

# *The Lookout*



SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK

VOL. XXVIII NO. 6

JUNE, 1937



This Month's Cover is a reproduction of a photograph taken by Mr. Brooks Atkinson while he was making a voyage on the "AMERICAN TRADER". It is reprinted here by courtesy of "The Ocean Ferry", official publication of the United States Lines.

## The LOOKOUT

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CLARENCE G. MICHALIS  
President  
FRANK T. WARBURTON  
Secretary-Treasurer  
REV. HAROLD H. KELLEY  
Superintendent

MARJORIE DENT CANDEE  
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### LEGACIES TO THE INSTITUTE

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

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

Note that the words "Of New York" are a part of our title.

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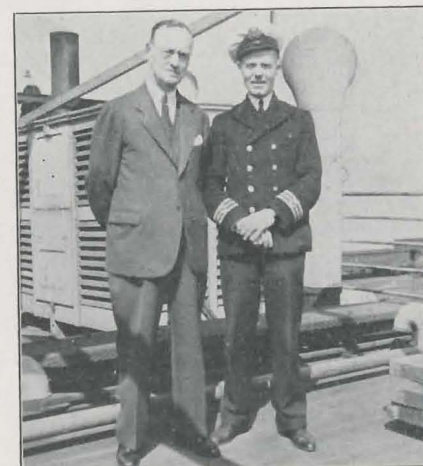
## Log of a Ship Visitor

By Philip Warner

*Editor's Note:* The practice of chaplains visiting seamen aboard ships in harbor is an accepted procedure in Seamen's Institutes and was customary here until shortly before the World War. On March 1st, 1937, our Institute resumed regular shipboard visiting, and Mr. Philip Warner was assigned to the task, visiting particularly the apprentices and cadets. We asked him to write some of his impressions and experiences for LOOKOUT readers.

SHIP visiting is the most delightful part of a man's day, for in it he meets the men who go down to the sea in ships and the men who really have a major part in seeing that we arrive at our destination in perfect condition.

I wonder if you have ever stopped to think of these things when you are planning a trip or making ready to make a shipment which means everything to you? If not, then I invite you aboard a couple of ships with me; let us see the kind of men to whom we entrust our lives and cargoes. First of all, it is our duty and mine in particular to see to it that the personnel have the little things when in port that go towards making their stay happier. In order to do this we must first get permission from the port captain to go aboard. There is no trouble in this as the Seamen's Church Institute of New York is so well known that the mention of it insures privileges on all Lines. Then to the officers' quarters and a chat with them, who invariably call one of the quartermasters, and then we are escorted, first to the fo'c'sle, to talk to the



Mr. Philip Warner with Chief Officer  
J. F. Foster of the S.S. Harpagon,  
Harrison Line.

crew. At first, they seem skeptical, but as soon as they find that you are there in their interest, they will tell you their troubles and their wants. I was aboard an English passenger ship the other day and three of the crew were having tea. I did not want to bother them and started to leave when one of them asked, "What do you want?" I answered that I did not want anything but had come aboard from the Institute to find out what they wanted and in what way we could make their stay in port more comfortable.

One of the seamen, an Irish chap, spoke up and said, "sit down and have tea," and during our conversation it developed that they wanted



magazines, playing cards, dominoes and checkers. Those things were taken aboard the next day and they were so grateful I had a hard time getting away. I asked my Irish friend how it was that a good Irishman like him was working on a British ship. He came right back at me with: "Well, the police force is filled up and I have to work!" Then to the engineers' quarters and a chat with them. On various ships there is a marked difference in the quarters, not in air or cleanliness but in size. Their wants are the same: reading matter, magazines in particular and stationery. In this way you go from one department of the ship to another always finding some one wanting to make your visit instructive, and proudly showing off their ship. A clean-cut type of men they are, trustworthy and efficient, the kind in whom you have no hesitancy in trusting your life and goods.

Today (May 12th) the British ships everywhere are fully dressed in honor of the new King, the radios are blasting forth the ceremony and you find solemn, silent groups massed around listening. Suddenly, the band starts "GOD SAVE THE KING," and the crews doff their hats and stand at attention.

