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POETRY.

THE LIFE BOAT.

BY MISS STRECKLAND, (NOW MRS. MOSELER.)

The life boat! the life boat! when tempests are dark,
She's the bosom of hope to the foundering bark,
When, midst the wild roar of the hurricane's sweep,
The minute guns boom, like a knell on the deep.

The life boat! the life boat! the whirlwind and rain,
The white-crested breakers oppose her in vain;
Her crew are resolved, and her timbers are staunch,
She's the vessel of mercy—God speed to her launch!

The life boat! the life boat! how fearless and true,
She wins her bold course o'er the wide-rolling sea;
She bounds o'er the surges with gallant disdain,
She has stemmed them before, and she'll stem them again!

The life boat! the life boat! she's man'd by the brave,
In the noblest of causes commissioned to save;
What heart but has thrilled in the seaman's distress,
At the life boat's cue-words, the life boat's success!

The life boat! the life boat! no vessel that sails
Has stemmed such rough billows, and weathered
Such gales;
Not e'en Nelson's proud ship, when his death-bed
Was won,
Such true glory achieved as the life boat has done.

ANNABEL'S BRIDAID,

A LEGEND OF A DREAM.

PART I.—THE DREAM.

The sister's had set for more than an hour
In the noblest of causes commissioned to save;
The afternoon was dark and sultry; and, from a
huge mass of clouds, which lay heavily upon
the horizon, came forth low, muttering sounds
of thunder, and sharp, hissing breezes, which
did so immediately as they were an excited.

"Do you know, sister," at length said Annabel,
lively, with an effort, "they talk of night as
lonely and full of fear; but I would rather be
left alone at the darkest hour of midnight in
the most solitary place, than now, in this
sweet, familiar chamber. I could look at that
cloud, till the changing shapes into which it
withers itself make me positively terrified.
See, it is now like a bear, with its crown
of dark plumes and tail mottled character;
and, look you!—do you not see that skull-
tor it is a skull—peeping between those two
huge folds of drapery? Heaven grant Herbert
may reach us safe and sound!"

"Why now, my little Annabel, what a fool
has this love made of you! a positive fool,
and you the boldest girl I ever knew only a
twelvemonth ago! but every thing shall now
pass free; and I will make him laugh with
me at all our omens and portents to-morrow!
A hearse indeed! Now I see a charming
holding grove of golden palm-trees; and your
skull has turned itself into the very figure of
the flying cupid, whose image you admire so
much. Rouse yourself, or you will have poor
pale cheeks and heavy eyes to greet him
withal when he does come. In five hours,"
and she turned as she spoke to an antique
time-piece, "in five hours precisely from this
time, he will be in this chamber, in this chair,
and you the happiest of the happy."

As Ida spoke, a sudden and binding tongue
of lightning leaped from that portentous cloud
with a peal of thunder which shook the old
massion to its foundation. Both the girls
turned dead pale; for they cared more than
is now esteemed discreet for omens, and
fortune tellings, and vision; and Sir Guy Cour-
tenay, their father—unkind fate had, in their
infancy, deprived them of a mother's care—
was himself accused in whispers of troubling
himself too much about alchemy and magic
and other dark sciences, such as are shunned
by simple and pious men.

"Some woe is hanging over us, I am sure,"
said Annabel, sinking to the floor in the ter-
ror of the moment, and leaning, half kneeling
against the knee of her father sister! "my
dream last night, and this sudden answer to
your hopeful words of comfort. . . . I will
go and pray, for my heart is oppressed, and
very heavy."

But you did not tell me before of this
dream, Annabel. What was it, I pray you?

Not that I fear of care or be— But
strange things have come to pass, and who
can be sure that good and evil spirits do not
come and whisper in our ears what is about to
happen when we lie asleep?"

"I did not tell you, my Ida, because I was
sure you would laugh at me; but now it
seems as if I must, whether I would or not.
Santa Maria! how the sky darkens! and did
you not see in yonder corner, there—
there?"

She stretched forth her arm almost convul-
sively as she spoke, and her eye fixed itself
as firmly upon the dusky void of the part of
the chamber towards which she pointed, as if
indeed, it had been visited by some fearful or
unexpected object. Ida looked, once, twice,
herself infected by the fears which possessed
her sister! but it was all in vain—there was
nothing.

"Well, I am foolish, I know," began Annabel,
after a pause, during which her form
relaxed from that strained attitude, and her
eye from its wondering distention. "but it is
all owing to my dream! and now, when I
would tell it, I know not why, a chain seems
as my tongue, and the wind—these again!
How like a sigh it was that said 'Forsake!
but you shall hear it.'"

