

A SHORT TRACT  
 UPON THE  
 EXPEDIENCY OF A GENERAL ESTABLISHMENT  
 OF THE  
 LIFE BOAT,  
 BUT MORE PARTICULARLY IN THE VICINITY OF THE  
 MORTELLO TOWERS.

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BY THE REV. W. LIDDIARD, A.B.  
 CHAPLAIN TO HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF RICHMOND, AND THE  
 RIGHT HONORABLE LORD SOMERVILLE.

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O, I have suffer'd  
 With those that I saw suffer! A brave vessel,  
 Who had no doubt, some noble creatures in her,  
 Dash'd all to pieces. O, the cry did knock  
 Against my very heart! Poor souls! they perish'd!!!

SHAKESPEARE,

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DUBLIN:

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1807.

A SHORT TRACT

FOR THE

RECOVERY OF A CRIMINAL ESTABLISHMENT

OF THE

LIFE BOAT

BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY IN THE INTEREST OF THE

MOUNTED TO TOWERS

BY THE REV. W. H. HOBBS, A.B.

PRINTED FOR M. R. HARRIS, 10, COLLEGE STREET, DUBLIN.

O, I have seen the  
 And those that I saw  
 And those that I saw  
 And those that I saw

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1807.

Houses of the Oireachtas

TO HIS GRACE,  
**CHARLES LENOX,**  
*LORD LIEUTENANT GENERAL*  
AND  
GENERAL GOVERNOR OF  
*IRELAND, &c.*

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TO YOUR GRACE,

I have taken the liberty of dedicating the following short tract upon the utility of the Life-boat; being well assured, that as no one would be more alive to the recent calamity occasioned by the late dreadful hurricane upon our coasts, so no one would be more prompt to exert the power attached to your exalted station, in promoting any scheme, calculated to save the lives, or alleviate the sufferings of those, doomed to experience the horrors of shipwreck.

## DEDICATION.

In the mariner's, but more particularly in the foldier's life, your Grace's professional situation has experienced you.

He who like your Grace has been by such opportunities instructed in their value, will best know how to pity their distreffes, and to exert his influence in the promotion of their relief.

the brave  
Love mercy, and delight to save.

GAY.

With much respect,

I have the honor to be,

your Grace's

most obedient

Humble fervant,

WILLIAM LIDDIARD.

## P R E F A C E .

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Had not the use of the Life-boat been attended with success, and unequivocally approved of wherever it has been resorted to, I should not have ventured to have given the following brief and imperfect tract, to the public; since in that case it would have required more than a *general* notice of its merits: whilst however its universal title to approbation has been acknowledged (I am sorry to say) no general disposition has evinced itself in the public to profit, in an extensive sense, by the invention.

Thus circumstanced, without pretending *critically* to expatiate on its properties, I have seized the moment when the feelings of the

P R E F A C E.

nation are afloat, and before they can possibly be thought to have subsided, of recommending a more *general* establishment of the Life-boat; a plan, which affords in some degree a balm for the *despondency* of the moment, promising as it does to prevent a recurrence of misfortunes similar to those, which have lately gloomed our shores.

A

# SHORT TRACT

UPON THE

*EXPEDIENCY, &c.*

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THE many charitable institutions which the public records of this country exhibit, are so many testimonies of the philanthropic dispositions of its inhabitants, and have justly obtained them the rewards due to benevolence and charity, in the applause of the virtuous and the good, of every state, whom accident or enquiry have instructed on this head. So wide is this characteristic trait of the Irish

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character disseminated, and so universal its effects, that it is no easy matter to discover in the activity of their fervid benevolence, room to add to the charitable catalogue which has so much distinguished, and does so much honour to the natives of this island. If however there is cause for surprize at the want of any material public institution, there is likewise reason for hope, if not conviction, that the mention of any one entitled to attention, by its importance to the public interests, will be speedily followed by its adoption. It is under this supposition that the writer of this short appeal to the better feelings of the nation is induced to call the considerations of the Public, to the properties of the Life-Boat; the neglect of which, is as incomprehensible as the invention of it has proved, wherever it has been resorted to, beneficial to individuals, and in individuals, to the community at large. That it has not been in more universal demand can be account-

ed for no otherwise, than, that in our habit of looking out with avidity for new modes of destruction, or rather in the obligation of so doing which we have been driven into in our own defence, we have become negligent and indifferent about discoveries connected with the preservation of our fellow-creatures.

