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OF

New Century Pamphlets for Seamen

Seamen afloat are the masters of nature because they understand her laws and pull together for a common end; ashore, they are the fools of every schemer because they are ignorant of their rights and divided against themselves. Fellow-workers, let us know our little book!



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OF AMERICA

1901



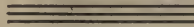
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PRESS OF HOLLISTER BROTHERS
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

1901

A Word of Greeting

The one word, "seaman" should be enough to at once put the reader and writer of these papers on a good understanding with each other. As seamen, though we may be born to different mother-tongues, we have learned to think in one language—the language of our common sufferings and our common hopes. As seamen, let us assume the mutual right to advise and the mutual claim to attention on matters concerning our own affairs, just as we would assume that right and that claim in the affairs of practical seamanship.

That the seaman's present lot is by no means a happy one is not due to any lack of advice. As a class, we have been preached at and prayed for by all sorts and conditions of persons, friendly and otherwise. These counsels have been useless in the main; for the reason, chiefly, that the persons offering them, not being seamen, have been unable to put themselves in true touch with the seamen's conditions. A great deal depends upon the point of view. What may be true to one man may be false to another; as, for instance, it may be sunrise to the man at the masthead, while it is yet dawn to the man on the maindeck. Thus, most of the advice so generously bestowed upon us, while feasible enough in the circumstances of shore life, has been utterly impracticable in the case of the seaman.

We have been told that much of our hardship is due to "natural improvidence" (that is, to drink), and that the remedy in the case is to straighten up and lead a model life. This is equivalent to advising a man overboard in midocean to save his life by getting out of the water. To throw him a grindstone would be a more practical measure.

The notorious fact is, that while the conditions of the man ashore—his chances of getting and keeping work—doubtless depend to some extent upon sobriety and thrift, the chances of the seaman in these respects depend, under the crimping system, upon his character as a good spender. It follows that, so far as the seaman's character is molded by the circumstances upon which he is dependent for employment, "natural improvidence" is an effect of his conditions, not a cause of them. Any advice on the subject, to be worth anything, must be directed to removing the cause, when the effect will disappear of itself.

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Generally speaking, it may be said that so far as the interest taken in the seaman by his friends ashore has been effective at all, it has tended to weaken rather than to strengthen him. It has sapped his self-dependence and made of him either an unreasoning rebel or a spiritless discontent. By dwelling upon his wrongs and referring the causes thereof to his own shortcomings; by seeking the remedy in the grace of God, the charity of the shipowner or the mercy of the crimp, the seaman is impressed at once with a sense of helplessness in himself and of hopelessness in others.

What is needed is to appeal to the seaman's pride, not to his shame; to show him that he must help himself; to show him that he can, and how he can, do it.

Every improvement made in the seaman's life, and there have been many, has been due in the first place to the seaman's own efforts, through the power of organization. Where the best efforts of the seaman's friends ashore have failed, the efforts of the seaman himself have succeeded, because they have been based upon a true appreciation of the evils to be dealt with, and because they have been backed by the force of self-help.

Organization, to be permanent, must be founded and maintained upon devotion to the principle that "in union is strength"; to be successful, it must be guided by intelligence. Only by education can we realize that principle and attain to that intelligence necessary to the advancement of our conditions and the achievement of that justice, honor and happiness which is the due of every seaman, and which should be the object in life of every self-respecting human being.

To further the education of our fellow-seamen is the purpose of the following pages. To every seaman, whether a member of a union or not, they will appeal with special interest—to the union seaman as a source of pride and encouragement; to the non-union seaman as the inspiration of a hope for better times in his calling and the guidance in a duty to join the only movement that can make that hope a reality.

Nothing ever "just happens" in the world; everything has its cause. The success or failure of the seamen's unions will not follow as the accident of good or bad times, the excess of the demand over the supply of labor, or vice versa, but as the direct result of intelligent or unintelligent action in those circumstances over which the seamen themselves have control. Let every reader bear in mind, therefore, that upon himself rests the responsibility for the future of our great work; that it will succeed or fail in proportion as he brings to it devotion and knowledge, or selfishness and ignorance.

INTERNATIONAL SEAMEN'S UNION OF AMERICA.

Organization—What It Means

A hundred years ago there were no seamen's unions in the United States. The life of the seaman in those days was summed up in two periods; namely, a hard time afloat and a good time ashore. There was no thought in his mind of any attempt to make life at sea more endurable and life ashore more rational. At sea he suffered like a beast, and consoled himself with the reflection that, at least, he was at liberty to have a beast's time when ashore. He accepted the hardship of his life as natural and inevitable, and regarded its pleasures as a form of compensation which it was his duty to secure the most of. Outward bound, his maxim was, "Grin and bear it;" homeward bound, it was "Let us eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we ship."

Note the change in the seaman's attitude at the beginning of the new century! The idea of organization on trade lines, which has spread so rapidly among all classes of wageworkers, has taken hold of the seaman with all the force of irresistible truth. To-day the seaman of intelligence who has seen this truth would as soon think of questioning the winds or tides as of disputing the necessity and power of trade-unionism. To-day the intelligence of our class, as represented in our unions, recognizes that the circumstances of life at sea are largely within our own control; that we cannot excuse indifference to our own welfare by the plea of helplessness; that there is but one limit to what we may accomplish in improvement—namely, the limit of the numbers organized.

Truth, once seen, can never be observed. It will compel acknowledgment and force action. The truth of organization, once seen by a few seamen, has compelled them to work for the spread of that power among their fellow-workers. The result we find in the seamen's unions in the different seaports of the country. These unions form the links of a chain which, before the century just opening is well under way, will bind the seamen of all nations, tongues and colors in one great movement for the common good. In the "Brotherhood of the Sea" the characteristics of the seafaring class, which, in the individual, are a source of weakness, will, by the mere fact of combination, form a source of strength that will be invincible to the assaults of the common enemy.

The formation and growth of these unions is the work, not of a hundred, but of less than twenty years. During the greater part of the century, while the workers in shore trades were organizing and enjoying the benefits of that method, the seamen remained at the mercy of their enemies. To the pioneers of organization among the seamen it seemed for a time as though the nature of our calling might, after all, prove the impossibility of mutual help. First, the law was against us; then, there was the admixture of races among us, our inability to resist imposition at sea, the hostility of the officials, the false sentiment of the public, the short stay in port—now in one part of the world, now in another—and, finally, the power of the crimp. All these features combined to form a problem that seemed well-nigh hopeless.

But no sooner was the first seamen's union formed than these difficulties began to disappear, or to appear in the light of actual helps. It was seen that by altering the law in the interest of the seaman we would have in the support of the Government a power superior to that of the crimp; that though we might be natives of different countries, speaking different tongues, we were first of all seamen, and working-men, and that an earnest appeal to the interests of the men of that calling and class would unite them, to the exclusion of race or other prejudices. And so, in numerous other respects, the seamen's unions demonstrated the power of organization to transform the very circumstances that make the seaman helpless as an individual into elements of strength when acting with others of his calling.

Organization is order, discipline and, consequently, efficiency. As an instance of organization, the seamen's unions are an application by the seamen themselves to their personal affairs of the principle that applies in their daily lives at sea. Imagine a case in which, when a vessel is being put about, every man should act on his own responsibility, with the sole idea of getting ahead of the other man—the fellows forward shifting their sheets, booms and yards before the fellows aft had started theirs—and you get a fair idea of the actual condition among the unorganized workers, where each man tries to get an advantage of every other. The result is the same in both cases—confusion and failure.

Organization, by uniting the workers in an orderly and disciplined movement to better their conditions, accomplishes in that regard just what the application of the same principle accomplishes in the management of a vessel.

The union of the members of a family is the first and strongest bond between men. The union of the members of a trade (i. e., the trade-union) comes next in the order of

progress and power. Each trade has its own peculiarities, which only the men following it are competent to deal with. The common interest of men in a given trade, which attracts and holds them to the task of regulating the conditions under which they earn their daily bread, develops naturally into a common interest in the general affairs of life. In its nature, therefore, the trade-union is not only the most powerful agency for the promotion of the special interests of a given class, but it is the foundation of all other movements in the interest of society at large.

