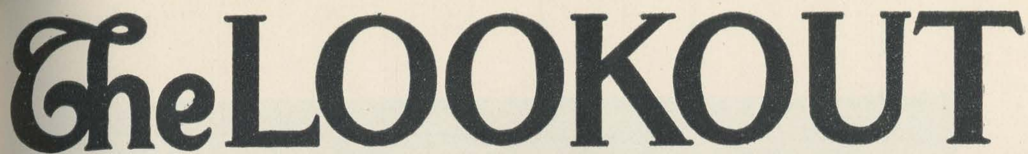

FEBRUARY 1957

SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE of NEW YORK

THE SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK is a shore center for merchant seamen who are between ships in this great port. The largest organization of its kind in the world, the Institute combines the services of a modern hotel with a wide range of educational, medical, religious and recreational facilities needed by a profession that cannot share fully the important advantages of home and community life.

The Institute is partially self-supporting, the nature of its work requiring assistance from the public to provide the personal and social services that distinguish it from a waterfront boarding house and give the Institute its real value for seamen of all nations and all faiths who are away from home in New York.

A tribute to the service it has performed during the past century is its growth from a floating chapel in 1844 to the thirteen-story building at 25 South Street known to merchant seamen the world around.

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The LOOKOUT

VOL. XLVIII, No. 2 FEBRUARY, 1957

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SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK
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Published Monthly $1.00 yearly 10c a copy

Gifts to the Institute of $5.00 and over include a year's subscription

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

THE COVER: This moonlight view of the East River suggests the tranquility that overtook New York harbor during much of February. The port was tied up by striking tugboat and longshoremen's unions.

Proposed: a recreation island at the eye of the maelstrom.

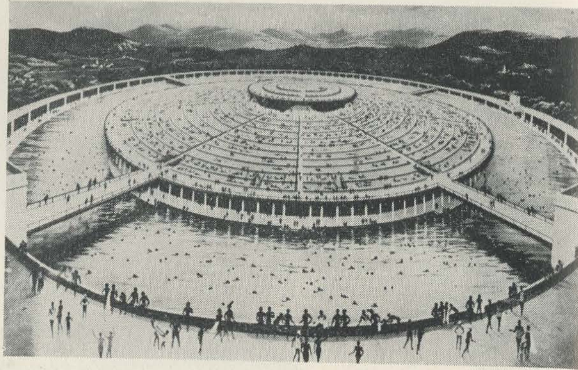
Utopia on a Mud Bank

NEW YORK, a city that has often seen fantasy turned to steel and stone in its bridges, tunnels and buildings, has just been offered another dream, this time in the form of a thousand-acre man-made island in the shallow waters south of Governor's Island. The island suggestion, which is not new, comes again from Community Councils of New York, whose president, Frank Peer Beal, has advanced the idea since 1929. The original project conceived for these shallows was an airport; the judgment which overruled that idea has been vindicated by subsequent developments in both aviation and New York Harbor. However, emphasis in the present island scheme is recreational, and if the idea is said nay again, it will have to be done by a new line of argument, since the island itself is considered well within the reach of modern engineering and 40 million dollars (the more old-fashioned, the better). Community Councils regards the use of these shallow areas as being inevitable, and they propose that this use should be primarily for the pleasure and health of millions who live in the metropolitan area.

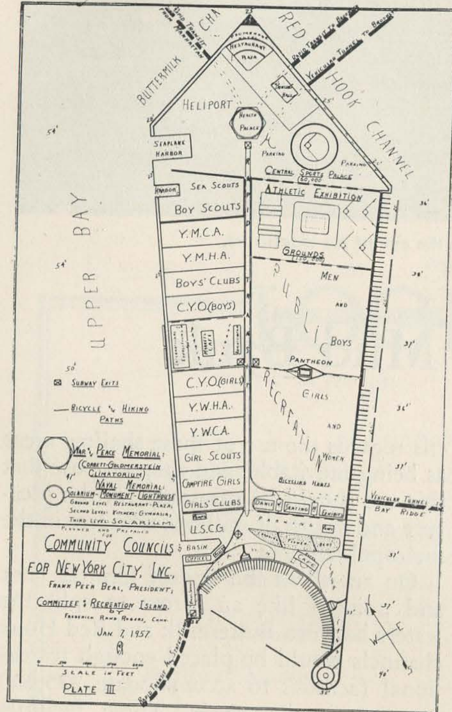
On an island the size of Central Park and pointed like an arrow to split the waters between Buttermilk and Red Hook channels would be placed enough recreational facilities to accommodate 275,000 persons simultaneously. These facilities would include yachting, baseball, football, skating, skiing, swimming, riding, dancing, gymnastics, bicycling, camping, seaplaning, helicopting and hiking, plus two physical therapy centers, one accommodating 3,000, the other, 8,000.

