

## A Tale from the Sea.

As told by an old man, in the Baptist prayer meeting, at Roland, Man., Feb. 1901.

DEAR FRIENDS:—I purpose telling you a story to-night, of the sea. Allowing for the imperfections of the narrator, you have a true and faithful tale throughout:—The most of you know that I at one time followed the sea. For about twenty-five years, I gained my living off the water. I did not go to sea as young as many do, in fact I was about a man grown when I first started. Now most of young men, who take to the sea, especially those who have a little education, do so with a view of advancement, while all do not attain it, nearly all look to be master, and perhaps master and owner later in life. I must plead guilty to the same ambition. I went fully determined to be at least captain before many years, well I got along very well at first, through some fortunate circumstances which I will not tire you by relating. I was made first mate of a full rigged brig in a little less than two years, and in a little less than another year I was offered charge of her, but for some reasons that I need not weary you by stating, I did not accept the offer. Well I did not get another chance to go as master for several years. In fact it was so long I began to despair of promotion, and thought I should end my days as mate only. There is a saying, everything comes to those who wait. Well it came to me after seven or eight years more. I had the offer of a small vessel to go to the West Indies, it was true she was small, but a small vessel is a good stepping stone to a larger one. So with a fine crew of home boys, I set sail. My orders were to go round to a southern home port, and purchase a load of lumber, then to proceed to the island of Barbadoes to seek the best market to dispose of cargo and after unloading to buy a certain amount of sugar and molasses and, with the balance of proceeds in cash, to return home. I felt it to be quite a responsible position for a young untitled captain and resolved to do my very best. Well fortune (which I use in place of a better term) favored me. I had a good run round to loading port, bought the lumber satisfactorily and had dispatch in loading. Then I had a good run to the West Indies and at Barbadoes. I found a splendid market for cargo at Guardalope, a French West India Island. I again had good dispatch discharging at that port and was able to purchase sugar and molasses at a low figure, quite a little lower than my owners told me I would likely have to pay. Well when all was ready for sea, we set sail for home. It was a beautiful day and a splendid fair wind, and I do not suppose many captains of His Majesty's man of war, or captains of ocean liners were much prouder when walking their quarter deck, than was your now humble servant on that day. I had known for years that I was capable of taking a vessel from port to port and also of transacting the business of one, but I had not proved it. Now I had proved it, to my own satisfaction at least, and it was self, self, self. I never remembered to give God the thanks. I was doing and going to do it all, myself.

I think it was Solomon, who said pride cometh before a fall, but whoever it was made a true proverb, as I only too soon could fully attest. I had a pretty hard fall. For the first night out one man took sick with yellow fever or something close akin to it, and the next day another, and in about three days there were only two men that could walk from one end of the deck to the other, one man besides myself. And for the next two or three weeks, we put in about as miserable a time as our worst enemies could wish. The little medicine we had was soon exhausted, the sick were all in our little hole of a cabin and the weather was hot. The one man and myself had to work and steer the vessel, cook the food, if any was cooked, which was seldom, and, what was still worse for us, take care of the sick, such care as we could give them. Poor fellows! I fear they found we were not trained nurses, though our wills were good. Well for two weeks or more we never took off our clothing or even turned into a bed, but when warm enough lay down on deck. When the weather was too cool, we would lay down on the cabin floor for a few minutes' sleep and if we could get one half hour at a time we thought that fortunate. After a week or so at sea it became only too evident, that at least some of the sick ones would die, two in particular. Some of them became very anxious about their eternal welfare. One young man about nineteen years of age, was very anxious, he lamented greatly his lost state. I learned from him, that he had lately passed through a revival season and had been awakened, but like too many others he put it off for a more convenient season, but now his lament was, "Oh that I had attended to it then when I had friends around me to advise and pray with me, but here I am, dying without help. Alone, nobody to show me the way." He at several times asked me to read the Bible to him, which I did occasionally, although my time was so limited, I could only read a few verses at a time. Now I could have pointed him to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world, I could have told him, that the son of God was crucified for him and was now risen and glorified and was interceding for him