“In union is strength.” By the union of any number of men the individual becomes as strong as the whole. Take a number of ropeyarns, useless, as ropeyarns, for anything but junk—knot, wind and marl them, and the result is a selvagee that will hold where rope will slip. Take a number of metals, each of little use in itself, weld or mold them in appropriate kinds and quantities, and we have the bell that makes music to the soul, the blade that will split a hair or the projectile that will pierce the bowels of a mountain. Take a number of men, the weak with the strong—each equally the helpless creature of our industrial system,—weld them by the influence of a common cause, and we have a trade-union that is all-powerful to protect and secure justice for all.

Organization is nature’s law. It is the law that keeps the stars in their courses, that regulates the tides, that guides the winds, that governs the actions and develops the properties of all bodies and forces. When men discover the operation of this law in a given case they create a science, by which they are enabled to forecast events and to regulate actions for their own benefit. The discovery, then, of the law that governs man as a factor in the industrial world, and the knowledge of its operation, is the science of trade-unionism. The seaman who ignores or defies that science is as foolish as the navigator who should ignore or defy the sciences of astronomy and mathematics.

Organization is wisdom—the wisdom of numbers. “No one is wise alone.” In the struggle of to-day, when the individual conditions are governed not by individual wisdom, but by competition with the general mass of men, the wisest may, and, in fact, must learn from the simplest, and the simplest from the wisest, since in the power to affect each other’s conditions they are equal. The day has passed forever when the man of brains could act without reference to the future of the man of brawn, secure in the belief that the future held for himself both wealth and ease. To-day, and probably for all time, the man of brains and the man of brawn must go hand in hand, each recognizing the duty to aid the other, each dependent for advancement upon obedience to that duty.

Organization is morality. It is an expression, an example, probably the most practical of the kind ever given to the world, of men's obligation to each other in the furtherance of the general welfare, of unselfishness, of devotion to right, as opposed to might, of the principle that "an injury to one is the concern of all," of that attribute—the highest, as well as the most human, of all the virtues—the love of one's fellowman.

Objects of the Union, and Duties of the Members

The first object of the seamen's unions is, of course, to raise wages, to reduce the daily hours of labor and to remedy the hundred and one abuses to which the seaman is subject, afloat and ashore.

The seaman who depends upon himself, or rather upon the crimp, for the terms of employment is paid less and treated worse than any man in all the ranks of labor. Not only are his wages ridiculously small but he is systematically and remorselessly robbed of even that pittance. He is continually at the mercy of his enemies, who grow rich and fat upon his misfortunes. The seaman who depends upon organization to protect him in demanding decent wages and fair treatment has already secured many advantages in these respects. To secure these advantages for all seamen, all seamen must organize. All seamen wish these advantages, and would no doubt ask for them if consulted in the matter. But wishing and asking are of no avail unless backed by the only power that can make them effective—the power of a trade-union. The man who employs labor never pays more wages than he is forced to. The trade-union, being the only power that can enable men to agree upon a demand for fair wages, and to withhold their services until these are granted, is the only power that can force the employer to grant them.

The main object of the seamen's unions, then, is to secure a rate of wages based upon the amount and the nature of the labor performed, and to secure these wages to the seaman himself, as against the impositions and thieveries of other classes. Other objects, equally important in the end, are: Shortening of the working day in port; observance of Sundays and holidays, in port and at sea; improvement of food; enlargement of forecastles; increase in the number of men carried in each vessel, and the total abolition of that hideous, soul-destroying evil, "Buckoism."

Some of these objects can be accomplished directly by organization; others can only be secured through the passage of laws, which, in turn, is an object that in itself can only be secured by organization. Laws are made by men to serve

their own personal ends, not to serve the good of other men, and particularly not when the interests of the latter are directly opposed to those of the former. Most of the law in the seaman's case has been made by the shipowners, and, consequently, in the shipowners' interests, because the seamen, as individuals, did not know how to make laws for themselves, and, even if they had known, were not able to exercise any influence at the seat of legislation. But the seamen, acting collectively, have already proved that they are able not only to draft laws in their own interest, but to secure their passage, and afterward to enforce them. This the seamen have not only proved to be possible—they have actually done it; done it through their organizations.

The further purposes of the seamen's unions are, to educate the members of our craft in those matters that directly affect our interests, and by so doing to liberate the seaman from that bondage, of the body and of the mind, that is the result of ignorance; to instill a spirit of self-dependence and self-respect; to bury the dead; to care for the shipwrecked and distressed; to inspire courage, and to create a feeling of confidence in the seaman—confidence in himself and his fellow-workers. Through the seamen's unions the public, too, will be educated to a correct view of our affairs and to a correct judgment of our work for the improvement of them. In this way the false impressions of the public, which have led to a feeling of contempt and antagonism toward us, will be removed, and in their stead will grow a sentiment of respect for our calling and a willingness to assist us in achieving our aims. By organization the seaman and the shipowner or shipmaster will be brought together in arranging the terms of employment, to the exclusion of the crimps, "shipping agents" and all other classes of middlemen who live by their power to keep employer and employee apart, until they consent to pay tribute for permission to transact their own business.

Strikes and other labor troubles are the result, in many instances, of the failure of either party to meet the other in a free and fair discussion of their mutual affairs. By bringing the seaman face to face with his employer the seamen's unions reduce the danger of strikes, and thus substitute conference for conflict, agreement for aggression.

In order that these purposes and objects may be fulfilled certain duties are imposed upon every member, which he must observe and faithfully perform. When the seaman joins a union of his craft he takes a solemn obligation to treat every other member as a brother. The first duty of a union man is to keep this obligation constantly in mind and to endeavor in every way to live up to it, in letter and spirit. He should

endeavor to regard himself as the union, not as merely a little part of it; to recognize that faithfulness to the union means faithfulness to himself; to recognize that the orders of the union are his own orders—that its affairs are his own affairs. The man who merely pays dues to a union and stops at that, leaving the real work of the organization to his fellow members, is not a good union man. The seamen's unions of to-day were born, and have lived and grown, in the spirit of devotion that stops at no sacrifice of personal ends, so long as the general welfare could be served. This spirit has led our members to suffer cheerfully that their comrades might reap the benefits of their adherence to union principles. These benefits the seamen of to-day are now enjoying; this spirit they, too, must display if they hope to retain the advantages already gained and to make further progress on the same lines.

It is the duty of a union man to uphold every other in obeying the laws of the union, and to condemn him in disobeying them; to so conduct himself, at work and at play, that his example will make converts and friends to the union. Above all, it is the duty of a union man to respect the will of the majority, as much when it is against as when it is in favor of his own views. The views of the greatest number must prevail at all times or the whole work of the union must fail. Remember, the majority is always right, for the reason that action of any kind is only possible by the agreement of the greatest number.

Seamen's Union—History

The man who never looks behind never gets ahead. To see the future we must know the past. To lay the course of the labor movement we must note its history, just as, to lay the course of a vessel, the navigator must note exactly his point of departure. The history of the seamen's unions has its lessons and its inspiration for every man who would lend a hand in the great work of improving industrial life.

First, in the order of its achievements, is the Sailors' Union of the Pacific. To seamen of all grades, the world over, and to the organized workers generally, as well, the name of that organization stands as a striking example of the power of trade-unionism. To its own members it has been a comfort and a protection; to the workers of the world it has been a beacon light that shone the brighter the darker the times.

In the early '80s affairs among the men on the Pacific Coast had reached the limit of endurance for those who still retained a spark of manhood. The situation may be described by the phrase, "Hunger and Hard Graft." Practically, the notorious deepwater conditions prevailed in the matters of shipping, food, treatment, etc., while the work itself was of the hardest and most exacting. Ashore, the crimp had full swing; at sea, the bucko was undisputed. It mattered not how much wages might rise or fall, for in the end the crimp got everything.

This condition had prevailed for a long time, and was becoming rapidly worse, when, in 1885, a few men got together and decided upon common action against the abuses to which they were subject. At this time the whole country was stirred by the spirit of industrial discontent and industrial organization. The seamen of the Pacific Coast, taking courage from the efforts of their fellow workers, decided to form a trade-union. So, on March 6, 1885, they met on Folsom Street Dock, in San Francisco, and banded themselves together under the name of the Coast Seamen's Union. The surroundings might well have discouraged any body of men less inured to hardship or less driven by force of circumstances.

The night was wet and windy. The speakers addressed the gathering from a lumber pile. In the crowd that listened to the gospel of working-class emancipation on that memorable

night were men of the very classes which the seamen were met to form battle against. But the heart of the crimp was light. He sneered at the bare thought of the seamen sticking together for their own good. The event proved, however, that although the crimp might be a good judge of the seaman in despair, he could not anticipate the power of the seaman in hope and determination.