If without proving it to absolute demonstration it can be made more than probable, that the greater part, if not the whole, of the unfortunate victims who recently met an untimely fate upon the shores they were coming to protect, might have been saved by means of this antidote to storm and tempest, how shall we be able to forgive ourselves for not being prepared with them on every part of our coast, as well as our Mortello Towers; as if it was not an equally momentous duty to consult the means of safety to our countrymen, as well as of destruction to our enemies: How, I repeat it, shall we acquit our consciences for

having neglected, but by an early adoption of this salutary and incumbent measure? What individual but would cheerfully contribute his proportionable quota to such a beneficent undertaking? What native of this island which has set the example of some charities whilst it monopolizes others, but would feel his bosom glow with a correspondent rapture to the hand extended for such a God-like purpose?

Ignorance and apathy have ever been the inveterate foes of ingenuity and invention; ever opposing a stubborn bulwark to intellectual acquisition; time and experience of their utility are scarcely able to reconcile them to even successful innovation; chained down to habits the futility of which even disappointment cannot persuade them to abandon, and measuring the discoveries of the enlightened and discerning by the circumscribed standard of their own blunt faculties, they wage war against science and humanity.

To what but the obstinacy of the self-opinionated; to what but to fatuity itself are we to ascribe the rejection of the vaccine inoculation, that felicitous discovery, which the unenlarged and illiterate multitude resisted, at the very moment, when the legislature, liberal, just, and comprehensive, had rewarded the discoverer, by voting him the thanks of the house in a pecuniary donation? To the same chilling source we may attribute that infatuated and guilty negligence concerning an institution in which our interests as *Christians* are involved; that unpardonable indifference to the lives of those, to whom, perhaps, we are indebted for the security of our own—to our Soldiers and our Sailors.

A hint to the wise or the benevolent, synonymous appellations, is oftentimes sufficient, and it is to these only I address myself, nor let them deem me guilty of presumption in putting to them an interrogative, in calling them to the consideration of a question which involves no less momentous

a concern than the preservation of existence; than that of circumscribing the grim tyrant on the coast, the recent scene of havoc and despair; of defeating of his deadly aim the fell archer, who,

“ Hanging up the quiver nature gave him  
 “ As flow of execution, for dispatch,  
 “ Tossed twice ten thousand at a meal.

YOUNG.

The question I would ask is this; whether the Mortello towers might not be converted into a twofold means of safety, into a tower of salvation as well as what it now is, a battlement of defence? whether the cannon of this insular fortification might not be made instrumental to the cause of mercy, to our friends, as well as defiance to our foes, by being occasionally employed in giving notice of that distress of which they, to whose care they are entrusted, are so often involuntary witnesses? as a tocfin to call together certain persons stationed in the neighbourhood, for the express purpose of affording succour to vessels in distress?

In the same centinel might be comprized a double office, carrying at once into effect the object of the Mortello and the purpose of humanity. One, two, three, or more guns being fired according to signals agreed upon and understood, the earliest intimation of danger might be given, and in a short time a number of hands collected to the spot where pity calls for aid. To make this work of charity complete, who would hesitate to go one step farther, or assert that it would extend the charity beyond its proper bounds to hire or erect houses contiguous to these towers, as asylums furnished with beds and every other requisite calculated to relieve the ship-wrecked mariner snatched from a watery grave?

