resolved, That the greetings of the Board of Managers of the Seamen's Church Institute of New York be conveyed to the President and the Board of Managers of the Seamen's Church Institute of Philadelphia, upon their Twenty-fifth Anniversary under their present organization, prefaced as this period has been, by seventy-one years of service to seamen under a number of agencies whose amalgamation into the present Institute was effected in 1920, and be it further

Resolved, That this Board extends also its best wishes for the continued usefulness of the Institute, to merchant seamen of all nations, and for its continued growth and prosperity under the blessing of God.

(Continued from Page 2)

the Congressional Medal and a pension. I had firmly made up my mind that not a morsel of it should pass my lips. You see I had charge of the ship's refrigerating machinery and made periodical tours through the cold storage rooms. That turkey had been frozen and unfrozen so often that it was quite likely to ignore the conventional attitude of dead turkeys and take a trip around the decks and maybe fall over the side where it should have been long ago but for the sadistic streak that our chief steward possessed and brought forward the remark that even if we went without turkey on Thanksgiving we were going to have turkey for Christmas. "I went on bended knee to the Army Quartermaster Corps for these birds", he said, "and they cost the slop chest plenty in changey to get them".

As I expected, very little of the turkey was eaten and the brave souls who heeded not the warnings of their nasal organs were soon to be seen leaving the festive board and hurrying to their cabins. Even the nuts were bad or at least three in every four.

The afternoon was spent in lamenting the lot of the seafarer but some excitement was had by all when one of the cooks was caught exchanging his blankets for a mandolin from some of the itinerant traders moored in their leaky boats around the stern. He was taken ashore for questioning by the coast guards who caught him as he was easy to identify from the shore through binoculars as he wore the only beard on the ship. Anyway he got ashore; the rest of us didn't.

For supper it was the good old Army K rations. Very good once a week but not so attractive every day for a couple of months.

I was glad when eight p.m. came around and it was time to go on watch. At least I could listen to my fireman extolling the beauties and virtues of West Virginia.

About two bells I nearly fell down the starboard bilge. The telegraph rang. I rushed around the engine. There it was with the needle pointing steadily at Stand By. With that the Chief came hurtling down the engine room ladders. I knew something serious was up. The last time I had seen him in the engine room was when his underwear, drying on a line in the fidley, had dropped off and landed on the boiler tops.

When he hit the main floor plates with both feet I thought that there must be some new kind of attack impending and that it was no longer safe on the upper decks. But with a last effort he struggled over to me and gasped "We are going home (pant pant) the orders just came aboard," and then he slowly settled down on the top of the waste locker and beamed softly around him. I believe that at that minute that old triple expansion engine looked beautiful to him.

Two hours later we joined a convoy from Naples and headed home. That was the best Christmas present anyone could have given us. We left one man short. The bearded cook with mandolin was still ashore.

* Member, Artists and Writers Club.

waters of the Arctic around Bear Island to Murmansk—a run some of you may very well remember. We saw these merchant ships sailing or waddling along, headed steadfastly toward their port, with all hell let loose around them. We picked up survivors, clothed and fed them, laughed and argued with them, and from time to time, prayed with them.

One of the most impressive sights I have ever seen was the great rendezvous of ships before the invasion of North Africa, when all over the Atlantic, as far as the eye could see, from all directions, came convoys of merchant ships,—big ships, little ships and medium ships, stately ships, ugly ships, all kinds of ships, bearing down inexorably to their destinations. In the harbor of Bone, we watched some of those ships discharge their cargoes of gasoline, ammunition, food, jeeps, aeroplanes, spare parts and many other supplies of vital importance and all the time overhead from dawn to dusk, came squadron after squadron of enemy aircraft, deluging the harbour and its jetties with fire and high explosives. We watched many of these precious cargoes, brought in safely from Britain or America, over thousands of miles of sea, go up in flames; we watched fine ships burning. But then the survivors, grumbling and cursing, but doggedly determined, would put back to sea to do the same thing over again . . . if need be over and over again . . . until the job was finished. This, I say, as an expression of humble appreciation from the fighting navy to the merchant navy, itself a fighting fleet.

Having spoken these words as a seagoing parson, I would like to add a word as an Englishman, just an ordinary "linney". Back home in Britain we have depended for six long years on the merchant navy for our very existence . . . not just for luxuries and comforts, but the means of life . . . our daily

bread. That is why we in England feel a special debt of gratitude to the merchant navy. Those of you who have been in Britain during the war will remember the familiar motto found in every shop, every restaurant, every school, every public building "Don't waste. What you throw away, costs the life of a merchant seaman."

