

For the Register.
The Hero of Lake Erie.

BY A. S. POPE.

The summer on the earth had thrown her robes,
Each hill embowered where the cool shades lay,
Woo'd by the zephyrs, from the sunny fields,
Where spread the grass, a carpet for the beast
To press his weighted hoof into its wool,
A softer web than that of Islam's looms,
Whereon he couched, while heaven's light and air
Seemed handmaids, wooing him to pleasure's gifts ;
When failed all these, the countless murmuring streams
Did whisper songs into his drowsy ear,
Whist sweeping down to gather into deeps,
Lakes that woo'd heaven, and bathed in its light,
Far down, till each seemed each, so like they looked.
Thus Erie lay, a mirror to the sky,
The sun, the stars, all that looked on the earth
From out aerial vaults unfathomable ;
Edged by the hills, and fields of summer green,
While all its surface, where the zephyrs fanned,
Broke into jewels, flashing 'neath the sun,
Pearls, diamonds, rubies, amethysts and jets,
With emeralds that water-nymphs there tossed
Up to the surface of this chalice grand ;
From whence the day-god his libation takes ;
Ambrosial cup, fit for immortal lips,
To taste the vintage of sweet nature's breast ;
And from the overflowing draught to bathe
All earth with gems, wherein the rosy dawn
Might revel, ere the air's wings brushed them off.
Thus in the light supreme it jeweled lay,
Celestial pave whereon the angels tread,
Whence seral's minions bear sweet voices to
Cliffs, hills and woods ; eternal hymns of praise
For nature's gifts that line its pleasant way,
Sun kissed, it is the wealth of heaven,
Whence gather its bright gems a draught of light ;
Until the storm king from the Northern clime

Comes down to feed upon its placid breast ;
Lash it to the foam ; to lift its waves in spray ;
Bear them upon the hurricane's fierce breath,
Mad rover of the North ! the ice berg's clime,
Steeds riderless that no restraint obey,
But with their hoofs upheave its waters to
The sky, from whence the lowering clouds do frown
Down on its bosom, weeping darkness there
In elemental battle, chaos dread,
As riven with the lightning's vivid flash,
That, belching palls from heaven's artillery,
Shakes the fair bosom of the lake to foam.
Peals wrought from madness of the trout led drop,
The demons toss from out its waters wild,
In anger lifting up their snowy heads,
Defiant to the tempest breath that lifts
And bears them 'way, exultant, as a prize.
The spectral arms distracted toss in spray,
Then back into the deep the legions pass,
And, gathering to the fight, they writhe and toil,
For jewels striving that are sweeping 'way,
In clouds that clasp them in their murky folds
The chariots driven by the storm's fierce king,
As wildly rent, the sky in wrath comes down.
Dread conflict ! element with element,
Their vitals burst to feed the powers that rage,
And, swift as lightning's car, they cut the foam,
And whirl it in confusion madly 'way ;
When passing to the cliffs, the hills, and woods,
Their tops they bend and crush with cracking groan,
As though fierce pain was living in their forms,
Whilst bearing off the heavy storm and clouds.
So weeps the lake in woe against the shore,
Till sunlight comes and basks its smile again.
Mind has assayed to build upon its wave,
A palace, to float o'er its jeweled pave ;
Urged on by gossamer of the deep in chains,
In iron bands, that circle him about,
To hold in durance vile, till he performed
The task assigned ; upon the wings of wind,
A cloud he floats, like that to Israel's host,

To duty awaked by fiery ordeal,
That pierced his heart and warmed it into life.
He 'scapes his prison with a sigh,
And weeps tears back upon the waters left,
So long his home, where he was jewel-crowned.
Now, monster caged, with heat to fury driven,
He 'scapes the vent, with wings and arms outspread ;
As wild his throes the palace onward drive,
Through glittering surf, and mirrors calm that lie,
Their beauties waking to the glorious day,
Till they in pearls, cut by the iron prow,
As drapery flowing softly from its side,
The palace robe around with jewels bright,
Like nymph with every feature beaming smiles,
Whose form is symmetry, whose motion grace.
Thus mind, with labor, wrought the palace grand ;
Its halls were draped, as fairy tales dream-told ;
Mirror reflecting mirror, where they wrought
Hall after hall, in grandeur, stretching 'way ;
While many throngs that tread the cabin floor,
Thread them in magic numbers multiplying.
While sinking to the West, the sun throws back his rays
Of thick'ning light ; his red glare on the lake ;
And crimsoned o'er the wave, woo'd demon forms
Of night, whose raven wings float up the deep
Through evening's gleaming ; his glare on the panes
So lit the glass, that each space looked like fire,
And flashed its curtains' gorgeous drapery,
As if consuming with a hungry flame.
Thus swept the palace o'er the wave, like maid
Who threads the dance, in mazy robes,
And face that beams with pleasure and delight,
The balmy evening air floats o'er the deck ;
The travelers wooing to its pleasant touch,
Who through the upper deck, to watch the lake
And city merging from the distance dim.
Here men and women meet, who ne'er had met,
And as old friends in social concourse talked,
They to the pilot came, and questions asked,
Who stood gray haired with service at the helm ;
His white locks lying off his manly brow,

Where intellect spoke out from lip and eye;
While with firm hand he held the boat its way.
Full many changes had he seen through life,
Of storm and toil; but never from his heart
Had sunny kindness lost its genial ray,
Or wrong with shadow on it cast a cloud.
Groups gathered to his stand to list his tales;
To wile the time, as swiftly down the lake
The boat sped on. And through the stories told
Crept manly love, and kindly sympathy,
The aim and object of the life he wrought.
The point he steered, his eye sought earnestly,
As his kind heart aimed gentle deeds of love.
His soul was placid as the lake that lay
In the sun, basking 'neath a cloudless sky.
So much of holy peace, hope, trust and will,
Lost was each listener in the stories told;
When from the deck beneath arose thick smoke,
Like that in which sin folds the human heart,
When sunk in deeds of lowest infamy.
The captain to the mate asks for the cause;
When quickly from below came dread reply,
Of fire! fire! fire! Each heart stood still in fear,
A moment palsied by the awful cry;
Then through the boat each voice took up the word,
And echoed back the fearful sound. The captain then
With firm command bade each one strive for life,
While sternly stood the pilot to his task.
Each one wrought 'gainst the fast consuming flame,
That circled them around, with fierce despair,
Like deadly sins, that creep about the soul,
That merge in brilliant lights, false hopes illumine,
And make to pleasing fancy all things bright,
They win their way, the balance losing stand,
And vivid contrast forces deeds of good.
When it is lost the flames grow strong indeed—
Life, hope and all, in sin's fierce grasp is lost.
So through the bark of safety spread the flames;
All fell save one good deed—the pilot stood
A mid the flames; he firmly battled on,

And held the boat to shore to save their lives,
He on time's record stands a beacon light ;
Here and hereafter, a light to those he saved,
A deed upon redemption's pages pure ;
But swiftly stole the hungry flames around
That form devoted, till one side the flames
Crept up and crisped,—feet and one hand all pain,
The other firmly braced, held fast the helm.
Love bound him close, a victim on the rack,
The boat an altar—he the sacrifice.
The floor shrank to the flames beneath his weight ;
The captain shouted, “ Maynard ! ” from below.
“ Aye ! aye ! ” responsive, “ Can you hold your course ? ”
“ With God's will ! ” came the firm reply.
The boat was leached and all were saved.
John Maynard found the shore, not of this earth,
But Heaven—his ashes lie in Erie urned,
A monument of waters to his name.

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