

# THE LIFE BOAT:

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## The Fair Temptress—Or the Fatal Pledge.

BY MRS. ANGELINA FISH.



“OW, Wilson,” said Geo. Grant, “we have one more call to make to finish up our round of New Year’s calls. And glad am I, for to tell the truth I am more than half bewildered with all this show and fascination gratuitously lavished upon us, poor bachelor wights, by imperious beauties who mercilessly demand a whole year’s homage crowded into one brief day, and all so graciously received, and as gallantly tendered as though the light of each fair lady’s smile richly compensated for all this encounter of wind and snow; to say nothing of the whisperings of conscience in the case, for I claim yet to retain a little of that commodity. You did well to reserve this for the last call, as doubtless your ‘gentle Mary’ has something for your private ear, which may require a prolonged in-

terview. As for Mabel, the magnificent beauty, I am already prepared to surrender to her matchless charms.”

Mabel, or Bell, as she was often called, was indeed beautiful. Tall and commanding in her mien, with a complexion of dazzling whiteness, and cheeks of rosy hue, with hair like the raven’s wing, and eyes dark and piercing. And her laugh was like the wild gush of music, entrancing the soul with its mystic power.

Mabel knew she was beautiful. Of a proud and aristocratic family, with wealth at her command, and educated only to shine and captivate, what wonder that she fancied herself a bright divinity, which man might feel proud to worship, and honored in being permitted to serve.

The sisters were as unlike as possible, Mary, the younger, was all gentleness fair and delicate, with a soul all goodness and benevolence. Her voice was soft and low, like the music of a purling stream; and her mild eyes beamed with melting tenderness, as one gazed through their mirrored lights, down into the deep fountains of her