In this fetching and carrying of the means of war and the necessities of life, the American merchant navy has played a large and important part. Our tribute is primarily to this American Merchant Marine. But I know very well the American merchant navy would not have us stop there, for the merchant navy is far more international and cosmopolitan than the United States or the Royal Navies. In American ships alongside Americans, you found Norwegians, Swedes, and Danes, and many other nationalities . . . just as in convoys themselves, you saw ships of all nationalities, side by side, all in line astern. It is an illuminating fact taken from the statistics of the *last* war that the little neutral country of Denmark suffered as many casualties in merchant seamen as the U. S. suffered in all its services. The merchant service, of *the United Nations*, has done a superb job in this war, the results of which have made possible military victory.

The church has always taught that he who shows gratitude must do so not only with his lips but in his life and I am proud to remember that in the case of the merchant service, the church has practiced what she preaches. The Episcopal church of America and the Church of England have between them financed and organised throughout the world and in every major port, their Missions to Seamen or their Seamen's Church Institutes. True, it is, that most of them are not so luxurious and well-appointed as this one in New York. Nevertheless wherever they are, the seaman knows that he can find a temporary

home and shelter where he can pass his time at shore in comparative security, where he knows that there is no one scheming to relieve him of his money. These church institutes do not pester their guests with pious pamphlets or manoeuvre them into church. They stand for the church as a light and a shelter for men from the seas and they are living proof of the deep care which the church has for merchant seamen. In these hostels all are welcomed without reference to their religion, their background or their colour. As I have nothing to do with the organisation myself, I can frankly say that I am very proud that the Church of England and the Episcopal Church — two branches of the same family — have been Christian enough, wise and big enough, to minister to the needs of those who go down to the sea in ships, in such a sensible way.

SAILORS' DAY

Merchant seamen joined with the U. S. Navy, U. S. Coast Guard and U. S. Maritime Service in the annual Sailors' Day service on Sunday, October 28th, at 4:00 p.m. at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York City, through the courtesy of Bishop Manning and sponsored by the Seamen's Church Institute of New York. The Rev. Frederic S. Fleming, D.D., rector of Trinity Church, and a vice-president of the Institute, preached. The Bishop offered special prayers for seamen and pronounced the benediction.

Sailors' Day was established in 1919 by resolution of the General Convention in order that Church people throughout the nation "might remember the value of the living seamen and memorialize those who have died." It is regularly observed in many ports. Navy Day this year received greater emphasis because of Fleet Day celebration in New York Harbor.

Dr. Kelley, Director of the Institute, and many of the Board of Managers were in the procession, as were also Naval Chaplains and line officers, consular officials and representatives of various seamen's welfare agencies in Greater New York.

Marching into the Cathedral, led by an Honor Guard from the Naval Midshipmen's School, Columbia University were Bluejackets, WAVES, U. S. Coast Guardsmen and SPARS, mid-

shipmen from the U. S. Merchant Marine Academy, Kings Point, N. Y., and the N. Y. State Maritime Academy, Fort Schuyler, N. Y., and trainees from the U. S. Maritime Station at Sheepshead Bay, N. Y., a total of well over 2,000.

CHRISTMAS AT SEA IN WAR-TIME

By Seaman Gerald Merlin

We looked to the steward to pull his favorite recipes out of a hat for our Christmas dinner. We knew he had bartered with a farmer at our last port of call for turkey.

He did not fail us. All our cherished memories of mother and home-styled cooking were rekindled with satisfaction as we enjoyed his culinary art. We were oblivious, as we feasted, of the ship, the daily watch and routine, and the sea in all its perversities. Forgotten were the dangers of the sub and the plane, and in spirit we were once again at our own hearth on Christmas morning.

In contrast with the hot tropical sun beating down on the decks, I reminisced of shoveling snow in a small town in New England, wearing ear muffs, scarf and woolen gloves . . .

Standing lookout, I felt a brisk wind relieve the intense dry heat. My thoughts went back to the preceding Christmas when I rolled in the deep snow and cluttered the rugs with ice flakes as I came indoors.

The smoke from the ship's stack sent clouds of blackness into the blue overhead. It reminded me of our smoking chimney at home, and over the fireplace hung Christmas holly wreaths . . . Coming out of my reverie, I heard the command "Hard Right". Our ship, in its pattern, with the other ships in the convoy, slowly turned.

. . . The warmth of the hearth encircled all of us, I could hear the sound of crackling embers and smell toasted marshmallows . . .

The general alarm sounded and all of us reported to our battle stations.

. . . Such was Christmas at sea, in war-time, just a year ago.