By an institution of this kind on the coast of Northumberland, suspended animation has often been restored, and many an arm revigorated to the sorrow of a defeated enemy and the exultation of a victorious country; and this by means of an in-

stitution set on foot, not at the general expence, but by the will of an individual, a Bishop of Durham, of the name of Crew, who left by his last testament a sum sufficient to defray the expences of this charity, the purposes of which says Pennant, writing upon this subject, "make the heart to glow when thought of." Bamborough Castle, the place alluded to, is situated upon the most inaccessible part of the rocky coast of Northumberland; but without making any apology I shall quote Pennant's description of this castle and its appropriations, As the strongest corroborative proof of what may be accomplished by an unit in society, where inclination and ability co-operate in the furtherance of the projects of benevolence. This charity where an individual has done *so much* stands in existence and on record as a stigma upon the community at large, for having done *so little*; stands as an imperious and substantial precept to warn the public of their torpid and unaccounta-

ble neglect and to instruct them in an appreciable duty.

“ This castle,” says Pennant, “ was once as well as the manor belonging to it, the properties of the Forsters ; but purchased by Lord Crew, Bishop of Durham, and with other considerable estates, left vested in trustees to be applied to unconfined charitable uses.

Three of these trustees are a majority: one of them makes this place his residence, and blesses the coast by his judicious and humane application of the prelates generous bequest. He has repaired and made habitable the great square tower : the part reserved for himself and family is a large hall and smaller apartments ; but the rest of the spacious edifice is allotted for purposes which make the heart to glow with joy when thought of. The upper part is a large granary ; from whence corn is dispersed to the poor without distinction, in the dearest times, at the value of four shillings a bushel ; and

the distressed for many miles round often experience the convenience of this benefaction. Other apartments are fitted up for the reception of shipwrecked sailors; and bedding is provided for thirty, should such a number happen to be cast on shore at the same time. A constant patrol is left every stormy night along this tempestuous coast, for above eight miles, the length of the manor, by which means numbers of lives have been preserved; many poor wretches are often found on the shore in a state of insensibility; but by timely relief are soon brought to themselves. It often happens that ships strike in such a manner on the rocks as to be capable of relief, in case numbers of people could be suddenly assembled for that purpose. A cannon\* is fixed on top of the tower which is fired once, if the accident happens in such a quarter, twice, if in ano-

\* This cannon once belonged to a Dutch Frigate of forty guns; which with all the crew was lost opposite to the castle about sixty years ago. Pennant wrote the above in the year 1769.

ther ; and thrice, if in such a place. By these signals the country people are directed to the spot they are to fly to, and by this means frequently preserve, not only the crew, but even the vessel: for machines of different kinds are always in readiness to heave the ships out of their perilous situations. In a word all the schemes of this worthy trustee have a humane and useful tendency ; he seems as if selected from his brethren for the same purposes as Spencer tells us the first of his seven beadsmen in the house of holiness was.

“ The first of them that eldest was and best  
 Of all the house had charge and government  
 As guardian and steward of the rest :  
 His office was to give entertainment  
 And lodging unto all that came and went ;  
 Not unto such as could him feast againe,  
 And doubly quit for that he on them spent ;  
 But such as want of harbour did constraine,  
 Those for God’s sake his duty was to entertaine.”

“ This castle was first built by Ida King of the Northumbrians, but according to the conjecture of an antiquarian I met with

there, on the site of a Roman Fortrefs. It had been of great strength. The hill it is founded on is excessively steep on all sides and accessible only by flights of steps on the S. East side. The ruins are still considerable, but many of them now filled with sand, caught up by the winds, which rage here with great violence, and carried to very distant places." Its apposite beauties will apologise, I trust, for subjoining the following Sonnet upon Bamborough Castle, from the interesting pen of Bowles.

*Sonnet written at Bamborough, by the Revd. W. Lisle Bowles.*

" Ye holy towers that shade the wave worn steep ;  
 " Long may ye rear your aged brows sublime,  
 " Tho' hurrying silent by relentless Time  
 " Assail you and the winter whirlwind's sweep.  
 " For far from blazing Grandeur's crowded halls,  
 " Here Charity hath fixed her chosen seat,  
 " Oft list'ning tearful when the wild winds beat  
 " With hollow bodings round your ancient walls ;  
 " And Pity at the dark and stormy hour  
 " Of midnight, when the moon is hid on high,  
 " Keeps her lone watch, upon the topmast tow'r,  
 " And turns her ear to each expiring cry,  
 " Blest if her aid some fainting wretch might save.  
 " And snatch him cold and speechless from the wave.

