

# The Home Mission Journal

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## Cruising for the Cross.

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### CHAPTER XVI.

The barkentine was off the coast of New Guinea one moonlight night. Henton had bought the latest chart of these waters when in Colombo, and had carefully consulted it. He had given orders to the second officer on the bridge what course to pursue—the correct course shown by that chart—and then before midnight he turned in.

Hardly had Henton dropped asleep when there came a rude shock. The whole ship quivered from stem to stern. Rousing on deck Captain Henton rubbed the sleep from his eyes and blinking looked around. The whole sea looked grayish with a curious white froth. Hailing the second officer who was on the bridge he demanded to know what the matter.

"We're aground, Sir!" replied the second officer.

"Call all hands!" ordered Henton.

A hasty examination was made, while the whole ship's company came tumbling up on deck. The officer conning the ship had, it seemed, mistaken for cresting waves a touched sily white by moonlight, what were really breakers tripping gently over shoals. Fortunately the sea was smooth. The barkentine had run on an uncharted shoal—for the best of n-a-n-ade charts, unlike that perfect chart, the Bible, are unreliable or deficient at certain points.

The yacht had ground softly and was resting easily. Yet it could not be stirred with the engines, even when the steam was turned on. Henton's face grew grave. That was a pretty predicament to be in, off an unknown coast, and out of the usual course of ocean travel! But perhaps the tide would help, when it ran flood in the morning. Yet when morning dawned, after an anxious night, the *Glad Tidings* was still fast.

"John," said Grace slyly, "I will now say un-to you as Paul said unto the centurion, 'Sir, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have gained this harm and loss!'"

"Just like a woman to say, 'I told you so!'" growled John rather crossly.

Grace discreetly kept silent while her brother with vexation and chagrin written plainly on his face, walked forward to take a look at things from the top-gallant fore'side.

But now a new difficulty presented itself. As the yacht had been running along the coast the precious day John and Grace had amused themselves watching the canoes of the wild Borneo tribesmen dancing up and down on the waves near the shore. But now they did not at all relish the sight of a small fleet of canoes that began to creep out toward them in the forenoon watch! What if those canoes, which now seemed fairly to swarm over the waters, contained ferocious head hunters? The *Glad Tidings* was unarmed, except for a small saluting cannon. Henton ordered that hastily loaded with old spikes, while the few rifles on board were distributed among the cool set members of the crew, who could be trusted not to fire before they were ordered.

John Henton was no man of blood, and was sorely perplexed. Was it right for him to fire on the savages, or was there some bloodless way of repelling their advance? How could he be sure that an attack was really intended? Clearly it was his duty to defend the ship and his crew. Putting up a hasty prayer to his Master to forgive him for his folly in cruising out of his proper course, instead of continuing his gospel work

in well-frequented ports, Henton quickly matured his plans, making ready for emergencies. Nearer and nearer came the canoes, their occupants grinning hideously and brandishing their rude weapons. Henton could see that fortunately the savages possessed no fire-arms. Were they bent on barter or blood-shed? It was time to find out. The crew of the *Glad Tidings* were now all on deck, armed with what weapons they could secure, including marling spikes and bayonets. Grace at her brother's urgent request had kept below.

Henton, running up to the bridge, made a sign to the savages to keep off. A few hideously painted figures stood up in the bows of the advancing canoes and brandished their weapons in fierce defiance.

There could be no doubt now but that the savages meant mischief of the worst kind. Henton ordered the yacht's cannon fired at an angle, just clearing the canoes to warn the wild men. The spikes went flying over the water, dashing a few flecks of foam into the canoes at one end of the line. Still the canoes began to come on though more slowly now. Henton's nerves began to creep. "Must I fire point-blank?" he asked himself.

Just then a bright thought struck his mind. "Get on the fire-hose!" cried the captain. Several lengths of hose belonging to pumps both fore and aft were brought out and trailed along the deck, while trusty men were detailed to hold the nozzles. Telling the men who were armed with rifles to hold their fire as a last resort, Captain Henton ordered the pumps set going. Engineer Henderson saw to it that the pumps did their work as they had never done it previously, and before the astonished savages, who now had crowded nearer the ship, knew what to make of the queer kind of rain shot out in their direction, they were sprinkled with hot water mixed with steam. A few moments of this watery bombardment were enough to make the crews of the foremost canoes paddle back out of range. So powerful were the pumps and so far did they throw their streams that the savages thereafter were only able to hurl their spears and shoot their arrows from a range so distant as to render their attack harmless to the *Glad Tidings* except for the scratching of a little paint or the snapping of a bit of rope-yarn here and there. All that forenoon the yacht lay securely protected within a safety zone of hot water mixed with steam. An admontory shot now and then with a rifle or with the cannon, sending a metallic missile popping into the water near by the canoes, helped to enforce the less n-intended. For some hours the canoes kept bobbing up and down just outside the range of the steam-pumps, until the head-hunters, thinking that they might have better fortune ash-ore, slowly paddled to land and disappeared in the woods.