The Coast Seamen's Union, formed on the lumber pile, adjourned to a small room and proceeded to business. The first work of the Union was marked by a degree of ambition natural to men newly inspired with faith in their cause. A Union shipping-office was opened, followed by the establishment of a Union boarding-house. By these means the Union aimed to secure not only the seaman's chances of getting employment, but also his chances of living while awaiting work. What the shipping-office and boarding-house failed to accomplish in practical results was amply made up in the experience that subsequently enabled the Union to make progress in other and greater things.

In the following years there were successes and failures; but always the confidence of the members in their Union grew, and with that its future was assured. In 1887 the "Coast Seamen's Journal" was first issued. Though at first but a humble sheet, ridiculed by its enemies as a mere abortion of journalism, the "Journal" has lived and increased in power and influence, until it has become one of the leading labor papers of the world. In 1891 the Union again opened a shipping-office, which was conducted with great success for a time. During the same year an amalgamation was formed between the Coast Seamen's Union and the Steamship Sailors' Protective Union. The two unions thus combined represented the seamen employed on both steam and sailing vessels on the Pacific Coast, under the name of the Sailors' Union of the Pacific.

In 1892 the Union, recognizing that the maritime law, as it then existed, prevented anything like permanent progress in the betterment of the seaman's lot, elected a legislative committee for the purpose of considering the law in all its phases and its effects upon the seaman, with the object of drafting a bill that would meet the needs of the case. To the work thus begun and kept up to the present time is due the passage of those important measures, the Maguire and White Acts (passed in 1895 and 1898, respectively), which have to a great extent freed the seaman from the power of the crimp and placed in his own hands the power to make a fair contract for his services, and to prevent the violation of that contract by his employer.

When we reflect that the maritime law of the country is supported by the traditions of centuries and backed by the most powerful interests in the shipping and business world, it will be seen that the victory of the seamen in this matter is the strongest possible proof of the power that lies in organization to right the oldest and most extensively backed wrong.

During the long period of hard times which began in 1893, the Union passed through a number of experiences which tested to the fullest degree its capacity to endure adversity. The unflinching resistance of the Union prevented the cutting of wages to the lowest possible figure. In the excitement of the times many crimes were committed against ships and seamen, with the double object of bringing the Union into public disrepute and of forcing the members through fear to abandon it. The Union's enemies thought by these means to accomplish that which they were helpless to do in fair fight. The prosecutions of Union members which followed these crimes failed utterly and ignominiously in every case. The Union came out of the ordeal triumphant. By the devotion and courage of the members the Union rose in the estimation and confidence of the public, and gained that strength which enabled it, when times improved, to assume full control of the seamen's interests, and to establish itself firmly and permanently in every seaport of the Pacific Coast, from Puget Sound to the Hawaiian Islands.

The history of the seamen's unions on the Great Lakes and the Atlantic Coast is in general the same as that of the organization just described. The seaman's grievances being everywhere of the same general kind, and the means adopted for their cure everywhere the same in character, the same experiences and the same results have everywhere followed.

The Lake Seamen's Union, organized in 1863, has existed continuously for thirty-seven years. In that period the seamen of the Lakes have seen the conditions of their calling change from the small sailing vessel to the monster steamer and the tow-barge; from the small shipowner to the great corporation. These changes, while increasing the power of the seaman's employers, have hindered the work of organization among the seamen themselves by the consequent change in the character of the men employed. To a great extent the seaman was displaced by the "deckhand," who, being to all intents and purposes a landsman, was not fitted either by inclination or capacity to unite with seamen. But, in spite of these and other drawbacks, the Lake Seamen's Union persevered in the determination that the men employed on the Lakes—wheelmen, lookouts and deckhands—should, sooner or later, recognize their common interests. In this instance,

as in all others where the true spirit of trade-unionism prevails, success has rewarded constancy and persistency. The Lake Seamen's Union is to-day a healthy and vigorous body, rapidly increasing in membership and influence in all the ports of the Lakes.

The Atlantic Coast Seamen's Union, organized in 1889, has throughout its career maintained the work of bringing together the seamen of the Eastern seaboard, in the face of the greatest difficulties. The crimping system prevailed in this locality to a greater extent, probably, than in any other in the country. Much of the time and resources of this body have been expended in the effort to shake off the crimp. In the circumstances, progress has necessarily been slow and attended by temporary failures and discouragements. But with each victory the future has become easier, so that now, for the first time, the seamen of the Atlantic Coast enjoy a degree of independence in arranging the terms of employment. The certain result of devotion to the principles of organization is well illustrated by the Atlantic Coast Seamen's Union, as it now exists. After many years of seemingly hopeless conflict with the ancient enemies of their calling the seamen of the Atlantic Coast are realizing their own powers, and increasing them day by day.

Previous to 1892 the seamen's unions had existed independently of each other. It was realized, however, that organization, to be thoroughly effective, must be national as well as local. So, in that year the seamen's unions of the Lakes, the Atlantic and the Pacific joined hands under the name of the International Seamen's Union of America. By this step the three unions became one in all matters of equal interest. The respective unions continued to regulate wages and other local affairs according to local conditions, but in matters of law and their relations to each other all were regulated by the International Union. While the unions had always maintained the most friendly relations, assisting each other whenever possible, it was but natural that differences of opinion should exist on some points, particularly as to the legislative measures best calculated to redress certain evils. This state of affairs was fatal to the hope of securing favorable legislation. The International Union, at its conventions, discussed these differences and came to an agreement, by which the seamen united in the demand for certain measures. To the influence thus exercised by the International Union is mainly due the passage of those laws which have proved so beneficial to the seamen in every section of the country.

Another advantage gained by the International Union is the agreement for an exchange of cards. By this arrange-

ment any member of one union arriving within the jurisdiction of another is entitled to all the privileges of the latter upon the simple presentation of his membership card and the payment of dues. The same principle has been extended to the seamen of other countries by an agreement for the exchange of cards between members of the Sailors' Union of the Pacific and the Australian Seamen's Union, while a similar arrangement is now being discussed with the British Seamen's Union. Thus, the question of forming a world-wide union of seamen, from being a remote ideal, has in a few years become a matter of practical moment, awaiting only the thorough organization of the seamen in the respective localities for its complete realization.

The International Seamen's Union of America, although at present containing only unions of seamen, strictly so called, is designed to embrace unions of all classes employed on steam and sailing vessels on the seas and on the Lakes. The efforts of the International Union are directed to organizing unions of firemen, cooks and stewards, as well as of seamen, separately and independently so far as necessary for dealing with the conditions peculiar to each branch, but uniting them in the International Union so far as necessary for dealing with the conditions common to all. With the energetic pursuit of this plan the near future will see a united movement of all classes of maritime workers—the men of the stoke-hole, of the glory-hole, and of the dog-hole—in all the ports of the United States and Canada.

The history of these organizations, short though it be, abounds in experiences which, if properly noted, will serve as a guide to the seamen of to-day and those who come after them in assuring the effectiveness and permanency of our work. We see in the loyalty of the members to their unions in times of discouragement and temporary defeat a proof that, whatever its difficulties, organization alone offers a chance of ultimate success in any effort at real improvement in the life of the seaman. The conviction that if organization failed no other means could possibly succeed, kept alive and oftentimes renewed the determination that organization must succeed at any cost of personal suffering and loss. Consequently, it did succeed.

We see in the mutual helpfulness of the seamen's unions toward each other, and in much of the work done by these unions for non-members and for the unions of other trades, a clear recognition of the principle that a union helps itself in helping others. To the sense of gratitude for the ready response given by the seamen to the call for aid in the struggle of other organizations, as much as to the sense of

simple justice, is due the powerful moral support which we have received from the labor movement at large.

The failure of the early efforts of the Atlantic Coast Seamen's Union to combine seamen and firemen in one body, and the success of the amalgamation between the Sailors' Union and the Steamshipmen, on the Pacific, marks distinctly the line between dual and single organization. The result proves that classes of men whose work differs in its nature—who do not interchange in their occupations—should organize separately; while those whose work is essentially of the same nature—who interchange jobs with one another—should organize together. In the design of the International Seamen's Union is recognized the principle that all unions of kindred trades—that is, of men following the sea—should be affiliated under one head for the regulation of all kindred affairs.

