

*The Pittsfield Sun*  
(Pittsfield, Massachusetts)

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 1845  
[p. 1, c. 3]

[A]

[No Introduction]

[To facilitate comparison,  
the division of lines  
in the texts from  
*The Pittsfield Sun* and *The Adams Sentinel*  
is based on that of  
*The Commercial Advertiser*.]

The Helmsman of Lake Erie.

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 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 you were looking **at** the green ocean itself. The Jersey – for that was the name of the steamer – was dressed **out** with many bright flags: the Blue Peter, the signal **for** [ ] immediate sailing, was at her **main-mast** -head; porters were hurrying along the narrow quay that juts out

*The Adams Sentinel*  
(Gettysburg, Pennsylvania)

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 1845  
[p. 1, c. 1-2]

[B]

[No Introduction]

[...] HELMSMAN OF LAKE ERIE [..]

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 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 you were looking **on** the green ocean itself. The Jersey – for that was the name of the steamer – was dressed **gaily** with many bright flags; the Blue Peter, the signal **of her** immediate sailing, was at her **mainmast** [ ] head; porters were hurrying along the narrow quay that juts out

*Commercial-Advertiser.*  
(Buffalo, New York)

FRIDAY EVENING, SEPT. 13, 1845 [=Sept. 12, 1845]  
[p. ?, c. ?]

[A]

Blue: Neither A nor B

THE HELMSMAN OF LAKE ERIE.—The story un-  
[der] this head in today's paper will recall to the recol-  
lection of many readers the heroic and self-sacrificing  
devotion of MCBRIDE, the Helmsman of the *Erie*, who,  
during this awful burning of that boat, remain-  
ed at his post until nearly consumed by the flames  
and when further effort was unavailing. The story  
is well told, but by one more familiar with the nav-  
[i]gation of the ocean than that of the lakes. Boats  
do not ride at anchor off Buffalo.

THE HELMSMAN OF LAKE ERIE,

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 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 you were looking **at** the green ocean itself. The Jersey – for that was the name of the steamer – was dressed **out** with many bright flags; the Blue Peter, the signal **of** [ ] immediate sailing, was at her **main-mast** [ ] 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; cab-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 **hove**, 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 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 **southward**, 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 **time**, 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

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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 **of** 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 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.

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<p>Maynard; and the secret of his honesty to his neighbors, was [ ] his love of God.</p> <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 he came up 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>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, and 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 the 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 the shore; they would probably be in in forty min-</p>	<p>Maynard; and the secret of his honesty to his neighbors [ ] was – his love of God.</p> <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 he came up 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 [ ] smouldering flame.</p> <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, and 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 minutes, 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?” – [Question missing!!!] “Can they see us from the 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 min-</p>	<p>Maynard, and the secret of his honesty to his neighbors [ ] was [ ] his love of God.</p> <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 he came up with much greater speed.</p> <p>“The hold’s on fire, sir,” he said to the captain, who was by this time 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>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, and 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 the shore?” The helmsman answered as well as he could. 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utes; 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** [ ] less *talk-ing*, and a little more *praying*, it would be the better for us, and none the worse for the boat.”  
 “How’s her head?” shouted the captain.  
 “West-**sou**-west,” answered Maynard.  
 “Keep her **sou and** by west,” cried the captain.  
 “We must go **ashore any where**.”

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 **skylight**; and the captain seeing this, ordered all the women forward. The engineer put on his utmost steam; 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.

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 waist-coats, and preparing for one long struggle for life. And still the coast grew plainer and plainer; 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.

“John Maynard!” cried the captain.

“Aye, aye, Sir!” said John.

“**Could** you hold on five minutes longer?”

“**I’ll try, sir.**”

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

utes: he could not tell how far the fire had reached.— “**And**, to speak the truth,” he added, “we are all in great danger, and I think if there **was a little** less *talk-ing*[ ] and a little more **praying**, it would be the better for us, and none the worse for the boat.”  
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“John Maynard!” cried the **Captain**.

“Aye, aye, Sir!” said John.

“**Can** you hold on five minutes longer?”

**[Response missing!]**

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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 **whole** was soon on fire. Then long wreaths of smoke began to find their way through the sky-light; and the captain seeing this, ordered all the women forward. The engineer put on his utmost steam; 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.

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“John Maynard!” cried the captain.

“Aye, aye, Sir!” said John.

“**Could** you hold **out** five minutes longer?”

“**I’ll try, sir.**”

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

<p>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 <b>creaked</b> 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, “<b>t</b>he 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 endeavoring to come forward, and fell overboard, or whether he was suffocated by dense smoke, his comrades could not tell. At the moment the vessel struck, the boats were at her side; <b>the</b> passengers, sailors, and captain leaped into them, or swam for their lives: all, save he to whom they owed every thing, escaped.</p> <p>He had died the death of a <b>christian</b> 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>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 <b>crackled</b> 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, “<b>T</b>he 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 endeavoring to come forward, and fell overboard, or whether he was suffocated by 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>He had died the death of a <b>Christian</b> 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>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 <b>muscle creaked</b> 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, “<b>t</b>he women first, [ ] 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 endeavoring to come forward, and fell overboard, or whether he was suffocated by dense smoke, his comrades could not tell. At the moment the vessel struck, the boats were at her side; <b>the</b> passengers, sailors, and captain leaped into them, or swam for their lives; all, save he to whom they owed every thing, escaped.</p> <p>He had died the death of a <b>Christian</b> 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>
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