

Lionel Lincoln

Lionel Lincoln

by

James Fenimore Cooper

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Lionel Lincoln, by James Fenimore Cooper

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TO
WILLIAM JAY,
OF
BEDFORD, WESTCHESTER,
ESQUIRE.

* * * * *

MY DEAR JAY,

An unbroken intimacy of four-and-twenty years may justify the present use of your name. A man of readier wit than myself might, on such a subject, find an opportunity of saying something clever, concerning the exalted services of your father. No weak testimony of mine, however, can add to a fame that belongs already to posterity; and one like myself, who has long known the merits, and has so often experienced the friendship of the son, can find even better reasons for offering these Legends to your notice.

Very truly and constantly,

Yours,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE

THE manner in which the author became possessed of the private incidents, the characters, and the descriptions contained in these tales, will, most probably, ever remain a secret between himself and his publisher. That the leading events are true, he presumes it is unnecessary to assert; for should inherent testimony, to prove that important point, be wanting, he is conscious that no anonymous declaration can establish its credibility.

But while he shrinks from directly yielding his authorities, the author has no hesitation in furnishing all the negative testimony in his power.

In the first place, then, he solemnly declares that no unknown man or woman has ever died in his vicinity, of whose effects he has become the possessor, by either fair means or foul. No dark-looking stranger, of a morbid temperament, and of inflexible silence, has ever transmitted to him a single page of illegible manuscript. Nor has any landlord furnished him with materials to be worked up into a book, in order that the profits might go to discharge the arrearages of a certain consumptive lodger, who made his exit so unceremoniously as to leave the last item in his account, his funeral charges.

He is indebted to no garrulous tale-teller for beguiling the long winter evenings; in ghosts he has no faith; he never had a vision in his life; and he sleeps too soundly to dream.

He is constrained to add, that in no "puff," "squib," "notice," article," or "review," whether in daily, weekly, monthly, or quarterly publication, has he been able to find a single hint that his humble powers could improve. No one regrets this fatality more than himself; for these writers generally bring a weight of imagination to their several tasks, that, properly improved, might secure the immortality of any book, by rendering it unintelligible.

He boldly asserts that he has derived no information from any of the learned societies—and without fear of contradiction; for why should one so obscure be the exclusive object of their favors!

Notwithstanding he occasionally is seen in that erudite and abstemious association, the "Bread-and-Cheese Lunch," where he is elbowed by lawyers, doctors, jurists, poets, painters, editors, congressmen, and authors of every shade and qualification, whether metaphysical, scientific, or imaginative; he avers that he esteems the lore which is there culled, as far too sacred to be used in any work less dignified than actual history.

Of the colleges it is necessary to speak with reverence; though truth possesses claims even superior to gratitude. He shall dispose of them by simply saying, that they are entirely innocent of all his blunders; the little they bestowed having long since been forgotten. He has stolen no images from the deep, natural poetry of Bryant; no pungency from the wit of Halleck; no felicity of expression from the richness of Percival; no satire from the caustic pen of Paulding; no periods nor humor from Irving; nor any high finish from the attainments exhibited by Verplanck.

At the "*soirées*" and "*coteries des bas blues*" he did think he had obtained a prize, in the dandies of literature who haunt them. But experience and analysis detected his error; as they proved these worthies unfit for any better purpose than that which their own instinct had already dictated.

He has made no impious attempt to rob Joe Miller of his jokes; the sentimentalists of their pathos; or the newspaper Homers of their lofty aspirations.

His presumption has not even imagined the vivacity of the Eastern States; he has not analyzed the homogeneous character of the Middle; and he has left the South in the undisturbed possession of all their saturnine wit.

In short, he has pilfered from no black-letter book, or sixpenny pamphlet; his grandmother unnaturally refused her assistance to his labors; and, to speak affirmatively, for once, he wishes to live in peace, and hopes to die in the fear of God.

CHAPTER I

"My weary soul they seem to soothe,
And, redolent of joy and youth,
To breathe a second spring."

—GRAY.

NO American can be ignorant of the principal events that induced the Parliament of Great Britain, in 1774, to lay those impolitic restrictions on the port of Boston which so effectually destroyed the trade of the chief town in her western colonies. Nor should it be unknown to any American how nobly, and with what devotedness to the great principles of the controversy, the inhabitants of the adjacent town of Salem refused to profit by the situation of their neighbors and fellow-subjects. In consequence of these impolitic measures of the English government, and of the laudable unanimity among the capitalists of the times, it became a rare sight to see the canvas of any other vessels than such as wore the pennants of the king, whitening the forsaken waters of Massachusetts Bay.

