

# The Burning of the Sultana

by: Wm. H. Norton, Company C, 115th Ohio

Midnight's dreary hour has past,  
The mists of night are falling fast,  
Sultana sounds her farewell blast,  
And braves the might stream;  
The swollen river's banks overflow,  
The deaden clouds are hanging low  
And veil the stars bright silver glow,  
And darkness reigns supreme.

Her engine fires now brighter burn,  
Her mammoth wheels now faster turn,  
Her dipping paddles lightly spurn  
The river's foaming crest:  
And drowsy Memphis, lost to sight,  
Now fainter shows her beacon light,  
As Sultana steams in the dead of night,  
And the Union soldiers rest.

The sleeping soldiers dream of home,  
To them the long-sought day had come,  
No more in prison pens to moan,  
Or guarded by the gray;  
At last the changing fates of war  
Had swing their prison "gates ajar,"  
And "laurel wreaths" from the North afar  
Await their crowning day.

For Peace has raised her magic hand,  
The Stars and Stripes wave o'er the land,  
The conquered foemen now disband,  
"As melts the mowing dew;"  
And mothers wear their wonted smile,  
And aged sires the hours beguile,  
And plighted love awaits the while  
The coming of the blue.

On sails the steamer through the gloom,  
On sleep the soldiers to their doom,  
And death's dark angel oh! so soon-

Calls loud the muster roll.  
A-burst-a-crash-and-timbers fly,

And-flame-and-steam-leap to the sky,  
And-men awakened-but-to die-  
Commend to God their souls.

Out from the flame's encircling fold,  
Like a mighty rush of warriors, bold,  
They leap to the river dark and cold,  
And search for the hidden shore.  
In the cabins, -and-pinioned-there,  
A mid-the-smoke-and-fire-and-glare,  
The-awful-wail-of-death's-despair  
Is heard above the roar.

Out on, the river's rolling tide,  
Out from the steamer's burning side,  
Out where the circle is growing wide,  
They battle with the waves.  
And drowning men each other clasp,  
And writhing in death's closing grasp  
They struggle bravely, but at last  
Sink to watery graves.

Oh! for the star's bright silver light  
Oh! for a moon to dispel the night!  
Oh! for the hand that should guide aright  
The way to the distant land!  
Clinging to driftwood and floating down,  
Caught in the eddies and whirling around,  
Washed to the flooded banks are found  
The survivors of that band.

Norton, William H. "The Burning of the Sultana." Loss of the Sultana and Reminiscences of Survivors. Comp. Chester D. Berry. Lansing, 1892. 12-13.