And she arose from her knees, and looked
her sister's fine hand in her own, and contin-
ued thus:

"I was dreaming of my wedding night,
Ida—I suppose, because I sometimes fancy
it can never cease! and I thought I saw my-
self robed as a bride, for I was out of myself
with that low veil which Herbert says makes
me look so like a Spaniard—the veil I stole
from you, Ida, because he admired it, and the
Lady Ursula's jewels were gone, and in my
ears. What could possess me to fancy I
should wear them? I shudder so whenever
I remember her great wickedness and hideous
fate! and I cannot bear to pass her picture
after nightfall, though it be veiled! I always
fancy I hear the curtain rustle! Well, and
my veil was down, and a bright ring was on
every finger, and jewelled shoes on my feet.
Herbert too, looked just as he is, with that
glorious buoyant smile—O, Ida! think you
will continue to love one so homely and brown
as I am? You were not there, nor could I see
my bridesmaid, nor the priest, nor my father,
Herbert and myself were alone in the chapel.
I went so well down, for I mean my sym-
piz—stood aside, and saw it! And all the
rings and scones were lighted, and six great
candles on the altar wreathed with flowers;
and we advanced close to the altar, and
I saw him press my hand, and stoop and whisper
in my ear, with that fresh, perfumed
breath of his! When, behold, a chasm opened
in the pavement, just where stood the Lady
Ursula's tomb, and a voice spoke from the
chasm; and when I looked again, there was
nothing, neither bride nor bridesmaid, only a
few bones, and a handful of jewels, and a rosary,
green with the mould of many years;
and when the chasm closed, I heard some-
thing laugh beneath the pavement, and the
tread of heavy feet far down below. But
what is still stranger, wherever I have cast
my eyes to-day, I have fancied I saw those
poor bleached remains, those accursed orna-
ments so well known, you know, will not use
them, even in his experiments, though he has
lacked jewels badly of late;—and I have
heard the laugh, and that dull stepping of feet
as of those who carry a lie. Heaven shield
my Herbert! for did you ever see such rain?
He will not, cannot, come tonight! If I only
ever look on him again!"

Ida was silent for a moment; then she
looked in her sister's face, with a pale and
wistful smile. "Your fancy is strangely dis-
tempered, dear Annabel; I shall call our fa-
ther, or nurse Marion, and they shall prescribe
for you. This poor pulse, how it leaps, and
throbs, and flutters! But only see—yonder,
glimmering among the trees—I know the horse;
and ah, how is swifter than his promise!
Gently, gently sweet! or you will die of your
rapture, before he has crossed half the park.
I warrant you find that they were never he-
fore so slow in opening the gates!"

PART II.—THE DISCOVERY.

My tale hath now reached the Christmas
tide, and we are alone with Ida in her cham-
ber! that maiden being seated, fixedly gazing
(if her eyes received forms and colours) upon
the huge mass of burning wood that filled the
hearth, whence the fire flickered and burned
up, casting quaint lights upon the pictures on
the wall, or leaving them to deep shadow,
fantastic and solemn in its suddenness.

Never had Ida, before that night, looked so
transcendently beautiful. Her pearly white
skin, and the clear carnation blush that rose
and fell upon her cheek, and her long golden
hair floating round her, all unbound, were
touched with a pleasant glow by that fitful
firelight. But who shall tell the glance it re-
vealed—the troubled eye—the quivering lip,
divided between rapture and remorse?—who
describe the perplexity of her clasped hands?
—her breath was on her knee, but she knew
it not; nor did the entrance of Annabel, for
some minutes, arouse her from her thick-
crowding contemplations. And in truth that
maiden, came in with a step as firm and noise-
less as his who creeps through the dark to do
a murder.

"We are waiting for you," said Annabel,
in her quietest voice, laying her hand upon
her sister's shoulder—but, O, with what
meaning in its pressure!—"come we are
waiting for you." And the maiden rose with-
out a word—her brilliant colour coming and
going, like moonshine on a stormy night—and
the two went together in silence towards the
saloon. Annabel opened the door with the
same quiet deliberation. Ida cast round her
a hasty but eager look of inquiry—for a strange
light was there assembled.

By a table, in the midst of the chamber,
which was dimly lighted by a single lamp,
stood old Sir Guy Courtenay; but it might be
seen that, though his body was present, his
thoughts were in his chambers of toil and
study. A nobleman, yet older, was by his side;
but he was as wholly of this world as the
maiden's father belonged to the world unseen
and visionary. He had a salmon-coloured
wrinkled cheek; and a small, dead, greedy
eye; and lips which would not close over the
firm white teeth (not his own) with which his
mouth was set, and the love-locks which
streamed over his shoulders were thick and
scented; and upon his long withered hand,
which rattled from its very leanness, were
costly rings; and his doublet was of Genoa
velvet, with a rare gem in every clasp, and
on every button; and he stood propped upon a
staff, curiously wrought—the spoil, it was
said, of some rare sea-monster, which the dis-
coverers had brought home and sold at a
mighty price. By the side of Lord Orde stood
a scribe, with pens and an inkhorn at his gir-
dle, and a wide white parchment was spread
upon the table before them.

