

The Home Mission Journal.

A record of Missionary, Sunday-school and Temperance work, and a reporter of church and ministerial activities, and general religious literature. Published semi-monthly.

All communications, whether containing money or other wise are to be addressed to

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Cruising for the Cross.

By Rev. C. A. S. Dwight.

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CHAPTER I.

DIED AS THE FOOL DIETH.

Over the waters of Newport Harbor one still night in June, the radiance of a full moon was streaming. The bay was crowded with yachts, and when the big *Sonnet* steamer on its way from Fall River to New York had arrived off the Torpedo Station, it had been obliged slowly to feel its way to its pier, among the pretty little craft with their knife-like bows, a good deal as a ponderous whale might navigate among a school of sword fish. Festivities afloat and ashore were now at an end for the evening, and the brilliant blaze from the cabins of the yachts began to be dimmed.

On board one of the steam yachts—the *Sea Gull*—two men in natty yachting costume were pacing the deck. The younger of the two, John Henton, was a frank-faced fellow of pleasing appearance, the other, George Oakes, was a heavy, thick-set man, whose face was already mottled with the signs of dissipation. As they strolled about the yacht, the two men, who were boon companions, talked lightly of the gay scenes they had just witnessed in the Casino ashore. Frequently their conversation was punctuated with oaths. Both men walked rather unsteadily, and their rolling gait was not due to any swell of the sea. Presently the steward was ordered to serve more drinks on the quarter-deck. Then the men resumed their stroll, up and down, up and down, until midnight, when George Oakes, calling loudly for his launch, stumbled clumsily aboard it, and was carried over to his own yacht, the *Carcenought*, which lay at anchor near by, and which, in the hands of Oakes, was a floating palace of sin and shame. As the little launch puffied its way to the gangway of the *Carcenought* the oaths of the reckless Oakes echoed back over the waters.

John Henton, after the departure of his hilarious friend, hardly felt like turning in. His head was hot, but not having unbidled as freely as had Oakes he still had some wits left. As the glowing moonlight flooded Newport Harbor, Henton gazed admiringly at the beautiful scene. The garnish electric lights of the town and the riding-lights of the yachts shone forth in seeming competition with the calm, pervasive radiance of earth's faithful satellite. Even to John Henton, who did not lack in sense of shewdness, there appeared to be a marked contrast between the two kinds of illumination. It was man-made, artificial, local and garish—in too many cases the sign and token of debauchery and sin. The other, made by the Great Creator, was high, pure, and free to all, and seemed to be symbolic of the calm and control of a life that was very different from that fevered rush and struggle after pleasure in which Henton was engaged.

John Henton had had a fair average home training. His parents had not been professors of religion, yet had maintained a respectful attitude towards its institutions. Their creed appeared to be morality. They were indulgent and easy-going—members of a class too large in America today. It seemed impossible for them to deny their son John and their daughter Grace anything. John had gone to college, where he had become intimate with a classmate from the West—George Oakes. Both young men had plenty of spending money—squandering in a single year sums larger than the salaries of many professional men. They were comrades in dissipation, although Henton stopped short of its coarser forms of excess. After college days both men dabbled for a while in business, but their vacations were more in the aggregate than their office

hours. Neither had need of money, as their respective fathers obligingly wrote convenient checks when asked to do so. So it happened that what with driving in Lenox or Tuxedo in the fall, golfing in Florida in winter, fishing toms in the Spring and yachting in the Summer, with frequent staves at Newport, Bar Harbor, and similar summer resorts, the two young men appeared to be adepts at turning life into a holiday. At the time this story opened, Henton having been given the use of his father's yacht for the season was cruising in company with Oakes, who owned his own craft. Oakes was one of those men who never appeared to have a serious thought. The idea of responsibility never crossed his mind, while of religion he knew and cared as much as he did about the question. "Is Mars inhabited?" Henton occasionally dropped into a church, but only when some attractive lady asked him to escort her thither, or when the conventionalities of society absolutely demanded it. As for the church service itself, that seemed utterly uninteresting to him, except for the music, which now and then gave him an aesthetic pleasure.

But there was a conscience hidden away down deep in John Henton, and his conscience on the night in question gave him some trouble. Perhaps it was the vague memory of a sermon he had happened to hear in a Newport church the preceding Sunday, when an unusually earnest man officiated—or it may have been that he felt blue after an unusual reckless carouse that evening—at any rate he was depressed. His present life did not satisfy him—that he half-realized and recognized. For Henton had in him the makings of a fine man if sin were only stopped from ravaging his character, and if a noble ambition could be brought from some direction to replace the moral dilettantism which then characterized his life. After a half hour or so of this uneasy reverie, out of sorts with himself and his surroundings, though afloat on a fine yacht with a dozen men under his orders and every luxury at hand, Henton walked to the companion way, resolved to turn in. As he put his foot on the top step, he glanced seaward and noticed that a thick haze was clouding the face of the moon, and he heard the quarter-master mutter, "Thick weather tomorrow!" As he sought his cabin, Henton noticed that the barometer had slightly fallen. Soon he was asleep in his handsome stateroom.

