

The Home Mission Journal

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REV. J. H. HUGHES,
Canard Street, St. John, (North) N. B.

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Cruising for the Cross.

By Rev. C. A. S. Dwight.

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CHAPTER XII.

"THERE GO THE SHIPS."

At Sebastopol Henton did what he could in a quiet way for the moral welfare of the English-speaking seamen in port. Inasmuch as Russia is in the grip of the bigoted hierarchy of the Greek Church, it was not possible to do much missionary work ashore without being subjected to the annoyances of a call from the police. Yet Henton did manage to slip a few Bibles, printed in Russian, into the hands of a few people who seemed to be hungry for better teaching than is afforded by the priest-ridden Church to which they nominally belonged, but in which they found small comfort for the heart.

It was a quick run back to Constantinople, across the Sea of Marmora, out through the Dardanelles, past the Troad and the ruins of Alexandria Troas—where Paul left the parchments, and where Eutychus fell out of the window—down to Smyrna. Again at Smyrna there was a "Rest" to visit, and many delightful meetings were held in its pleasant quarters near the quay, attended by sailors of many nationalities. While the *Glad Tidings* lay at anchor at Smyrna the Hentons did not fail to take advantage of the opportunity afforded of visiting the sites of some of the seven churches of Asia, including Ephesus, once a stately city by the sea, but now a mass of silent ruins cut off from the blue waters of the Aegean by many acres of silt and sand which the passing centuries have deposited in its once famous harbor.

From Smyrna the *Glad Tidings* in leisurely fashion took a run over to Athens, anchoring in the harbor of the Piræus, and remaining there a week, while its owners strolled about among the beautiful relics and noble monuments of ancient Greece, not failing to visit Mar's Hill, where once the Apostle to the Gentiles confronted the assembled majesty and wisdom of Athens, with the new strange doctrine of a resurrection from the dead through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Of course the Hentons admired the Parthenon, and revelled in the antiquities and art of Greece, while not failing to note how great was the lack in that old "sunny paganism" of truly joyful inspiration, and regretting that so often art was debased to picture forth but a rude and coarse heathenism.

There were Protestant believers, too, to visit in Athens, whose evangelic witness in the metropolis of Greece is steady and strong, though refused by the majority of the shallow and superstitious modern Greeks, to whom the forms of religion are more than the faith which makes alive.

But soon these pleasant experiences came to an end, and the *Glad Tidings*, weighing its anchor, spread its white wings for a further voyage, and after many delightful hours spent in skimming the billows of the Mediterranean, arrived before long at Beirut, where the Syrian Protestant College was visited, and many delightful hours were spent with the members of its Faculty and the missionaries of the city.

After a pleasant stay there of some days, the *Glad Tidings* dropped down to Alexandria, whence the Hentons took a run by rail to Cairo and the Pyramids. On their return the yacht was navigated to Port Said—the open door to the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean and India.

Port Said was perhaps the worst place Henton had yet visited. It was surrounded by a low-lying country, and filled with disreputable odds and ends of all nationalities. There the Armen-

ian merchant was of much assistance, as he knew many languages. There was no Sailors' Rest, but Henton set to work to establish one in rented quarters, placing in charge of it the willing and faithful Armenian. Just off the quay a big Russ an man of war was moored. It pained Henton to see how on Sunday the sailors, after a season of shore leave, would come back helplessly drunk, to be unceremoniously tumbled into the boats, taken to the ship and perhaps put under the knout the next day. If ever there seemed to be a God-forsaken place, it was Port Said. Yet John Henton tried earnestly to do a good work there for Jesus Christ, and many will meet him in glory who, though once poor abandoned sailors, were reclaimed by that Saviors' Rest and restored to manhood by the grace of the Redeemer.

It was no part of Hentons' plan, however, to tarry long in one port, as the world is wide, and opportunities for usefulness offer themselves everywhere. So the *Glad Tidings* began to make its way slowly through the Suez Canal—that famous ditch in the desert cut by what was practically slave labor.

Midway in its course the canal widens out into the pretty Lake of Ismailia. As the *Glad Tidings* rounded to into the lake Henton was surprised to find at anchor in that island sheet of water a yacht, the *Vixen*, flying the Stars and Stripes, and near it a big English yacht. Civilities were exchanged in due form. The English yacht belonged to a wealthy lord, who had made his money and gained a peering out of brewing beer. The other yacht was owned by an American speculator, not personal immortal, but apparently without a thought or a care regarding religion.

"Would that I could win these rich men to Christ!" thought John Henton.