In the past two months I have visited over sixty American passenger ships and when I step aboard an American owned and manned vessel I feel a thrill of patriotic pride in our merchant marine. I find in the crews' quarters a stalwart bunch of men clean-cut and willing, well-fed, and in most instances happy, wanting not much, but glad of your visit. They tell how well they are fed and that the officers are very considerate of their welfare and comfort. They ask about the Institute and you enumer-

ate the many amusements and comforts here. They want to hear about the various clinics and the hours, the rates of lodging and meals and about the school conducted by Captain Huntington. Invariably some one will speak up and say "I know all about that place, Mother Roper helped me once." The wants of a seaman are the same the world over; a place to go where he may find rest and decent treatment, a place to go when he needs spiritual advice, for at heart the average seaman is a Christian and devout in many ways. He wants friendship and someone to talk to, some one to help him when he is in trouble, and always someone to share his happiness. That is the spirit I have found on the American ships. Our American Merchant Marine is undergoing changes, our Cadets are relatively new, there is not the tradition in back of them that there is for the British, but give us time and a fuller understanding between the ships' personnel and the owners and there isn't anything that can stop us.

I have sat at mess with the crew on American ships and with just a few exceptions, their conversation could grace the average table and the food is wholesome, plentiful and served well.

I have sat around with officers and crews and chatted along general lines. Their usual topic is how they can help to make conditions aboard and ashore better for the American Seamen. That, in some measure, is my job and I am thinking of ways and means to accomplish this end: to make the seaman's life happier, to inform him of how the Institute can serve him, be to him a haven of rest and happiness, and above all that the Institute is his friend.

## News From "The Sea Devil"



Count Luckner's new yacht, "Seeteufel".

WORD comes to us, by way of Michael Folan, that our old friend, Felix Count Luckner, famous World War commander of the "Seeadler", is again sailing the seven seas in search of adventure. The last time the jolly Count was in New York he paid a visit to the Institute and amused an audience of sailormen with lively accounts of his experiences. Two years ago his four-masted schooner, "Mopelia" was destroyed by fire, but the Count could not stay away long from the sea he loves, and now he has a new yacht, the "Seeteufel". He intends to sail her down to Brazil and to the lagoon where his "Seeadler" was wrecked. Perhaps he will find something left of the ship in which he ran the British blockade to get through the North Sea; the ship in which he captured ships of the

Allies but without loss of life. He even saved six dogs and thirty-four cats, transferring them safely to the "Seeadler."

When asked to explain his humane method of warfare, the Count said: "I know how much every sailor loves his mother. I thought of my mother and I decided that not one of those sailors' mothers should know sorrow on my account. They were actually prisoners of war, but I treated them as friends and we were all seamen together."

We presume that the Count's constant companions on his new voyage will be his dog and his pipe, and no doubt he will regale the crew with yarns spun as only he can spin them, interspersed with his favorite expression, "By Joe." Good luck, Count Luckner, and happy landfall!



# Security for Seamen's Children



Photo by Russart Studio

THE Society for the Relief of Destitute Children of Seamen, being renamed the Society for Seamen's Children, is one of that small group of pioneer social agencies in New York which, like the Institute, had their beginnings about a century ago. Organized in 1846, and caring for 24 children the first year, this Society has since been of service to thousands of seamen's sons and daughters. We are happy to announce that this Society has become affiliated with the Central Council of Associations of the Seamen's Church Institute of New York. The Council is glad to have this added interest, and the experience and organization of the Institute will prove of material benefit to the Society. The Institute has for many decades turned to the Society when needing aid for the

children of seamen, and the new relation is a natural and happy result. The Society maintains a cottage at 657 Castleton Avenue, West Brighton, Staten Island, and of the 83 children cared for during 1936, 30 lived in boarding homes or foster homes, 24 in the cottage, 6 in special boarding schools and the remainder in relatives' homes (some with financial aid provided by the Society).

We asked Miss Marguerite Woodin, executive secretary, to tell us her experiences with some of the children whom the Society

has helped, and we believe that readers of THE LOOK-OUT will be interested in her report, which follows:

"All the children under our care come from homes disrupted by some family misfortune. In many cases, the death of the mother made it impossible for the seaman father to maintain a home on shore for his children while he was away at sea. In other instances, the children's fathers were dead and the mothers were financially unable to support the children. Each child is studied and treatment is determined according to his individual needs. The following example will indicate how flexible is the Society's program:

Living a carefree life on a coal barge, breathing the salty tang of the sea, was rather fun for Francis and Harry, as long as mother was there to care for and love them. This abruptly changed, however,

when the mother became ill with pneumonia. She was rushed to the nearest hospital as soon as a tow could be signaled. Every effort was made to save her but the delay proved fatal. The captain loved his children and wanted to keep them with him. He found, however, he could not manage alone as there were no relatives to whom the father could turn in this emergency. On coming into port, a fellow captain told him about the Society for Seamen's Children. The children were taken to the Receiving Home of the agency.

