

The Standard

(Clarksville, Red River County, Texas)
October 27, 1860

Vol. 17, No. 41
p. 2, c. 5

HEROISM

There are heroes in private life. Those men who suffer mortal agony, and are s[uch as] who never seek fame—who do not want fam[e], who bear their cross unmurmuring, and looking only for the relief which comes, when mortal life becomes extinct, and when there are no fleshly muscles to be strained, or mortal feelings to endure agony—when the breath has gone out—when the body is stretched in its final repose. Are not these just as wise as those who pursue the unreal phantom which men call fame—glory? At last all men come to the same place to rest, whether neither elemental [s]torms, nor the vicissitudes of life, nor the alternations of hope or despair can reach us; hopes never to be realized—despair which is unnecessary and unphilosophic. it is a poor fruitless weariness, the journey of life; and Solomon placed his claim to the highest wisdom beyond doubt, when he said

“All is vanity.”

These reflections come to us, on seeing in one of our exchanges, the repetition of an incident which we remember well, from the time of its occurrence on Lake Erie, as developing the highest possible order of pure heroism, untarnished “by even the hope of Fame.”

“John Maynard was a pilot on a steamer from Detroit to buffalo. One summer afternoon smoke was seen ascending from below, and the Captain called out, “Simpson, go down and see what that smoke is.” Sim[p]son came up with his face pale as ashes. “Captain, the ship is on fire!” Then, “Fire! fire! fire! fire on shipboard!” All hands were called up. Buckets of water were dashed upon the fire, but in vain. Passengers and crew, men, women and children, crowded the forward part of the ship. — John Maynard stood at the helm. The flames burst forth in a sheet of fire; clouds of smoke arose; the captain cried out through his trumpet, “John Maynard!” “Aye, aye, sir!” “How does she head?” “South east-by-east, sir.” “Head her southeast and run her on shore.” Nearer, nearer, yet nearer she approached the shore. again the captain cried out, “John Maynard!” The response came feebly, “Aye, aye, sir!” “Can you hold [on] five minutes longer, john?” “By God’s he[lp I will!”] The old man’s hair was scorch[ed from the sc]alp; —one [han]d disabled, his [other hand upon th]e wheel, he stood firm as [a rock. He beache]d the ship —every man, [woman and child wa]s saved, as John Maynard [dropped, and his spir]it took its flight to his [God].”