In plans made public recently by Community Councils, the island would also provide a two-mile causeway for arterial and rapid transit facilities linking Manhattan, Brooklyn and Staten Island. Among a list of 30 potential features of the island is

A proposed "health palace" would provide swimming, lounging, dining, artifical sunbathing on white sand and physical therapies of every kind found in the world's great spas, for 25,000 people each day.



A preliminary plan for "Recreation Island" suggests this arrangement of its potential features.



a yacht harbor offering up to 200 moorings. The Coast Guard is tendered a basin and 30 acres for shore installations. Perhaps the Dodgers could find use for a proposed all-weather sports palace that seats 60,000.

To help find the best final design for such a "recreation island," the National Institute for Architectural Education is planning a competition among architectural schools. The project is considered too vast for the drawing boards of individual students.

Reflecting on the financing problem posed by the island, Community Councils observes that it is now a truism that "money can be found in the U.S. to support any worthy project." They suggest that "Since this project involves almost equally city, state and national governments, some new kind of authority is required to design, finance, build and administer the island."

Although the present idea is for an island that would be one-third smaller than one projected in the late 20's, with only slight encroachment on waters more than 30 feet deep, it may still meet with some of the same protests by harbor experts. In *Tugboat,* a newly published (and fascinating) history of the Moran Towing and Transportation Company, Eugene F. Moran explains why he has opposed such ventures in the past.

"Nature provided the Port of New York with what we call overflows, comprising swamps, low meadow areas, creeks, shallow bays which during flood conditions caused by storms, high easterly winds, and the like, take care of the surplus water. Encroachments on our fairways have destroyed many of these overflows and, as a result, we have witnessed tidal waters pouring over our piers, bulkheads and low lands as happened during the hurricanes of September, 1938 and 1944.

". . . New York City in general and the shipping industry in particular are greatly indebted to the Army Engineers for their foresight and understanding of the harbor channel problems. They are well aware of the dire results of indiscriminate encroachments, extension of bulkheads, the creation of artificial islands and the building of bridge abutments in the middle of the channels. Ultimately these encroachments and filling-in of overflows and flats could only mean the confining of the water from the sea and from the Mohawk and Hudson Valleys to the narrowing prism of New York Harbor.

"Were this narrowing permitted to continue, it would be the same as if you filled a bucket to its brim and then dropped a couple of bricks into it. The water would overflow the brim. This is what will happen to the lower part of Manhattan if encroachments and bulkhead extension persist."

Against such possible liabilities, Community Councils stacks up an imposing list of assets for the project. Staten Island would be reborn by the rapid transit facilities; settling and treatment tanks under the island would provide a centralized and adequate means of handling New York's sewage disposal problem, freeing beach areas from contamination; rentals and revenue from island facilities would net a ten million cash return.

By a "new concept to American economists," Community Councils estimates that the "direct and indirect influences of this island can raise the city's physical fitness to produce goods, services and ideas by about ten percent within three years after its opening . . . Say, roughly, a state and national annual gain in 'strength' of $2 billions per year? To say naught of family, moral, social, spiritual and patriotic gains — and exclusive of the gains inevitably effected elsewhere in the U.S. from the example set by New York City: *noblesse oblige!"*

These statements seem designed to make New Yorkers blink, but not close their eyes entirely to the possibilities of what Community Councils calls a "Utopian plan," a chance to trade a thousand acres of underwater mud for "a New Yorker's recreational paradise: a Utopia! In their own very front yard . . ."

SCOTIAN SCHOONER

Clarence G. Michalis, left, president of the Institute's Board of Managers, accepts a model of the Nova Scotia fishing schooner *Rambler* from Harry A. Scott, Canadian consul general in New York. Presented to the Marine Museum by the Canadian government at ceremonies held here in January, the model is an exact replica of a vessel used in Nova Scotian waters in 1888; ships of the Bluenose design have generally replaced her type today.