If ever the *will* of an individual was entitled to poetic notice, it must be acknowledged, that of the patriotic Bishop of Durham has a claim to the harmony of numbers, of those finished lines and peculiarly happy figures, which afford at once a testimony of the price we ought to set upon the institution, and its founder.

It is scarcely necessary to observe that the idea of making the Mortello towers useful in a *double* point of view was suggested by the analogy in the site of these and that of Bambro' Castle ; as was that of the advantages to be derived from a general adoption of the Life Boat, by its long acknowledged merits, and by the late heart rending accounts of the severe losses sustained upon our coasts.

I have to add another observation before I leave this subject ; unless I am much misinformed, the signals of an approaching enemy are made by lighting fires ; thus the two signals, that is, of a rash enemy or tempest driven friends, would not clash, or by being

indeterminate, occasion indecision: but even supposing this was not the case, the signal guns could not be attended with any injurious effects; for should, by any accident, the notice of an approaching foe be mistaken for, and misconstrued into a signal of distress, its only consequences would be, to collect a number of able bodied men upon the coast, who if their laudable alacrity to save, should be defeated in its end, would still have an opportunity of being serviceable to, by repelling the invaders of their country.

In refutation of the groundless cavils which selfish extravagance or penurious avarice are always ready to urge against any measure, calling upon them to part with any portion of their pelf, I would hold out the proposition of making the charity a national concern, which by dividing, and of course diminishing the individual aid required, ought to lull to rest their apprehensions. The ability of carrying such a *desideratum* into effect, must rest with those,

who, with power and authority combine philanthropy and patriotic zeal. The means of upholding it can arise only from a general fund, supported by every county inland as well as those bounded by the element whose terrors it is intended to assuage. Should, after an experiment, such a mode be found incompetent, justice to their constituents, as well as to the community at large, should urge the Guardians of our state to enforce a contribution upon a maritime nation, for the preservation of that class of people, who as they hazard their lives for the public weal, have a reciprocal right to look for every possible protection in return.

Merchants ! Soldiers ! Sailors ! who unite with your professional a legislative character, ye are called upon by interest, but still more by duty and humanity, to consider in your latter character, those, from whom, you, Ye Merchants, have derived the blessings of commerce, to whom you owe your present honourable exaltation; and you, ye commanders, both naval and military, those

with whom ye have bled, perhaps, for your country, in the former.

The Life Boat once established, it would be the duty as I am convinced it would be the inclination of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to give directions to the respective commanders of the sea fencibles, to superintend the necessary arrangements, and conduct of the Life-boat ; and to stimulate the Officers to emulation in their duties, by bringing to their recollections the possibility of their exertions being demanded in favour of their former ship-mates and brave failors, who have participated with them the dangers of the battle, and the still greater perils of the deep.

In the next place I would appeal to the merchants in this commercial country, whose honourable speculations in trade so much depend upon the safety of the failor, who, with a hardihood peculiar to himself braves the dangers of the winds and waves to bring home to his employer the rich

confidence is added to the hopes of booty, indifference will give place to exertion: convinced that this mode of argument will hold good with the majority of the *crowd*, I would propose the holding out rewards proportioned to the merits of the candidates, making a compromise between benevolent and mercenary motives.

A paragraph of Freeman's Journal mentions the death of an inhabitant of Dunleary, who fell a just victim to his avidity for plunder: from this circumstance, without assuming too much, may be deduced the following conclusion; that if individuals can be induced (from the often fallible hope of plunder,) to brave all dangers in the roughest weather, in an open boat, liable too, in case of discovery, to be overtaken by the violated justice of their country, we may take it for granted, that the certainty of remuneration, together with a diminution of danger (circumstances which would undoubtedly attend the adoption of the Life-boat) would

save our feelings, nay our consciences, many a bitter pang, by rendering infrequent, if not totally preventing the loss of *life*, at least, upon the verge of land, the proximity of which too often mocks, and embitters the last moments of the poor mariner, and by its delusory promises but adds to his terrific doom.