With a quick and resolved glance, a hasty
step, and yet a firm one, Annabel drew her
sister to the table. She dipped a pen in the
massy silver standish, and whispered in her
ear, "Sign, Ida, and quickly; you should not
keep these gentlemen waiting. Sign! Sign!"

And Ida obeyed, and wrote her name in
the blank space pointed out to her by her sis-
ter's outstretched finger. Then Annabel took
the pen, and, clearing her brow with her hand,
after the pause of another moment, traced her
name also. "What pains you take with your
writing, my love?" said the old Lord Orde,
with his sickly smile, and his voice most dis-
cordant when he most essayed to be tender!—
It was done, and the clerk sealed up the
parliament, and with his employer left the
chamber. Sir Guy Courtenay had not spoken;
he left the chamber also.

"Now, sister!" exclaimed Annabel, when
the door had closed—a strange and vengeful
thrust, leaping into her eyes—"Now
but I forget!" (sinking her voice to a strange
and scornful whisper)—"you may have a
love-tale to tell me—a confession to make . . .
Shall I speak or listen?—I am quite ready for
either!"

The words of Annabel seemed to awaken
her sister as from a trance; but it was to

plunge her from a dead calm into a passionate
transport of grief. Tears burst from her eyes,
like the rain of a thunder-shower, and she
would have thrown herself upon Annabel's
neck to weep; but the latter forbade, with a
frown and a smile, Ida knew not which of the
two was the most terrible. "O listen to me,
Annabel!—I am a poor, wicked, distracted
creature; listen to me, and I will confess
all—every thing!"

"Confess!—you may spare yourself the
trouble, Ida! as you might have spared your-
self the dissimulation. We are sisters—why
should you not have made confidence to me at
once? Why not have said, 'I cannot bear
the sight of your happiness—the thought of
your grandeur—I am fairer than you, and I
can beguile him from you, or at least I will
try.' It would have been a strange speech,
methinks; but I should have then known how
to answer it in kind—and you, not I, would
have been spared a surprise more poignant,
I deem, than pleasant. For think you, I was
foiled?—that I had not the heart and the wit
to avenge myself?—You (and she laughed as
she spoke) "you yourself have, but a moment
ago, set the seal of witness to my ven-
geance!"

"Forgive—forgive me!" murmured her
feebler and fairer sister, trembling before this
vehemence, and unable to raise her eyes.

"And it was no passion that urged you
thus to wreck my happiness—none of that
deep-seated, heart-wearing affection, which
. . . . That I can talk of to you! I should
have spoken of an ancient name, and broad
lands, and proud palaces, rather. Well, these
shall all be mine—mine in spite of your plot-
ting and jealousy. And as for his daughter—
as for the distance between seventy-two and
twenty-seven—what matter!—and she again
laughed fearfully. "You forget, it
seems, when you made so sure of the son, that
there was yet a father alive. . . . You could
not conceive that, if you could plot, your sis-
ter could counterplot. . . . You did not im-
agine, when you there wrote your name, that
you were signing a contract of marriage be-
tween myself and Lord Orde; and that my
dowry was to be his son's disinheritance! Go
and tell him so—go: he awaits you in the
south walk, under the cedar trees—he has
waited for me there before now. Tell him
that the same day that graces him with a
bride will shine on his father's wedding too!
—I have moved you, I see!" continued
she, with increasing wildness, as her sister
crouched before her, struck dumb with shame
and wonder—"to-night, then, begins my tri-
umph!"

(To be concluded in our next.)

UNITED STATES.

BANK FAILURES.—It seems the Windsor
Bank is not the only "lame duck" in Ver-
mont. We cut the following from the Ro-
chester Daily Advertiser of yesterday:

A gentleman of this city yesterday received
a letter from Vermont, stating that the fol-
lowing banks in that state had failed within a few
days:

Bank of Windsor,
Wells River Bank, Newbury,
Orange County Bank, Chelsea.

This event was caused by the failure of the
house of Emerson & Lamb, in Boston. It
seems that firm was the agent for those
banks in Boston, and held a large amount of
their funds.

We stated, a day or two since, that several
of the Safety Fund banks of Michigan had
been closed by the Commissioners of that
State. The following are given as the banks
just closed:

The Bank of Leapee,
Farmers' Bank of Genesee County,
Farmers' Bank of Sandstone,
Jackson County Bank.

Exchange Bank at Selawassee, and
The Wayne County Bank.

The Bank of Manchester is one the Com-
missioners did not see fit to close, but they
caution the public to avoid its issues.