Above: Carl M. Olson demonstrates for the TV camera the old-time sailor's art of square-knotting. He says of his hobby, "I've been doing it for 40 years and I never got tired of it yet."

Left: Visiting columnist Hy Gardner looks over a few ship models from the Marine Museum with Dr. Raymond S. Hall, director of the Institute.

Before the Cameras

NEAR the stroke of midnight on the last day of January, television cameras from the NBC-TV program "Tonight" gave the nation a 15-minute slice of life from 25 South Street. By no means was it a surprise visit. The wiring for a "live remote" is about as complicated as the rigging of a four-master, and only after several days of scheming and testing was the transmission problem solved. Because the Institute does not have a clear line of sight to the Empire State Building, the signal had to be bounced across to Brooklyn and relayed from there.

Captain Gorgen Bjorge, one of the Institute's ship visitors, is interviewed from the "Bridge" at 25 South Street by Hy Gardner. Asked if he thought weather was a sailor's worst enemy at sea, Capt. Bjorge said that in his 25 years aboard ship, man himself, and not the weather, had proved to be the worst enemy. He explained that his tanker had been torpedoed during World War II.

Below: The television program closed as Hy Gardner joined Dr. Hall and a group of sailors singing old favorites at the piano in the Janet Roper Clubroom.

The Wo of Ships

OCEAN TRUCKING

A "seagoing parking lot" crossed the ocean last month as transatlantic roll-on, roll-off cargo service got under way for the first time.

The *TMT Carib Queen,* laden with trucks, Army trailers, jeeps, sedans and amphibious vessels, sailed from New York to St. Nazaire, France on the first of three experimental voyages for the Army Transportation Corps to determine how well suited the trailer ship is to military planning standards.

An official of the Defense Department, in New York for the sailing, explained that conventional ports might not be available for use in future military operations. Ships that could use small, improvised ports or beaches to unload their cargoes in darkness would be needed. Roll-on, roll-off vessels may be the answer.

The *TMT Carib Queen* is owned and operated by TMT Trailer Ferry Inc. of Miami, Florida.

HARD TIMES AHEAD

A few years ago an electronic fish-finder was invented, and the poor fish lost his one best weapon in his battle with the fisherman — invisibility. Now things are even worse. The first deep-seeing eye was a big, bulky affair, suitable only for large commercial vessels. But Radiomarine Corporation has just unveiled a portable fish-finder which eliminates fin-flapper's fighting chance against even the Sunday fisherman.

Called the Miniskop, the new device fits handily onto a yacht, small fishing boat or even a rowboat. Weighing only 26 pounds and measuring less than a foot square, it can, by means of ultrasound impulses transmitted downwards through the water, spot anything from a tadpole to a whale, identify the fish by size and type and even indicate the exact spot where the fisherman should dangle his bait.

PROTEST

A book urging the United States to turn over its commercial and military cargoes to foreign steamship lines has come in for some scathing criticism from leading U.S. shipping officials. Both William T. Moore, Chairman of the Committee of American Steamship Lines and Ralph E. Casey, president of the American Merchant Marine Institute, have taken issue with the thesis set forth by Wytze Gorter, an economics professor, in his book "United States Shipping Policy."

In a letter to the Council of Foreign Relations, protesting its sponsorship of the book, Moore and his committee pointed out that Gorter's solution for an "uneconomic" merchant fleet would mean a virtual scuttling of American ships. His suggestions — to repeal the 50-50 cargo preference act, which reserves 50% of government-financed cargoes for American-flag ships, to open coastwide and intercoastal trade to foreign-flag vessels and to purchase ships in foreign yards and hire foreign seamen at the lowest rates—would mean the end of the nation's tramp and coastal fleets and put all American seamen and shipping personnel out of work, the committee stated.

Ralph Casey, speaking before the Propeller Club of New Orleans in January, said the book not only condemned American maritime policy but the American economy as well. If cheapness is to be our only criterion, stated Casey, why not have foreign laborers in all other industries as well? If the military are to move cargo on foreign flag ships, as this book suggests, why not "cheaper tanks from Belgium and cheaper planes from Britain? We might even get soldiers from France for a fraction of the American pay scale. Where do we draw the line?"

