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CHOICE SELECTIONS.

JIM BLUDSO.

Well, no, I can't tell you where he lives,

Bekase he dont live, you see;

Least ways he's given up the habit

Of living like you and me,—

Where hev ye been for the past three year

That ye hev'n't heerd folks tell

How Jimmy Bludso passed in his checks

The night of the "Prairie Belle?"

He warn't no saint. Them engineers

Are pretty much all alike—

One wife in Natchez-under-the-hill

And another one here in Pike.

A keerless man in his talk was Jim

And an awkward hand in a row,

But he never flunked and he never lied—

I reckon he never knowed how.

And this was all the religion he had:—

To treat his engine well,

Never be passed on the river,

To mind the pilot's bell;

And if ever the "Prairie Belle" took fire

A thousand times he swore

He'd hold her nozzle against the bank

Till the last soul got ashore.

All boats have their day on the Mississippi,

And her day kem at last—

The "Movoastar" was a better boat,

But the "Belle," she WOULDN'T be passed;

And, so she kem tearin' along that night,

The oldest craft on the line,

With a nigger squat on her safety-valve

And her furnace crammed rosin an' pine.

The fire bust out as we clar'd the bar

And burnt a hole in the night,

And quick as a flash she turned and went

Fer that willer bank on the right;

There was screaming and cursing, but

Jim yelled out

Over all the infernal roar—

I'll hold her nozzle agin the bank

Till the last galoot's ashore!

Through the hot, black breath of the burning boat

Jim Bludso's voice was heard,

And they all had faith in his cussedness

And knew he would keep his word.
And sure's you're born, they all got off
Afore the smoke-stack fell,
And Bludso's ghost went up alone
In the smoke of the "Prairie Belle."

He warn't no saint, but at jedgement
I'd run my chance with Jim
'Longside uv some pious gentleman
Thet wouldn't shock hands with him—

He saw his duty a dead sure thing
And went fer it thar and then,
And Christ ain't a goin' to be too hard
On a man who died fer men."

A BALLAD OF LAKE ERIE.

Twas on Lake Erie's broad expanse
One bright midsummer day
The gallant steamer "Ocean Queen"
Swept proudly on her way.

Bright faces, clustered on the deck
Or leaning o'er the side
Watched carelessly the feathery foam
That flecked the rippling tide.

Ah, who beneath that cloudless sky,
That smiling bends serene,
Could dream that danger, awful, vast,
Impended o'er the scene.

Could dream, that ere an hour had sped
That frame of sturdy oak
Should sink beneath the lakes blue waves

Blackened with fire and smoke,
A seaman sought the Captain's side,
A moment whispered low,
The Captain's swarthy cheek grew pale,
He hurried down below.

Alas, too late—though quick and sharp
And clear his orders came
No human effort could avail
To quench the insidious flame,

The bad news quickly reached the deck,

It sped from lip to lip,
And ghastly faces everywhere
Looked from the doomed ship.

"Is there no hope? no chance of life?"
A hundred lips implore:—
"But one," the captain made reply—
To run the ship on shore.

A sailor, whose heroic soul
That hour should yet reveal,
By name John Maynard, eastern born,
Stood calmly at the wheel.

"Head her south east," the captain cried

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