

"JOHN MAYNARD" (A. J.)

The anonymous poem for which you ask is doubtless the following, although you spell the bold helmsman's name in a different way.

'Twas on Lake Erie's broad expanse,
One bright midsummer day—
The gallant steamer Ocean Queen
Swept proudly on its way,
Bright faces glistened on the deck
Or leaning o'er the side,
Watched carelessly the feathery foam,
That socked the rippling tide.

Ah! who beneath that cloudless sky
That smiling beads serene,
Could think that danger, awful—vast,
Impended o'er the scene,
Could think, that e'er an hour had passed,
That frame of sturdy oak,
Would sink beneath the flames, blue waves,
Blackened with fire and smoke.

A seaman whose heroic soul the hour should
yet reveal,—
By name John Maynard—Eastern born—stood
calmly at the wheel,
Head her southeast, the Captain shouts above
the smothering roar,
Head her southeast—without delay—make for
the nearest shore—
No terror fills that dauntless heart, nor clouds
that dauntless eye
As in a sailor's measured tones—his voice re-
sounded: Aye, Aye—
Three hundred souls, the steamer's freight-
crowd forward, white with fear—
As at the stern those dreadful flames above
the deck appear.

John Maynard, with an anxious voice—the Cap-
tain shouts once more,
Stand by that wheel five minutes yet, and we
shall reach the shore,
The flames approach in giant strides—they
scorch his hands and brow,
One arm disabled—locks his side—Ah! he is
conquered now,
But no—his teeth are firmly set—he crushes
down the pain.—
His knee, upon the stanchion pressed, he
gullies the ship again,
One moment yet—One moment yet—brave
heart, thy task is o'er,
The pebbles grate beneath the keel—the steamer
touches shore.

Three hundred grateful voices rise—in praise
to God that He
Hath saved them from that terrible fire—and
from the engulfing sea,
HU! where is he—the helmsman bold—the
Captain saw him reel,
His lifeless hands release their task—He fell
beside the wheel,
The waves received his lifeless corpse black-
ened with smoke and fire,
God rest him—Here never had a nobler funeral
pyre.