(Continued from Page 4)

waters along the ship's sides. Through the wide stern windows the frothy wake could be seen churning milky-white in the darkness, trailing a mottled pattern across each silver-crested comber. The entire scene tilted first forwards, then backwards and rolled crazily from side to side as the vessel rode the surging seas.

All hands sang loudly if not tunelessly "Stille Nacht", an inaccurate description of the prevailing weather.

IT WASN'T AMBERGRIS; SAILORS GET NO RICHES

Special to the Herald Tribune

BAYONNE, N. J., Oct. 5.—The crew of the Liberty Ship Santiago Iglesias busied themselves today throwing overboard a 250-pound mass of what they fondly had dreamed was a "fortune" in ambergris, highly prized in the manufacture of perfume.

Initial reports that the grey mass they had picked up near Oran was valuable ambergris, a substance secreted by sperm whales worth \$1,000 a pound, were disproved by later chemical analysis. The chemists said it probably was the residue of some carcass. Crewmen who had dreamed of a \$250,000 fortune split forty-two ways, had the task of cleaning out the ship's hold where the substance had been stored.

(Continued from Page 14)

spread from the volunteer Obstetrician to Skipper to passengers, the child had been delivered safely. She had a caul over her face. The ship was safe, thank God, the Skipper had the caul in his possession.

The old superstition, if superstition it is, now bore fruit. The ship came through one of the worst cyclones the Old Man had weathered in thirty years at sea.

The baby had a lay baptism and was named Evelyn.

Christmas Day broke bright, clear and peaceful. Everyone wore a smile of good cheer and wished each other a Merry Christmas. Forgotten it seemed, was the fury of the storm, but not the birth of the babe—the babe born yesterday and the Babe born nearly 2000 years ago.

(Continued from Page 13)

I have not enjoyed in too many years.

Again thanks for what you've done for me.

Dear Mr. A. A.

Just a note to tell you that I am all straightened out, on a new C-2 Diesel refrigerator ship which is a honey. Am on the wagon, in a big way, haven't had drink, and strangely enough, don't especially want one. Have been to the Seamen's A.A. Club couple of times, but am on the 4-12, port watch, so can't make it often.

Will see you when we get back, and report progress. Many thanks for all you did for me, I don't know just what would have happened if it had not been for you. In fact, I am afraid to think of the whole thing. With regards and thanks.

Camera Club

A Camera Club for merchant seamen of all nationalities has been organized by the Seamen's Church Institute of New York, with headquarters on the 12th floor of the Institute's building at 25 South Street. A well-equipped dark room where seamen may develop their own films without charge is available. Lectures and demonstrations on photography will be given by experts. The Committee on arrangements includes Anton Bruehl, well-known commercial photographer, Mrs. Mabel Scacheri, photography columnist, New York World Telegram, Dr. I. Schmidt, official, Miniature Camera Club, Mrs. Marie Higginson, Lookout photographer.

The Club will sponsor a Photography Contest. Active merchant seamen of all nationalities and trainees in the U. S. Maritime Schools are eligible to compete. Photographs may be of any size, taken by any camera. Negatives should not be sent. Prizes totalling \$75.00 will be awarded by The Lookout in the following classes: people, scenic, animals. Photos should be sent to Mrs. Marie Higginson, Secretary—Camera Club, 25 South Street, New York 4, N. Y. Contest closes December 31st. Name, home address, rating and Z number should be written on the back of each photograph submitted.

Before the war, the Institute conducted a marine photography contest and 600 contestants submitted photographs, indicating the interest in this subject. The winning photographs will be published in "The Lookout."



Photo by Marie Higginson
Anton Bruehl talks to Camera fans.

SEAMEN'S PAINTINGS

An exhibition of paintings by members of the Artists and Writers Club for the Merchant Marine, sponsored by the Seamen's Church Institute of New York, will be held in the Janet Roper Room, fourth floor, 25 South Street, New York City from December 1st through January 1st. The exhibition will be open to the public as well as to seamen, daily from 11 A.M. to 11 P.M. Some of the pictures are for sale and would make fine Christmas gifts.

The seamen-artists represented include: Lt. Reginald Packard, Fred Slavic, Phil May (purser), James Pritchard, John Solomon, Cliff Davis (A.B.), John Davis, and others.