It was found that Francis, who was eight years old, was only in the first grade. This was not because he was dull, but because of difficult and irregular school attendance, due to the frequent trips of the barge. Their undernourished bodies were gradually built up under the complete and thorough medical service which is given to all the children under care of the Society. The two brothers were placed in a carefully selected foster home with substitute parents who gave them the love and care to which every child is entitled. Shortly after the mother's death, the father's barge was tied up along with many others, as a result of the depression. He was permitted to live on the barge, but was dependent upon relief for food. He is still unable to find employment and, therefore, cannot contribute toward the support of his little boys. How happy this father is that his children are safely cared for by the Society for Seamen's Children, whose purpose it is to efficiently and adequately meet the needs of the children under its care!

It is somewhat difficult for a sailor to make a satisfactory marriage because of long absences and



Photo by Victor Bent

## Charting Their Course

the nature of his work. Mr. B did not marry well and his wife deserted him when their child, Arthur, was one year old. He tried to keep his home together and to care for the child with the help of a housekeeper. Later his health failed and he could no longer work regularly. Then he learned of the Society for Seamen's Children and asked them to take responsibility for Arthur.

Arthur is now seven, a bright-eyed, lovable child. In the years of Arthur's growth his father's thinking has changed. It is well remembered by the people in the agency that Mr. B was once a swashbuckling sailor, who in the role of a doting father, sometimes proved to be a nuisance. He did not want his child to be taught to be too polite. "I don't want my son to be a sissy!", he would declare. He liked to take him out on excursions and would buy him all kinds of indigestible treats. Because of this the foster mother would have a sick boy on her hands for a day or two afterwards. Mr. B had to be convinced of the need for careful train-

(Continued on Page 8)



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## *Praise of Seamen in the Press*

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### **American Women Laud Heroic Work of Seamen in Storm; One Hurlled Across Room**

ROME, March 9 (US).—Dramatic details of their experiences during the stormy trans-Atlantic voyage of the liner Rex were given Universal Service by two American women passengers tonight.

The women, Mme. Raffalovich, the former Catherine Lighter, of Stanton, Va., and Mrs. Evelyn Devoes, of Portland, Ore., and New York, both gave high praise to the liner's crew for heroic action . . . .

One cabin boy was killed on the trip which ended Sunday, and two Americans were seriously injured.

#### **Hurlled Across Room**

Mme. Raffalovich, whose husband is a Paris banker, said:

*"I believe more than 62 persons were hurt. One steward was badly hurt trying to help a woman who lost her grip on the ropes which had been strung about the ship for days."*

Mme. Raffalovich had high praise for all the crew, to whose consideration and bravery she attributed the fact that many more passengers were not injured. She continued:

*"Most of the crew were hurt. They were injured in trying to save passengers from cuts or bruises or worse. Careless passengers caused them no end of trouble by trying to be heroic and risking going on the tossing deck in search of thrills. Nearly every one of my friends arrived with at least scratches."*

#### **Praises Crew**

Mrs. Devoes described the voyage as "the worst I ever experienced." She said:

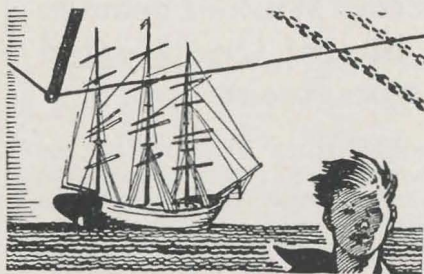
*"The crew was wonderful, helping people about and giving food to those who stayed in their cabins."*

*New York American, March 9, 1937.*



## Security for Seamen's Children

(Continued from Page 5)



ing. This training of seamen to be thoughtful parents is an important phase of the work of this organization.

Mr. B, himself, has changed. It is no longer possible for him to go to sea. Most of his days are spent in a hospital. He still clings to life because of his child. He makes tremendous sacrifices to buy things for Arthur and his greatest joy in life is to watch his son, happy and secure, romping and sometimes, perhaps, boasting a bit as his father used to do.