Towards the decline of a day in April, 1775, however, the eyes of hundreds had been fastened on a distant sail, which was seen rising from the bosom of the waves, making her way along the forbidden track, and steering directly for the mouth of the proscribed haven. With that deep solicitude in passing events which marked the period, a large group of spectators was collected on Beacon Hill, spreading from its conical summit far down the eastern declivity, all gazing intently on the object of their common interest. In so large an assemblage, however, there were those who were excited by very different feelings, and indulging in wishes directly opposite to each other. While the decent, grave, but wary citizen was endeavoring to conceal the bitterness of the sensations which soured his mind, under the appearance of a cold indifference, a few gay young men, who mingled in the throng, bearing about their persons the trappings of their martial profession, were loud in their exultations, and hearty in their congratulations on the prospect of hearing from their distant homes and absent friends. But the long, loud rolls of the drums, ascending on the evening air, from the adjacent common, soon called these idle spectators, in a body, from the spot, when the hill was left to the quiet possession of those who claimed the strongest right to its enjoyment. It was not, however, a period for open and unreserved communications. Long before the mists of evening had succeeded the shadows thrown from the setting sun, the hill was entirely deserted; the remainder of the spectators having descended from the eminence, and held their several courses, singly, silent, and thoughtful, towards the rows of dusky roofs that covered the lowland, along the eastern side of the peninsula.

Notwithstanding this appearance of apathy, rumor—which, in times of great excitement, ever finds means to convey its whisperings, when it dare not bruit its information aloud—was busy in circulating the unwelcome intelligence, that the stranger was the first of a fleet, bringing stores and reinforcements to an army already too numerous, and too confident of its power, to respect the law. No tumult or noise succeeded this unpleasant annunciation, but the doors of the houses were sullenly closed, and the windows darkened, as if the people intended to express their dissatisfaction, alone, by these silent testimonials of their disgust.

In the meantime the ship had gained the rocky entrance to the harbor, where, deserted by the breeze, and met by an adverse tide, she lay inactive, as if conscious of the unwelcome reception she must receive. The fears of the inhabitants of Boston had, however, exaggerated the danger; for the vessel, instead of exhibiting the confused and disorderly throng of licentious soldiery which would have crowded a transport, was but thinly people, and her orderly decks were cleared of every incumbrance that could interfere with the comfort of those she did contain. There was an appearance in the arrangements of her external accommodations that would have indicated to an observant eye that she carried those who claimed the rank or possessed the means of making others contribute largely to their comforts. The few seamen who navigated the ship lay extended on different portions of the vessel, watching the lazy sails as they flapped against the masts, or indolently bending their looks on the placid waters of the bay; while several menials, in livery, crowded around a young man who was putting his eager inquiries to the pilot, that had just boarded the vessel off the Graves. The dress of this youth was studiously neat, and from the excessive pains bestowed on its adjustment, it was obviously deemed, by its wearer, to be in the height of the prevailing customs. From the place where this inquisitive party stood, nigh the main-mast, a wide sweep of the quarter-deck was untenanted; but nearer to the spot where the listless seaman hung idly over the tiller of the ship, stood a being of altogether different mould and fashion. He was a man who would have seemed in the very extremity of age, had not his quick, vigorous steps, and the glowing, rapid glances from his eyes, as he occasionally paced the deck, appeared to deny the usual indications of many years. His form was bowed, and attenuated nearly to emaciation. His hair, which fluttered a little wildly around his temples, was thin, and silvered to the whiteness of at least eighty winters. Deep furrows, like the lines of great age and long endured cares united, wrinkled his hollow cheeks, and rendered the bold, haughty outline of his prominent features still more remarkable. He was clad in a simple and somewhat tarnished suit of modest gray, which bore about it the ill-concealed marks of long and neglected use. Whenever he turned his piercing look from the shores, he moved swiftly along the deserted quarter-deck, and seemed entirely engrossed with the force of his own thoughts, his lips moving rapidly, though no sounds were heard to issue from a mouth habitually silent. He was under the influence of one of those sudden impulses in which the body, apparently, sympathized so keenly with the restless activity of the mind, when a young man

ascended from the cabin, and took his stand among the interested and excited gazers at the land, on the upper deck. The age of this gentleman might have been five-and-twenty. He wore a military cloak, thrown carelessly across his form, which in addition to such parts of his dress as were visible through its open folds, sufficiently announced that his profession was that of arms. There was an air of ease and high fashion gleaming about his person, though his speaking countenance at times seemed melancholy, if not sad. On gaining the deck, this young officer, encountering the eyes of the aged and restless being who trod its planks, bowed courteously before he turned away to the view, and in his turn became deeply absorbed in studying its fading beauties.

