

<p><b>THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND MAGAZINE 1845 NO. 527, PP. 365-366. (LONDON, ENGLAND)</b></p> <p>Those portions of the 1845 sketch that were <i>not</i> used by John Bartholomew Gough are <b>in gray</b>.</p> <p><b>June 7, 1845 (Anonymous)</b></p> <p><b>Juvenile Reading. THE HELMSMAN OF LAKE ERIE.</b></p> <p>It was on a pleasant May morning that a Steam-vessel was riding at anchor, opposite the town of Buffalo, on lake Erie. You know, I dare say, that Erie is one of those</p>	<p><b>JOHN B. GOUGH'S 1859 BRITISH VERSION The Norfolk News, Eastern Counties Journal and Norwich, Yarmouth, and Lynn Commercial Gazette (England), p. 3, c. 1.</b></p> <p>Those portions that are not in the 1845 version are marked <b>in red</b>.</p> <p><b>Local Mr. Gough's Orations</b></p> <p><b>Feb. 19, 1859 (Before Gough's Return to the United States)</b></p> <p><b>UNTITLED.</b></p>	<p><b>ELIHU BURRITT'S 1867 RENDERING</b></p> <p><b>Elihu Burritt, <i>The Mission of Great Sufferings</i> (London: Sampson Low, Son, and Marston, Milton House, Ludgate Hill, 1867), pp. 95-99.</b></p> <p>Those portions that are neither in the 1845 nor the 1860 versions are <b>in red</b>.</p> <p><b>1867 (Burritt)</b></p> <p><b>UNTITLED.</b></p>
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sea-lakes for which America is so famous; and, as you stand on its shore, and see the green waves dashing in one after another, you might well think that you were looking at the green ocean itself. The Jersey – for that was the name of the steamer – was dressed gaily out with many bright flags: the Blue Peter, the signal of immediate sailing, was at her mainmast-head: porters were hurrying along the narrow quay that juts out into the lake; boatmen quarrelling with each other for passengers; travellers hurrying backwards and forwards to look for their luggage; friends shaking hands, and bidding each other farewell; idlers lounging about, with their hands in their pockets; car-drivers jangling for a larger fare; and all the various kinds of bustle and confusion that attend the departure of a packet from a watering-place.

But presently the anchor was heaved, the paddles began to turn, the sails were set, and, leaving a broad track of foam behind her, the Jersey stood westward, and held on her course for the town of Erie. It was a bright blue day; and, as hour after hour went by, some mingled in the busy conversation on politics; some sat apart, and calculated the gains of the shop or the counting-house; some were wrapped up in the book with which they were engaged; and one or two, with whom time

*(Harbor scene deleted.)*

*(Harbor scene deleted.)*

*(Activities of passengers deleted.)*

*(Activities of passengers deleted.)*

seemed to hang heavily, composed themselves to sleep. In short, one and all were like men who thought that, let danger come to them when it might, at least it would not be that day.

It drew towards four in the afternoon, and the steamer, which had hitherto been keeping the middle of the lake, stood southwards. Erie, the place to which it was bound, lying on the southern side. Old John Maynard was at the wheel; a bluff, weather-beaten sailor, tanned by many a burning summer day, and by many a winter tempest. He had truly learnt to be content with his situation: none could ever say that they had heard him repine at his hard labor and scanty pay. He had, in the worst times, a cheerful word and a kind look for those with whom he was thrown: cast, often enough, into bad company, he tried, at least, and generally succeeded, to say or do something for its good. He was known, from one end of lake Erie to the other, by the name of honest John Maynard; and the secret of his honesty to his neighbors was his love of God.

*(Setting changed from “a pleasant May morning” to “one summer afternoon” in Gough’s later versions.)*

The name of John Maynard is known and honoured throughout the whole length of the lake country of America. He was only a hard-handed, hard-headed, yet warm-hearted and God-fearing pilot. He was employed on Lake Erie, whose steamers carry few, if any boats.

*(No mention of Maynard’s marital status is made in either the 1845 or 1860 versions. Both the 1845 and 1860 renderings depict Maynard as “old.” In the Burritt version, Maynard is married and even has children.)*

*(Setting changed from “a pleasant May morning” to “one summer afternoon.”)*

John Maynard was an honest, hardy pilot, who plied his occupation on the lake steamers. He was an upright, straightforward man, a good father of happy children, and his wife loved and revered the heart that was in him, for she knew, and many knew, that it was as tender as it was manly. On Lake Erie he stood at the wheel of the great two-story steamers, and hundreds who had watched his careful eye and steady hand, and heard his calm voice when the sudden storms came down, felt that whatever any man could know or do for the safety of a ship wrestling with the waves. John Maynard knew and could do. He had made his reputation as a pilot by many years of watch and ward at the wheel. Thousands who had made the voyage with him, when the storm was on its quick-raised fury, could tell and did tell how John bore himself in those hours of fear and danger. But one summer day came after three years of sailorship, when he was to show the latent forces of his inner nature to the full. He was standing on his post that afternoon on the passage from Detroit to Buffalo,