What was a father to do when the news came to him of his wife's death and the ship on which he was employed was 1,000 miles away at sea? Grief-stricken over his loss, he was faced with the immediate necessity of planning for his four motherless children: two boys and two girls. Upon his return from sea he was greatly relieved to learn that there was a Society for Seamen's Children which would help him with his problem. For several years the father was able to pay for his children's care until he became acutely ill and died, leaving his children entirely dependent upon the Society. That was twelve years ago. Two of the boys are now self-supporting. Upon acceptance it was found by the Society that the

children had unusual mental ability, very interesting personalities and great ambitions. In high school, the oldest boy, Tom, began to show keen interest in teaching. He received the highest honor in public speaking for an oration which he had written, on "The Value of Foster Homes for Dependent Children." Through an interested organization we were able to send Tom to college. He is graduating this year with honors and expects to be appointed to a teaching position in a private academy. John is a Junior in college and earns his tuition and board by waiting on table, working in a laundry and occasionally by tutoring. John hopes to be a lawyer and has already shown his ability to achieve success in spite of obstacles. Helen will soon be ready to go into nurse's training, and since she has character and determination of purpose, it is expected she will succeed. Marie, though young, is exhibiting an interest in social work, and we feel her own background and experience in a Home should give her a rare sympathy and understanding of people in need. As there are not as many opportunities for girls to help themselves through college, it will be necessary for the Society to find ways and means to make possible the fulfillment of the ambitions of these children.

The Directors of the Society are: Mrs. Archibald R. Mansfield, First Directress, Miss Marian Holyoke, Second Directress, Mrs. Charles E. Pearson, Corresponding Secretary, Mrs. Alfred T. Pouch, Recording Secretary, Miss M. Adelaide Irving, Treasurer and Mrs. Norman H. Donald, Chairman of Appeals.

## The New York Whitehall Boat

By W. P. Stephens



WHILE much has been written about the shipbuilding for which New York was once famous, and the ships which carried the fame of Henry Eckford, Isaac Bell, the Westervelts and William H. Webb to all the ports of the world, the humble rowboat which once served as the sole means of communication between the shore and the ships (moored of necessity in the harbor in the days when piers were few) is now absolutely forgotten. The history of boat building in New York, once a great industry, is likewise neglected.

The steam ferry system which until comparatively recent years was the sole link between Manhattan Island and the shores of Staten Island, Westchester, Long Island and New Jersey, is itself little more than a century old, and yet there are records of established ferries running back nearly three hundred years. The vehicle of these early ferries was the rowboat; presumably in the first place, about 1654, the heavy and clumsy ship's boats of the day. As the ferry service

extended, one of the principal routes being from the Battery to Paulus Hook, the southern extremity of Jersey City and the main road to the South, boats were specially built for the service.

Prior to the introduction of the steam tug all service between ship and shore was carried on in rowboats of a special model taking their name from "Whitehall Slip," at the foot of Whitehall Street, New York, where a special basin of piles was built for them. The statement made at times that the type originated and took its name from boats built at Whitehall, N. Y., on Lake Champlain, is too absurd to deserve serious consideration.

The "Whitehall boat," as it existed from perhaps 1840 to 1890, was 19 feet long and 4 feet 5 inches in breadth, a skillfully modelled hull, propelled at times by two oarsmen, each using a pair of sculls. A boat was owned and run by one man, but a second pair of oars was carried and a passenger who could use them was expected to lend his aid. A small spritsail was carried,



to be used when the wind favored, as with neither centerboard nor leeboards and a keel of only about an inch, little could be done to windward. The boats carried on long trips four passengers and when not over-loaded were fast and able for their length. On short trips in smooth water eight or more could be seated. Their service took them not only all over the Upper Bay but outside Sandy Hook; the first man to board an incoming ship secured the order for stores while in port, or booked the crew for the sailors' boarding houses on Cherry and Roosevelt streets. Following them, when once inside the Hook, came the ship news reporters for the long lists of ships spoken which were so important before the days of the ocean cables and wireless; the agents of the owners with orders as to docking, anxious friends of officers and passengers.

The Whitehall boats and boatmen created a public interest in rowing no less keen than that of today in baseball and similar more modern sports, and this led to the refinement of the working models in the search for speed. As long ago as 1811 rowing races between picked crews of New York and Long Island boatmen brought out the populace of New York and Brooklyn, the stakes running as high as \$1,000.