Casey pointed out that for all Mr. Gorter's complaining about the American people bearing the cost of a merchant marine in taxes, the *net* government outlay for the merchant marine is only about $8½ million a year, "to insure the availability of an essential arm of national defense — at a time when other arms are requiring from the Federal budget not millions but tens of billions annually."

BUBBLE DANCE

Scientists have spent a great deal of effort learning how to freeze things that aren't normally frozen—and now they're learning how to reverse the process. A new thawing mechanism, which keeps navigation channels and hydroelectric power plants from freezing up over the winter may give the St. Lawrence Seaway a twelve-months-per-year lease on life, if tests now going on in Canada are successful.

Developed by the Atlas Copco Co. of Paterson, New Jersey, the process releases compressed air bubbles from a perforated plastic submarine pipe. Climbing to the surface, the bubbles carry warmer water from the bottom which melts the surface ice. Tested in Sweden last winter, the dancing bubbles were able to thaw a strip 65 feet wide in a 1,000-foot channel of ice that was nearly two feet thick.

On the basis of the Swedish experiment, costs to install the necessary equipment on the Seaway would run about $385,000.

ME, TOO

This business of duplicating famous voyages seems to be getting contagious. A second batch of Pilgrims will set out on a new *Mayflower* in April, and it has just been announced that the voyage which took Charles Darwin around the world and led to his formation of the theory of evolution will be retraced in 1958.

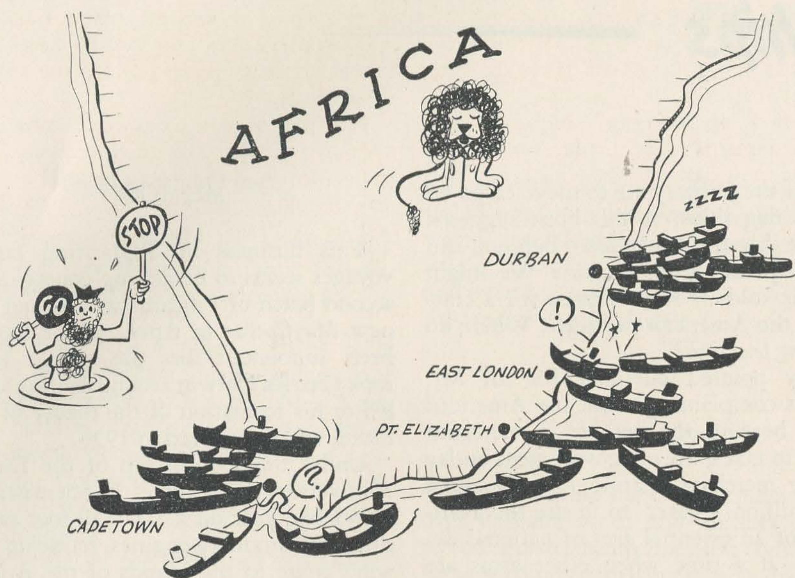
Under the sponsorship of the Darwin Anniversary Committee, 20 scientists will spend one year on a 100-150-foot sailing ship with auxiliary engines, retracing Darwin's route to the islands of the Atlantic and western Pacific and to the South American coast and its islands. Darwin spent five years on his voyage aboard the British surveying ship *Beagle* studying the flora and fauna and native peoples of the areas. The modern group will study the ecologic conditions — the relations between organisms and their environment — of today and compare them with those of 125 years ago.

1958 has been chosen for the voyage because it is the centennial of Darwin's presentation of his paper on evolution to the Linnaean Society of London.

Lady Nora Barlow, a descendant of Darwin, and biologist Julian S. Huxley, grandson of "Darwin's bulldog," Thomas Henry Huxley, are in charge of the project.

HARMONY

Anyone being crowded by a grand piano? Should you have one, in good playing order, that your family's grown too big for or your home has grown too small for, seamen at the Institute's Janet Roper Room could make some sweet harmony on it. The Department of Special Services, 25 South Street, New York 4, (BO-9-2710) would like to hear from you.