Finally, we note that safety and success depends upon sound business and financial methods, and upon the personal control and attention by the members to every detail of their organization.

Crimping, Allotment and Involuntary Servitude

What man has done, man may do. This saying has become trite through the very force of its truth. It is probably truer in the case of the seaman and the crimp than in any other. The crimp has kept the seaman at his mercy for generations under a law that gave the former all the advantage. The law has lately been altered in the seaman's favor, but the crimp is still master of the situation where the seaman does not know, or does not try to enforce the law. Laws do not operate mechanically, like clocks; they merely guarantee the sanction and assistance of the authorities to persons in doing or preventing certain acts. And even the authorities won't act of their own accord; they act one way or another in the interests of the side that brings most pressure to bear upon them. In a word, a law, no matter what its original purpose may be, becomes in practice just what it is desired it should be by those who actually enforce it.

The very existence of the crimp at this late day is a positive proof of this statement. For many years the law has prohibited crimping. But the crimp has continued to live and thrive, because he alone had any say in enforcing the law. The seamen, acting individually or even as ships' crews, were helpless before the organized forces of their enemies. Of course, the crimp naturally made the most of every feature of the law that could by any means be construed in his interest. But he did more than that. He used the provisions of the law that were plainly intended for the seaman's protection against crimping as a means of increasing the seaman's helplessness in the case. The crimps were organized; they brought their united strength to bear upon the shipowners, the shipping-commissioners and the courts. Consequently, the law against crimping became a law in favor of that practice. It always has been, and always will be, the same in this and in all other matters concerning the seamen, until they, too, organize and adopt the same means.

The origin of the crimp dates as far back, probably, as the origin of sin itself. As the flea is natural to the dog, and the sucker to the shark, the crimp and his species are natural

to any class that is weak enough, or ignorant enough, to allow itself to be preyed upon. The crimp came into existence naturally as the result of a scarcity of seamen. Whenever, for any reason, men refused to go to sea, the government and the shipowner, while unwilling to make terms with the seaman that would have led him to accept employment voluntarily, were willing to make terms with any one who, by trick or by force, could deliver crews on board ship. When the British Government, owing to its treatment of its naval seamen, could not secure men to man its fleets, it offered a shilling a head to any one who could deliver the goods. Thus the press-gang came into existence. In order to make money the press-gang roped in fishermen, farmers and any other classes that could be secured. The crimp-gang of to-day is, in all important respects, the press-gang of the past; the objects, methods and motives in both cases are practically the same.

The crimping system depends for its existence mainly upon two things; namely, the advance, or allotment, as it is called, and imprisonment for desertion. People ashore may differ in opinion as to the real purpose of allotment. Some may say that it is a convenience to the seaman who leaves dependent relatives; others may say that it is a necessity to the seaman who squanders the wages of one voyage without thought for the needs of the next. The seaman, however, knows that allotment is at bottom a payment to the crimp for his services in securing crews—a payment made by the seaman himself for his own enslavement. To prove this we have only to note the well-known fact that as a general thing the seaman cannot get employment unless he is willing to sign for allotment. In a word, it is the crimp, and not the seaman, who needs and who secures the allotment.

The history of the allotment law is a further proof of this conclusion. Prior to 1884 it was the custom to pay advance in a lump sum "on the capstan-head"—that is, as soon as the seaman went on board ship. In that year an Act of Congress was passed, totally prohibiting the payment of advance, and confining the payment of allotment to certain dependent relatives of the seaman. Thus the crimp's main source of revenue was cut off. What was the result? The shipowner, of course, might himself have paid the crimp for his services, but to do so would have been to sacrifice the sole advantage to the shipowner of the crimping system. If the cost of that system could not be taken out of the seaman's wages the crimp might as well have gone out of business, so far as the shipowner was concerned.

The immediate effect of the prohibition of advance was to

tie up the shipping of the great seaports. The crimp would not provide seamen, and the latter were unable to ship themselves without the consent of the former. The shipowners and shipmasters preferred to suffer a temporary loss, rather than see the crimps defeated, for they knew that the success of the latter would be to their advantage in the future. After the lapse of two years (in 1886) Congress amended the law so as to permit the payment of allotment to an "original creditor" in liquidation of a just debt for board or clothing.

The result of this step was to place the whole matter precisely where it had been prior to the abolition of advance. The "original creditor" was the crimp; the supposedly "just debt" for board and clothing was mostly a rank robbery for "shipping fees" and other illegal and fraudulent charges; while the allotment, instead of being paid in installments at the end of each month during the voyage, was paid in a lump sum as soon as the vessel sailed, thus becoming, in fact, advance. The allotment law having been thus altered to suit the crimp, was satisfactory to everybody but the seaman. That the law was altered to suit the crimps proves that that class are the real beneficiaries of the allotment system.

The law under which the seaman could be compelled to go on board, and to stay on board, after having signed articles, upon pain of being imprisoned and afterward placed on board in irons was a natural accompaniment of the law providing for the payment of the seaman's wages to his creditors. Whatever excuse may have existed in the conditions of the remote past for the law that made the seaman practically a serf to his ship, it is a fact that the excuse offered in recent times for that law is that as the shipowner advances so much money on the wages to be earned by the seaman, the law should give the shipowner the power to keep possession of the seaman until he has earned the money thus advanced.

The law under which the seaman was forced to work against his will has been recognized by the seamen's unions as creating a condition of involuntary servitude, and, therefore, a violation of the Constitution of the United States. Upon this understanding the Sailors' Union of the Pacific, in 1895, appeared the famous Arago case to the United States Supreme Court. The Court upheld the law and declared that the seaman did not come under that provision of the Constitution which prohibits slavery and involuntary servitude. In substance it appears that just as allotment is necessary to secure the services of the crimp, so imprisonment for desertion is necessary to secure the return by the seaman to the shipowner of the money originally paid out of the latter's wages as allotment.

Another means by which the seaman was kept in subjection to his enemies was the boarding-house custom of holding the seaman's clothing in event of his refusal to accept the crimp's terms of shipment, or settlement. The seaman who otherwise might have objected to an unreasonable bill was forced to accept it or leave the boarding-house and lose his clothing. As refusal meant starvation, the seaman was forced to submit to every extortion.

Under the operation of these methods the seaman was literally the slave of the crimps ashore and of the shipowner or ship's officers at sea. The former held possession of his means of employment, controlled his wages, held his clothing and ruled in the important question as to whether or not he should get food and a place to sleep. The latter held possession of his body and forced him to labor by means not one whit removed from the tactics of the common slave-master.

Through the efforts of the organized seamen some of these evils have been for the greater part entirely abolished. The Maguire Act, passed in 1895, prohibited the payment of allotment and imprisonment for desertion in the coastwise trade. The same Act also prohibited the holding of any seaman's clothing. The White Act, passed in 1898, continued the prohibition of allotment and imprisonment for desertion in the coastwise trade; also the prohibition against holding a seaman's clothing. In addition, the White Act reduced the amount of allotment that might be paid by a seaman on a foreign-going voyage to a sum not exceeding one month's wages in all, and made this provision applicable to all vessels, foreign as well as American, signing crews in American ports. It prohibited the arrest or imprisonment of any seaman shipped for a foreign voyage for refusal to join his ship or for desertion in any American or near-by foreign port. It reduced the maximum term of imprisonment for desertion in a foreign port from three to one month, and made the infliction of that punishment optional with the court, instead of mandatory upon it, as was previously the case. The White Act contained numerous other provisions for the benefit of the seaman, which will be noted in their proper place. In the respects here mentioned the White Act accomplished, so far as a law could of itself do so, the practical liberation of the seamen, coastwise and foreign-going, from those conditions which were mainly responsible for his helplessness. The vital feature of the matter, namely, the enforcement of the law, remains, of course, with the seamen themselves.

In order that the seaman may know just where he stands the leading features of the law as it now exists are here set forth :

Imprisonment for failure to join a vessel after signing articles, or for desertion at any time during the voyage, is entirely abolished in the coastwise trade. Coastwise trade (sometimes called "excepted port," or "near-by foreign port" trade) is trade between any ports on either seaboard of the United States and trade between any port of the United States and any port in British North America (Canada), Newfoundland, the Bahamas, Bermudas, West Indies, and Mexico. The trade between a United States port on the Atlantic and a United States port on the Pacific is called the "'Round the Horn" trade.

