

CHRISTMAS CHEER AT SEA

Provision Made by Ship Owners for Passengers and Crew.

ALL GIVEN A MERRY TIME

What Happened During Yuletide to Passengers and Crew of the Steamer.

Nobody who could help it would think of spending Christmas at sea, away from home and friends. But every year there are certainfortunates who cannot help themselves, and when December 24, with all its good cheer and festivity, draws its twilight on some great ship, between port to port, these expatriates think forlornly of all the happiness from which they are separated—that is, if they had no previous experience of Christmas at sea. The experienced voyager is not forlorn, because, for one thing, he knows that even though the Yuletide joys of a great steamer may not be so fascinating as those of home, they have still a good cheer all their own.

On all steamships carrying passengers, and particularly those on the transatlantic runs, the celebration of Christmas is scrupulously observed. This is partly because the keynote of the policy of the big steamship lines is to make their passengers as comfortable as is possible, and partly because among seamen the celebration of Christmas is always popular. Every steamer that sails from American or European ports late in December, with the certain knowledge that its schedule will keep it at sea over the 25th, carries among the other tons of good things in its hold a full complement of Christmas trees for the passengers of every class, and for the different messes of the crew. Plenty of Vermont and Rhode Island turkey, mince pie, goose, plum pudding and the "fixings" that go to make a Christmas dinner what it ought to be, are stored in the larder.

The most lavish of all high-sea Christmas celebrations are those on the German ships, for although the English make a great deal of the feast, after all it is the Germans who celebrate it most. On the English ships Christmas is more or less of the staid function that it is in all respectable British homes. On the German ships everybody aboard, from captain down to the poorest steerable passenger, including the wealthy occupant of the "royal suite," joints heart and soul in the festivity. There is a spontaneous exuberance about the day's events, Teutonic and homelike.

For the children on the ships. Children are always at a premium on the ships of both nations. In fact, the staidest, most dignified "ocean grayhound" skipper, with his gold-laced uniform and "Commander, R. N. R." after his name, will get down on his knees in the middle of the saloon floor on a stormy Christmas morning, up where the "roaring forties" dip to the north, and explain the intricacies of the electrical apparatus which lights the Christmas tree to some tiny youngster, whose unaffected joy in the unique entertainment has gripped the entire company. This is a fact. Any one can witness such a sight, unnatural as it may seem to those who have only seen the skipper on the bridge of his ship.

There was once a man who had celebrated Christmas in many strange places, but never at sea. He was in London, living all alone at a club, with only men like himself for company, and a cable message came, bidding him get at once for the states. He wandered through the club all that day, remarking that it "was a beastly bore having to travel at Christmas time." Why he said this it would be difficult to explain, for it had been years since he had really known what Christmas meant at home. It was just that he disliked the idea of being away from fixed customs on the day of days in the year.

The man went on board his ship at Liverpool, along with a meager company of unfortunates, who, like himself, were condemned to travel in the holiday season. Before the ship had passed Holyhead, the man had found another man in the smoking room with whom he could bemoan misfortunes. And other people in the dining saloon that night said the same thing. What should they do, they asked each other? Certainly, they ought to get together and arrange some sort of a celebration, if just to break up the routine of the voyage.

So one of them went to the purser, and told him their sad tale, and the purser smiled. A good purser will always smile at any hard luck story.

"My dear sir," he said, "don't you worry about Christmas. We'll give you as fitting a celebration as any you've ever had in your life."

During the next two days the preparations began to take shape. Stewards broke out of the cargo holds sturdy fir-trees, one for the cabin, one for second class and one for the steerage. Other stewards unearthed quantities of greens, holly and mistletoe, which were draped about the cabins, in smoking rooms, card

rooms, the women's rooms and all over the ship. A huge piece of mistletoe was pendant over the stairway, and the captain laughingly warned women passengers that they must expect to take the consequences if they failed to keep to the sides of the stairs.

Presently, a notice appeared on the bulletin boards saying that if any passengers intended to exchange presents with each other the Christmas tree stewards would see to the hanging of the parcels; and another notice followed, asking for volunteers for a concert Sunday night. A comic opera prima donna, on her way to fill an engagement at abnormal rates in a Broadway production, immediately offered to take charge of the arrangements as first assistant to the ubiquitous purser. By this time, the atmosphere of this particular vessel, steaming along through head seas at a speed of twenty knots, had become very similar to that one might expect to find in some English country house or in any well-to-do American family. Everybody was cheerful, everybody was smiling, everybody was looking forward to Christmas.