<p>The land was about ten miles off, when the captain, coming up from his cabin, cried to a sailor: – “Dick Fletcher, What’s all that smoke I see coming out from the hold?”</p> <p>“It’s from the engine room, sir, I guess,” said the man.</p> <p>“Down with you, then, and let me know.”</p> <p>The sailor began descending the ladder by which you go to the hold; but scarcely had he disappeared beneath the deck, when up he came with much greater speed.</p> <p>“The hold’s on fire, sir,” he said to the captain, who by this time was standing close to him.</p> <p>The captain rushed down, and found the account too true. Some sparks had fallen on a bundle of tow: no one had seen the accident; and now not only much of the luggage, but the sides of the vessel were in a smouldering flame.</p>	<p>The steamer he was piloting between Detroit and Buffalo, was steaming towards its destination, with 400 passengers on board,</p> <p><i>(“Fletcher” becomes “Simpson” in the Gough and Burrill versions.)</i></p> <p>when the captain said to a sailor, “Simpson, go down below and see what that smoke is.” The sailor did as he was bid, and came up with a face pale as ashes, saying, “The ship is on fire.” “Fire on the ship!”</p>	<p>when a thin stream of smoke was seen ascending from below. “Simpson, go down and see what that smoke is,” said the captain, <b>in a quiet voice</b>, to one of the deck hands. <b>He spoke in his ordinary tone, so as not to betray a sense of danger to any of the bystanders, knowing what a panic the least suspicion of fire would cause among the passengers.</b> The man went down, and <b>in less than a minute</b> reappeared with <b>red eyes and face as pale as ashes.</b> “Captain, the ship is on fire!”</p> <p>The terrible word ran like lightening from deck to deck and from cabin to cabin. <b>In a breath of time 500 men, women and children were in an agony of terror, some half-paralysed and dumb with mortal fear, other shrieking in the face of the awful death before them.</b></p>
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<p>All hands, passengers as well as sailors, were called together; and two lines being made, one on each side of the hold, buckets of water were passed and repassed; they were filled from the lake, they flew along a line of ready hands, were dashed hissing on the burning mass, and then passed on to the other side to be refilled. For some few moments, it seemed as if the flames were subdued.</p> <p>In the meantime the women on board were clustering round John Maynard, the only man unemployed who was capable of answering their questions. “How far is it to land?” “How long shall we be getting in?” “Is it very deep?” “Is there no boat?” Can they see us from shore?” The helmsman answered as well as he could. There was no boat: it had been left at Buffalo to be mended: they might be seven miles from shore; they would probably be in in forty minutes; he could not tell how far the fire had reached. “But, to speak the truth,” he added, “we are all in great danger, and I think if there were a little less <i>talking</i>, and a little more <i>praying</i>, it would be the better for us, and none the worse for the boat.”</p>	<p>“All hands on deck!” Buckets of water were dashed down below. There was resin and tar on board, and soon they found it hopeless to save the ship. The flames rapidly increased and licked round every combustible material. John Maynard stood at the helm.</p> <p>The passengers rushed aft and inquired, “How far from Buffalo?” “Seven miles.” “How long before we reach it?” “Three-quarters of an hour. Go forward, every one of you, the fire will be here presently.” Driving them forward, the passengers and crew clinging to the fore-part of the ship, John Maynard stood alone at the helm. The paddle-wheels revolved, but the engineer and firemen, scorched from their posts, rushed forward from the flames. Still she went on. The captain in the fore could see nothing aft through the mighty cloud of smoke and shower of sparks. Onward shot the flames, as the captain called out, “John Maynard.” “Aye, aye, sir!”</p>	<p>“Head her to the land!” shouted the captain. “Aye, aye, sir!” came John’s steady voice from the wheel. “Where away? “Seven miles south-east by east, sir.” – “What is the shortest you can do it?” – “Three-quarters of an hour, sir, at this rate.” – “Engineer, put on every ounce of steam she’ll bear!”</p> <p>All these quick questions and commands were crowded into a minute’s space. The burning steamer headed to the land. Every man <b>and boy, and every woman, too</b>, who could lift a pail, worked as with life’s last desperate chance on the effort to keep down the flames. And the bravest might well be appalled at the impending fate. There were no boats slung to the steamer’s side by which a single soul might escape. <b>Not a life-preserver was on board to aid a swimmer for life. They had not yet been heard of. The wooden vessel was as dry as tinder from the summer sun. Over and above all, as if to make their destruction quick and sure</b>, much of the lading between decks was resin and</p>