### John Masefield's *Coronation Sonnet*:

You stand upon the highway of the sea,  
Wherein the ships, your children, come and go  
In splendor at the full of every flow,  
Bound to and from whatever ports may be.  
Through this beginning reign, for years to come,  
May fortune set your lot in happy times:  
Your seaman saint still marking, with his chimes

These racing boats were, as far as known, from 28 to 30 feet in length, about 4 feet in width, and rowed by four men, each pulling a pair of sculls, with a coxswain. One of the most noted builders was John Baptiste, who flourished about the early part of the 19th Century.

On the occasion of the fatal explosion of the boilers of the Staten Island ferryboat Westfield, in 1871, the Whitehall boatmen did noble work in rescuing the dying and retrieving the bodies of the dead. When the present stone wall was built along the Battery front it was proposed to abolish the little pile basin which housed the boats, but in recognition of this work of the Battery boatmen the original plans were altered to give the stone basin still to be seen just West of the Barge Office. As the need for boat service declined with the disappearance of the sailing ship, the construction of miles of piers along all waterfronts of the Harbor, and the construction of bridges and tunnels, the boats and their gallant crews passed from public memory, and it is a difficult task today to trace them. There is so much of interest, however, attached to the boats and boat builders of old New York that a few are working to preserve their history.

Daily, some ship of yours returning home.

Though you are changed from what I once beheld:

Though your remembered hulls are with the coral:

I can not think upon your might unstirred.

O sacred city of the lost seabird,  
May wealth, out ransoming the ports of eld,

Be yours with spiritual gold and holy laurel.

## Eleventh Floor Renovations



Photo by Frank J. Kenney



Photo by Dan Cross, F. Lerner.

**S**EAMEN who purchase rooms on the eleventh floor of the Institute are being given a pleasant surprise when they step off the elevator. The entire floor has been completely redecorated and the new furnishings are receiving most favorable comment. Our business manager, Mr. Leslie C. Westerman, took some of the seamen into his confidence and several aided him in selecting the draperies for the curtains, the green and tan tiling for the floor, and the modern light fixtures. One seaman asked if it would not be possible for a wall locker with extra shelving to be installed, and this suggestion was adopted. It is proving very practical as a place where seamen's books, photographs and other treasures may be displayed. In an institution as large as the Institute, with 1,614 beds, it was thought previously that in the interests of cleanliness and general good housekeeping, curtains and other

draperies could be omitted. But the eleventh floor experiment is working out so successfully, and the men are so appreciative and so expressive of their preference for the renovations, that it is to be hoped we may be able to gradually transform some of the other floors into the same type of attractive, colorful, homey bedrooms.

### Book Reviews

#### SHIPS AND WOMEN

By Bill Adams

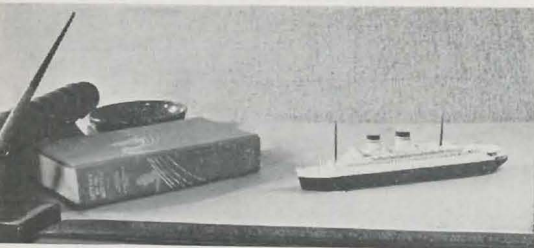
Little, Brown & Co. 1937. \$2.50

Bill Adams comes as no stranger to lovers of the sea and ships. For a number of years his stories have appeared in THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY and in BLUE PETER, and now enthusiastic readers have the answer to many of the questions on their tongues. It was a strange fate which decreed that a lad whose four years' apprenticeship had tried him hard and not found him wanting in the stuff which makes a sailor, must leave the sea forever. Bill Adams has never forgotten the sea, and while

(Continued on next page)



## Book Reviews



Courtesy, Van Ryper, Vineyard Haven.

perhaps years of regret for a thwarted career may have increased a natural inclination to romanticize, his book suffers from no lack of realism. There is no glossing over of the hardships suffered by boys in the "half-deck" in those strenuous years, but rather a pervading conviction that it was worth the struggle. Bill Adams has looked back upon his sailing days and found them good; his is an honest lament—repeated like a minor strain throughout the book "But now the steamers have our sea".

A. W. C.

### "BEAT TO QUARTERS"

By C. S. Forester

Little, Brown and Company, Boston.