and inviting him to come, but while my heart ached for him, my tongue clove to the roof of my mouth. I made one or two efforts to tell him but I could not speak to the point, you may think this strange, that I could not talk to a man who I knew would be dead in a few days. But it was like this. Suppose they had asked me if I had accepted what I was advising them to accept, and if they did not, my conscience would. What answer could I make. Then again, lips that had been heard all the voyage using profane words to now talk of holy things seemed to me to be altogether incongruous, though I will do myself the justice to say I was not greatly profane for a sailor. So, to my sorrow and shame, I have to say that I let them die without much help. Well, when we had been two weeks at sea there was something strange happened, at least to me it was. I must digress just here to say that I was never superstitious, although sailors are proverbially so. I used to say that if the living let me live in peace I was not afraid of the dead. I had no faith in ghosts, witches or mermaids, nor yet in dreams. But I had a dream which I will relate to you without comment. Near sunset one day I went into the cabin, and after a little attention to the sick I threw myself on the floor with an old jacket for a pillow, hoping to catch a few minutes sleep to better fit me for night duty. I suppose I was asleep almost as soon as I touched the floor, and I dreamed I was just there, sick men and all, the only difference was I thought I sat in a chair at the table and was feeling and over our troubles, and looking up I saw a young lady that I was well acquainted with coming down the cabin stairs. It did not strike me that there was anything strange in this, she walked up to me, just looking a little more sober than usual. She was a fine person, an admirable young woman, though I do not know that she was a professed Christian at that time. I may just say she was nothing more than an ordinary friend of mine. Well, she had the Bible in her hand and handed it to me saying, "You read the sixth chapter of St. John." I took the Bible from her with a jest, asking why some other chapter would not do. She gave me a commanding look and said, "You read it," and then turned and went out the way she came in. I think it must have been right away that I was awakened by the cries of some of the sufferers. I got up and after administering to their wants I went to the one I have before referred to. He said, "Oh, Captain, it is getting so dark I can't see a bit of light, do get the Bible and read to me." I don't think I ever before wished I was a Christian, at any rate just for the sake of others. I did wish it then. Oh how I thought I could tell of the Crucified if only I had my lips unsealed, and how I regretted they were ever heard using profane or obscene language. I got the book and I think I offered a silent prayer for guidance in choice of reading when the thought struck me to read the sixth chapter of St. John. I knew something of the gospel of St. John, but had not the least idea what was in the sixth chapter. I found it a long chapter, and I was needed on deck, but I read it throughout. When I came to the passage where Jesus said, "It is I, be not afraid," the young man's countenance brightened, he raised his hands and said, "I see it, I see it, 'tis I, be not afraid. Yes, dear Jesus, I will not be afraid," and from that time till the end he was a happy Christian. He did his best to tell the others and point them to Jesus, especially the mate, who was in the next berth or bed. They were cousins. We will hope his words had a good effect. The next night he fell asleep, I fully trust, in Jesus, and the following morning his cousin died also. That evening we buried the two in a watery grave. A funeral at sea is always a solemn sight and you may well think for a young crew all from the same town or vicinity to have to bury one third of their number at one time was very impressive. I could not resist the impulse to read a chapter and offer a prayer, the first time my voice was ever heard in audible prayer. I think we all felt we were very near eternity and I do believe that Jesus never quite let go of me since, although I wandered on barren hills and vales and over mountains of sin, I believe the all-seeing eye was watching me and purposed to bring me back, for which I hope I am truly thankful. My story is about all told, I will just add, a few days after the burial we fell in with a vessel of and from New York, and they supplied us with two men, and a few days after that we put into New York harbor. The sick went to the hospital and eventually recovered their health. My vessel was seized for salvage by the owners of the vessel who supplied us with help, and after a vexatious law suit which took all the profits of the voyage, and much detention I arrived home. And so ended that golden dream. I had learned that I might propose but that it is God that disposes. Two weeks after arriving the Rev. J. C. (now Doctor) Morse preached those two young men's funeral sermon, giving us a very solemn and impressive discourse from the text, "It is I, be not afraid." I had related my dream to Mr. Morse but have told it very seldom since, only once since I came to this country. Thanking you all for your patient attention, I'll only add I hope when you go home you will read the sixth chapter of St. John and pray for all who may be in distress.

