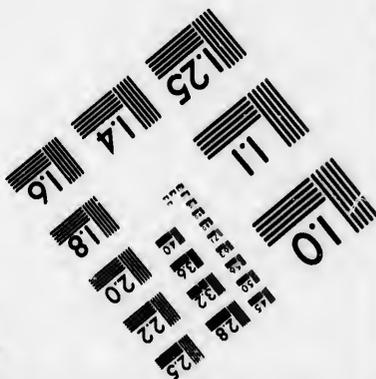
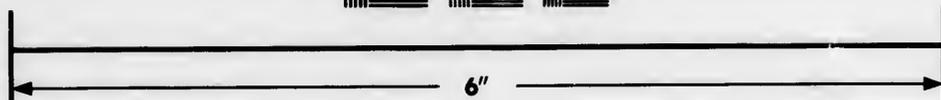
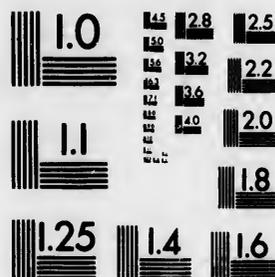


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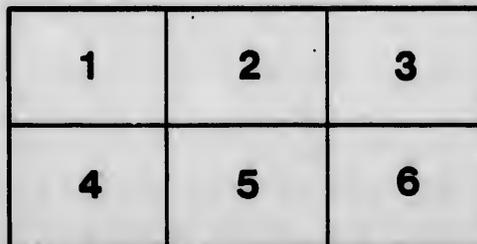
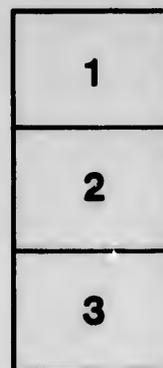
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"OTHER LITTLE SHIPS."

A SERMON,

PREACHED BY THE RT. REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF FREDERICTON,

John Medley

IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF S. PETER, EXETER,

ON TUESDAY, AUGUST 13th, 1878,

BEING THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE

Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge,

AND THE

Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.

PUBLISHED BY THE

COMMITTEE FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL IN FOREIGN PARTS,

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"OTHER LITTLE SHIPS."

S. MARK IV. 36.

"And there were also with Him other little ships."

FOR brevity, simplicity, and fulness, and perfect suitableness to the various needs of anxious and troubled souls, I recollect no history in the Holy Gospels more remarkable than the narrative with which this text is connected. It seems to strike home, like that great Collect of the Church which appeals to our Heavenly Father's pity, as "knowing us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers that we cannot always stand upright," and beseeches Him to "grant us such strength and protection as may support us in all dangers, and carry us through all temptations," even as the disciples in the ship, when our Lord lay sleeping, and in the other little ships that waited on Him, by one word from His mouth were delivered from the raging storm, and brought safe into the haven where they would be.

Our Lord is here described as crossing the lake of Galilee with the Apostles in a small fishing-vessel. A strong current always flows through the lake, and it is open to sudden violent tempests, like that which caught our own *Eurydice*, rushing down from the gorges which divide the hills on either side. Caught in one of these storms, unusually violent, the little vessel is covered with the short broken seas. The disciples, though fishermen, are alarmed; and to their amazement they behold their Master in the stern asleep on a pillow. Possibly one was the spokesman for the rest, and we can hardly doubt that it was St. Peter, always more forward to chide, and more impulsive; and the earliest traditions record that this lifelike story was written under his dictation. With loud, earnest, passionate cries they ask, "Master, carest Thou not that we perish?" As if He who had so long and so tenderly loved them, could now forget them in their extremest danger! As if He who cared for all could cease caring for that little flock whom He had chosen, or even for those little ships which surrounded Him, full of souls as precious to Him as the Apostles themselves!

The gentle rebuke follows, "Why are ye so fearful?" How is it that ye have no faith in My care and love? Then comes the all-powerful word which struck them with great fear, "He rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Be still," be bridled, "and there was a great calm."

