

*Harper's New Monthly Magazine.* / Volume 42, Issue 251

April 1871

[Editor's Drawer](#) : p. 947

•

THE terrible loss of life on the burning of the steamer *Erie* on Lake Michigan, many years ago, was at the time made the occasion of many a homily from the pulpit in the West, as emphatically illustrating the uncertainty of life. Old Parson G —— had for several successive Sabbaths tried to enforce upon his congregation the frail tenure of earthly existence by reference to this horrible disaster. Mr. F —— , a regular attendant of the church, but not a professor of religion, meeting Deacon S —— , accosted him with,

“Well, deacon, don’t you think we have had about enough of the *Erie*?”

“Yes, yes,” quickly replied that facetious deacon; “I *almost* wish the *Erie*’d never burned.”

[Note from Norman Barry: No doubt “Lake Michigan” was chosen to avoid the repetition of “Erie”. There was no dramatic steamer disaster involving a steamer named the *Erie* on Lake Michigan. “Old Parson G —— ” may well be an oblique reference to John Bartholomew Gough.]