BLESSED EVENT

Blessed event news on the waterfront is that "Seaweed," the cat at the Seamen's Church Institute, 25 South Street, has given birth to four kittens which have been named respectively, Ditto, Quote, Unquote and Comma, because of the white markings on their noses. The kittens are being groomed as ship mascots for four new cargo vessels, the ONWARD, RAPID, DEFENDER and

A KEY FINDS ITS WAY HOME

38 Broad Street
Leckwith Road
Cardiff
South Wales
England

Seamen's Church Institute
New York City

Dear Sirs:

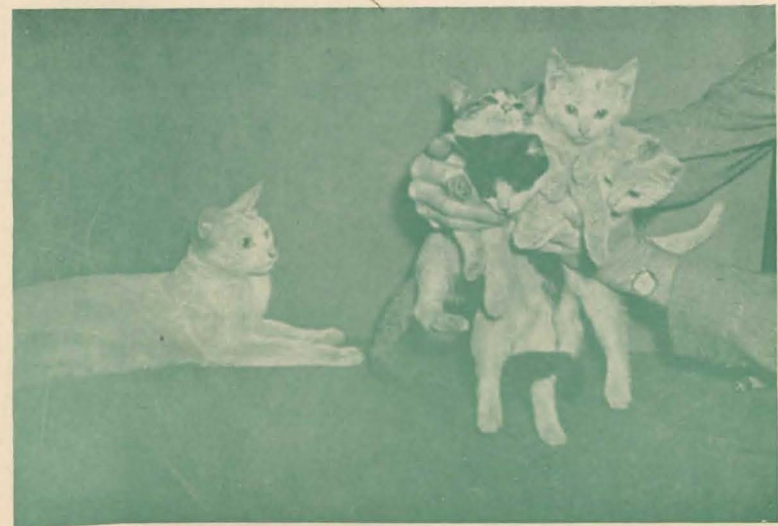
A friend of mine found this key on Pontyfridd Railway Station, South Wales, so failing to find the owner, we return it as stated on the tab.

Trusting you will receive it O. K.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) H. F. EYNON

WHISTLER of the United States Lines which will soon sail on their maiden voyages. Another cat named "Coursey", was given to the ship's crew of the U. S. liner S.S. COURSER, (now on her way to the Philippines) by the Seamen's Institute. It is always regarded in seafaring circles as good luck to have a cat on board a new ship. For the interest of stamp collectors, "First Day Covers" will be serviced on these new ships.



bar maid. She was carrying a bright, shiny aluminum percolator. Slim's eyes almost popped out of his head. He realized he must have that percolator at all costs.

We leaned on the rail looking shoreward wistfully for Slim's familiar figure. At last we saw him. He was running toward us. When he saw us, he shouted something and raised an object over his head. It was a coffee pot, and a spontaneous cheer broke out from the crew. Seldom do dreams and wishes come to such a thrilling actuality as that coffee pot came to us. That new percolator was immediately put to a test. It worked! We sailed away a happy, contented crew.

But if our first thought was for the coffee pot, the next was how in the world Slim had gotten hold of it. It seems that after Slim had met the bar maid, he tried to bargain with her. But she would not sell her percolator. In desperation he used other tactics. He was a good-looking chap and he used all his charms to make love to the girl. In the end he got the coffee pot, but not until he had promised to marry her. Now, whether or not Slim married the girl, we do not know, and that is of little consequence to us, for we had what we wanted and that's all we were concerned about.

As we sailed, we were a happy crew. We hummed and sang while we worked, joked and laughed. Everything was normal again.

Still, Old Rust Pot remained aboard ship to remind us of more miserable days. We'd talk about her and soon she became a topic of reminiscence.

One morning this bulletin appeared:

SPECIAL NOTICE. ALL OF THE CREW NOT ON WATCH ARE REQUESTED TO ATTEND THE BURIAL OF OLD RUST POT. SERVICES WILL BE HELD ON NO. 4 HATCH AT 0800 TOMORROW.

Naturally, everybody who could come was there. Even the captain looked down from his bridge expectantly. Somehow he'd got wind of it. The funeral cortege came from the passageway, leading to the mess room. Four armed guards in full dress blues with side arms came first and following them was the bosun carrying before him a dog-eared movie magazine and looking seriously as pious as a bishop. Next came the pallbearers carrying Rust Pot on a specially made plank, and last came two more armed guards. The whole procession was a solemn one. We who were watching were in hysterics. Even the captain could be seen laughing.

The pallbearers set Rust Pot down on No. 4 hatch tenderly, and we gathered around. Now the bosun opened the movie magazine, thumbed through the pages and began the sermon:

"We of the **ACHILLES HEEL** condemn you, Rust Pot, to the deep where you should have been a long time ago, instead of causing us the pain (the bosun paused to rub the spot where he had been scalded) and misery you have brought us. Your days of maliciousness are over at last. Before we send you to Davy Jones' locker, it is only fitting that I show you the tribute you so justly deserve."

