

A CLUB for JACK ASHORE

HOW THE NAVAL Y. M. C. A. AT VALLEJO HELPS THE BLUE-JACKET SAVE HIS MONEY AND FILLS HIS LEISURE HOURS WITH FUN, ATHLETICS AND THE COMFORTS OF HOME



THE CLUB-HOUSE AT VALLEJO



READING A LETTER HOME



THE FIRST NIGHT ASHORE



MAKING THE PIANO GIVE DOWN

JACK ashore has long been a problem to those vitally interested in the welfare of the bluejackets of the navy. What to do with him, how to do it, and where to do it has been a question which has bid defiance to many well-meant efforts of those who would fain take Jack in charge and give him a right royal shore leave—with limitations.

Jack himself has not only been willing but anxious that the problem should be solved; for the majority of the enlisted men of the navy are young fellows from 18 to 25 years of age, trig, taut and shipshape, possessed of a degree of that intelligent responsiveness which goes to the making of a good sailor, who realize, perhaps dimly, their inability to cope with the untrained forces of their own natures when in shore togs with money bulging in their trousers pockets.

There have always been innumerable resorts, saloons and gilded palaces—lighted places glittering with false promise—tempting by reason of the boisterous gaiety within. Jack has

tion in its first few months surpassed the highest expectations.

The story is told of a certain young apprentice. The lad came from Los Angeles to Vallejo, where he arrived at 9 o'clock in the evening with 25 cents in his pocket and without any definite idea regarding the night's lodging. He roamed the streets for a while, wondering what it would be best to do: to spend his solitary quarter for a meal and trust to luck for a bed, or to spend it for a bed and trust to luck for a meal. As it grew late, he decided on the bed—if one could be found cheap enough—and to that end he hailed the first man he saw coming in his direction, who turned out to be a sailor.

"Hello, mate," sang out the penniless one. "D'ye know where I can get a bunk—a cheap one?"

The sailorman paused as if taking in the questioner.

"Dunno about a bunk," he said, slowly, "but the Y. M. C. A. branch is on this street, and if you steer a straight course you can't miss her."

to one that the sailor needing it or fancying he does for certain purposes confides in the secretary to the extent that he "is going to have a good time," and it is ten to one that the secretary, being skilled in the handling of men, persuades him to change his mind before the transaction is over and go away feeling in some undefined fashion that the "good time" doesn't look as alluring as it did, and that it is "a mighty fine thing to have money in the bank."

The Vallejo branch last year handled \$150,000. If a man is a member of one branch of a naval station he is a member of all. If a man comes from Brooklyn to Vallejo the secretary of the Vallejo branch receives a letter from the secretary of the Brooklyn branch saying that a certain man is coming and stating a few facts which may be of value to the Vallejo secretary in dealing with him. If the man has any money on deposit in Brooklyn at his own request it will be forwarded to the Vallejo branch, where it will be ready for him on his arrival. In this way the sailors are provided for while on shore, besides having snug sums to their credit at the end of a cruise. Navy men are paid according to their degree of skill; many enlist as carpenters, machinists, sailmakers, cooks, pharmacists or electricians. The last named receive the highest rate of pay, which is \$75 a month. A seaman receives \$30. Generally speaking, the grade of the men employed in the navy is higher than that of the army, as skilled labor and training count for more, and are more in de-

largest, but is almost equaled by the one at Norfolk. At Vallejo there are sleeping accommodations for 150 men, among which are seventy rooms (counted one of the greatest privileges), while eighty more men can be put in rooms with two beds each. Besides this, five dozen canvas cots can be set up in the big auditorium and there are reading-rooms, baths and swimming pool, a correspondence room completely furnished with stationery, private lockers, a parcel checking and storage system, and many representative games, such as bowling, pool, billiards, bagatelle, and a shooting gallery. There is also a laundry and telegraph agency, and an entertainment designed especially for the approbation of the Jackies is given in the Auditorium every Saturday evening.

These entertainments are often very interesting, for occasionally a man may be found among the tars who can play the accordion or cornet or who may even be an expert pianist. The men are very fond of music and at the Sunday evening meetings once a week on board ship they join in the rousing old hymns with a will. "Full for the Shore, Sailor," when given lustily by a thousand voices, once heard will never be forgotten. The English acquaintances on the other night meetings with their own naval and rollicking coast songs.

What Roosevelt Says

"Nevertheless, life in the navy and the marine corps is considered hard. The greatest difficulty is encountered in finding men willing to enlist. The



DINING-ROOM AND LUNCH COUNTER



IN THE BILLIARD ROOM

not lacked for places where he could spend his money—or lose it—to come staggering out any time after midnight, stripped to his last cent, desperate, forlorn. It is the existence of just such travesties of jollity and good cheer as these that has caused a concerted effort for the amelioration of conditions.

