

Church's Work Among the Sailors.



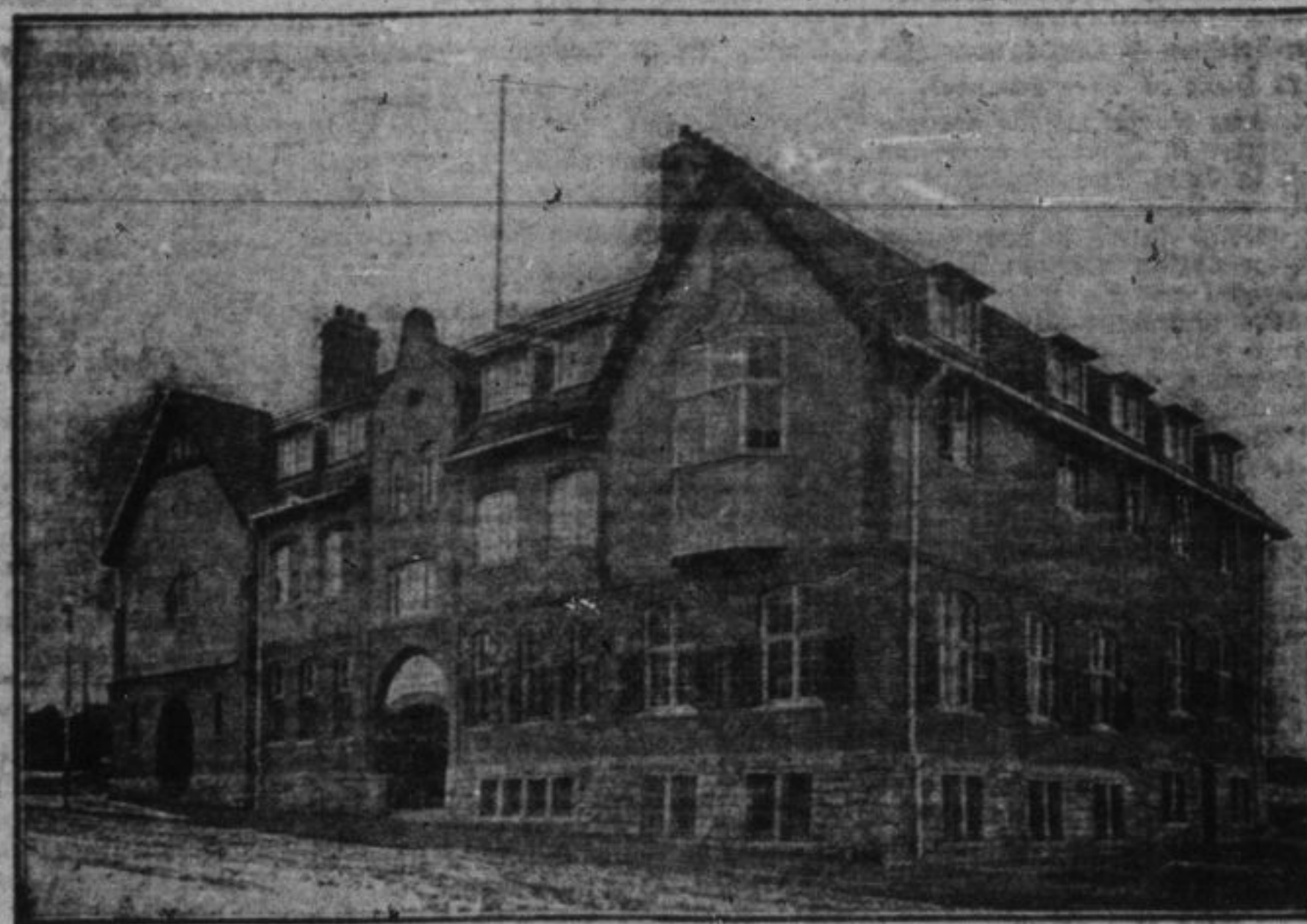
The flag of The Missions to Seamen is probably as well known to most sailors as the flag of their own countries. The "Blue Flag with the Flying Angel" flies over 140 seamen's institutes and churches in all parts of the world and from the stern of 75 mission ships and boats. It is the flag under which 65 clergy of our Church serve as chaplains, while 220 lay readers, engineers and boatmen, etc., are in the employ of this great Church society, "The Missions to Seamen."