The rounded heights of Dorchester were radiant with the rays of the luminary that had just sunk behind their crest, and streaks of paler light were playing along the waters, and gilding the green summits of the islands which clustered across the mouth of the estuary. Far in the distance were to be seen the tall spires of the churches, rising out of the deep shadows of the town, with their vanes glittering in the sunbeams, while a few rays of strong light were dancing about the black beacon, which reared itself high above the conical peak, that took its name from the circumstance of supporting this instrument of alarms. Several large vessels were anchored among the islands and before the town, their dark hulls at each moment becoming less distinct through the haze of evening, while the summits of their long lines of masts were yet glowing with the marks of day. From each of these sullen ships, from the low fortification which rose above a small island deep in the bay, and from various elevations in the town itself, the broad silky folds of the flag of England were yet waving in the currents of the passing air. The young man was suddenly aroused from gazing at this scene by the quick reports of the evening guns, and while his eyes were yet tracing the descent of the proud symbols of the British power from their respective places of display, he felt his arm convulsively pressed by the hand of his aged fellow passenger.

"Will the day ever arrive," said a low, hollow voice at his elbow, "when those flags shall be lowered, never to rise again in this hemisphere?"

The young soldier turned his quick eyes to the countenance of the speaker, but bent them instantly in embarrassment on the deck, to avoid the keen, searching glance he encountered in the looks of the other. A long, and, on the part of the young man, a painful silence, succeeded this remark. At length the youth, pointing to the land, said,—

"Tell me, you who are of Boston, and must have known it so long, the names of all these beautiful places I see."

"And are you not of Boston, too?" asked his old companion.

"Certainly, by birth, but an Englishman by habit and education."

"Accursed be the habits, and neglected the education, which would teach a child to forget its parentage!" muttered the old man, turning suddenly, and walking away so rapidly as to be soon lost in the forward parts of the ship.

For several minutes longer the youth stood absorbed in his own musings, when, as if recollecting his previous purposes, he called aloud,—*"Meriton!"*

At the sounds of his voice the curious group around the pilot instantly separated, and the highly ornamented youth, before mentioned, approached the officer with a manner in which pert familiarity and fearful respect were peculiarly blended. Without regarding the air of the other, however, or indeed without even favoring him with a glance, the young soldier continued,—

"I desired you to detain the boat which boarded us, in order to convey me to the town, Mr. Meriton; see if it be in readiness."

The valet flew to execute this commission, and in an instant returned with a reply in the affirmative.

"But, sir," he continued, "you will never think of going in that boat, I feel very much assured, sir."

"Your assurance, Mr. Meriton, is not the least of your recommendations; why should I not?"

"That disagreeable old stranger has taken possession of it, with his mean, filthy bundle of rags; and—"

"And what? you must name a greater evil, to detain me here, than mentioning the fact that the only gentleman in the ship is to be my companion."

"Lord, sir!" said Meriton, glancing his eye upward in amazement: "but, sir, surely you know best as to gentility of behavior; but as to gentility of dress—"

"Enough of this," interrupted his master, a little angrily; "the company is such as I am content with; if you find it unequal to your deserts, you have my permission to remain in the ship until the morning; the presence of a coxcomb is by no means necessary to my comfort for one night."

Without regarding the mortification of his disconcerted valet, the young man passed along the deck to the place where the boat was in waiting. By the general movement among the indolent menials, and the profound respect with which he was attended by the master of the ship to the gangway, it was sufficiently apparent that, notwithstanding his youth, it was this gentleman whose presence had exacted those arrangements in the ship which have been mentioned. While all around him, however, were busy in facilitating the entrance of the officer into the boat, the aged stranger occupied its principal seat, with an air of deep abstraction, if not of cool indifference. A hint from the pliant Meriton, who had ventured to follow his master, that it would be more agreeable if he would relinquish his place, was

disregarded, and the youth took a seat by the side of the old man, with a simplicity of manner that his valet inwardly pronounced abundantly degrading. As if this humiliation were not sufficient, the young man, perceiving that a general pause had succeeded his own entrance, turned to his companion, and courteously inquired if he were ready to proceed. A silent wave of the hand was the reply, when the boat shot away from the vessel, leaving the ship steering for an anchorage in Nantasket.

