

From the Sailor's Magazine.

A Great Ship.

In a wakeful hour at night, when creation slumbered around me, the click of the clock and the breathing of a companion reminded me of a steam-boat. A little aid of the imagination placed me in a berth, while the stroke of the piston, and the gush of the steam at every stroke, seemed to be connected with the movement of the boat on its watery element. Soon I began to allegorize, and the globe became a vast ship—the mountains and rocks were ballast, the continents and islands were the abodes of men; their habitations were their berths; and the waters were the pathways of communication.

The ship, freighted with hundreds of millions, was moving steadily onward in its ethereal course; a course traversed for ages, but a course in which no trace of its passage could ever be seen. In this invisible pathway it had performed an annual revolution during thousands of years, freighted successively with all the generations of men. Moving at the rate of 68,000 miles an hour, its voyage each year exceeded 595 millions of miles. Some of the human family had sailed round almost a thousand times. But in process of time few attained even a hundred. Now three scores and ten are considered as the usual number, while the majority do not equal twenty.

Thus I viewed myself and all mankind on board of this vast ship, borne on in one continued round, while on every side all was boundless space, untrodden by the foot of man, unmeasured even by the line of human imagination. Every moment some one was leaving the ship, not exactly as passengers are landed from a steamboat, taking all their effects with them; but much more as men are plunged overboard from a ship, when the last rites are performed. The soul departs from the body, and leaves it and all its labors and acquisitions on board the ship. It carries nothing away, while it plunges unseen into immeasurable space, but never returns.

One thing on board this great ship is very remarkable, because it is so unlike anything on other ships—it is this; all the passengers wish to remain as long as they can. Scarcely a few, indeed, have a desire to depart, because they think that it will be far better for them, and they only wait the orders of the Master to go. And a few, weary of their troubles, take their departure without leave. Even those who have the poorest berths and the meanest accommodations prefer to remain, rather than make an exchange. Indeed there is a dread in the thought of leaving the ship, and of plunging into immensity, uncertain often whether it be for woe or woe. It is only when the Master sends his own boat, with a skilful and faithful pilot, that any one ventures joyfully to leave the ship and launch forth for the unseen world. Then such as have a keen eye and a good glass can see a better country; and when they obtain leave, they joyfully bid farewell to their shipmates and reach upward for better lands.

That glass, by the way, is one of a thousand. Indeed there is none like it, except such as are made after the same pattern. The Master ordered it on purpose for the passengers. It is free to all, though some have not that clear sight, which enables them to see the objects which the glass is designed to present to their view. By the aid of that glass, such as have a single eye can see many objects, which are entirely invisible to others. They can see the Master. They can see the boat and the pilot, when sent after them. They can see through all the mists, which are spread over boundless ether, and discern the better country. And sometimes, as they look through the glass and see the country, they desire to depart. They see, also, another country, covered with eternal darkness and gloom. Into the one or other of these countries go all that leave the ship, and there they dwell forever.

The Master's orders are, that every creature on board this ship should be furnished with one of these glasses. But amazing as it may seem, yet true it is, that a small proportion has been supplied. Some, who are best acquainted with it, and most skilful in using it, spare no pains to present it to others. Indeed they have, within the last quarter of a century, sent off millions of them into different sections of the great ship. Others seem to be satisfied when they have a glass for their own use, though they seldom use it. Probably their eyesight is not clear, and therefore they see not the objects which the glass presents. Others again despise the glass, and think they can see better without it. While whole nations and tribes, with their rulers, even dash from them this divine help to discern unseen objects, and do all they can to hinder such as would send it to others.

Thus my imagination led me on through the present world, the great ship, and into other worlds as the final state of all that exist in this. But surely all is not imagination. There is reality.

1. *It is reality that every voyager must soon finish his course.*—Every one may say to himself, "Soon shall I quit this house of clay, and fly to unknown lands." Every one may ask himself, and ask often, am I ready? "Do I know whom I have believed, and that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day? Do I from the heart abhor sin in all its forms and rely on Jesus, my Lord, to wash me in his blood and make me holy by his Spirit? Is the covenant of his grace all my salvation and all my desire?" Looking into the abyss through which the ship wafts me, and as every moment drives me onward and nearer to the place from whence I shall take my departure, do I feel entire confidence in him whom I have believed? Are all things ready to leave behind? Is my will made, and are my earthly effects rightly disposed of, and is my house set in order? Am I at peace with all men? Is there none to be forgiven by me? Am I forgiven by all whom I have injured? Have I procrastinated no duty to God or man, with the expectation of a more convenient season? Have I spoken in faithfulness to every erring believer? Have I diligently warned the impenitent? Were this my bed of death, would no regret steal into my bosom? Nor would conscience say, *That neighbor is unwarned by thee?* Alas! alas! "enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord." This deceitful delay leaves the sinner unwarned—my conscience insupportably burdened. Why delay? By any possible activity in time to come, even if that time should come, can the duty of this day be performed? How? To-morrow, if to-morrow comes to me, I shall be twenty-four times sixty-eight thousand miles farther on my way. Can I by any possibility come back to-morrow and finish what I have left undone to-day? Instead of warning this neighbor to-morrow, I should be warning another and another: and one, warned to-day, might be engaged in the same work, and so on from day to day. Rouse up, sluggish soul! When the morning comes, go about thy work. "And whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