Imprisonment for desertion in a foreign port is limited to one month, which imprisonment is left entirely to the discretion of the court. If the deserting seaman can show good cause for leaving his vessel the judge may order him set at liberty. Seamen engaged on any vessel, in the coastwise or foreign trade, may leave—that is, desert—in any port of the United States, or in any port of the countries previously named as included in the coastwise trade. The seaman leaving a vessel in any of these ports may take his clothing with him. He may also, before leaving, demand one-half of the wages due him, provided he has not signed the latter right away at the time of shipping. The clothing and effects left on board when deserting he forfeits all future claim to.

Advance is prohibited in all trades, under penalty of a fine of not less than four times the amount advanced and imprisonment for six months.

Allotment is totally prohibited in the coastwise trade. A seaman in the foreign-going trade may allot any portion of his wages to his grandparents, parents, wife, sister or children. The amount of allotment payable to an "original creditor" (that is, to a crimp or a boarding-master) is regulated by the following schedule:

1. On voyages in the "'Round the Horn" trade, or trade between American ports on the Pacific or Atlantic coasts and ports in the Indian Ocean, not exceeding one month's wages.

2. On voyages between American ports on the Atlantic and foreign ports on the Atlantic south of the Equator, and between American ports on the Pacific and foreign ports on the Pacific west of the 180th meridian, or south of the Equator, not exceeding twenty days' wages.

3. On voyages in the Western Ocean trade (that is, trade between American ports and foreign ports on the Atlantic north of the Equator), and trade between American ports and foreign ports on the Pacific east of the 180th meridian and north of the Equator, not exceeding fifteen days' wages.

4. On voyages between ports of the United States on the Atlantic or Pacific and foreign ports to which allotments are permitted, not described in the foregoing paragraphs, not exceeding ten days' wages.

These provisions apply to all vessels, foreign as well as American (except to fishing or whaling vessels or yachts), which sign crews in American ports.

The foregoing are the maximum amounts of allotment allowable in the respective trades. If the sum actually owing by the seaman is less than the maximum allowed by law the amount of allotment allowable is correspondingly less. In other words, the amount of allotment must not exceed the amount of the seaman's debt.

Anyone misrepresenting the amount of a seaman's debt, or making false claims as a relative, for the purpose of securing allotment is punishable by a fine of \$500 or imprisonment for six months.

Any sums deducted from the seaman's wages as allotment, if contrary to the foregoing provisions of the law, must be refunded at the pay-table upon demand by the seaman. If refused, the seaman may sue for and recover the same.

No crimp, boarding-master or other person can hold a seaman's clothing for debt, or on any other pretense, under a penalty of \$100.

The seaman who exercises the rights granted him by these provisions of the law is practically a free man. That is to say, he is master of his own body, of his wages and of his clothing. The seaman who does not exercise these rights is as much a slave as he was under the old law. No law can help the man who submits without a struggle to be bluffed and bulldozed into a vessel under terms that he does not approve of, and who signs an allotment note for more than the amount of his debt, under the threat of being thrown out of a boarding-house without his clothing. It is understood, of course, that the seaman, acting singly, is powerless to resist the crimp. But this weakness really lies, not in the individual seaman, but in the individual method that he adopts. By uniting with other individuals—in a word, by organization—the individual seaman becomes powerful enough to accomplish as much as all the other individuals put together can accomplish, because all the others add their efforts to his.

Organization alone made possible the passage of the law; organization alone can make possible its enforcement. The seamen's unions have succeeded in enforcing the new law to the fullest advantage in every instance involving union members; they have failed only in those instances involving

non-members in which the men themselves have refused to do their own part. The seamen's unions have succeeded—in some instances by suit, in others by simple demand—in securing the repayment to the seaman of sums originally paid to the crimps in violation of the law. This success has been dependent, in the first instance, upon the refusal of the seaman concerned to accept less than the amount he is entitled to. The seaman who takes what is offered him, who allows himself to be robbed and otherwise imposed upon, is not only the most helpless, but the most hopeless creature in existence. The whole world united in his defense can do nothing for him. "You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear."

The Shipping Articles

The act of "signing articles" appears to different seamen in different lights. To some it is a mere matter of form; to others it is a very serious affair. In either case the seaman seldom thinks of questioning any part of the proceedings, either because they are too commonplace or too solemn to permit of discussion. Seldom or never does the seaman enter a shipping-office feeling that he himself is the most important part of the business; that no business can be done unless it is done to suit him, and that the articles, if signed at all, must express his wishes regarding the terms of employment, and not those only of the other parties to the transaction. In general the demeanor of the man in the shipping-office resembles that of the man at the foot of the scaffold. The shipping articles might be his death-warrant, the reading of which he waives, either because he is determined to "die game" or because his thoughts are all of the future. The man on the scaffold must die; the man in the shipping-office must ship. For both the future is equally a matter of chance. Then why bother about the formalities of the present!

A number of men enter a shipping-office to sign articles for a voyage. The articles are read. Have they heard them read? Do they understand them? Are they willing to sign? A pen is handed to each man; he affixes his signature and departs, consoling himself with the reflection that if he does not know a single thing about it he has, at any rate, not made a holy show of his ignorance. Anyway, he can find out all about it from the crimp, and what the latter does not tell him he can find out before the voyage is over. It is not well to be too inquisitive!

The shipping-commissioner's office is supposed to be sacred to the uses of the seaman and his employer—a sanctuary barred to the crimp and all others not directly interested, or interested only in wronging the seaman. But, in fact, it is nothing of the kind. Usually the crimp has as much to say in the shipment of "his men" as the shipping-commissioner, and very often more. In every instance the interests of the crimp, as such, are taken as much care of by the shipping-commissioner as are those of the seaman and ship-owner. Indeed, it may be said without exaggeration that the office of the shipping-commissioner, instead of being a

protection to the seaman against the crimp, as it was originally intended to be, has become a convenience to the crimp in his business of fleecing the seaman.

It is required by law that the shipping articles shall be read by or to the seaman so that he thoroughly understands them; that the shipping-commissioner shall acquaint each seaman with the conditions thereof, and that the seaman shall sign "freely and voluntarily, while sober and not in a state of intoxication." Nothing but the merest pretense, and often not even that, is ever made to comply with these provisions. The seaman may, or may not, know the name of the vessel or the nature of the voyage; he may be sober, and, on the other hand, he may be in a "state of intoxication"; he may be asked to sign for an allotment equal to the amount of his debt, or, as mostly happens, he may be asked to sign away every cent that the law allows; the arrangement with reference to wages may be fair, or it may be openly fraudulent. It makes no difference either way to the seaman. He has been brought to the shipping office for the purpose of signing articles, and the crimp, who is at the door, or, it may be, at the table, will see that he does sign.

The pliant attitude of the seaman in the shipping-office is due in great part to his unfamiliarity with the contents of the shipping articles. His ideas as to what the articles should, and what they should not contain, are of the vaguest; frequently they are directly contrary to the facts. When the seaman becomes as well acquainted with the right and wrong of the shipping articles as he is with the right and wrong of his work on board ship he will be just as confident in going about the business of signing articles as he is in going about his daily work, and be as little likely to be fooled into committing grave mistakes in the one case as in the other. If a seaman were told that the right way to furl a sail is to begin on the lee side he would smile, and probably refuse to obey an order to that effect. So, when he knows his shipping articles he will in all probability refuse with equal positiveness to sign anything that takes from him any of his legal rights, or otherwise endangers his personal welfare.

The following particulars concerning the signing of articles, what the articles mean and how far they are binding, are selected with the utmost care and may be relied upon to be absolutely correct. The seaman who studies them may feel sure that in demanding the enforcement of the provisions here mentioned he is making a demand that must be granted if firmly insisted upon.

First, then, every seaman engaging for a voyage in the foreign, or in the "Round the Horn" trade must sign ar-

ticles in the presence of a shipping-commissioner. The shipping-commissioner or his deputy may sign a crew on board the vessel, but it is advisable that the seaman should insist upon signing articles in the shipping-commissioner's office ashore. In the case of foreign vessels in American ports and American vessels in foreign ports the articles must be signed in the presence of the respective consuls. For every seaman taken to sea without first signing articles the master of the vessel is liable to a penalty of \$200.