One's whole nature instinctively recoils from the notion, that we must limit this narrative to the literal place of its occurrence. The whole mind of the Church has seen in it a wonderful mirror of the dangers to which the individual Christian and the whole body of the Church are ever exposed. As we ride on the waves of this troublesome world, our

baptismal service prudently whispers in the ears of each child, "You are set in the midst of many and great dangers." We cannot avoid them, do what we will. They rise around us like the wild waves, from our very childhood. They surround us in the fever of our youth; they press upon us in our busy manhood; they linger round the couch of old age. The heedless boy yields to them; the vigorous man is beset by them; old age sometimes gives up the struggle as hopeless. The ship is filled with them. They come suddenly and unexpectedly, as with a gust, and blow from various quarters, and beat upon our bark. But our greatest difficulty arises from our own want of faith in our great Master's care and love. Our own vessel seems to us the only vessel in danger; the dangers which encircle it higher and more fearful than any others; our own sufferings harder to bear than those of any others. Loss of fortune it may be, loss of health, loss of sight, loss of hearing, loss of children, loss of husband, wife, or friend—some of those bitternesses with which no stranger can intermingle. And where is the great Master? where is the consoling promise, that "He that guardeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep"? Is He not out of sight? Does He not suffer the tempest to rage, and the waves to pour in one after another into our vessel, so that deep calleth unto deep to overwhelm us? We cry, but there is no answer to our prayers. The Master sleeps. But why does He sleep amidst the raging of the storm? Is not that calm sleep an image of His Divine power, a token that He sends the storm, and when His time comes He can still it?

The physical sleep of the Lord's body is not a symbol of His indifference. It is a lesson to us not to imagine that He is careless of our danger, because for the moment He takes

no notice of it. How small and contracted is the view which poor sufferers have of their temptations and their trials, of the motive which prompts their Master to permit them, of the wise and tender love which every moment cares for them whilst they suffer, and because they suffer! And if He seems to sleep, it is to make them more vigilant, that they may cry aloud for succour, and may learn, as fresh troubles arise in the Church, or in their own life, not to be "so fearful," and to have more faith in Him.

And is our own vessel the only ship for which He cares? Are there not with Him also "other little ships"? Are there not many souls of whom the world takes no account, unnamed in history, uncouneted in the chronicles of fame—poor, suffering, tempted souls, for whom few human beings care, who live in toil, and want, and penury, and suffer unknown agonies of dreary doubt, and fear of what may happen, and their little boat is always tossing, no sooner mounted on the crest of a wave than it sweeps wildly down into the trough of the sea, and every one is too busy about his own dangers to attend to the solitary craft? But does the Master forget that in the "little ships" there are lives and souls as precious as those of the Apostles themselves? Cares He not for those little ships? Will not they also hear the consoling word, "Why are ye so fearful?" Will they not share in the rebuke of the tempest, and in the "great calm"?

Surely this is a lesson to all classes of minds, and all ranks of society. It is not for the poor to think, Christ careth not for me. It is not for the rich to imagine, I am one of the great pillars of the Church, or of the State—one of the few who deserve consideration. It is not for the laity to say, it is well for you, the Bishops and clergy, to possess the saintly character;

we do not dream of ascending to such heights. The saintly character belongs to the Christian man and woman everywhere, not to the clergy as a class. For when they receive the Holy Ghost at their ordination, it is in fulfilment of their Master's promise, to sanctify the word they preach, to make valid the sacraments they minister, to render their whole office valuable to the flock, and effectual for the purposes for which it was designed, not to stamp them as the greatest saints before the world. It is to strengthen them and comfort them by the belief that this is not a sham of man's devising, but a real truth of God's ordaining, which, rightly interpreted, and modestly and reasonably set forth, is the strength and comfort both of the shepherd and of the flock: of the shepherd when he knows that not only high and glorious intellects, profoundly learned masters in Israel, are the Redeemer's care, but the "little ships" also, plain ordinary men, whose hope lies not in brilliancy, but in rugged perseverance; in that simplicity and godly sincerity which an Apostle gloried in, and which they may share with that great Apostle.

And so it is our comfort, brethren beloved in the Lord, when we come to England for a little season, we gaze on the magnificent shrines which ancient piety reared, and which your reverence and liberality have restored, but only restored (remember), for your hands built not these walls, your genius did not originate this mighty plan, your souls were not first inspired with these lofty thoughts: but when our joyful eyes behold it, we thank God and you for the sight, and see everything to admire in it, and nothing to find fault with. We know that in our colonial Sees we are but "little ships." Yet, whatsoever we are, we are in the great Master's fleet. It was His voice that called us to embark; it is His hand that beckons us to the shore; it is His arm