The Long Way Home

WITH the Suez Canal out of commission for an indefinitely long time, shipping is being forced to take the long way—via the Cape of Good Hope—home these days. Plying the ancient water route between Europe and the East are hundreds of vessels, reminiscent of the turbulent days of World War II when, with the Suez blockaded by Mussolini, the South African route was the normal one for Allied shipping.

How is the Cape bearing up today under the heavy brunt of the Suez-diverted traffic? Approximately three times as many ships as usual—oil tankers, dry cargo vessels and passenger ships—are putting in at her ports for bunkering, watering and provisioning. Yet, from most indications, the Cape's four major harbors — Cape Town, Durban, East London and Port Elizabeth — whose combined ship-handling facilities do not match those of the Port of New York, seem to be taking the unexpected and gigantic job in their stride. They are playing host to vessels of all nations — Britain, France, Russia and the United States, to mention only a few—as well as servicing their own normal traffic. Captain Clarence Wells of the *Robin Mowbray,* in New York in late January after a run to South Africa, commented that delays in the harbors never lasted more than a few hours. "The South African railroads and harbors authorities are to be commended for doing an exceptionally good job," he said.

The "exceptionally" good job, however, is imposing a severe strain on the ports. The harbors are being worked an average of 21 hours per day; new pilots have had to be appointed; mail handled at Cape Town docks has trebled, as have radio messages from that port to ships on the Atlantic and Indian oceans. Special efforts have been made to speed up the pumping rate at various bunkering points and to reroute traffic among the various harbors so that none will become over-congested. Despite the fact that business is the best ever in the South African ports, the government would welcome the re-opening of the Suez Canal at the earliest possible opportunity, the country's Minister of External Affairs, Mr. E. H. Louw, told the United Nations General Assembly on November 26. "The South African government is doing its utmost to provide the necessary facilities for handling the abnormal flow of shipping," he said, "but the fact remains that it places a severe strain on our harbors and railways. The additional income earned by the harbor authorities, as well as from bunkering and provisioning, does not compensate for the dislocation of our ports and its effects on certain aspects of the country's economy."

At any rate, reports in some American newspapers, stating that some ships had been delayed up to as much as eight days in South African ports, appear to be unfounded. So also are reports that the harbors have deteriorated since the war years, and even then were not able to cope adequately with heavy traffic. According to the South African consulate in New York City, the Union's own industrial growth has been so great, and its own export-import trade has risen so tremendously, that shipping facilities have constantly improved since the war years. In 1955 and 1956, before the Suez crisis, South African ports were able to handle an average of 6,351 ships per year, a figure comfortably close to the number of ships—6,981—served during the peak wartime year of 1940-1941. Well aware of South Africa's strategic position as an alternate route, the government is doing all it can to improve harbor facilities. In March of 1956, months before the present Suez crisis, the Transport Department set aside approximately $24,000,000 for a five-year plan for harbor improvement.

Even after the Suez is re-opened, South African ports will continue to grow in importance to world shipping, if the present trend toward the building of huge supertankers continues. Although they are more economical, in both operation and construction costs, such monsters as Aristotle Onassis' newly-announced 100,000 ton supertanker will be too big for Suez. "Supertankers coming off the ship ways and on the drawing boards are making the Suez Canal obsolete for the movement of oil," the Director of the Office of Industrial Resources of the International Cooperation Administration commented last month. Cape Town, in contrast, has channels deep enough, and dry-docking facilities large enough, to handle the biggest ships afloat.

For the present, however, most ship operators will breathe a sigh of relief when traffic moves on the Suez again. The added time it takes a ship to round the Cape is costing millions, say spokesman for the shipping industry. According to the *Journal of Commerce,* one shipowner states that the additional costs of 18 to 20 days steaming time required to go around the Cape on a voyage from New York to Karachi and return bring the tab up some $50,000. To overcome delays, some vessels sailing from the United States have been taking on additional fuel, which has cut into the amount of cargo the ships can carry. It has become necessary to cancel a number of sailings and to impose surcharges of 15 to 20% in many cases. Even so, say the shipping lines, losses are heavy.

