

## COLORLESS BUILDING IN LONDON IS CENTRE OF ROMANCE TO SAILORS

In the shadows of the Mint, in London, unknown to the many passers-by over Tower Hill, stands a gaunt building, known to sailors of the British Mercantile Marine since before the days of Nelson as the "Chain Locker," where he goes when he wishes to know the whereabouts of a quondam shipmate, or on other occasions the whereabouts of his "book."

Romance fills every shelf and drawer in this building of shelves and drawers despite the hard looking exterior and the forbidding business-like atmosphere of its interior, for within its walls the old salt can hark back to the times when the English barque and the Yankee clipper were fighting for sea supremacy, just in the same manner that the steamships of today are carrying on the same old war.

To the Board of Trade, to which it is an integral part, it is known as the General Register and Record Office of Shipping Seamen. The officials in this building are finest judges of sea character in the world. They know what they want before you ask for it. They can distinguish the sailor from the landlubber, the anxious wife from the landlady who some sailor has "sloped" without paying up, the ship's officer from the irate boarding house runner who has been taken in with an "advance note," or he can in a minute distinguish from any the deserter, who slinks up to the counter, and in a humble voice asks, "Got my book here, mister?"

The laymen ashore cannot realize the vital necessity that causes a man to humble himself enough to go looking for his book in the "Chain Locker." It is his livelihood, and is his most important asset in the shipping game. It contains all the information that is required by the Shipping Master or the ship's officer signing him on, as to his ability and his character. Never does it find its way into the Chain Locker without a man has left a ship and cannot be found, or is dead; and the books arrive there from all parts of the world.

In these days of competition, the A. B. or ordinary seaman has small chance of signing on a ship without his discharge book, and usually there come requests through the mail for the return of somebody's book. They get them back and are not surprised to see stamped across the last entry of signing: "Voyage not Completed."

The only entries under the stamp are those pertaining to the ship signed, the length of time signed for, and the master's name.

The entries relating to character and ability are left ominously blank, and the book is then known as a "spoiled book" in sailor language.

Many of the old-timers are not unduly worried over this, as they know that they are ways and means of crossing such bridges for a slight consideration. Some resort to the practice of borrowing another man's book, but it is not long before the deception is discovered, to the borrower's discomfort. Others take a harder road which sometimes works. That is by means of the "fixer."

The fixer plies has trade in any port of a decent size, and is to be found here in Montreal. He is the man employed by the seamen to make a good

book out of a spoiled book, and is a past master in the art.

The deserter who has received his book back knows that he will have a hard time getting a ship with a bad entry in, and he will have a harder time getting a ship without one. He therefore takes it along to the fixer who makes his price according to the work he has to put in on the book, or the size of the man's pocket. The usual fee on this side is about \$25, and for this he guarantees that he will remove all marks of a bad nature.

By means of various ink removers the first takes away all signs of the stamp with the fatal story, "Voyage not Completed," and then looks up the other entries in the book.

If he cannot get an entry which will give him some index to the writing of the clerk who made the first entries, he removes all writing dealing with that ship, and "signs him up" for a second voyage on the ship before that, forging the master's signature.

This is done in order to get the next entry to take on the appearance of having been newly made, and by various methods of treating the ink he is able entry to take on the appearance of having been newly made.

It became a common practice in the Old Country during the war for men who did not wish to serve with the forces to take to sea, but unless they had discharge books they were not able to sign on. The fixer then did a roaring trade, and manufactured discharge books with plenty of good entries for anyone who cared to pay the price, which was naturally very stiff, as much as \$500 being asked at this time.

The books were almost identical with those issued by the Government, and even contained the words telling that this particular book was published by His Majesty's Stationery Office.

The discharge books in war days also had to contain a photograph of the owner, which was stamped with a special Shipping Office stamp. This did not deter the fixer. He had dies of the same kind made. He has also in his possession data which enables him to "put a man aboard ship" that the man in question never even saw. Yet a certain ship did sail on a certain date, under a certain master, but not with the man in question aboard, although his discourse book says this.

The practice continued after the war, when it became difficult for any one but a good man to get any sort of a job aboard ship, and work ashore was even scarcer. A good book came more a necessity than anything at this time, and the possessor of one was a lucky man.

Some were sold, others were manufactured, but there had to be an end to it all some time, and when the books began to find their way into the "Chain Locker" it was discovered that something was wrong, and the hapless possessor of a manufactured or doctored book found out to his cost that forgery did not pay when he went to the office behind Tower Hill.

