

WITHOUT BALLAST.

One Monday the "Escambia," a British iron steamer loaded with wheat, weighed anchor, and started down the bay of San Francisco. The pilot left her when about five miles outside the Golden Gate. Looking back from his pilot-boat a short time after, he saw the vessel stop, drift into the trough of the sea, careen to port, both bulwarks going under water, and then suddenly capsize and sink!

What was the cause of this sad catastrophe? A want of ballast. She came into port from China, a few weeks before, with a thousand emigrants on board. But she had in her hold immense tanks for what is called water ballast. Those tanks were full, and she battled successfully with wind and waves. But the captain, wishing to carry all the wheat he could between decks, neglected to fill those tanks. He thought the cargo would steady the ship. But it made it top heavy, and the first rough sea capsized it.

Here, then, was a vessel tight and strong, with powerful engines, with a cargo worth \$100,000, foundering as soon as she left the harbour, taking down with her a crew of forty-five men, because the captain failed to have her properly ballasted. The moment she began to lurch, the wheat all tumbled over to the lower side, and down into the sea she went.

How this wreck of the "Escambia" repeats the trite lesson that so many have tried to teach, and that they who need it most are so slow to learn. Young men starting out in life want to carry as little ballast as possible. They are enterprising, ambitious. They are anxious to go fast and take as much cargo as they can. Old-fashioned principles are regarded as dead weight. It does not pay to keep them, and they are thrown overboard. Good home habits are abandoned in order to be popular with the gay and worldly. The Bible is not read, the Lord's Day is not observed, prayer is neglected, and lo! some day, when all the sails are spread, a sudden temptation comes that wrecks the character and the life.

THE SWEET-MINDED WOMAN.—So great is the influence of a sweet-minded woman on those around her that it is almost boundless. It is to her that friends come in seasons of sorrow and sickness for help and comfort; one soothing touch of her kindly hand works wonders in the feverish child; a few words let fall from her lip in the ear of a sorrowing sister do

much to raise the load of grief that is bowing its victim down to the dust in anguish. The husband comes home worn out with the pressure of business, and feeling irritable with the whole world in general; but when he enters the cosy sitting room, and sees the blaze of the bright fire, and meets his wife's smiling face, he succumbs in a moment to the soothing influences which act as a balm of Gilead to his wounded spirits, that are wearied with the stern realities of life. The rough school-boy flies in a rage from the taunts of his companions to find solace in his mother's smiles; the little one full of grief with his own large trouble, finds a haven of rest on its mother's breast; and so one might go on with instance after instance of the influence that a sweet-minded woman has in the social life with which she is connected. Beauty is an insignificant power when compared with hers.

OBITUARY.

On the 23rd April 1883 there passed away to his rest and reward at Sheet Harbor Mr. John Hall aged 62 years.

During the pastorate of the Rev. James Waddell, in 1864, he was elected to the eldership in the Sheet Harbor congregation and served 19 years. He ever manifested a deep interest in the welfare of the Presbyterian Church and was strongly attached to it. By his quiet demeanour and humble deportment coupled with his earnest instructions at the Sabbath School he endeared himself to many. His seat in the House of God was seldom vacant unless absent from home and his loyalty to our beloved Zion continued firm down to the day of his death. At the prayer meeting, in the choir and Sabbath school he is missed and others must now rise up to take the place he filled so well. In his death Sheet Harbor congregation has lost a firm friend, good counsellor and a judicious elder.

Let us be followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

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Nearly \$25,000,000 have been invested in the search for gold in India, and not \$2,500 have been realized after three years labour. The money invested in missionary labours there, with some short-sighted business men pronounced a waste, has brought substantial and permanent returns. Missions pay, if mines do not.