The next day was Sunday. Henton slept late, for he had never learned to pay any attention to the Sabbath day, or to ask himself when it dawned whether any religious duties awaited him. After a while the rich young pleasure-seeker appeared in the cabin, and in a listless way partook of breakfast, in solitary selfishness. Hardly had he finished his meal when the swish of a launch was heard alongside, and the form of Oakes darkened the companion way.

"Henton," exclaimed Oakes, "let's get a run out today for a little deep-sea fishing. It will be slightly thick—all the better for that kind of work. Don't trouble," he added, "to send ashore for any more provisions. I have an extra hamper of champagne I will send aboard for you. If you like, we will try a race, when we have dropped Brenton Reef Lightshipastern. By-the-way," he added, "I have invited some friends to come along. We will join parties and have a spread when we reach Rock Island on the way out!"

Henton listened to all this talk with a yawn. He knew something about Oakes' friends—not that he objected to them, for his own conscience was not sufficiently awake to make any such discrimination, but he simply failed to take any interest in them.

"Oakes," said Henton, "I did think of going ashore and asking that Miss Goodrich, whom we met at the Casino yesterday to go to St. Mark's with me."

"Nonsense, Henton; that girl is neither rich nor pretty, what's the use of doing any such penance for her!"

Henton, weak as he was then in moral principle, in the absence, too, of any real regard for Miss Goodrich, dropped the subject, and not caring to take a run seaward just then, cast about for some other excuse. If he had no religious scruples, at least he was like many men of bad morals, a bit superstitious, and so he blurted out: "Oakes, I don't care about going out on Sunday. It's bad luck. You and I don't care anything about religion, but it's no use—well, no use running in the face of Providence, as the preachers say. "And besides," he added, "I promised the crew

they should have a rest today after our hard run up from Old Point Comfort."

Oakes' only answer to this was a derisive laugh, a jeer at religion, and an unfeeling remark that he cared nothing for the crew—they were hired to shovel coal and to haul on the braces.

With that he was off, shouting back as he lumbered up the companion way that the shore party would be on board the *Carcenought* at noon, and then he would "up-anchor" and be off, expecting to see the *Sea Gull* trailing behind him.

(To be Continued.)

Letter from Rev. S. D. Ervine.

Dear Brother:

I write again to let you know about my recent illness. I have had a close call. On Tuesday, Feb. 9th, a severe hemorrhage set in, and I fully expected in a few minutes to be let free from this body of disease and suffering. The blood, however stopped flowing, and though the loss greatly reduced my already depleted stock of strength, my life was again spared, and I still linger, why I cannot tell.

My sufferings for several months in the respiratory organs, and through general weakness have been indescribable; very little pain, but a stifling, smothering sensation, coupled with a feeling of general collapse over the entire body. Truly to me to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord would be far better. But I await the Master's bidding—his summons, child, come home.

Mrs. E. and children have had a prevailing cold, but are now somewhat better. There is much sickness here and many deaths. I think if Southern California ever had the right to be called the land of health, or health restorer, it has now lost all its virtue. But I must stop. I can't write much; my head is thick, and my hand trembles. God bless you all. Remember me kindly to my many friends.

As ever yours,

S. D. ERVINE.

San Jacinto, Cal., Feb. 16, 1904.

THE ERVINE FUND.

The following amounts have been contributed to this fund since Sept., 1903:

C. W. Newcomb,	\$1 00
Mrs. C. W. Newcomb,	1 00
Mrs. W. H. Manzer,	1 00
Mrs. Elijah Granville,	1 00
Per Rev. N. B. Rogers,	5 00
Miss E. E. Estabrooks,	5 00
Leverett Estabrooks,	4 00
Mrs. Hattie Edgar,	1 00
Mrs. S. M. Rogers,	1 00
T. E. Bridges,	50
D. C. Dykeman,	50
Rev. I. Wallace,	1 00
Mr. and Mrs. W. M. Smith,	1 00
Per Rev. C. W. Townsend,	3 61
David Vaughan,	2 00
H. A. Fowles,	1 00
Harry Hyslop,	1 00
Mr. and Mrs. T. A. Branscombe,	1 00
Mrs. R. H. Hetherington,	1 00
Mrs. Mary A. Starkey,	1 00
Mrs. E. C. Corey,	1 00
Per Mrs. H. L. Bailey,	5 00
Edward Hughes,	1 00
E. M. Ganong,	2 00

Total, \$40 61

With these gifts there have also doubtless been many prayers offered in behalf of our afflicted brother and his family. May God graciously sustain them in this trying period.

W. E. McINTYRE

The following is one of many kind expressions of sympathy and Christian fellowship accompanying these remittances:

"Dear Brother:

I am sending you today five dollars for our dear brother Ervine in California. He is indeed passing through deep waters, and my prayer is that God may bless him abundantly, and if it can be the Divine Will that he may again be restored to health and take up the work so dear to his heart.

Yours in Christ,
MRS. H. L. BAILEY."

Debec Junction, Feb. 17th, 1904.