If it has been deemed necessary, upon the score of policy, to recompence by a bounty from the parish, the firemen, who bring the first engine to the spot where it is required, to the house in flames, when the danger, as far as life is concerned, bears no comparison to that consequent to a wreck, where hundreds as we have lately witnessed, have been in one moment engulfed; if such I say is the result of the comparison between the calamities, between events, equally lamentable in fact, though not in consequence, surely there can be no diversity of opinion as to the urgent necessity in the more important, of following, in

the system of reward, the example of the less important instance. Economy one would imagine ought to urge the mercantile world independent of every other consideration to promote and establish a fund, which, at the same time, that it was necessary to the preservation of men with whom they ought to have no separate interests, might be attended with a secondary, but still material benefit, and conduce to the saving of the cargo; \* since the same persons

\* The following extracts from the Evening-mail are strong examples of what may be done by a happy combination of resolution with nautical skill. "The late dreadful gales drove the Danish 74 gun ship *Fuen* from the North Foreland to Yarmouth Roads, she tailed on the Corton Sand and would indisputably have been lost, had not Admiral Douglass (the Port Admiral at Yarmouth) sent off a lighter with anchors and cables previous to her driving, he having perceived her to be in a dangerous situation. Seyeren another Danish 74, was also saved by the same anticipation. The former had above 800 people on board and is laden with brass ordnance and knees, the latter laden with copper, cordage &c. We are informed that the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty have so much approved of Adml. Douglas's proceedings that they have ordered a vessel agreeable to his own plan, to be stationed there for the purpose of taking anchors and cables

after attaining the first object might be employed, in cases where such a thing was practicable, in a second, in *saving*, and where that was past recovery, in *guarding* the wreck against the depredations of the worst species of banditti ; depredations, nine

to vessels in distress, and to be at the disposal of the Admiral, on whose indefatigable attention and humanity every reliance may be placed. His majesty's ships as well as merchant vessels, will derive much benefit from this measure and particularly ships trading to the Baltic.

Gardenstown (Banffshire) November 7th. During the whole of Tuesday last, we had an excessive gale here from the Northward and a very heavy sea in consequence, about four P. M. descried a sail in contact with that bold promontory called Crovie-head about two miles to the Eastward of this port. Knowing it impossible for the vessel to clear the shore and the extremely critical situation of her crew under such circumstances, on this rocky coast, her motions were watched by a number of spectators with heart-felt anxiety ; when Captains James Nicoll and Wood, having animated three other seamen to join them determined on the humane, but hazardous enterprise of proceeding in a fishing boat to her assistance. Before this laudable purpose could be effected, however, the vessel, which had providentially been conducted in the very safest track went aground (the tide half back) on the West side of the channel leading to the harbour. Our adventurers then boarded and found her to be the *Venus* of Aberdeen, Captain Rogers, with a valuable cargo of

“Argosies” entrusted to his care; and which he executes with patience and fortitude unexampled though surrounded by a thousand dangers. Behold him now his heart throbbing with feelings the most interesting, impatient to embrace again his wife and family, to share with them the comforts of his hard earned bread; just as he anticipates the joy of home, fondly expecting the heart felt bliss which he vainly thinks within a few hours reach—the storm arises—on his own coast arises!—see him now exerting every nerve; baffled by the contending elements he makes known his approaching danger, by the only means now left him, by his signal guns; still clinging to the hope that help is near; what bitter agony his lot when now he sees *that* hope is vain—despair succeeds! succour is, alas! impossible, they who from humanity would have willingly encountered every thing but certain death to save him, are deterred from making, by despair of succeeding in the at-

tempt. How often, alas! how *recently* has such a scene been realized; when every gale came loaded, with the agonizing cries of horror, rendered doubly terrible to those who heard them, by the sad conviction of the impossibility of listening to the dictates of that feeling, which as it is the prerogative, ought to be the chief pride of man.\*