Seamen engaging in the coastwise trade, except in trade between the ports of adjoining states, must also sign articles, stating the nature of the voyage or the length of time for which they are engaged. If no such agreement is signed the master of the vessel must pay the seaman for the services rendered at the highest rate of wages paid at the port of shipment for a similar voyage within the three months prior to the seaman's shipment. In such case the master is also liable to a penalty of \$20 for each seaman who has not signed articles, one-half of that sum to go to the seaman and the remainder to the United States. Seamen thus taken to sea without signing articles are not bound by the general law, but may quit the vessel at any time and demand the full amount of wages earned.

Coastwise articles may be signed privately; but if the parties agree they may be signed in the presence of a shipping-commissioner. If the seaman is shipped before a shipping-commissioner he must also be paid off before one. With this exception, it makes practically no difference in law whether the articles are signed privately or before a shipping-commissioner.

The shipping articles must be posted on board the vessel so as to be accessible to the crew, under a penalty of \$100.

Shipping articles in the Lake trade are subject wholly to private agreement and may contain any provisions not contrary to the general law.

No "shipping-fees" of any kind are payable by the seaman in any trade, or under any circumstances. Any person, whether a shipping-commissioner, an employee of the same, crimp, boarding-master, ship-master, ship-owner or otherwise, who demands or receives, directly or indirectly from any seaman, or from any person on his behalf, any remuneration whatever for providing him with employment is liable to a penalty of \$100.

Under the shipping articles seamen must obey all orders of the shipmaster, on board, in boats or on shore. Seamen cannot refuse to work in port on Sundays, holidays or after the usual working hours, but they are entitled to overtime

pay for any work performed at such times, provided such work is not necessary for the safety of the vessel, her cargo or the lives of those on board.

Shipping articles are binding for the full term agreed upon. Seamen leaving a vessel, against the will of the master, before the expiry of their agreement forfeit all wages and effects left on board. They may take their clothing with them when they leave the vessel, but cannot demand their wages.

In case of shipwreck seamen are entitled to the wages due at the time of leaving the vessel, but not for any further period.

Seamen discharged through no fault of their own, and without their consent, before the commencement of the voyage, or before one month's wages are earned, must receive one month's pay in addition to any pay they may have earned.

At the end of a voyage seamen are entitled to be paid off, if in the coastwise trade, within two days; if in the foreign-going trade, within four days after discharge. If discharged before the end of a voyage seamen are entitled to be paid off immediately upon their discharge. Seamen kept waiting for their wages beyond the specified periods are entitled to one day's extra wages for every day's delay. At the end of a voyage in any trade the seaman is entitled to receive one-third of the wages due him at the time of leaving the vessel.

Vessels leaving any port after the commencement of a voyage must ship seamen to fill all vacancies in the crew list caused by death, desertion or otherwise.

Seamen discharged on account of shipwreck are entitled to their wages up to the time of the wreck and to transportation to the port of shipment. Seamen discharged in a foreign port before the end of the term agreed upon, and against their will, must be provided with another vessel, to be agreed to by them, or receive one month's extra wages, provided they are not discharged for neglect of duty or injury received on the vessel. Seamen discharged on account of injury or illness are entitled to maintenance and return to the United States at the expense of the fund for the maintenance and transportation of destitute American seamen.

If discharged in a foreign port on account of the sale of the vessel the master must provide each seaman with employment on board a vessel bound to the original port of shipment, or to such other port as may be agreed upon, or pay his passage home.

If discharged in a foreign port on account of ill treatment or violation of agreement, the master must pay the seaman one month's extra wages and provide him with em-

ployment on some other vessel, or provide him with a passage to a port of the United States or to a port agreed to by the seaman.

Seamen may demand the survey of a vessel, if in a home port, upon an agreement of a majority of the crew, and, if in a foreign port, upon an agreement of a majority of the crew and the first or second officer.

Every vessel engaged on a foreign voyage exceeding in length fourteen days must carry a slop-chest containing at least one suit of woolen clothing for each member of the crew. Every vessel, in all trades, must be provided with a safe and warm room for the use of the crew in cold weather, under a penalty of not less than \$100.

Offenses on the part of seamen are punishable as follows :

Desertion, if in a port in the coastwise trade, by forfeiture of all the clothing and effects left on board and of all the wages due; if in a port in the foreign-going trade, by the same forfeitures and also by imprisonment, at the discretion of the court, for not more than one month.

Refusal to join vessel or to sail in her, or absence without leave within twenty-four hours of the sailing time, if in a port in the coastwise trade, by forfeiture of not more than two days' pay, or sufficient to pay a substitute, if one is engaged; if in a port in the foreign-going trade, by forfeiture of not more than two days' pay, or, at the discretion of the court, by imprisonment for not more than one month.

Quitting the vessel, in any port or trade, before she is placed in security, by forfeiture of not more than one month's pay.

Disobedience to lawful commands at sea, by forfeiture upon arrival in a port of the United States, of not more than four days' pay; upon arrival in a foreign port, by the same forfeiture, or, at the discretion of the court, by imprisonment for not more than one month.

Continued disobedience at sea, by being placed in irons, on bread and water, with full rations every fifth day, and, upon arrival in a port of the United States, by forfeiture of not more than twelve days' pay for every twenty-four hours of such disobedience; upon arrival in a foreign port, in addition to the above penalty, by imprisonment for not more than three months, at the discretion of the court.

Assaulting the master or mate, in any trade, by imprisonment for not more than two years.

Damaging the vessel, or damaging or embezzling the stores or cargo, in any trade, by forfeiture of an amount equal to the damage caused and by imprisonment for not more than twelve months, at the discretion of the court.

Smuggling, in any trade, by forfeiture of an amount equal to the loss occasioned and imprisonment for not more than twelve months.

An entry of each offense must be made in the log-book on the day it is committed and read to the offender, who is entitled to have his reply also recorded. These entries must be signed by the master or mate or one of the crew. The log-book containing these entries must be produced at the trial, failing which the court may refuse to consider the charges against the seaman.

Seamen's wages cannot be attached by any process in any court, State or Federal.

The food-scale must be displayed on every vessel where it can be seen by the crew. No substitutes except those mentioned in the scale are permitted. For any shortage in the amount of food provided, each seaman is entitled to the following sums per day: For shortage not exceeding one-third of the scale, not more than fifty cents per day; for shortage over one-third of the scale, not more than one dollar per day; for bad quality of food, not more than one dollar per day.

All forms of corporal punishment—striking, beating, etc.—are positively forbidden, under a penalty of not less than three months' nor more than two years' imprisonment. Under the law no form of corporal punishment can be considered justifiable; that is to say, the simple fact that a seaman has been assaulted by a ship's officer is sufficient to justify his conviction. Shipmasters who allow ships' officers charged with assaulting seamen to escape are liable in damages to the seamen assaulted.

In every printed form of shipping articles there is a blank space, in which the shipmaster may insert any provisions not contrary to law. In this space it is customary to write the words, "No grog allowed," "No going on shore in port without the consent of the master," etc. This feature of the shipping articles is of the utmost importance to the seaman, for the reason that these provisions, while they may not be contrary to law, may take away some of the advantages of the law to which the seaman would otherwise be entitled.

The most striking instance of this is the provision usually inserted in the blank space of shipping articles, as follows: "No money in port except at master's option."

This provision is in keeping with the law, and yet it takes from the seaman the right which the law gives him to demand one-half of the wages due him in every port of loading and discharge after the voyage has commenced. The explanation of this seemingly contradictory situation is con-

tained in the law itself, which says that the seaman is entitled to one-half of his pay, "unless the contrary is expressly stipulated in the contract." Thus, the law says, in effect, that the seaman shall be entitled to one-half of his wages in port only in event that he does not sign that right away.

Seamen should be careful to see that the "no-money" clause is not inserted in the shipping articles. If the shipmaster insists upon inserting that clause the seaman should refuse to sign. The provision that seamen shall be entitled to one-half of the wages due in port is one of the most beneficial features of the law. Its enforcement will enable the seaman to provide for his wants while on a voyage without having to submit to the extortions of storekeepers and money-lenders. Moreover, its enforcement will prove to the public and the lawmakers that the seaman appreciates, and is prepared to avail himself of any advantages offered him.