And the need for differing conditions has been met. Today when Jack steps ashore at the end of his cruise he knows three things more than he used to know. He knows where to go, how to go, and why. These three reasons are all embodied in a substantial, roomy building with hospitably wide open door, through which he catches glimpses of well-warmed, well-lighted interior as he hurries up the path and enters into a particular domain provided for him. The lettering above the door reads, "Branch of the Y. M. C. A. Naval Station," and Jack knows to the full the comfort and cheer that await him there.

These naval stations were instituted during the time of the Spanish war, and have grown in number and efficiency till there are five branches in the United States and three in foreign countries. They are at Brooklyn, N. Y., Philadelphia, Newport, R. I., Norfolk, Va., and at Vallejo, Cal.; also at Porto Rico, Cavite and San Juan.

The Vallejo branch has done most efficient work. Since its opening June 16, 1904, 25,000 men have registered there. For the last calendar year the registration was 12,000, or about 1000 a month. The success of the institu-

"What!" exclaimed the young fellow in huge delight. "Do you mean to tell me there's a Y. M. C. A. branch here?" and without waiting for an answer he started off on the run.

Well, the Vallejo branch took the lad in, housed him, fed him, and kept him for three days, when it found him a berth on one of the best ships going. The boy was a clever pharmacist and he made good in that capacity.

Saving the Sailor From Sharks

"The prime sources of trouble for the enlisted man," said Mr. Squiers, the secretary of the Vallejo branch, "are three. First the men are entirely away from home and home associations and influences; second, they are herded together like sheep on board ship, having no private life whatever; third, they are idle. Put me ashore under similar conditions and I doubt if I could do as well as some of the men. There is not work enough aboard an ordinary ship to keep a crew of 400 men constantly employed. The consequence is that a large part of the time hangs heavily on their hands. They are berthed in hammocks swung sixteen inches apart, and above these the tables are swung to be lowered when needed. Around these tables the men sit in these empty hours. All classes of men are thus thrust together, and when you consider the fact that there is absolutely no private life for them, and that they are commonly debarrated from most pleasures or enjoyments from the time the ship leaves one harbor till she is docked in another, it is small wonder that a number of

paid off men coming on shore leave with anywhere from \$100 to \$1000 to their credit should be easy prey for the designing sharks who cluster about an incoming vessel like flies. But now," finished Mr. Squiers energetically, "these sharks have come to know that we expect to keep pretty close to an incoming ship, too. They know us and look out for us, and they'd like to put a spoke through our wheel if they could."

"When the New Orleans came into harbor flying the homeward pennant we knew there were a lot of paid off men aboard, and as soon as the sharks saw her they made a lively tumble for the water front. But we were there, too, with the result that we handled \$50,000 of the New Orleans money, and that brings me to tell you of the main feature of the branches, which we think is the banking system."

Making Jack Save Money

The banking system, in essence, is as follows. When the men are paid off they often request that the money be paid direct to the secretary of the banking department, who is an accredited agent of Wells-Fargo Company. As the men usually have from \$100 to \$1000 to their credit, the branches endeavor to have the men deposit their coin with them, where it is always available, besides drawing interest at 3½ per cent. In the case of men merely passing through a city where a naval branch is situated, the officers of the branch are sometimes able to induce the men to put the money in the shape of a money

order payable to them in their native town. This effectually prevents the arrival of a sailor in a penniless condition. If a man allots his pay to the secretary of the banking system of any branch he is entitled to draw out a large amount as he wishes, but there is good influence at hand; and it is ten



CHESS, CHECKERS AND DOMINOES

recruiting officer talks himself hoarse painting the "pleasures of travel," the delights of foreign lands, the possibilities, the chances—but the fact remains that the enlisted man must do as he is told, and that many of the men having once been induced to ship count the hours till their release, and that few can be induced to enlist again. However, the work of the branches is efficacious in this regard too. As the men realize more fully that the same kindly spirit which watched over them at Brooklyn or Newport also prevails at San Juan or at Chefoo, where a branch has recently been established which during the summer months is visited by about 10,000 sailors and marines, when they realize that, like an endless chain wherever they may be the same kindly interest and care is acting for them through these branches, it may have a remedial effect on the present unwillingness to enlist. That the branches have a most beneficial effect along other lines is an indisputable fact. While reaching in many directions, the end and aim of all the work is constantly in view. Hundreds of men have testified to the ennobling and regenerative influence of the Y. M. C. A. branches and at Vallejo alone eighty-one men last year expressed their desire to lead changed lives. In connection with this, President Roosevelt writes: "What I like about your work is that you mix religion with common sense," and Admiral Dewey says: "Nothing has done more good for the enlisted force of the navy than has the work of the Y. M. C. A."

So the work is appreciated and is growing. With five stations already in the United States, there may be ten in a few years more. The navy is constantly increasing. New vessels are being built—more men are needed—more branches must come to the fore. The Vallejo branch has proven its power and usefulness in a hundred ways. The Jackies of the navy look out for its lights as beacons at the entrance of a harbor safe and sure.

It is the purpose of the Y. M. C. A. to have branches wherever ships land. The Vallejo branch is now the second