Perhaps it may be said, that to the vulgar mind, where selfishness is not counteracted by education, or fear by any other feeling than necessity and self interest, feats of chivalry are not to be expected; and that rewards are absolutely necessary to stimulate compassion: but that when reason for

\* How much this feeling properly seconded and directed might accomplish may be seen by the following paragraphs taken from an English news-paper. "Wednesday seven-night the brig *Cornelia*, of Newcastle from Liverpool, was wrecked on the Herd sand in entering the Tyne. The sea was frightfully high, nothing to be seen but broken water, yet the Northumberland *Life boat as usual* saved the whole of the crew. "Again" The Lark, Cook, from Yarmouth, laden with barley, bound to Shetland, was wrecked at Barmstone yesterday se'nnight. The crew were fortunately saved by the Life-boat."

times out of ten, preceded by murder of the *foulest* kind, of those helpless and half exhausted victims, who in the act of claiming mercy, (misery's right,) meet the immolating stroke of the assassin; spared by the rocks and waves, who find in obdurate man a more inveterate foe.

When it is recollected that the few lives that were saved out of the Prince of Wales Packet, lost at Dunleary, owed their safety to a common boat which they had on board, we may infer that the ready assistance of a Life-boat manned with energetic hands would have rescued the remainder of the passengers, in number a hundred and twen-

Merchants' goods, bound for Cromarty. After having landed the crew, who were very much exhausted, and one young lady, passenger, they ceased not in their exertions for the property; till, by a most judicious arrangement of ropes from the vessel, and strong purchases on the east quay, aided by all the active population of the place, they succeeded in bringing her safe into the harbour at high water, an event which could not have been anticipated by the most sanguine spectator, considering that the storm had increased to a hurricane and the sea rising mountains high, and the night unusually dark and awful."

ty; Soldiers!—who in thus perishing, fell victims to an improvident and impolitic country.

Before I take leave of my subject I shall candidly acknowledge my inability to do it justice; and as some sort of apology may be expected for intruding my hasty opinions upon the public, I shall confess and hope for pardon upon the consideration of my motives. In the first place, I felt the redoubled interest with which the subject would be canvassed, whilst yet the topic of conversation and general regret; in the next, I had a strong inducement in the *wish*, the *hope*, that the measure recommended might be thought worthy of other pens more capable of displaying its *momentous* nature.

For my own part, I shall consider my reward as ample, if attended with so beneficial a consequence; and recur with sincere delight to the moment when induced to give it my humble considerations: should these, however, be unattended with

the desired result, I can only regret the inadequacy of my endeavours, to rouse the *slumbering* embers of Philanthropy.

Spirit of the immortal Howard !—hover o'er our Senators ; whisper to their souls the *importance* of the theme ; teach them to canvass the subject *in* their minds, and *with* their tongues : And do thou, Eloquence, dwell with thy persuasive powers on the lips of him, who, instigated by his heart, shall start, promote, and eulogize the Institution.

“ Nor shall the spirit of those deeds inspire,  
“ As fades the feeble spark of vital fire,  
“ But beam abroad, and cheer with lustre mild  
“ Humanity's remotest prospects wild,  
“ Till this frail orb shall from its sphere be hurl'd,  
“ Till final ruin hush the murm'ring world,  
“ And all its sorrows at the awful blast  
“ Of the Archangel's trump, be but as shadows past.

*Bowles's grave of Howard.*

Shade of misery's friend !—place before those candidates in mercy's cause the deathless meed in store, for active and successful

virtue; for those “ who guide the wildered  
in the waves and bring them out of tempest  
into port. ”

Wives, Parents, Children, shall monu-  
ment those actions in their hearts, whilst a  
grateful nation shall record them in their  
annals.

“ What the bright reward they gain?  
“ The grateful mem’ry of the good.  
“ Sweet is the breath of vernal show’r,  
“ The bee’s collected treasures sweet,  
“ Sweet music’s melting fall, but sweeter yet  
“ The still small voice of gratitude.

GRAY.