The only people who seem to be really enjoying the long way home are passengers on the Suez-diverted ships, who are getting a chance to see some of the most magnificent country in the world, the spot where the waters of the South Atlantic, Indian ocean and Antarctic mingle. Cape Province near the sea, writes John Gunther in "Inside Africa," is like a wilder and more mountainous French Riviera or Italy near Amalfi. Most of the Cape looks like the Engadine in spring, he writes, and Cape Town itself "has a golden, creamy atmosphere, a marked cosmopolitan accent, deriving from its historical role as a 'tavern of the seas.' " Yet even here there is a fly in the ointment. Merchant seamen are forced to be away from home on longer runs than usual, and a sailor at the Seamen's Church Institute of New York, who has visited the Cape many times, reminds us that the Union of South Africa has probably the strictest apartheid, or segregation rules in the world. Negro seamen, once forbidden ashore, are now allowed to land in the Cape, but only in strictly segregated areas. They feel as if they're back in the days of Uncle Tom's Cabin and slavery, admitted one Durban newspaper this summer.

FAYE HAMMEL

"You do not have to be rich to give away an old coat."

Louis from the Ship

LOUIS CABALLO does not live in a house by the side of the road; he lives by the sea and he is the friend of many men. Between ships in New York, Louis stays at the Seamen's Church Institute, where he spends much of his free time building strong sea chests, handsomely fashioned of red cedar, mahogany, teak, rosewood, camphor and other fine woods that he brings back from each voyage.

Plates of beaten copper, hinges of hand wrought steel and great brass locks hint that the chests were made to hold all the treasures of the East—which is not misleading, for what they hold is precious.

Like the hand-rubbed woods of his seachests, Louis himself is warm and mellow. His eyes have the rich brown of rosewood; his cheeks are mahogany tan; his lips, the hue of red cedar. His beard, trimmed to follow a magnificently square jaw, is a blend of ebony and birch.

He was born around the turn of the century in Naples, Italy, where he grew up in the slums. "We lived in strictest poverty. Sometimes nothing to eat for days. When you ate twice it was a holiday. Meat only a few times each year. I left for the sea when I was sixteen."

In the days when aliens could still jump ship in America, Louis came to New York and became a U.S. citizen. Poverty was here also to remind him of the poverty he left, and when Louis signed on a ship again he carried two seabags. One was filled with clothes for Louis and one was filled with clothes for the poor that he knew would meet him wherever he stepped ashore in foreign lands.

After visiting nearly every seaport in the world Louis has much to remember as he carves a seachest. "I meet good people everywhere in the world because I do not meet the poor empty-handed. In Italy, Germany, among the Spanish Gypsies, among the Confucians, Mohammedans—everywhere, good people I meet. I help these people. I try to do good, and when you do good, good comes to you. Many times in my life I have been saved from death. You do good things and people thank you; God hears this."

Louis has travelled far enough to know that people do not always say thank you when they are helped. "After World War II I sail fireman on transports going to Germany. I meet this woman in Bremerhaven and she has a beautiful little girl with her. They are hungry and the little girl, about 12 years old, begs on her knees for food. I help the woman and her child all I can — and many times. Later, I go back when these people are on their feet once more, and they are not glad to see me. They say 'Hello, Louis,' but I know they are not glad.

"These people are proud. It is not easy to take food from strangers. People everywhere are proud, but when they have nothing, what can they do?"

However, Louis recalls another German that he met in Bremerhaven. The man was a farmer who walked lame from a club foot, and he had a young son. "Food and clothes I give these people, and now when I go to Bremerhaven, this man with the limp says to me, 'Louis, you stay with us. This is your house because you are a friend.' I like this man because he knows how to take something. It is easy for Louis to give—I am not married and my needs are few—but it is not so easy for people to be thankful. I like this man with the clubbed foot."

When he goes ashore to give away the contents of his second seabag, Louis does not dress like a Rockefeller. "I am just Louis from the ship. You do not have to be rich to give away an old coat. People know that. Anyway, why should I pretend?"

However, his benevolence does not always go unquestioned. "Sometimes the police follow. They think I sell on the black market, but when they talk to the people I visit they find I only give these things away. Sometimes when I come ashore with gifts the people think I am not in my right mind. One time I bring many suits to the padre in Livorno, Italy. The padre looks at me and he asks was I sure I want to give these things away. There was one nice Stetson hat; I almost want to wear it myself, but I bought it second-hand for the poor, so I give it to them. Poverty is terrible."