We want you to note that name—"The Missions to Seamen"—it is the name of the largest society working for sailors, whose income is nearly \$400,000 per annum. It is a distinctly Church society, yet of such Catholic and Evangelical breadth of spirit that seamen of all nations, colors and creeds crowd into its institutes and churches. Wherever a sailor goes he finds this flag—London or San Francisco, Rotterdam or Rangoon, Cape Town or Cardiff—no sooner is he in port than up the side comes the "Sky Pilot" with a

service is almost just what it was in 1850. An assistant is handing out letters, or advising in the spelling of an unusually difficult word in a letter home. To another worker a sailor makes request for "a bit of reading." "Come on, friend, hold this sack while I fill it," replies the lay reader, after which Jack staggers back to his ship loaded with perhaps 60lbs. of magazines—good ones, not goody-goody. In each sack is a Bible, Prayer and Hymn Book, and a selection of serious books. You can readily see, reader, what all this means in elevating the moral tone on board that ship when she sails.

Those services in the little Sailor's Church, pathetic in the many memorials round its walls, are something unique in church life. Men who hardly ever darken a church door are found there, of all creeds, taking part in the simple, grand old service of our ancient Church. The chaplain at Buenos Ayres, Canon Karney, reports no less than 12,000 attendances of sailors at church last year. Is not this "Casting bread upon the waters?" We may not find it even after many days, but He will.

The Missions to Seamen does its work also very largely afloat. While it is very important to help and befriend "Jack ashore," to rescue him from those who lie in wait for him, and, above all, to bring him under the influence of the Gospel of Jesus Christ through



The Missions to Seamen Institute, Cape Town.

again," they part. The good seed has been sown, let us hope, in some cases at least, on ground that will bring forth even an hundred-fold to God's glory. Then back to the captain. Will he take a "service box," provided with Bibles, Prayer and Hymn Books for all hands, and promise to hold Divine service regularly? He probably sees difficulties in the way, but may be induced to try. At any rate he accepts a bag of miscellaneous literature, which always includes a Bible and Prayer Book.

And here, by the way, is a true story of a Bible in one of these bags. The chaplain for Belfast Lough had on many occasions tried to induce a certain captain to let him hold a service with his men, but he would not even allow him to come on board. "He was always glad, however, to accept a bag of reading," thrown from the mission vessel. One day, after the bag was thrown on board, the captain called out, "Will you come and hold a service?" The chaplain, as surprised as de-

lighted, did not wait for a second invitation. After the service he asked the captain for an explanation. "Well," said he, "this last voyage we were decalmed for a long time. I had read and re-read every bit of paper in that bag you left us except the Bible, which at last, in sheer desperation, I took up. On turning over the pages I noticed that several passages were marked. The thought struck me, 'Well this Book, which I've always thought so useless, seems to have been very useful to somebody.' I read a few of the passages, became interested, read more, and, in the end, I was led by that old Bible to see

the Kingdom of God. The splendid institute at Wellington, New Zealand, was built by a devout Wesleyan lady, the widow of a ship's captain, and vested in the local committee under the Missions to Seamen. The large institute at San Francisco was erected at a cost of \$70,000 within 20 months of the destruction of its predecessor in the disastrous earthquake and fire of 1906, and here we get a very unique piece of brotherliness in that the Missions to Seamen has helped our brethren of the American Church to establish this post by loaning chaplains and subsidizing the American Pacific Coast dioceses to the extent of



Under Full Sail.