2. *It is reality that many sinners near by are unconverted.*—The prayerless family, the neglecter of public worship, the thoughtless youth, are witnesses that many are unconverted: for many are in such a condition. Why is this? Are they faithfully warned and taught? Is prayer offered effectual and fervent to God in their behalf? Have they nothing to do? What must we do for them, or they for themselves, or God for both? Are they not in the ship? Does not a mighty, resistless energy, drive them on their way? How many circuits have they already taken? Is any part of their work done? If not, is not so much of their time gone, wasted, irrecoverable? Has not sin grown up within them from a little twig to a sturdy sapling, or an unbending tree? Has not the world woven round them a net and inclosed them: and is it not daily adding one cord to another and making their bonds stronger and stronger? And is not the devil leading them captive by the cords of their sins, having blinded their eyes lest the light of the glorious gospel should shine unto them? Onward they move. The ship never stops. When they will be hurried into the abyss none can tell. Is not the condition of every unconverted soul perilous? Is there an hour in the day, or a minute in an hour, when the soul may not be required? Is not the heart of the impenitent hardened? Is not God provoked? Is not the spirit resisted? Is not Christ despised, by every sinful act? And adds not every sinful act to the sinner's presumption, so that he is more likely to continue to sin in time to come? Alas! How fearful is the prospect! My soul trembles, while there is but a step between that soul and death.

3. *It is reality that much the larger part of the voyagers remain ignorant of the way to be saved.*—This fact need not be proved. They are known to be mad on their idols. We need only step to one part of the ship to see hundreds of millions before their altars and their idols, offering their sacrifices, pouring out their orisons, and practising every abomination. As their fathers did, so do they. With them it is reason enough, when guilty of every absurdity, that thus their fathers did, and thus they taught. But why do they remain in this condition? True indeed, they are without excuse. They might know God, but they know him not. Yet is there in the light which shines around them no principle revealed to heal their souls. The water of life flows not to them. But why does it not flow? Is not the river abundant? May not channels be opened? Is there no command of the Saviour?—

Has he not said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature?" Why sit we here till millions die? Have we not received this treasure to be imparted to them? Why hoard it up? Oh! haste, haste ye, heralds! "Add wings to your feet." Run, as did Aaron with his censor, to stand between the living and the dead to stay the plague. Go forth, young Christian—carry the word of God, the religious tract, and tell our fellows that there is in our father's house "bread enough and to spare." Let the pious female adorn herself with modest apparel, and be content with array not costly, that she may save the means of publishing the gospel. Let her good works be her precious jewels. Sixty-eight thousand miles an hour are we and the heathen driven forward from one opportunity to another. Thus passes every hour; and thus opportunity after opportunity is left forever with "the years beyond the flood." Onward, onward, with unabated, with resistless energy, both the enlightened and the unenlightened go. Every moment our souls leap into boundless regions, and are seen no more. Thus passes every generation away. What are we doing? Are we not rather dreaming than acting? And if we resolve to act, is it not on a future hour, or day, or year, that we intend to act? How can we promise to do any thing at the distance of sixty-eight thousand miles, when we know not but that we may leave the ship at any one of those miles? Thus our duty remains undone, the world unevangelized, men unsaved. This, too, is contrary to every precept of the bible. Said the Saviour, "I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work." I must work the works. I must do it. It is a work. As said the excellent Cecil: "Do something—do it—do it." It is not intending to do, nor resolving to do, nor contriving to do; but it is doing. And it must be done now, this present moment. In this way only can we pray; "Thy kingdom come"—pray now. In this way only can we contrive to do—contrive now. In this way only can any one repent—repent now. For it is written, "Now is the accepted time, behold! now is the day of salvation!" Does the word *do* seem unpleasant to one, who delights in free grace? It is free grace which "works in us both to will and to do." Free grace works, and this causes us to work. As says the Saviour: "This is the work of God that ye believe on him, whom he hath sent." It is what God works in you, and what puts your soul in action. Believe now, and live by faith, and do all your works by faith in Christ, and then shall not your labour be in vain. What can be more preposterous than the procrastination of the sinner? He knows that eternity is before him, that his soul may fly away into hell in a moment—and yet he puts off the work of faith till to-morrow. Alas! to-morrow, if not in eternity, you will be one million, six hundred and thirty-two thousand miles nearer—nor can you ever return one step to do what must be done. To-day—to-day—now is your time.

