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POETRY

The following stanzas present the reader with a very thrilling narrative which appeared in this paper [*the Baltimore Sun*] a few days since, in a new form. They will be read with delight, the beauty and harmony of the verse imparting poetic effect to an incident, certainly, most worthy to be thus commemorated.

From the Baltimore Sun

“THE HELMSMAN OF LAKE ERIE”

BY B. B. FRENCH

At morn a gallant vessel swept
O'er Erie's emerald wave,
She bore a hundred souls along –
The beautiful – the brave.
Boldly, she ploughed the ocean-lake –
A power that knows no stay
Urged her along with heaving breath,
Upon her watery way.

All day she held her onward course,
Her pilot's faithful eye
Marked, as the evening fell, her port,
Beneath the western sky,
And joy, and hope, and happiness
In many a bosom burned,
As o'er the rolling waves, bright eyes
With eager gaze were turned.

For on the distant strand were seen
Full many a house of bliss,
And lips already yearned to give
The pure parental kiss;
And beating hearts and heaving sighs
Full many a bosom moved

Lest the proud vessel should not bear
Their cherished, their beloved.

But, oh, in life, how soon the cup
Of joy is drugged with gloom,
How soon the shadow of despair
Follows the flush of bloom,
The sunlight glow on beauty's cheek,
A moment may o'er cast,
As sweeps, before the light of day,
The wild sirocco's blast.

'What, ho? that smoke!' – the captain cries,
As from the hatchway rolled
The curling volume's graceful wreaths,
Up from the vessel's hold;
The answer needed not a voice,
For, to all eyes it came,
In the most terrible of forms –
A sheet of lurid flame!

And there she was, a ship on fire,
Blazing against the sky,
The most sublime, terrible sight
That meets the sailor's eye!
And every art to quench the flame,
And all the seaman's skill
Were vain – a thousand fiery tongues
Seemed mocking human will.

And while despair rang o'er the deep
In accents wild and loud,
While the last hope seemed to have fled
From all the maniac crowd,
Where was the brave old pilot then,
When every thing seemed lost?
Standing as duty bade, unmoved,
And calmly at his post!

One hand still held the wheel, as on
She madly swept the tide,
The other hung, a blackened thing,
Yet seething, at his side –
And onward – onward still she strove,
Still shoreward rushed her keel,
Still stood, amid the blazing mass,
Her pilot at the wheel!

And boats came rushing from the shore,
And reached in time to save
All the devoted vessel bore
From a dread and watery grave –
Not all – not all – that helmsman, bold,
Whose life all else did save,
Now sleeps amid that blackened wreck,
'Neath Erie's rolling wave!

Build high a monument to him,
Let not his humble name
Perish, for he has nobly earned
The richest meed of fame!
Ye give *them* monuments who send
Their millions to the grave!
Then build JOHN MAYNARD one, who died
A hundred lives to save!