cheery, "How are you, boys, I'm the Missions to Seamen parson here." Strong and cordial is the welcome, hearty are the handshakes. "Have you got an institute here, sir?" "Yes, rather," in such and such a street. "Concert to-night at eight, come up twenty minutes before for service. 'Right O, we'll be there.' And there they are, coming in rather sheepishly, all in a bunch, but soon settling down. The chaplain makes it plain that there is no obligation to go into church. His new friends can please themselves, play their billiards, read, write letters, lounge round, do just what suits them; but, as the "Sky Pilot" generally says, "The church is yours, boys; we always have a fifteen minutes service each night, so don't say you never get the chance to worship." The men appreciate the fact that they are not coerced, as many a sailor has said to our chaplains, "The Missions to Seamen always treats you like a gentleman." We fear that sailors are too often alienated by the methods of some sailors' societies, where a man has no sooner entered an institute than some busybody makes fervent enquiries after his soul, or wants to know whether he is saved. The Church just gets to work with the message of salvation without talking about it.

Then, after service, may be, a first-rate concert is provided, two or three hundred appreciative sailors are in the audience, and raise the roof with their applause. "Never," said Miss Genevieve Ward, the famous London tragedienne, "have I experienced so enthusiastic an audience." Just before dispersing the

ministry of the Missions to Seamen, it is no less important that he should be cared for when aboard his ship, and influenced for his eternal good when he is "Jack afloat," and, for the time being, away from the evil influences of his enemies, the crimps and other land-sharks. One or two incidents occurring in the ordinary course of the society's work afloat will illustrate best how the Missions to Seamen cares for him.

It is a squally day. A number of ships are lying weather-bound in the Roadstead. They have just left the home port for a voyage, it may be of several months' duration. The crews are "down on their luck," some because they are leaving home and dear ones, others because, through the enemies we have already referred to, they have wasted in riotous living the hard-earned wages of the last voyage. The sailor's difficulty is the society's opportunity. The mission yacht is speedily on her way to the nearest of the ships. The crew notice her and remark to one another how well she is handled. And well they may, for her skipper, one of the society's chaplains, can sail a boat with the best. As she draws nearer the men can see her flag, which bears on it the Angel of the Revelation flying "in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach." It is the flag of a friendly Power; would that they all might know how friendly, how loving, is that Power.

By the time she is alongside a ladder is thrown over and, in less time than it takes to tell, the chaplain, with his little portable harmonium, is on the deck—not by any means

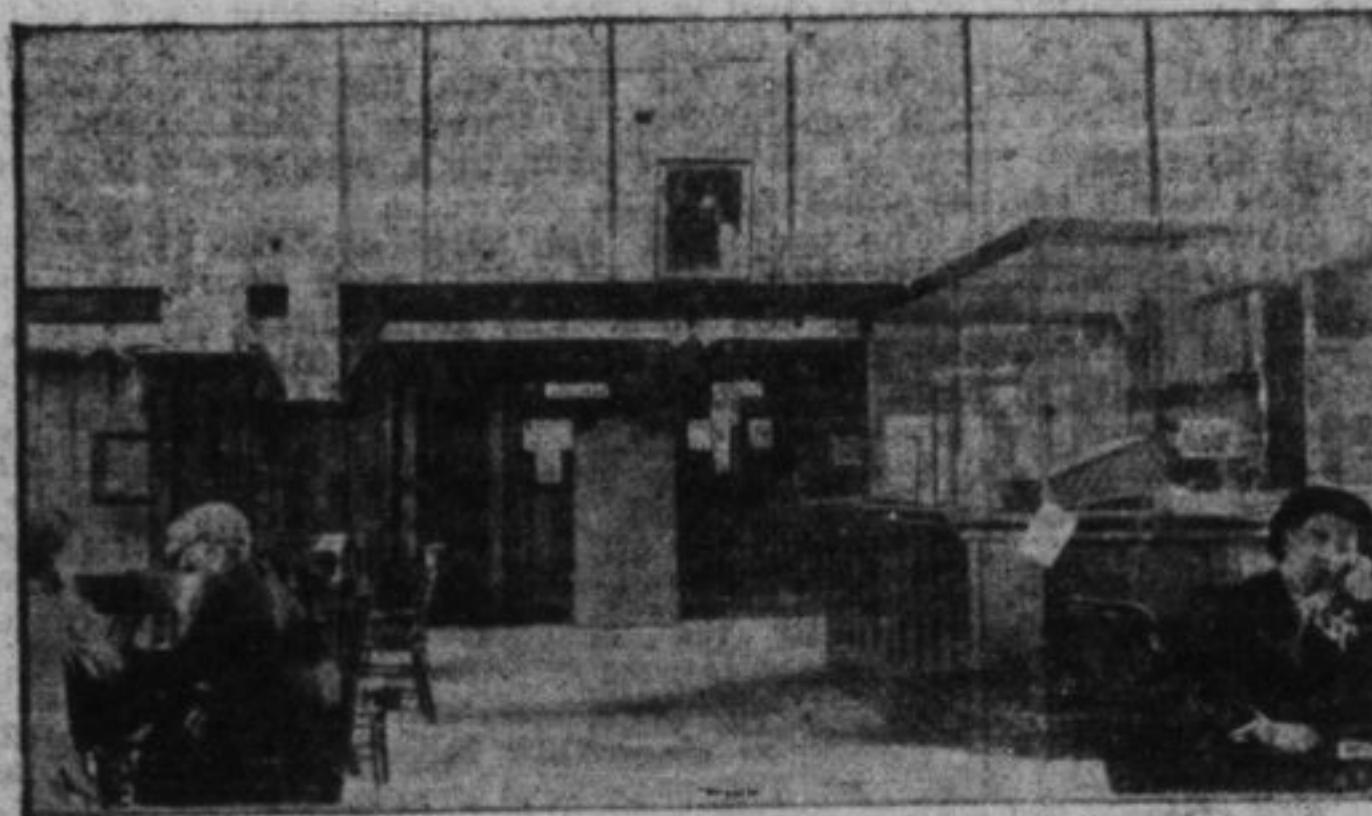
my need of a Saviour, and to seek and accept His Salvation."