1937. \$2.50

This is an ably told romance of the Napoleonic War. Captain Hornblower, sailing under sealed orders from the English Ministry, reaches the Pacific coast of Central America and finds that he is to start a rebellion in the Spanish American colonies. He forms an alliance with the half mad dictator of Nicaragua and captures the fifty gun ship of the enemy before the news reaches him that England has formed an alliance with Spain and that his efforts were in vain.

BEAT TO QUARTERS will appeal not only to those readers who like their sea stories exciting, with sea duels and picaresque adventure, but to those who are interested in an unglossed account of the life of sailors in the early 19th century. The bewildered suffering of small shopkeepers who were impressed into His Majesty's service, the bloody aftermath of the battles when the wounded died for lack of ordinary medical care, the very real danger of running out of lemon juice,—the all important preventive of scurvy—these and other details are related with sympathetic understanding. Mr. Forester has remembered what so many writers forget—that the little frigates

which sailed so gallantly through great danger and hardship did so not just for conquest and hidden treasure, but to open the Western world to everyday commerce.

I. M. A.

### "SENTINEL OF THE COASTS"

The Log of a Lighthouse Engineer.

By George R. Putnam

W. W. Norton & Company, N. Y.

Illustrated. \$3.50

Lighthouses, lightships and beacons, with their stirring pages of history and romance, have always appealed strongly to our imaginations. George R. Putnam, who served as United States Lighthouse Commissioner for 25 years, has made them very real to us in his excellent book. The high ideals of this service and the amazing courage of its personnel, in a never-ending struggle to safeguard vessels, gives inspiration to readers.

If a ship could talk, Lightship No. 1 could probably unfold the most exciting story. Stationed at Nantucket New South Shoals, she served in this dangerous location for 36 years with only sails for power. She saw the transition from wood to iron, from iron to steel and the development of lighthouses from the lantern beacon to the brilliant electrical beams and radio beacons of today.

Absorbing also to read, are the author's experiences as a map maker in the Coast and Geodetic Survey, which sent him to chart the Pribilof Islands, Alaska, the Philippine Islands and many other unusual places.

I. M. A.

### "PIPE ALL HANDS"

By H. M. Tomlinson

Harpers, New York. 1937. \$2.50

From the moment the unhappy "Hestia" sets out from her dock she is threatened by a destiny of which all hands seem strangely conscious. It is so with a ship. It is seldom, however, that an author in writing of it can draw his readers into the mysterious relationship which exists between ship and men as does Mr. Tomlinson. There is a compelling quality about his prose which holds one's interest with more than ordinary power. From the quiet, scholarly ship's master to the Cockney-Chinese "cookie" these men are real; their talk is real, their friendships and hostilities bring them into real situations. With a skillful pen the author, in scarcely more than thumbnail sketches, brings out the essential qualities in the character of each.

A. W. C.

## Two Guiding Lights for Mariners:

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Photo by Wendell Macrae

The Beacon, Nantucket Lightship

Titanic Tower Light at "25 South Street"

## SUMMARY OF SERVICES RENDERED TO MERCHANT SEAMEN BY THE

## SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK

FROM JANUARY 1st TO MAY 1st, 1937

80,267	Lodgings (including relief beds).
30,897	Pieces of Baggage handled.
200,775	Sales at Luncheonette and Restaurant.
87,529	Sales at News Stand.
5,885	Patronized Barber, Tailor and Laundry.
4,723	Attended <b>220</b> Religious Services at Institute and U. S. Marine Hospitals.
581	Cadets and Seamen attended <b>114</b> Lectures in Merchant Marine School; <b>18</b> new students enrolled.
27,933	Social Service Interviews.
6,615	Relief Loans.
2,875	Individual Seamen received Relief.
18,821	Books and magazines distributed.
1,680	Pieces of clothing, and <b>510</b> Knitted Articles distributed.
562	Treated in Dental, Eye, Ear-Nose-Throat & Medical Clinics.
46,675	Attended <b>63</b> entertainments, moving pictures, athletic activities, concerts and lectures.
1,335	Attendance in Apprentices' Room.
99	Missing Seamen found.
839	Positions secured for Seamen.
\$54,697.14	Deposited for <b>854</b> Seamen in Banks; <b>\$6,642.34</b> transmitted to families.
5,778	Attendance in Joseph Conrad Library.
3,586	Telephone Contacts with Seamen.



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