on which we lean in the midst of the tempest; it is His compass by which we steer; it is His great salvation which we hope to share with you. You worship (it is true) in a church of more than common stateliness and beauty, and you have a history on which the mind loves to dwell. You can look back to the days when these ancient towers were built by Norman hands, when daring and successful builders pierced their mighty walls, when the great designer of the choir first opened out the vista, and the still mightier Grandison completed the o'er-arching nave and aisles, and when the whole structure assumed somewhat of its present form and comeliness. Beneath the shadow of these walls generations of illustrious dead repose, the echoes of the Civil War have here died away, the trump of God has sounded to awake a sleeping Church, and through all changes of the State or of the Church the glorious walls remain, as if built for Eternity, and scarce to be destroyed by time; and in a thousand churches England recalls the struggles and the glories of the past. We have no history but that which we make ourselves. But we will never despair. Sons of the Church, we will build with the sword of the Spirit in one hand, and the trowel in the other, bent upon reproducing in such ways as God shall lead us, and as the varying conditions of our life permit, England's Church, and England's faith, and England's loyalty, and above all the truth of God's most Holy Word committed to our charge. We are a body Catholic because not merely Roman, separated, but not by our own desire, ever praying to be reunited on primitive and Apostolical foundations, in true, substantial, visible union with the several parts of our Church in many lands, but holding to "one Lord, one baptism, one God and Father of us all," and "contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the Saints." And when we have met

together in conference, all in communion with each other, surely it is not too much to say that while there has been free and friendly discussion, there has been substantial unity. No article of the faith has been denied, no venerable creed has been surrendered, no word of the living God has been thrust aside. Every Bishop has desired to build upon the old primitive foundations of the Catholic and undivided Church. Surely this Conference, if it did no more, would be a sufficient answer to those who unworthily represent us as one of many discordant sects, as a body rent by endless divisions, without foundation, without coherence, without orders, without sacraments, without unity in itself. Whereas by our marvellous increase throughout the world, and our union in all the verities of the Christian faith, we are "compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part," and, we are (we trust) "growing unto a holy temple in the Lord."

"Growing." Not till one hundred and fifty years after the Reformation did England begin to realise the blessing of growth. The "plantations" (so called) were feeble struggling communities, without a native episcopacy, divided in religious belief, and unconscious of their destiny. Now we behold a Church, vast in extent, considerable in numbers, with sixty Bishops, some of them Missionary Bishops, with more than four thousand clergy, with multitudes of highly educated men who have pressed into her fold, converts from all sides, a church thoroughly organised and synodically compacted. Rent from us by a political revolution, in all the great foundations of the faith, in all man's highest interests and hopes, in love for England's Church, the Episcopal Church of the United States is entirely one with our own in Great Britain and her colonies.

"Growing." Once in India Christianity made its appearance as an alien, feebly halting on forbidden ground. Yet such has been God's blessing that ten thousand native converts came to welcome the arrival of our Sovereign's son, and now under the care of Bishops lately consecrated eighteen thousand natives have requested to be-enrolled in the Church by Holy Baptism.

"Growing." About a century since, one Bishop was authorised as a State official to have nominal rule over the whole of the provinces of Canada, Newfoundland, Bermuda, and the Bahamas. So little notion had the statesmen of that day of the spiritual needs of Churchmen and the duties of a Bishop. Now we have two Church Provinces, and fourteen Bishops in those vast and populous regions, presiding over their several Synods, who have each as much work to do as any man can reasonably desire. The same remarkable growth has been shown in Australia and in Southern Africa.

And what need to speak of New Zealand, when the memory of two loved and honoured names is fresh in your hearts, and placed before your eyes? Surely the love we bear them should stir us, as their best memorial, to greater energy and self-sacrifice, and nobler gifts. And as we have wept together for the father, let our prayers now ascend together for the son. Oh, that the fire of suffering through which he has passed may be to him the fire of strength, of patience, and of love. In the love of the convert, in the steadfastness of the native pastor, in the deepening convictions of the island race, that he, the old Bishop's son, is their true and lasting friend, may he find his rich reward. So may he land in safety where the meek Patteson fell, and the fronds of the palm branch, once the tokens of a wild and savage justice, become the peaceful heralds of the Kingdom of the Prince of Peace. Thus from those five

blest wounds there shall stream forth fountains of salvation, and the fair and the dark races shall kneel before one altar, and become as one in the love of that Redeemer who has bought them with His precious blood.