The Englishman proved to be unapproachable, being inflated with an extraordinary sense of his own importance as a beer-made peer. The American, however, took a liking to John Henton, and Henton was drawn to him. Courtesies were interchanged, and many pleasant hours were enjoyed together. But the manners of some of the company were too free, and their talk was ill-guarded. Henton accordingly did not refrain from letting it be known that such behavior was not congenial to him. He ventured to ask permission for the sailors of the two yachts to meet on board the *Glad Tidings*. This permission was grudgingly and condescendingly granted by the Englishman, and laughingly accorded offhand by the American yachtsman, who bore the name of William Bixby. Henton determined that if he could, he would influence Bixby for good. One evening they were pacing the quarter-deck of the *Vixen* under the awning.

"Bixby," said Henton suddenly, "are you happy?"

"Bixby started, reddened, and stammered, "Why—why do you ask?"

"Because," said Henton, "I am trying to make my business to make people happy—by winning them to the Lord I love, and in whom I trust for salvation."

"Strange talk this!" muttered Bixby. "Is this a prayer-meeting?"

"No," said Henton, with a kindly smile, "but it might well be, and perhaps will yet be!"

And then he told his new friend the story of his own life, how he had been a sport and a confessed Epicurean, given to the things that perish. He spoke of the awful fate that befell the dissolute George Oakes off Newport, and told of the religious purpose of his own world-wide cruise. Then Henton took Bixby by the hand, and affectionately invited him to give his heart to God.

The rich man addressed was visibly moved. His voice grew hoarse as he said, "No man for years has spoken to me about my soul. I had almost forgotten that I had a soul. Here on these placid waters of the Lake of Ismailia in the heart of Moslem Egypt you come—a man of wealth and of my own class in society—to inquire whether I am saved. John Henton, I appreciate your interest, I respect your manhood, and I admit the truth of your message. Still, I cannot say now what answer I will make. I do not decide things in a hurry. Yet I will think it over. Yes, I will go so far as to ask that you will pray for me that I may settle it right."

Henton grasped the other hand of his new ac-

quaintance as he murmured, "Indeed I will pray! God will guide you into the sunshine of full surrender. Do not delay! Make this question the main matter under consideration until it is settled right."

And after returning to the *Glad Tidings* that night Henton in his own private cabin prayed long and earnestly for the conversion of his wealthy American acquaintance.

And William Bixby must have prayed too, for the next morning early he came over in his launch, and climbing lightly up the ladder of the *Glad Tidings*, which hung hospitably over the starboard side of the yacht, he routed out Henton from his cabin, and grasping his hand exclaimed with more enthusiasm than he had for years displayed about anything, "Henton, I have decided it right! I have decided for Jesus Christ. I too will be a Christian! God help me to be a good one!"

That was indeed a joyous breakfast that followed in the cabin of the *Glad Tidings*—for Henton soon told the good news to Grace, whose face was now wreathed in smiles over this new triumph of redeeming love.

A Pure Church.

By Rev. Charles C. Karle.

It is not the members of the church in the theatre and in related institutions, as much as it is the theatre and related institutions in the church that is the bane of Christianity. Fair festivals, and other secular entertainments produce a worldly atmosphere which is destructive to the spiritual life of the church, and which creates an appetite for secular sensations which the world is ever providing. A pure church is its own salvation and adequately meets all the needs of the soul, for which the church was instituted. When it departs from the sacred ministry of spiritual benefits to meet the so-called social needs of the people, and competes with the world in secular festivities, it vitiates its own life, and also the taste of the people for the things they should relish, and prepares them for the diversions of the world, which far surpass the feeble efforts of the church in this respect.

And those outside the church know full well when the church has lowered its standard and lost its spiritual power, and they are not won to Christ until the church has done its first works over, and been purified and renewed through repentance and prayer, and comes again into communion with God and lives the life of separation from the world. Then the Lord adds unto the church such as are being saved.

The Hiring Ministry.

Our good friends the Quakers, are quite apt at their Yearly Meetings to say quite a little about a hiring ministry. There is really very little ground for this. The man who fills his position well, and thinks but little about his stipend, cannot, in any just sense, be termed a hiring minister. It is the spirit that makes the hiring. If a man thinks of that which he is to gain, rather than of that which he is to do, he is a hiring, however he may be compensated. There is nothing of a hiring, on the other hand, about the man whose hand and heart and brain are full of the wants and needs of his people, and who spends, and is willing to be spent, in order that those and they may be met.

There are churches, however, that seem to want to establish or maintain that relationship of a hiring as between them and their pastors. Their pastors are engaged annually just as their hands on a farm are engaged. This, it seems to us, is a cheapening and demeaning thing. It puts too much of the commercial spirit into the transaction, and being hired like a hired man it has a tendency to induce the hired man feeling