People Encouraging their Minister.

Dr. Sharp, one of the oldest and most venerable ministers in this city, has lately preached a sermon with the above title. It would afford us pleasure to transfer the whole of it to our columns, but we have room only for a few extracts:—

Encourage your own pastor by your regular and constant attendance upon his ministry.

This is a duty of much greater moment to the usefulness and happiness of a pastor, than Christians generally imagine. When a church and congregation regularly attend on the ministry of a pastor, it cheers and elevates him. He considers it an assurance that he shares their affection, esteem and confidence. He goes to his pulpit, feeling that he shall not preach in vain, nor spend his strength for nought. He pursues his studies with greater diligence, and goes to the house of God with greater pleasure. And when he stands in the presence of a serious and soberly listening throng, whose eyes are fastened upon him, he is animated and encouraged. A new impulse is given to his feelings, his thoughts are quickened—his imagination soars with a truer and bolder wing—his appeals are more earnest—his sympathies well up, and pervade his whole nature; he feels strong in argument, and there is a concentration both in mind and heart; followed by an earnest and ready utterance, that he can never have who is doomed to preach to listless hearers or to empty pews. When the people with one consent come together to hear God's minister, his words come from his lips with facility and attractiveness; chaining the attention of his hearers to the close. To the minister so situated, the pulpit is more than a

throne. It is the pleasantest, as it is the most honorable place in which he ever stands. And the ministry is preferred by him to any other service on earth.

But when a pastor perceives that his ministry is neglected—when the absence of some is occasioned by a vain and itching curiosity to hear or see some new preacher, or to be enlightened by some new doctrine, and when the absence of others is occasioned by their love of the world, or by their dislike of the plain and faithful preaching of God's word—when one service is deemed better than two, and none better than one, even by some church members, the pious pastor returns from his scene of labor disquieted and cast down. In the bitterness of his soul he is ready to relinquish his work; to remove to some other station—and to doubt whether the ministry can be his province. He is discouraged in his studies. The energies of his mind are palsied. He knows not what subject to select, nor how to illustrate it, for he fears there will be but a few to hear him. He goes bound in spirit, and is both thought-tied and tongue-tied.

See this poor discouraged pastor. In his visits among his people, he has found some of his brethren in affliction—some in temptation—some in despondency—some it may be self-confident. They need consolation, counsel, warning. He goes prepared to be a minister of consolation; a preacher of righteousness, a guide to wanderers. He hopes to do some good, because he draws not his bow at a venture. But when he has announced his text, and his lips are ready to pour forth words of consolation, the afflicted are not there, to hear the words of comfort; the weak are not there to be strengthened; the bowed down are not there, that their minister may lift them up; the wanderer is not there that he may reclaim him. What discouraging sensations must a minister feel, to be thus disappointed in his benevolent aims. Encourage your minister then, by your habitual attendance on his ministry. Let neither the weather, nor worldliness, nor the love of hearing or seeing something new, cause you to leave your own seat vacant in the house of God. He that is a wandering worhipper "is as a bird that wandereth from her nest."

I have said, and I repeat it, that were I a hearer, and the apostle Paul should come to the city, I would not leave my own chosen pastor to hear him. I would wait till he came to the house where I worshipped, or, if he preached but once, I would persuade my pastor and the whole church to go and hear him. I would thus act, not from a bigoted attachment to my own minister, nor merely to manifest for him a just respect and regard, and thus to encourage him, but from an undoubting conviction that myself should be thereby more benefited. It is not something brilliant, profound or novel, coming from strange lips and accompanied by new tones and gesticulations, that can meet the real wants of the soul and give a right direction to the life; but the plain, sensible, scriptural teachings of one whom we know, and in whose integrity and purity of character we have entire confidence. The constant hearer of such a minister, however common he may be deemed, will make far greater progress in everything that is truly excellent, than he who, choosing no stated place of worship, is always in quest of some uncommon preacher. Of this latest class, I have seldom known one who had attained the true end of all hearing—that of being not only a hearer, but a doer of the word.—*Boston Recorder.*

How to "Feel Good."

The following short story of an honest Indian contains a volume of true wisdom. To feel good or enjoy sweet peace of mind a man must preserve a clear conscience. To lie down at night with the consciousness of having obeyed the Golden Rule against every temptation to deviate from it, is a felicity which we could wish were more extensively enjoyed by men. To sell this peace of conscience for pelf, is a miserable bargain at best, for it is worth more than all the treasures of Croesus.

Red men often act very conscientiously. One day an Indian solicited a little tobacco of a white man, to fill his pipe. Having some loose in his pocket, the white man gave him a handful. The next day the Indian returned in search of the man who had given him the tobacco. "I wish to see him," said the Indian. "Why so?" inquired some one. "Why, I find money with the tobacco."