"Growing." In the island of Madagascar, one whom I remember as a boy, the worthy son of a most worthy father, prebendary with myself of this cathedral, was lately confirming seventy-four native converts, and ordaining a native pastor, on the same Whitsun-day that I was ordaining the son of the old Pitcairn Missionary to the children of the mutineers in the *Bounty*, and likewise was ordaining a Danish teacher to minister to a body of emigrants from Copenhagen. Truly the Gospel of Christ supplies a gracious Nemesis. The memory of old deeds of hate is repaid by new deeds of love. Mutiny is changed to bounty; and ravages of fire and sword are repaid by sending to the descendants of the Danes the tokens of a fresh and lasting peace. For when in that emigrant room in the wilderness, adorned with boughs, and fresh flowers gathered from the forest, I confirmed the children of the Danes, the first names announced to me were Canute, Eric, and Olaf. We sang the old Danish hymns; we offered our Litany in the Danish, and responded in the English tongue; and the little band, now members of our own Church of England, knelt around one Altar, over which the cross of the Danish flag formed its simple but appropriate ornament. "For He has made us one by the blood of His cross." The history of Missions is indeed a mingled record of toil and journeyings, of shortcomings and fallings away, of many prayers and many tears: but sum them all up, gather them from every age and every land, and they are not so precious as one drop of the

blood of our Lord Jesus, the Prophet who teaches us, the Priest who offers for us, the King who dwells in us, the Intercessor and the Saviour of us all.

But, turning back for a moment to human agency, we may say, without any exaggeration, that much of the growth and extension of our Church is, under God, owing to the two handmaids of the Church, whose anniversary we celebrate to-day; and to whose strength and increase it is the duty of every Churchman, of every class, to contribute according to his ability. Make their cause, my brethren, your own. Throw yourselves heartily into this work, as if you believed in it and loved it. We want from you the same kind of work which you very reasonably require of us; strong, hearty, continued work, not the work of *dilettanti* Bishops and halting Christians, but the work of men; of those who know that there is a dignity in labour, and that honest labour goes on till sundown, and does not cease when the sun is high. Let every Bishop speak for himself. I come here to-day to bear my testimony, that my Diocese owes a debt, which we can never repay, to those two venerable Institutions; and that our greatest obligation is that of having called forth our own exertions, and enabled us to make some sacrifices for our religion. Certainly I hold it to be an *Articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiae*, that we not only believe, but that we do the will of God. And where is the Apostle who, travelling in a foreign land, found, as I have found, two noble and liberal Institutions ready to his hand; helping to support his Missionaries, and to build his churches, and never failing him in time of need? Then are we Apostles, when we toil in rowing: when we toil all the night, even if we have caught nothing, hoping to find when the blest morning comes.

And if my voice could be heard, and were of any worth without these walls, it would be raised on behalf of our never undertaking Colonial work which we were not prepared to live and die for. If the greatness of England is not an insular but a maritime greatness; if her fleets go forth, not only to protect her harbours, but to extend her commerce; if her power is felt in the little flag of the fisher-boat, as well as in the mightiest of her ironclads; if her sons carry with them to all lands the proud trophy of her laws and of her freedom, much more may Christian Bishops glory in continuing to "sow beside all waters," and in holding the land where they have sown and laboured as their own.

Permit me, in conclusion, to remind you all of your own duty to the Church, which is your mother, and to those Institutions which are the handmaids of the Church. That you are known at all as Christians, beyond the shores of England, is, in great part, the work of these two Institutions. Your eternal glory will not be that you restored cathedrals, or that you made treaties, or that you abounded in riches, or that you conquered nations, but that you conquered sin. The living stones of the Redeemer's temple will be your coronet; the gathering in your own half heathen masses, the seeking out the lost, the strengthening the weak, the raising the fallen in this and in every land. Look you at this glorious church, and fancy that your work is done. These dead stones, instinct with life, tell in your ears what living stones should be. The harmonies that daily wake within these walls are but the prelude to the nobler anthem of souls won to the love of Christ by your own efforts. Not to the clergy only, but to the Church at large, is committed this divine, this difficult, this unceasing care. Never for one moment is the cry

unheard amidst the storm, Christian, "carest thou not that we perish?"

Unholy soul, what hast thou done for Christ? Selfish, indolent, careless, self-satisfied soul, what hast thou done for Christ? Bitter, vindictive, harsh-judging soul, biting and devouring thy brethren, what art thou doing for Christ? And as the last word I may perhaps be ever permitted to speak within these dear and holy walls, I say to you all, Work more for Christ.

Work on, work humbly, and the truth will dawn upon you. Work on, and peace will return to you. Work on, and sorrow and sighing will not burden you. Work on, and the tempter will flee from you. Work on, for this is life's business, this is death's happiness, this is eternity's reward: "I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do." Amen.