The officials scan the book minutely if they suspect the least entry in it, and woe betide the suspect if there is cause for complaint.

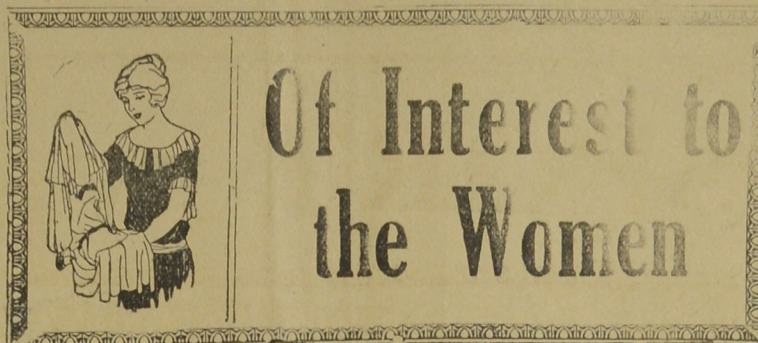
That is not the only branch of the work.

Every day there is a British seaman sent ashore to hospital in some part of the world, or there is sometimes a death at sea, and this means that the mail for the Chain Locker is increased by the man's book, and the record of his death, so that relatives can consult the files and find out what they wish to know to obtain possession of his effects which are kept in the shipping office at the first port of call.

Officers receive their "tickets" from this department. They are issued upon the recommendation of the Board of Trade examiners, and it is here that the officer has his record.

### QUICK FROSTING.

2 cups confectioners' sugar  
2 or more tablespoons hot cream  
or 1-2 tablespoons hot milk  
1 teaspoon melted butter  
Add hot liquid all at once to sugar and beat well. Add more liquid if needed to spread easily.



### CHOCOLATE FILLING

4 squares chocolate  
1 cup sugar  
1-2 cup cold water  
1-2 cups milk  
5 tablespoons pastry flour  
2 tablespoons cold water  
2 tablespoons butter or other shortening

1 teaspoon vanilla  
Cut chocolate into four or five pieces and put with water in saucepan. Stir over direct heat until smooth. Add sugar and milk and bring to the boiling point, stirring constantly. Mix flour with water and add slowly to the first mixture, stirring until thickened. Remove from fire add butter and vanilla. Cool and spread.

### BOILED FROSTING.

(Two-layer Recipe)

2 cups sugar  
3-4 cup water  
2 egg whites  
Boil the sugar and water until when tested it will hang from the spoon by a long thread (238 degrees Fahrenheit). Pour it over the beaten whites. Beat well and place the bowl in hot water. Beat until fluffy. This frosting will not run.

### BUTTER FROSTING.

1-2 cup butter  
2 egg yolks  
1-2 cups confectioners' sugar  
1-2 cup almonds  
Cream the butter, add the sugar and the egg yolks. Spread on the cake when ready to use. Blanch the almonds bake in a moderate oven until light brown. Cut in pieces and sprinkle on the frosting.

### ST. JAMES PUDDING

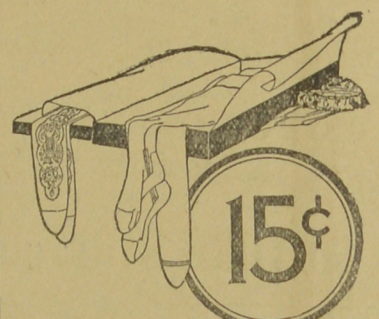
1-2 cup dark molasses  
2 tablespoons melted fat  
1-2 cup sour milk  
2 cups flour (scant)  
3-4 teaspoon soda  
1-4 teaspoon each of salt, cloves allspice, nutmeg  
1 cup dates  
Mix molasses, fat and milk, sift flour with soda, salt and spices add dates to flour mixture. Combine liquid and dry ingredients. Steam for three hours. Serve with lemon sauce.

### MOCHA FROSTING.

For this frosting add three tablespoons of cocoa to the sugar. When well mixed add strong coffee, a few drops at a time, until of the right consistency to spread.

### SOUR CREAM FILLING

1 cup sour cream  
1-2 cup sugar  
1 tablespoon cornstarch



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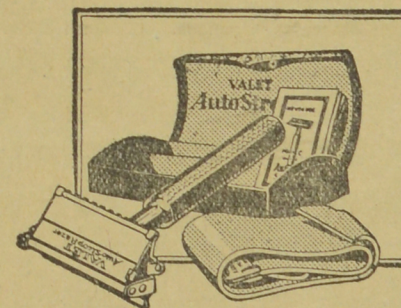
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