Then the bosun picked up Old Rust Pot, raised its lid and spit—yes, spit—into its interior. All the resentment and hate were put into that little gesture, so that it was done with great vehemence to our great delight. Even the captain laughed.

One last ceremony remained. Rust Pot was carried to the rail, then tilted on the plank until she slid off into the water where she bounded and floated till she sank, then disappeared from our sight forever.

Old Rust Pot had made us laugh at last.

Marine Poetry

TO A POET-SAILOR

If I say candidly I am amazed
Do not take that amiss; I recognized
Beneath esthetic doctrine neatly phrased
Your stronger metal. I was not surprised
To hear how under gun-fire you devised
A jury-rig for the dismantled dory,
Nor how, when the ill-fated boat cap-
sized
You saved three shipmates. O, that's not
the story.
This is the part, half laughter and half
glory,
That moves me to my depth. When next
you wrote
You made no mention of a ship in flames
Or derelict nights in the half-foundered
boat.
But raved about a Gothic ambulatory,
Some frescoes, and the work of Henry
James.

ROBERT HILLYER.
N. Y. Times, August 29, 1945

A SEAMAN'S FIRST IMPRESSION OF NEW YORK

New York is like the sea
Pregnant — vast — inscrutable
A Frankenstein of growth,
Commerce and boundless energy.
In the profound depths of its engulfing
immensity
Each individual will always, however,
Remain a separate entity,
An isolated personal Universe
Blending in one composite whole to a
unified exactness of perfection.
Just as the infinite sands of the beach
complete the pattern of God's
Will in the scheme of things.

LEO NEWMAN
~~THOMAS HILL, A. B. Seaman~~

EPITAPH

To Merchant Seamen Lost at Sea

No scroll of bronze marks our graves
Nor flowers to us do mourners bring,
We sleep beneath the ocean waves
Where only Sylphs and Mermaids sing.
Here old shipmates do we find
Who wed their first great love, the sea,
To all else but duty were we blind
Fate set and sealed our destiny.
No alien footsteps trod o'er our head
The voice of friend or foe we never hear,
Nor o'er our graves are tears e'er shed
Though loved ones held our memory
dear.
No marble stones adorn our graves
Nor flowers to us do mourners bring,
We sleep where sleep ten thousand
braves
Their sacrifice: sweet life's offering.

JIM DURKIN

"WELL DONE, MOTHER"

Dedicated to the late

Mrs. Janet Lord Roper, "Mother"

Time shall record, as "Seamen" pass,
The good that you did here,
Your motives high, of good intent
To comfort — solace — cheer.
Hope you held forth to every one
Connected with the sea.
In hospital, ashore, adrift,
Wherever they should be.
"Full measure" of your time you gave
Thru ever changing years,
Thru happy days and crisis grave,
Thru laughter and thru tears.
Responsive, kindly, ever near
As troubles went or came,
All classes could rely upon
Your self-denying name.
Your life was full and wisely spent
In work of God and Man,
Yet, there are men who could not see
Your all well-meaning plan.
You had to die and pass away
To leave a "Vacant Chair"
Before some men could comprehend
The "Void" created there.
We know your soul has passed into
A Haven far more fair,
A place celestial, ever bright
Where there is not a care.
May the Good Work that you have done
Be carried on right thru,
Dear Mother! You have done your best
Chivalrous — Godly — True.

C. J. W.

LIFE IS ETERNAL

(Anon)

I am standing on the seashore, a ship at
my side spreads her white sails to the
morning breeze and starts for the blue
ocean. She is an object of beauty and
strength, and I stand and watch until
at length she hangs like a speck of white
cloud—just where the sea and sky come
down to mingle with each other. Then
some one at my side, says "She's gone".
Gone where? Gone from my sight, that
is all—She is just as large in mast and
hull and spar, as she was when she left
my side, and just as able to bear her
load of living freight to the place of
destination. Her diminished size is in me,
not in her, and just at the moment, when
some one at my side says, "There she's
gone," There are other eyes watching her
coming, and other voices ready to take
up the glad shout "There she comes."

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REV. HAROLD H. KELLEY, D.D.

*Serving in the Armed Forces.

LEGACIES TO THE INSTITUTE

You are asked to remember this Institute in your will, that it may properly carry on its important work for seamen. While it is advisable to consult your lawyer as to the drawing of your will, we submit nevertheless the following as a clause that may be used:

"I give and bequeath to **"Seamen's Church Institute Of New York,"** a corporation of the State of New York, located at 25 South Street, New York City, the sum of.....Dollars."

Note that the words "Of New York" are a part of our title. If land or any specific property such as bonds, stocks, etc., is given, a brief description of the property should be inserted instead of the words, "the sum of.....Dollars."