The measured dash of the oars was uninterrupted by any voice, while, stemming the tide, they pulled laboriously up among the islands; but by the time they had reached the castle, the twilight had melted into the softer beams from a young moon, and, the surrounding objects becoming more distinct, the stranger commenced talking with that quick and startling vehemence which seemed his natural manner. He spoke of the localities with the vehemence and fondness of an enthusiast, and with the familiarity of one who had long known their beauties. His rapid utterance, however, ceased as they approached the naked wharves, and he sunk back gloomily in the boat, as if unwilling to trust his voice on the subject of his country's wrongs. Thus left to his own thoughts, the youth gazed with eager interest at the long ranges of buildings, which were now clearly visible to the eye, though with softer colors and more gloomy shadows. A few neglected and dismantled ships were lying at different points; but the hum of business, the forests of masts, and the rattling of wheels, which at that early hour should have distinguished the great mart of the colonies, were wanting. In their places were to be heard, at intervals, the sudden bursts of distant, martial music, the riotous merriment of the soldiery who frequented the taverns at the water's edge, or the sullen challenges of the sentinels from the vessels of war, as they vexed the progress of the few boats which the inhabitants still used in their ordinary pursuits.

"Here, indeed, is a change!" the young officer exclaimed, as they glided swiftly along this desolate scene; "even my recollections, young and fading as they are, recall the difference."

The stranger made no reply, but a smile of singular meaning gleamed across his wan features, imparting, by the moonlight, to their remarkable expression, a character of additional wildness. The officer was again silent, nor did either speak until the boat, having shot by the end of the long wharf, across whose naked boundaries a sentinel was pacing his measured path, inclined more to the shore, and soon reached the place of its destination.

Whatever might have been the respective feelings of the two passengers, at having thus reached in safety the object of their tiresome and protracted voyage, they were not expressed in language. The old man bared his silver locks, and, concealing his face with his hat, stood as if in deep mental thanksgiving at the termination of his toil, while his more youthful companion trod the wharf on which they landed with the air of a man whose emotions were too engrossing for the ordinary use of words.

"Here we must part, sir," the officer at length said; "but I trust the acquaintance, which has been thus accidentally formed between us, is not to be forgotten now there is an end to our common privations."

"It is not in the power of a man whose days, like mine, are numbered," returned the stranger, "to mock the liberality of his God, by any vain promises that must depend on time for their fulfilment. I am one, young gentleman, who has returned from a sad, sad pilgrimage, in the other hemisphere, to lay his bones in this, his native land; but should many hours be granted me, you will hear further of the man whom your courtesies and kindness have so greatly obliged."

The officer was sensibly affected by the softened but solemn manner of his companion, and pressed his wasted hand fervently as he answered,—

"Do; I ask it as a singular favor; I know not why, but you have obtained a command of my feelings that no other being ever yet possessed; and yet—'tis a mystery, 'tis like a dream! I feel that I not only venerate, but love you."

The old man stepped back, and held the youth at the length of his arm for a moment, while he fastened on him a look of glowing interest, and then, raising his hand slowly, he pointed impressively upward, and said,—

"'Tis from heaven, and for God's own purposes; smother not the sentiment, boy, but cherish it in your heart's core!"

The reply of the youth was interrupted by sudden and violent shrieks, that burst rudely on the stillness of the place, chilling the very blood of those who heard them, with their piteousness. The quick and severe blows of a lash were blended with the exclamations of the sufferer; and rude oaths, with hoarse execrations, from various voices, were united in the uproar, which appeared to be at no great distance. By a common impulse, the whole party broke away from the spot, and moved rapidly up the wharf in the direction of the sounds. As they approached the buildings, a group was seen collected around the man, who thus broke the charm of the evening by his cries, interrupting his wailings with their ribaldry, and encouraging his tormentors to proceed.

"Mercy, mercy, for the sake of the blessed God, have mercy, and don't kill Job!" again shrieked the sufferer; "Job will run your arr'nnds! Job is half-witted! Mercy on poor Job! O! you make his flesh creep!"

"I'll cut the heart from the mutinous knave," interrupted a hoarse, angry voice. "To refuse to drink the health of his majesty!"

"Job does wish him good health—Job loves the king—only Job don't love rum."