The next ship visited is homeward-bound. When the chaplain comes on board he is greeted with enthusiasm as an old friend. "How is this," says he, "you don't know me." "No, sir! but we know the flag; we seem never to have lost sight of it since we left home nearly two years ago. Before we left London we had a good time under it at the Poplar Institute. From London we went to Cape Town, and found it flying there; thence to Sydney, it was there too; the same with 'Frisco; now here we are at Plymouth, and we find it again; and, I suppose, when we get to Antwerp we shall still see it flying. In fact," said the mate, with a hearty laugh, "we don't seem to be able to get away from the

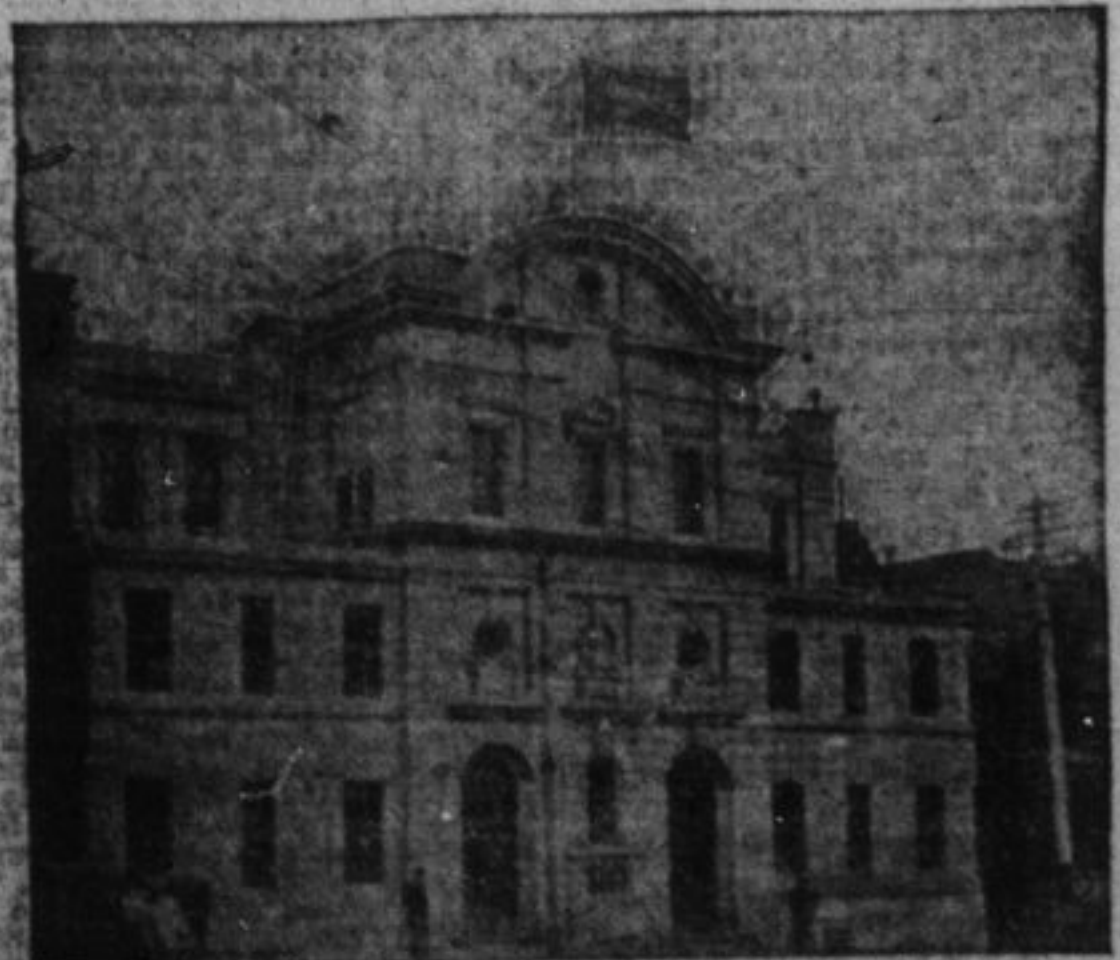
\$50,000 during the past eighteen years, and splendidly has California responded to this lead."

Would that the Canadian Pacific Coast dioceses showed equal enthusiasm and response! Let Canadians try to realize what Canada would be "without its sea trade" on each coast, let them use their imagination and try to understand the deep debt they owe to sailors, and they let the Canadian Church rise to its responsibilities and maintain fitting Church Institute in all its ports for the use of seamen of all nations, remembering that our Lord Jesus Christ found among sailors His closest friends.

Plans have been prepared for the new Baltimore Cathedral.



Interior San Francisco Seamen's Institute.



The Missions to Seamen Institute, Sydney.

chaplain gives out the notices for the week—there will be an athletic contest on Tuesday, a cinematograph display on Thursday, ambulance classes on Tuesday and Friday, Bible class on Friday, social and "sing song" on Saturday night to counteract the special efforts of the saloons, and then the usual Sunday services.