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<p>“How’s her head?” shouted the captain.</p> <p>“West-sou’-west, sir,” answered Maynard.</p> <p>“Keep her sou’ and by west,” cried the captain.</p> <p>“We must go on shore anywhere.”</p> <p>It happened that a draft of wind drove back the flames, which soon began to blaze up more furiously against the saloon; and the partition betwixt it and the hold was soon on fire. Then long wreaths of smoke began to find their way through the sky-light; and the captain, seeing this, <b>ordered</b> all the women forward. The engineer put on his utmost <b>steam</b>: the American flag was run up, and reversed, in token of distress; water was flung over the sails, to make them hold the wind. And still John Maynard stood by the wheel, though now he was cut off, by a sheet of smoke and flame, from the ship’s crew.</p> <p>Greater and greater grew the heat: the engineers fled from the engine-room: the passengers were clustering round the vessel’s bow; the sailors were sawing planks on which to lash the women: the boldest were throwing off their coats and waistcoats, and preparing for one long struggle for life. And still the coast <b>grew plainer and plainer</b>: the paddles, as yet, worked well: they could not be more than a mile from the shore; and boats were even now starting to their assistance.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>(Later Gough versions use “trumpet.”)</i></p>	<p>tar. This was reached in a few minutes by the lapping tongues of flame; and now the whole ship aft from the forward deck was enveloped in pitchy smoke flapped by the long, red wings of the ascending fire. Crowded at the bows the smoke-blinded multitude crouched in utter despair. Near them stood the captain, feeling how many lives must go down to death in a few minutes if they could not reach the land in that space. And at his post, invisible in the tar-smoke, stood John Maynard, with the very spokes of his wheel on fire, and the tiller chain at black heat.</p> <p>At this awful moment the land appeared at less than half a mile away. “John Maynard!” shouted the captain through his trumpet. – “Aye, aye, sir!” came John’s voice thick and choked through the roar and smoke of the towering flames.</p>
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<p>“John Maynard!” cried the captain.</p> <p>“Aye, aye, Sir!” said John.</p> <p>“Can you hold on five minutes longer?”</p> <p>“I’ll try, sir.”</p> <p>And he did try: the flames came nearer and nearer; a sheet of smoke would sometimes almost suffocate him; his hair was singed; his blood seemed on fire with the great heat. Crouching as far back as he could, he held the wheel firmly with his left hand, till the flesh shrivelled, and the muscles cracked in the flame; and then he stretched forth his right, and bore the agony without a scream or a groan. It was enough for him that he heard the cheer of the sailors to the approaching boats; the cry of the captain, “The women first, and then every man for himself, and God for us all.” And they were the last sounds that he heard. How he perished was not known: whether, dizzied by the smoke, he lost his footing in endeavouring to come forward, and fell overboard, or whether he was suffocated by the dense smoke, his comrades could not tell. At the moment the vessel struck the boats were at her side: passengers, sailors, and captain leaped into them, or swam for their lives; all, save he to whom they owed every thing, escaped.</p>	<p>The prow of the ship was turned to the shore, ridges of foam welled up before her bows, nearer and nearer, nearer and nearer rode the vessel, when the captain called out with quivering voice, “John Maynard!” “Aye, aye, sir.” “Can you hold on five minutes longer, John?” “By God’s help, I’ll try!”</p> <p>One hand disabled, the soles of Maynard’s boots curling with the heat, his white hair scorched off to the scalp, nerves and sinews swelling and cracking with the flames,</p> <p>there he stood, firm as a rock, till he had beached the ship, and every man, woman, and child was saved, when the scorched and blackened body of John Maynard fell backwards,</p>	<p>“Can you hold on five minutes longer, John? “By God’s help I will.”</p> <p>His hair was scorched from the scalp. His eyelashes were burnt away, and his face began to blister against the waves of flame beating against him. One hand was burnt to crisp. He had a home too, and wife and children he loved with a love as pure and strong as the richest man in the crowd at the bows felt for his. But with that one hand left him he held to the wheel.</p> <p>“Two minutes more, John!” – “One minute more, God bless you, John!”</p> <p>At the end of that minute the blazing steamer struck its forefront upon the beach, and the whole multitude the next minute stood upon it praising God and rejoicing with joy they could not utter at such deliverance from a most terrible death. But before their feet alighted on the beach, the burning wheelhouse, with the blackened and blistered form of John Maynard, fell with a crush through the charred decks into the hold of the red ruin.</p>
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<p>He had died the death of a Christian hero – I had almost said, of a martyr; his spirit was commended into his Father’s hands, and his body sleeps in peace by the green side of lake Erie.</p> <p><b><u>1296 words</u></b></p>	<p>and his spirit took its flight. That was the death of a hero. That is the way for a man to die – saving others – dying at his post of duty.</p> <p><b><u>363words</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>847 words.</u></b></p>
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