

From the Express.

**THE BURNING OF THE ERIE.**

The parting scene was o'er, they left  
The city in their pride,  
And every heart was merry now,  
And tears were thrown aside ;  
And proudly dashed the gallant bark,  
The swelling surges o'er  
As dimmer on the distance grew,  
The vast receding shore.

There were the blooming and the bright,  
And men with silvery hair ;  
And there were those whose joyous hearts  
Were free from every care ;  
There, too, was mingled with that throng,  
A bold and lonely band ;  
Far—far from distant shores they came,  
Far from their father land.

Where feudal castles rear their towers  
Up to the vaulted sky,  
And Switzerland's proud mountains left  
Their hoary heads on high ;  
And where Geneva's placid lake  
With brightness glitters o'er,—  
Land where the martyrs often trod—  
This was their native shore.

But now another clime they sought,—  
Clime of the brave and free—  
Where from extortion's cruel hand  
In safety they might be,  
On that unhappy fated boat,  
They had embarked that day,  
As to the regions of the West  
They onward urged their way.

And then perchance, they fondly thought  
Of their beloved home—  
The mountain stream—the sunny vale,  
Where they were wont to roam.  
And many a bright romantic scene  
Came up to memory's view ;  
But round them dashed portentous waves,—  
Their hours were now but few.

The sun went down in splendor wrapped—  
Their last sun sunk away,  
And soon the shades of evening closed  
Their last—their fatal day.  
And now each joyous heart beat high,  
And all around were gay,  
While glided o'er the waves their bark,  
Still urging on its way.

But hark ! a wild—a piercing cry  
Breaks on the startled ear,  
And wilder yet, and wilder grows,  
And fills each heart with fear,  
While bursting forth the livid flame  
Lights up the darkened sky,  
And 'midst confusion still is heard  
The agonizing cry.

Alas ! what shall the the bravest do,  
Much less the fearful now ?  
O God ! see how the darting flame  
Preys on that beauteous brow ;  
See how it wraps the fairest ones,  
Still struggling with its might,  
While o'er the gloomy waters gleams  
Its dread, unnatural light.

O hear, O hear, the frequent plunge  
    Beneath the troubled wave—  
While with their dying voice they cry  
    For heaven! "O save—O save!"  
The shriek—the gasp—the dying groan,  
    Still rends the midnight air,  
And yet is heard the rolling flame,  
    And wailing of despair.

But where are those who from afar  
    Across the ocean came?  
Hear how they cry in agony,  
    All wrapt in vivid flame;  
See mothers clasp their little ones  
    Close to their burning breast,  
While fathers—brothers—sisters—all  
    In last embrace are press'd.

And see upon the glowing deck,  
    An old man few of days,  
Kneels down, and fervent to his God,  
    In childhood's language prays.  
Why had he come from "home, sweet home,"  
    Across the swelling wave,  
To meet a frightful, fiery death,  
    Or find a watery grave?

And where is all that beauty now,  
    That trod upon that deck?  
Also go view the charred remains  
    Upon the burning wreck:  
Ask of the ashes scattered 'mid  
    The waters and the fire;  
That treacherous lake was now their grave,—  
    That boat, their funeral lyre.

A few amid the dashing waves  
To frail support yet pressed;  
One woman there among that few,  
Was fearless as the rest.  
But courage now, for help is near,  
(That help how many craved,)  
Courage! for generous aid now comes,  
And ye will soon be saved.

But one heroic deed record:  
How on that fearful night,  
Firm at his post the pilot stood—  
The flame was glowing bright,  
And nearer yet, and nearer came.  
Yet he was not afraid;  
But there he stood unmoved, and died  
In wreaths of fire arrayed.

And yet another daring deed  
Shall ne'er forgotten be;  
How boldly launched a little band  
Their bark upon the sea;  
The wild waves lashed the treacherous shore,  
Their boat was weak and frail,  
While high around the billows rose,—  
But yet they did not quail.

Light from the burning wreck still gleamed  
Upon the foaming wave,  
And still they toiled and rowed that night,  
The perishing to save.  
But oh, could then the troubled lake  
Its bosom wide unfold,  
How would their generous hearts be thrilled  
With horrors yet untold.

There lay the father and the son,  
    With pale and marble brow;  
There lay the mother and the babe  
    All cold and speechless now;  
There lay the lover and the loved,  
    In fond affection's clasp—  
There lay the friend and enemy  
    In death's convulsive grasp.

But hush, why longer dwell upon  
    The terrors of that night;  
Why yet again bring to the gaze,  
    That agonizing sight.  
Long after those heroic men  
    Are cold and still in death,  
Their deeds shall live—untainted be,  
    By defamations breath.

W. V. W.

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