Born poor, Louis has stayed with the simple things. As a woodworker, he uses only a few tools and turns out a seachest that is more enduring than perfect. He is proudest of his knowledge of how to treat wood with "certain oils" so that it will last indefinitely. But he has no illusions about being able to build a chest that will keep valuables safe from a thief.

"For this, there is nothing. What one man can put together, another man can take apart. My big brass locks only keep out the curious—who would be very disappointed to find that my own two seachests have inside mostly old clothes I will give away. See—here are some shoes, some jackets, some coats, overshoes, pants, caps, suits. This is catnip sewed up like a mouse—for the cats I meet on the waterfront. Here is a yo-yo; remember the farmer with the clubbed foot? I will take this to his boy next trip."

With a laugh, Louis closes the lid. "Not much to be in such a fine chest. Some clothes, some catnip and a yo-yo. But it is better to give such things away than to go out and make trouble. To find trouble is easy. To find peace is hard, very hard."

Answers to last month's "Do You Remember" Quiz

1. c 2. c 3. b 4. a 5. c 6. d 7. b 8. a 9. d 10. b

Book Watch

TUGBOAT, THE MORAN STORY

Eugene F. Moran and Louis Reid

Charles Scribner's Son, New York, $5.95

Eugene Moran was born 75 years ago, and for almost all of those years his life has been centered around tugs and the teeming life of New York harbor. Reading his memoirs, *Tugboat, The Moran Story,* is a fascinating excursion into that world, tracing it from the time of the tall ships to the time of the skyscrapers.

Eugene Moran's father, Michael, was an Irish immigrant who started out in the towing business by drawing mules along the towpath of the Erie Canal and eventually became the founder of the Moran dynasty, which now owns and operates one of the largest fleets of tugs in the world. Son Eugene got initiated into the life of the waterfront at the age of seven when his father took him visiting to the tugboat offices on South Street, became a deckhand on a Moran tug at 14, and soon learned all the other ropes of the business. His tasks have been immensely varied and exciting —among them, supplying patrol boats for Under-Secretary of the Navy Franklin D. Roosevelt in World War I; organizing, building and operating much of the vast Moran fleet; overseeing the enormous changes in tugboating that came with the replacement of steam by Diesel power; and playing an important part in the development of the Port of New York. Special glory came to his fleet in World War II. Adept at deep-sea towing since 1891, sturdy Moran tugs were able to haul docks and derricks, strings of barges and disabled ships across oceans to make an important contribution to the war effort.

Moran's book is not only a historical portrait of the American tugboat, but an intimate and informal look at shipping in the Port of New York over the last 75 years. The bustle of the harbor, its men, its power, its humor and, of course, its great ships, come alive in these pages.

FOLLOW THE WHALE

Ivan T. Sanderson

Little, Brown & Co., Boston, $6.00

Such a plethora of books on whaling have been published in the last few years that at first glance this seems like one too many. But a second glance plunges the reader, not into the too-often told story of the great days of the New England whalers, but into the whole history of man's pursuit of the whale, one that takes him from the misty pre-dawn of history to the present, a vast spectrum in which the New England whaling period is only a tiny, if dazzling, light.

Man has followed the whale at least as far back as the Stone Age, says Sanderson, and he is still doing so today, "with even greater vigor and more deplorable success than ever before." In 1951, for example, 31,072 whales were taken, yielding for their captors the colossal total of some $170,000,000. How man has hunted these greatest of all mammals and how this pursuit has affected his life — the lives of the Phoenicians and Norsemen, the Greeks and Romans, the Japanese and Basques, and the Europeans and Americans of modern times is the subject of this book.

THE SEA IS DEEP

The sea is deep and silent here.
No sound is heard,
Except the sad and questing call
Of a strange white bird. . . .
A wide-winged bird, forgotten now
In every clime.
A wheeling, lost, immortal bird
From another Time. . . .
The sea is deep and very still.
A white bird cries
And keeps a lonely vigil here
Where Atlantis lies.

A. Kulik

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HARBORS

Where salt and fresh waters mix
and each other's forces drown,
barges make a white defiant splash
like flags against the sky
and push the tidal rivers down
before their foaming bows.
Barges ride the warring waves
with the impregnable peace
of high, dry islands.

A. Kirby Congdon

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