When Christmas eve was at hand, the smoking room habitués decided that they must do something on their own account for the cause of Yuletide cheer. They began by organizing a chorus of waltzes, pledged to gather bright and early the next morning and wake the ship according to the good old English custom. Then the man who had thought himself so unlucky to have to travel across the ocean at Christmas time proposed a little extra cheer for those of the ship's company who perhaps needed it most. He suggested a collection to purchase a supply of dainties to be added to the Christmas fare of the steerage. His proposal was carried enthusiastically, and a substantial sum filled the hat after it had gone the rounds.

The purser was appealed to, and that ever-smiling person took up the proposition with enthusiasm.

"Of course, we give the steerage a regular Christmas dinner, you know," he said. "But this money will buy some extra fruit and candy and things to make Christmas a great deal more unusual for them."

Celebrating Christmas Day. Long before the breakfast bugle blew, the volunteer waiters, were assembled on the promenade deck, and they took up their march from deck to deck, singing as they went, with special pauses before the state rooms of the prettiest girl on the ship and the most popular little boy. It was a dull gray Christmas morning, rather more than 1,500 miles out, smoky above and somewhat choppy below, so that the course of the waiters was not very even one; but they made up for the suspicious stagger of their progress by the lustiness of their combined voices, chanting:

Come, all you merry gentlemen, Let nothing you dismay. Remember, Christ our Saviour Was born on Christmas day. When on the water-washed manger He lay, He was born on Christmas day. Later, when passengers had dressed and braved the rolling in the saloon, they found a full-sized Christmas tree, twinkling with electric lights. Scattered through the branches were parcels, presents exchanged by various passengers who knew each other, and by the officers of the ship. Later still, they sat down to a dinner that could only be described as "bang-up," followed by toasts and speeches, with the captain as toastmaster, and a "bully" concert, in which the prima donna took a leading role. And afterward, when some passengers went out on the wet decks for a good-night stroll and a last cigar, they heard the sounds of singing and laughter coming from the other parts of the great ship. The second cabin, the steerage, the stewards, the engine room force, the fo'c's'ite, and all aboard, were celebrating the Christmas tide.

"It was the experience of my life," said the man who had bemoaned the hard luck of a Christmas crossing. "In all my life I have not had an experience like it. It made me realize, as I never had before, the real meaning of Christmas, and by that I don't mean the cant talk of the 'sky pilot' persons you know. I mean the realization of Christmas in its broadest sense. Yes, I think the experience did me good."

Preparing for Ship's Holiday. On a German ship the celebration would have been even more elaborate. All German ships carry crates of Christmas tree trimmings, of the innumerable kinds that come from the toy-makers of Nuremberg—tinsel, gilt and all colors known—and as a general thing they also have toy villages which are set up about the tree, so that it has a typical German setting. The bigger German ships, which have separate playrooms for the children, also have special trees and special celebrations for the little ones. One of the stewards is dressed up as Santa Claus and distributes a few goodies to make the youngsters know that it is truly Christmas.

At dinner the different courses are brought in by stewards gotten up in Santa Claus costumes. At each plate are little favors, together with snappers, containing gaudy paper caps and such trifles. The atmosphere of carefree hilarity and enjoyment is like that at home. The dignified officers cast

The BEE'S Junior Birthday Book



This is the Day We Celebrate

December 25, 1911.

Table listing names and addresses of children for the Junior Birthday Book, including Eva Auguston, Mildred Beirdorff, Himan Berlnt, etc.



WILLIAM MCDANIEL, 208 South Twenty-third St.



MARY BRUNNER, 143 Westerfield Ave.

their dignity to the winds. In all probability the captain goes from the quarters of one class to the others, to extend the greetings of the day to the passengers.

A Life Sentence of suffering with throat and lung-trouble is quietly commuted by Dr. King's New Discovery. 50c and \$1.00. For sale by Beaton Drug Co.

MUCH OF STATE IS UNTILLED

Labor Commissioner Gives Out Figures on Vacant Land.

TAKES THE STATE BY COUNTIES

About Two-Thirds of All Land is Vacant—Figures Show Farms Are Not Cultivated to Advantage.

Deputy State Labor Commissioner Guye has issued some statistics concerning the amount of vacant land in the state and calling attention to the great waste not only from this vacant land, but also to the fact that much which is cultivated is not utilized to its best advantage.