## "Why do the Heathen Rage."

Dear Fellow-workers at Home:—This morning I find myself thinking of you and your interest in the great work we are carrying on together. Many of you have put much thought and prayer and real self-denying effort in Christendom's endeavor to give the gospel to the heathen and win them to Christ. With your missionaries you have rejoiced in every conversion reported; and with them you have mourned because so few, through their instrumentality, have yielded to the claims of Jesus crucified. How it would cheer your hearts should you hear of thousands, in that part which you have undertaken to evangelize, destroying their idols, and turning to the one true, living, loving God! and how we would rejoice could we read such a message!!!!

Do you sometimes think your whole effort has been a failure? Do you occasionally become a little discouraged about the business? Do you ever wonder whether, after all, it pays to send men and money to those who set themselves "against the Lord and against His Anointed," decidedly determined that they will not have him to rule over them and theirs? If you don't have any such questionings, happy are you. If you covet them, come to India and spend at least five years in the work. Please don't think I am disheartened and I want to get back home. I have no idea of asking the Board to make it possible for me to return at an early date. Not much!! On the contrary, my faith in God's promises and in the whole Foreign Mission movement was never stronger than it is at the present time. I must, however, acknowledge that I have had a long morning call from that old "father of lies," the devil. He so skillfully covered the falsehood with truth, that for a moment I felt myself beaten. But when I quoted the second Psalm to my visitor, and reminded him that his determination had ever been to destroy the works of God, and if possible to deceive the very elect; and that he was as foolish as he was wicked, he quite unceremoniously took leave and I took courage.

Sometimes God's children while looking at the things seen, and meditating upon the many hindrances to the work, and the mighty power of the adversary, lose sight of the great fundamental fact that the work is not theirs but their God's. The Foreign Mission movement did not originate with man. It was God who conceived the plan of presenting a crucified Saviour to all the world. And through his beloved Son, and those who have believed in him, God has worked out his purpose of love till the present time. Moreover, he will continue so to do in spite of all the heathen's raging, until his will shall have been as fully executed on earth as it is in Heaven.

Why is the soldier of the cross sometimes in danger of becoming discouraged? Because he sometimes forgets that the Almighty, Allwise God, his Heavenly Father has this work in hand, and is interested in it, as he himself cannot be. For the time being the divine part of the programme is lost sight of.

Why do the heathen rage and rave? Why do they so persistently reject the gospel offer and fight against the truth as we declare it unto them? Because they do not realize that in so doing they are fighting against God. They either eliminate the divine element entirely, or blindly disavow it.

"Why do the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel against the Lord, and against his Anointed, saying, let us break their bands asunder, and let us cast away their cords from us, he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh and the Lord shall have them in derision. . . . Ask of me and I will give thee the heathen for thy inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession."

We were talking about the bitter opposition and varied forms of persecution that converts to Christianity in India invariably meet, when a veteran missionary of ripe experience and strong faith most earnestly asked: "Why do the heathen rage anyhow? the poor fellows! don't they know they must come to it?"

It is doubtless true that hundreds of thousands of India's sons, and amongst them many of the most enlightened and best educated, thoroughly believe that Hindulism is doomed. Its gross absurdities, delusive abstractions, and vile teachings, have been so thoroughly and constantly exposed during the last twenty-five or fifty years, that thoughtful and fair-minded Hindus have become Hindus in name only. Their faith in Hindulism is shaken and shattered. The religion of their fathers offers to them no salvation, no personal holiness, no victory over the flesh, no real peace on earth, no hope of heaven. But while this is true, very, very few comparatively have the courage to renounce entirely the religion of their land, and accept fully that of the Lord Jesus Christ, even though they acknowledge it to be infinitely superior not only to India's religion, but all others as well. And some, though they dare to put on Christ publicly in baptism and identify themselves with his disciples, are yet lacking in that moral courage and Christian fortitude without which they cannot but deny their Saviour, when the finger of scorn, the scathing tongue of slander, and the cruel hand of persecution is turned against them. In my next letter I hope to tell you how one recently became convinced of the truths of Christianity, acknowledged Christ publicly, and then like Peter denied his Lord and Saviour.

Yours fraternally,

Bimlipatam, June 12, 1901.

R. E. GULLIBON.

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