Things might have gone badly, however for the stranded barkentine that night if a small frigate steamer which had been diverted from its accustomed course had not providentially turned up in the early afternoon. The "frigate" at once proceeded to the assistance of the yacht, and, after some hours' work succeeded in hauling it off the shoal. Henton was glad enough under the circumstances to pay a round sum for the timely help afforded by the frigate steamer. The *Glad Tidings* was not seriously injured, and continued forthwith on its voyage for the Chi-a-Sea. But John Henton had received a salutary hint, and resolved that he would not again seek to navigate uncharted seas.

While passing the China Sea, Captain Henton kept a bright look out for dhows, stray junks, or other nondescript craft, and at empty no perilous experiments in navigation, keeping close to the more frequented lanes of marine travel. He was heartily glad that he did not have to depend upon sails alone as a motive power, for the crews of many a good ship, because of the pirate invested waters, have been overpowered by boards of cut-throats.

During all his journeyings around the world John Henton, while seeking to do good as he had opportunity unto all men, did not neglect the spiritual welfare of his own crew. Morning prayers were held regularly attended by all the men off watch, and many other meetings were held as the weather or other circumstance per-

mitted. A few of the crew still resisted all Henton's appeals to give their hearts to Christ. Henton felt especially concerned for a Portuguese by the name of Antonio—nobody seemed to know his other name, not even the man himself—who had shipped at Colombo, in place of a sailor who had been sent home invalided to America, and also for the Lascar, and labored prayerfully and earnestly to impart to both men some clear idea of the real value and meaning of Christianity. Yet the fact seemed to be not so much in need that the men could not see that they would not learn of spirit-ual truths. They appeared to take no interest whatever in that "wonderful redemption, God's remedy for sin."

Both men slighted their work, and finally one day the Lascar angered at some slight provocation struck down a shipmate with an intent so evidently murderous that Captain Henton promptly clapped the man in irons, and kept him manacled for several days, on a bread and water diet. Then as the Lascar seemed penitent he was released with solemn injunctions to behave himself in future.

The Lascar, however, was evidently like the fool in Scripture who being often reproved hardeneth his neck. He knew now that he was watched by his officer—a fact which he fiercely if silently resented. Even a good man like John Henton cannot expect in this world to have all men speak well of him. And it was evident that another enemy he had on board was the ex-ma-jor-war's-man, Bailey.

It was some nights afterward, when the wind was freshening, causing the captain and the first officer a good deal of anxiety, that Henton, clad in his oil-skin coat, sought the bridge of the yacht to spend the night on duty. The *Glad Tidings* was then surging along under close-reefed topsails aided also by its engines, which were put in operation in order more effectively to handle the boat in the heavy sea way. Henton had just been consulting his charts in the chart room, and knew that the yacht was about one hundred and forty miles east of Cochin-China, not very far from the Paracels, those isles and reefs in the China Sea which give the navigator many an anxious thought as he passes in their neighborhood.

As Henton with his faithful first officer, Nickerson, paced the bridge, hailing the lookouts forward every now and then to make sure that they were awake, he thought anxiously of the engines wondering whether shaft and screw would endure the strain and pounding seas. Eagerly he listened to the *thud, and* of the cranks and churning screw. Yes, all seemed to be going right. He breathed a sigh of relief, and had just turned to take a cup of hot cocoa which Grace had sent up to him by the hand of a cabin-boy when—crash! *whir! bang!* The sound of a furious grinding came up through the engine-room hatch. Then there came a roar and rush of steam, and—hardly to be heard through all the uproar—there floated back to the bridge from the lookout forward the startling cry—

"Breakers to leeward, Sir, over the starboard bow!"

Carefully setting the cup in his hand down at the foot of the binnacle on the bridge (Henton always wondered in later days at his own coolness in doing this) the young captain sprang to the speaking tube and called down to the engine-room demanding what had happened? With difficulty he made out the reply of the engineer.

"Nothing very bad, Sir, I hope! Have shut off steam. Am examining the engines!"

Relieved now of one source of anxiety Henton found himself confronted with as great a peril. He had now only his reefed courses to depend upon, and he dared not in that gale set more sail.

But there were the reefs—the outermost of the Paracels—close aboard, and that too, to leeward! The situation was desperate. Ejecting a prayer to the God of storms for his direction and aid, Henton hurriedly consulted with his experienced first officer. At first he thought of wearing the ship. But there was hardly room to wear, and if they missed stays, nothing could save them from going on the reef, where the cruel white breakers were angrily racing. Another but desperate method must be tried.

Under the immediate direction of Nickerson, who ran forward to carry out Henton's well-considered orders, the lee anchor was cleared away. A hawser was bent to its ring, led in at the lee