Failure to enforce this part of the law will go far to prove what the enemies of the seamen have always contended as an excuse for keeping the seaman in subjection; namely, that the seaman himself does not desire the liberty of his wages, but prefers to have them tied to the ship as a safeguard against his own weakness in money matters. The seaman should claim and enforce the right to control his own wages at all times, and by so doing deny the right of any person or class to assume that his wages should be withheld on the ground that he may lose them or spend them foolishly.

So, with reference to the provision against going ashore without permission of the master, and the other clauses which are frequently inserted in the articles, the seaman should refuse to sign anything that tends to lessen the liberties guaranteed by the actual terms of the law. At best these liberties are too few; we can only secure more by using those we have to the fullest extent. To voluntarily surrender any of the advantages now made possible by the law would be simply to invite their curtailment. Liberties are like legs; they grow by use and are lost by disuse.

A careful reading of these features of the maritime law, as covered by the shipping articles, will inform the seaman as to his interests, in the shipping-office and on board ship. But it must be remembered that a knowledge of what is meant by the shipping articles is not of itself enough to protect the seaman in his rights. In the end, united action alone will prevail. One seaman does not make a ship's crew; neither can one seaman force the shipmaster to make the proper corrections in the articles proposed. To be successful in this, as in other respects, the seamen must act as a body in refusing to sign shipping articles that deprive them of their just dues.

The New Seamen's Bill

The one thing which, more than any other, distinguishes man from the beasts is his constant desire for more and more advantage in life. When you see an ass browsing on thistles, a calf threading its way along a crooked rut in the road or a monkey hanging by its tail to the limb of a tree, you see exactly what the ancestors of these animals did a thousand years ago.

With man it is different. The barbarian of a few centuries ago has developed into the civilized being of to-day; a few centuries hence our posterity will have developed a civilization which will make the customs of to-day look crude and childish. At the present moment there is no more striking instance of this characteristic of the human species than the seaman who has felt the inspiration of unionism. While for many years it looked as though the seaman was something of an ass, contented by nature to eat the thistles that were generously allowed him by his masters, it needed but a start toward something better to arouse in him all the instincts and energies of a normal man. The result is that the seaman, so far from being satisfied with the improvements already made in the law, is demanding further and more far-reaching improvements on the same general lines.

The seamen's bill, now before Congress, proposes a number of improvements on points already covered by the law, and a few innovations in matters that have so far been considered as beyond the scope of the law-making power. Briefly stated, the main objects of the bill are: Legal establishment of "watch-and-watch" at sea in the performance of routine work. Prohibition of unnecessary work in port and at sea on Sundays and holidays. Establishment of a nine-hour work day in port. Enlargement of forecastles. Establishment of a manning scale for all vessels. Exclusion of Asiatics from all vessels of the United States.

The significance of these provisions will be manifest to every seaman at a glance. The passage of the bill will forever put a stop to that crying evil, "Kalashi Watch," under which the seamen in many vessels are compelled to work dur-

ing the whole of the day and half of the night. The abolition of Sunday and holiday work in port and at sea and the establishment of a nine-hour workday in port will give the seamen a share of the benefits so long enjoyed by their fellow-workers ashore.

Speaking of the effort to reduce the length of the day's work, we are reminded that there is no class of workers so backward in the movement for shorter hours as are the seamen. This state of affairs is due, of course, to the peculiar conditions of our calling, or rather, we should say, to the exaggerated conception of them which has obtained with the powers that have made the working rules of the seaman. Because conditions required that the seaman should be at the beck and call of the shipmaster while at sea, it has been taken for granted that he should be equally subservient in port. While most men engaged in callings ashore have gradually reduced the length of the day's work so as to leave them some time for rest and recreation, the seamen have continued to toil as long as nature could stand the strain.

The shorter workday is demanded upon two main grounds; first, upon the ground that it is necessary for purposes of rest, and, secondly, upon the ground that it is necessary for purposes of education. Under the system of long hours men stay at their toil until the body is exhausted and the mind deadened. This system results in a reversal of the natural order of things, so that men become mere beasts of burden—living to work, instead of working to live. As long as this condition lasts little or no real progress can be hoped for. "Knowledge is power." Before the seaman or any other class of workers can secure the power to regulate their own industrial affairs on a basis of justice to themselves, they must educate themselves to a thorough understanding of the principles by which the relations of men are governed. To secure this education they must first secure the leisure in which to study.

As a matter of simple justice, if for no other reason, the reduction of the seaman's daily hours of labor should enlist the co-operation of all classes and should certainly command the earnest efforts of the seamen themselves. When we consider the nature of the seaman's work and the fact that in similarly hard toil on land the workers are enjoying a very general eight-hour day, it must be admitted that the seaman's demand for a nine-hour day is exceedingly modest. The demand for the abolition of "Kalashi Watch" and Sunday and holiday work is, of course, a necessary feature of the same movement. Further, it is directly in line with the necessary and proper precautions for safeguarding life and property

at sea. There can be no denying that the custom of compelling seamen to keep anchor-watch of one or two hours after performing a long and exhausting day's work is a positive menace to safety. This observation applies with even more force in the case of crews who at sea are compelled to work all day and then stand the regular watches at night. Thus the interest of the public in the shortening of the day's labor of the seaman is as immediate as that of the seaman himself. Speaking of holidays, it may be truthfully said that, as a general thing, the seaman enjoys no such opportunities of relaxation. Indeed, the fact is that the public holiday has no significance for the seaman other than as an occasion on which he is made to feel, more than at any other time, the discrimination that is practised against his calling.

The sentiments of patriotism and the proper respect for religious occasions, which are so universally commended in all other classes, are supposed to have no place with the seaman. The inevitable result of this upon the seaman is morally deteriorative. From every point of view, therefore, we believe that the seaman's demands for a shorter workday and the proper observance of Sundays and holidays are just and reasonable. It is understood, of course, and specifically stated in the bill itself, that these provisions will not in any way interfere with the power of the vessel's officers to require the performance, at any time and under any circumstances, of whatever work may be necessary for the safety of the vessel, her freight, crew and passengers. The utmost that the bill aims to accomplish is to put a stop to the system, now largely prevailing of "working up" crews, for the mere sake, as is often the case, of "keeping them out of mischief!"

The enlargement of ships' forecastles so as to increase the space provided for each seaman from 72 cubic feet and 12 square feet to not less than 100 and 16 feet, respectively, will give the seaman a reasonable amount of breathing room. The same section of the bill provides for proper living quarters for the crews of whaling and fishing vessels, yachts and pilot boats; also for the crews of steamers on the Mississippi River.

The proposal for a specific manning scale is a distinctly new feature of the maritime legislation of the United States. In substance, the bill requires that all sailing vessels shall carry a minimum of "effective hands," ranging from 5 2-3 in vessels of 200 tons to 30 2-3 in vessels of 3,000 tons.

By the term "effective hand" is meant an able seaman, master, mate, boatswain, carpenter or sailmaker. Cooks, stewards, apprentices and ordinary-seamen are rated proportionately as parts of an "effective hand." Steamers are

required to carry a minimum deck crew ranging from six hands (including all officers) in vessels of from 200 to 350 tons to sixteen hands in vessels of from 5,500 to 6,000 tons, with an additional "effective hand" for each additional 1,000 tons.

Able-seamen must be at least nineteen years of age and of three years' experience at sea on deck; ordinary-seamen must be at least eighteen years of age and of one year's experience at sea on deck. The bill also provides that no Asiatic—that is, Chinese, Japanese, Malay or Lascar—shall be engaged in any capacity on any vessel of the United States.

In addition to these new features of the maritime law, the bill now being urged by the organized seamen provides for the improvement of numerous features of the law as it now stands. It proposes to increase the amount payable to the seaman in event that he is kept waiting for his wages longer than the two or four days specified, from one to two days' extra wages for each day's delay; to prohibit the insertion of the "no-money" clause in the shipping articles; to bring the Hawaiian Islands within the provisions of the law governing the coastwise trade; to make the vessel, instead of the master, liable in damages for the escape of a ship's officer charged with assaulting a seaman; to improve the food scale by increasing the daily allowance of water from four to six quarts, and the daily allowance of butter from one to two ounces; to abolish all allotment to an "original creditor" in the foreign as well as in the coastwise trade; to abolish all imprisonment for desertion, in foreign as well as in domestic ports; to compel the masters of foreign vessels to present their shipping articles at the office of clearance, so as to prevent the violation of the allotment law by such vessels; to reduce the limit of sailing vessel tonnage now liable to annual inspection from 700 to 200 tons, and to extend the right to demand a survey in foreign ports to a majority of the crew, irrespective of the officers, as is now the case in home ports.