Such would be a typical evening in any Missions to Seamen institute. But this is the merest surface of the work. Over there at the entrance is a bright office. The manager is persuading a sailor who has just been paid off with \$80 to leave the cash in the Mission Savings bank. Jack demurs, but finally leaves it. The amount left at our various institutes in the course of a year amounts to tens of thousands of dollars, and these sums are frequently remitted home by the chaplains to wives who otherwise might have waited in vain for Jack's promised pay. For remember that the system of pay in the British merchant

is an easy matter with the sea that is running. The captain is interviewed. "May I have a talk with the men?" "Yes, the mate shall knock off work for half an hour." Presently a shrill whistle is heard; the men come hurrying, some from aloft and others from other parts of the ship, and are soon gathered in the fore-castle. They are a big shy at first, but a few questions about their voyage, the port they are bound for, and so forth, soon put them at their ease. Then, "Shall we have a hymn, men?" "Well, we are no great singers, but if you'll start we'll join in, as well as we can." An old favorite is chosen which, with the help of the little harmonium, goes very well. A few earnest prayers and a short straight talk follow. The half-hour is up, and the mate is waiting to give the command to "turn-to," for the bad weather has wrought havoc aloft, and he is anxious to get things a-b-shape. So, with a hearty handshake all round, and a "Thank you, sir, hope to see you



Missions to Seamen Steamer, 'Lucina'.

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