Table showing the amount of vacant land in the state by county, including Adams, Antelope, Banner, Boone, Blaine, Box Butte, Boyd, Brown, Buffalo, Burr, Butler, Cass, Cedar, Chas. Doherty, Cheyenne, Colfax, Conner, Custer, Dawes, Dawson, Deuel, Dixon, Dodge, Douglas, Dundy, Franklin, Frontier, Furness, Garden, Garfield, Gosper, Grant, Greeley, Hall, Hamilton, Harlan, Hayes, Hitchcock, Holt, Johnson, Kearney, Keith, Keya Paha, Kimball, Knox, Lancaster, Lincoln, Logan, Loup, Madison, McPherson, Morrill, Nemaha, Nelso, Nuckolls, Otoe, Pawnee, Perkins, Phelps, Pierce, Platte, Polk, Rock, Rock Willow, Richardson, Saline, Sarpy, Saunders, Scotts Bluff, Sherman, Stanton, Thayer, Thomas, Thurston, Valley, Washington, Wayne, Webster, Wheeler, York.

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Gas Company Has Christmas Party

The Omaha Gas company was host at a Christmas tree party held in the Howard street offices yesterday afternoon, the guests being the employees of the company and their children. Each person present was given a gift of a useful nature and the children were each given a doll or a watch. The following program was given:

Judge Paroles Boy as Christmas Gift

Clay Vallandigham, the former Loyal hotel bellboy who stole a suit case containing more than \$100 worth of merchandise and fled to New York city, was paroled to his father by Judge Lee S. Estelle in the criminal division of the district court late yesterday afternoon. Judge Estelle said it had been shown that the boy had not been in trouble before, and he believed by paroling him he would give him a valuable Christmas present in the shape of an opportunity to redeem himself and also bestow Christ-

mas cheer upon his parents, who are respectable Louisville, Ky., citizens. The boy's mother will come to Omaha and he and his father will spend Christmas day with her here.

Do you know that more real danger lurks in a common cold than in any other of the minor ailments? The safe way is to take Chamberlain's Cough Remedy, a thoroughly reliable preparation and rid yourself of the cold as quickly as possible. This remedy for sale by all druggists.



YOU CAN TELL A BLATZ BOTTLE A BLOCK AWAY. The Finest Beer Ever Brewed. Tell "George" to bring you Blatz. Watch for the label—the triangle. It stands for quality. "Always the same Good Old Blatz" from Milwaukee. BLATZ COMPANY 602-810 Douglas Street, Omaha, Neb. Phone: Douglas 6662

One of these 10,000 MISSION CLOCKS is yours if you will secure two subscriptions to a weekly magazine.

Advertisement for Wabash R. R. featuring a train and the text: Low Round Trip Rates to FLORIDA and CUBA. Also to All Other Winter Tourist Points in the South and Southwest. VIA WABASH R. R. SHORTEST LINE TO ST. LOUIS Double Daily Service. All information regarding rates, routes, berths, etc., cheerfully furnished. Agent for All Steamship Lines. H. C. Shields, G. A. P. D., Omaha Neb. WABASH CITY TICKET OFFICE, 1316 FARNAM ST.

THIS 5-DAY MISSION CLOCK of black Flemish-bred kiln-dried oak with raised metal numerals, large brass pendulum disk, and ornamental side weights, cup cell strikes the half hour and cathedral chime on the hour. SIZE 3 1/2 x 12, in. at no cash cost to you. A Super Cmas Gift—A Perfect Timekeeper. A handsome object of American art, suitable for the finest home. Send us your name and address and we will tell you what to do to get it. It is worth the asking for.

WRITE TONIGHT TO MISSION CLOCK DEPT. Bann Building, Scranton, Pa.

Interest allowed in savings department at 3% per annum... The United States National Bank of Omaha gives prompt and courteous service, affords absolute security and has a most convenient location.

Advertisement for US National Bank with logo and text: Northwest Corner Sixteenth and Farnam Streets. Capital \$600,000 Surplus \$600,000.

What Our School Children Are Doing—X



KINDERGARTNERS AT MONMOUTH PARK SCHOOL HAVE A CHRISTMAS TREE.

The Bee Building

Every man, woman and child in Omaha knows where it is and everyone who has ever been here knows how to find it. This is only one of the many advantages in having an office in THE BEE BUILDING

- Room 300—is a choice corner office having a north and west exposure... Room 410—Has a south and west exposure which makes a well lighted office... Room 415—Don't pay for dark room since when you can rent a private office for the same amount... Room 420—This room is located near the elevator and has a total of 135 square feet of floor space... Room 425—is 11x13 1/2 feet and has two large windows on the court... Room 430—is 11x13 1/2 feet and has two large windows on the court...

THE BEE BUILDING CO. Bee Business Office. 17th and Farnam Sts.