In the foregoing necessarily brief resume of the seamen's bill every reader who goes to sea will find much to favor, and every reader who stays ashore much to oppose. Volumes could be written for and against the measure. But, after all, any opposition to the bill must rest entirely upon the question as to whether or not the bill is a "practical" one. Can it be put into effect without disturbing the shipping interests?

This question has really no place in the consideration of the matter. No improvement, however great or small, however much needed, however much demanded by considera-

tions of humanity, was ever accomplished without some disturbance of previously existing conditions. The only question that ought to enter into the discussion of the proposed law is the question of justice to the seaman, of so improving the circumstances of his life as to bring them up to the prevailing standard of decent, healthy and honorable existence.

In the judgment of the organized seamen, the bill now proposed to Congress is a simple proposal to secure for the seamen conditions which will guarantee them a reasonable time for rest and recreation from toil that is sufficiently exacting under the best of circumstances; that will provide for living quarters in which the elemental laws of human health may be observed and the common code of human decency be respected; that will ensure the employment on every vessel of a number of seamen sufficient to safeguard life and property in time of emergency.

For the rest, the bill will remedy a number of defects that have developed under the operation of the existing law. Even with the great improvement achieved by the seamen's unions, it has been found that the intention of the law has been frustrated to a great extent by the various tricks and devices known to the seamen's enemies. While the law limits allotment to an "original creditor" to one month's wages at most, in numerous instances the shipping articles have contained provisions which practically increased the amount of allotment to two months' wages. In short, it has become evident that as long as the crimp is allowed any legal claim, no matter how slight, upon the seaman's wages he will find a way to assert full control over them through the "blood-money," and other schemes of the fraternity. Consequently, the only practical alternative remaining to the seaman is to abolish all allotment to "original creditor." This the new bill will do. Then the seaman who makes a voyage will be entitled to be paid off with every cent of the money earned from the day of joining the vessel. The "dead horse" will be a thing of the past, and the entire crimping institution will be destroyed by its own corruption. When the crimp is reduced to depend upon the seaman himself voluntarily paying for his own enslavement the day of that species of parasite will be short in the land.

Imprisonment for desertion, i. e., involuntary servitude, in a foreign port will also be strictly abolished when the new bill becomes law. Thus the seaman will be free in practice, and the principle of personal liberty be extended to the American seaman in all ports of the world.

These and all the other important features of the bill the organized seamen hope to see realized in the near future.

That they will some day be realized is as certain as that the seamen's unions have already achieved measures equally, if not more, difficult of attainment. The seamen, like the rest of the human race, "want more," and they are bound to get more. It only remains for the seamen of to-day to say whether they shall secure these advantages for themselves, or whether they shall, through lack of diligence and foresight, forfeit these advantages to posterity. Posterity has done nothing for us; it can not do anything for us. Let us be up and doing, that we may reap the full reward of our work, in the present day and generation.

The Seamen's Unions and the Labor Movement

The seamen's unions and other labor organizations in the country have been called into existence by a recognition of the truth that the individual worker, man or woman, is helpless against the greater power of the individual employer. The federation of the different unions in the labor councils of the respective cities, and again in the great national and international organizations, and, still again, in the American Federation of Labor, is but another recognition of the same truth—that organization, to be effective, must be complete; that the organization and concentration of the employing-classes can only be met by organization and concentration on the part of labor as a whole.

The seamen's unions owe much to the labor movement of the country. To the assistance so readily and generously given by the trade-unions in every section of the United States is due the passage of those laws which have freed the seamen from the bondage of centuries. Without such assistance the seamen could never have so impressed their cause upon Congress as to make that body listen respectfully to their wants and grant them the desired measures of improvement. As seamen, no matter how well organized, we would still have been acting under the disadvantage of a purely class movement; acting with the co-operation of all other classes of workers, we were assured of success, because our movement then became a purely humanitarian one.

Whatever the seamen hope for in future can only be obtained by the aid of the labor movement at large. Whether our efforts be aimed at improvements in the law or at the more immediate object of securing concessions from the ship-owners, the aid of the public will be necessary to success. In this age of centralization the individual union or the individual trade that assumes independence of other unions and trades is as certainly doomed to failure as is the individual man or woman who assumes independence of other individuals.

The seamen's unions, in the past, have fully recognized their obligation and duty to unite themselves closely with the unions to their fellow workers wherever possible. Whenever a union of seamen has been formed one of its first steps has been to affiliate with the central labor body in its vicinity, where such existed, or to form one if necessary. Under this policy the organized seamen have attained a position of influ-

ence in the counsels of labor, commanding the sincere respect and the hearty co-operation of trades-unionists everywhere.

This position has been attained at comparatively little expense in money. For the expenditures made by the seamen, they have received returns a hundred fold, if not in the same coin, yet in service that in itself involved a great outlay in the aggregate, and which, moreover, could not have been purchased for any purely monetary consideration.

The obligation of mutual assistance does not stop at the relations of union to union, but includes a duty on the part of every individual member to further the interest of other organized workers. This can be done most effectually by creating and increasing the demand for the products of organized labor. In this connection there are two or three points which if kept well in mind will make clear the course of conduct to be pursued and the justification therefor.

The labor organization, being an organization of producers, is of use only in so far as it can affect production. When members of a union strike they affect production by ceasing to produce; when they place a boycott on any unfair firm or article, they affect production by refusing to patronize such firm or article. The same principle, though in a different degree, operates when the members of a union concentrate their demand for any given products upon those that are made by the members of other unions. In the case of the strike or boycott the withholding of service or patronage affects production by stopping it; in the case of concerted demand, production is affected by increasing it. The action of the man who consumes is of as much importance in the outcome as is that of the man who produces. In other words, it is as necessary for the improvement of conditions, say in the cigarmaking trade, that the man who smokes should refrain from purchasing cigars made in certain factories, as that the workers should go on strike as a protest against injustice. Nay, even more so; for although the cigarmakers may go on strike, conditions will remain unredressed as long as the products of the struck factories, or others made under similar conditions, are accepted by the public.

Demand creates supply. Storekeepers are not in business for their health nor for their sentiment, but for the money that is in it. They do not keep those articles which they know to be the best because they are the best, but because they sell to the best advantage. As between a union and a non-union made product, the demand for both being equal, business instinct will give the preference to the latter, since, as the man who produces it gets least for his labor, the man who sells it can secure most for his profit. But, let the demand

for the union made product increase so as to overcome this difference, and it will immediately be given the preference. In most instances, if a storekeeper is unable to supply union-made goods at a moment's notice, the fault is with his patrons rather than with himself.

The demand for union articles should be unqualified and persistent; it should not be put off with "something just as good," under the name of "home industry" or any other deceptive term. Union industry alone should be recognized by union men; if it is at the same time home industry, so much the better. The main point is that the demand be made for the products of union men and women, even though they be produced at the opposite end of the earth.

In making this demand the only guide and assurance against deception is the union label. This little device is the most powerful weapon in the service of organized labor. It is to be found stitched, stamped, stuck or printed on a great number of the products of the trade-unionists. Where it is found it proclaims with absolute assurance that the articles upon which it appears are made by union men and women; there is absolutely no such assurance without it. The union label guarantees also that the articles bearing it are made under conditions which assure good workmanship. It guarantees health to the eater and drinker, cleanliness to the smoker, comfort to the wearer and lasting satisfaction to the user under all circumstances. The absence of the label implies the opposite of these conditions.

In rendering this moral support to the workers in other crafts the seamen will not only perform a duty that is clear and imperative—they will observe a policy that is wise and expedient—a policy that will bring them returns in the hour of their need. To the seaman who cannot be readily inspired to doing his duty for its own sake, we would point out that by helping others we help ourselves. Absolute independence is a myth. There is no such thing, neither as regards the individual man nor the individual combination of men. Men, unions, countries, worlds and universes depend upon each other in at least some degree. The seamen's unions, then, depend upon the unions of other trades for some measure of the strength that they need to fight the great battles ahead of them, as they have depended upon that source of strength for the victories of the past. The workers of the world can only progress with the speed of the most backward. No union can long outstrip the general movement, any more than a man can walk on air. It is our duty, it should be our policy, to give support to every other trade-union, the more in proportion to its weakness, so that the day of justice for all may be hastened.