The officer had approached so nigh as to perceive that the whole scene was one of disorder and abuse, and pushing aside the crowd of excited and deriding soldiers, who composed the throng, he broke at once into the centre of the circle.

CHAPTER II

"They'll have me whipped for speaking;
Thou'lt have me whipped for lying;
And sometimes I'm whipped for holding my peace.
I had rather be any kind of a thing
Than a fool."
—*King Lear*.

"WHAT means this outcry?" demanded the young man, arresting the arm of an infuriated soldier, who was inflicting the blows; "by what authority is this man thus abused?"

"By what authority dare you to lay hands on a British grenadier?" cried the fellow, turning in his fury, and raising his lash against the supposed townsman. But, when, as the officer stepped aside to avoid the threatened indignity, the light of the moon fell full upon his glittering dress, through the opening folds of his cloak, the arm of the brutal soldier was held suspended in air, with the surprise of the discovery.

"Answer, I bid you," continued the young officer, his frame shaking with passion; "why is this man tormented, and of what regiment are ye?"

"We belong to the grenadiers of the brave 47th, your honor," returned one of the bystanders, in a humble, deprecating tone, "and we was just polishing this 'ere natural, because as he refuses to drink the health of his majesty."

"He's a scornful sinner, that don't fear his Maker," cried the man in duress, eagerly bending his face, down which big tears were rolling, towards his protector. "Job loves the king, but Job don't love rum!"

The officer turned away from the cruel spectacle, as he bid the men untie their prisoner. Knives and fingers were instantly put in requisition, and the man was liberated, and suffered to resume his clothes. During this operation; the tumult and bustle, which had so recently distinguished the riotous scene, were succeeded by a stillness that rendered the hard breathing of the sufferer painfully audible.

"Now, sirs, you heroes of the 47th!" said the young man, when the victim of their rage was again clad, "know you this button?" The soldier to whom this question was more particularly addressed, gazed at the extended arm, and, to his vast discomfiture, he beheld the magical number of his own regiment reposing on the well-known white facings that decorated the rich scarlet of the vestment. No one presumed to answer this appeal, and after an impressive silence of a few moments, he continued,—

"You are noble supporters of the well-earned fame of 'Wolfe's own!' fit successors to the gallant men who conquered under the walls of Quebec! Away with ye! tomorrow it shall be looked to."

"I hope your honor will remember he refused his majesty's health. I'm sure, sir, that if Colonel Nesbitt was here himself—"

"Dog! do you dare to hesitate! go, while you have permission to depart."

The disconcerted soldiery, whose turbulence had thus vanished as if by enchantment before the frown of their superior, slunk away in a body, a few of the older men whispering to their comrades the name of the officer who had thus unexpectedly appeared in the midst of them. The angry eye of the young soldier followed their retiring forms, while a man of them was visible; after which, turning to an elderly citizen, who, supported on a crutch, had been a spectator of the scene, he asked,—

"Know you the cause of the cruel treatment this poor man has received; or what in any manner has led to the violence?"

"The boy is weak," returned the cripple; "quite an innocent, who knows but little good, but does no harm. The soldiers have been carousing in yonder dram-shop, and they often get the poor lad in with them, and sport with his infirmity. If these sorts of doings ain't checked, I fear much trouble will grow out of them! Hard laws from t' other side of the water, and tarring and feathering on this, with gentlemen like Colonel Nesbitt at their head, will—"

"It is wisest for us, my friend, to pursue this subject no further," interrupted the officer. "I belong myself to 'Wolfe's own,' and will endeavor to see justice done in the matter; as you will credit when I tell you that I am a Boston boy. But, though a native, a long absence has obliterated the marks of the town from my memory; and I am at a loss to thread these crooked streets. Know you the dwelling of Mrs. Lechmere?"

"The house is well known to all in Boston," returned the cripple, in a voice sensibly altered by the information that he was speaking to a townsman. "Job, here, does but little else than run of errands, and he will show you the way, out of gratitude; won't you, Job?"

The idiot,—for the vacant eye and unmeaning, boyish countenance of the young man who had just been liberated, but too plainly indicated that he was to be included in that miserable class of human beings,—answered with a caution and reluctance that were a little remarkable, considering the recent circumstances.

"Ma'am Lechmere's! O! yes, Job knows the way, and could go there blindfolded, if—if—"

"If what, you simpleton?" exclaimed the zealous cripple.

"Why, if 'twas daylight."

"Blindfolded, and daylight! do but hear the silly child! Come, Job, you must take this gentleman to Tremont Street, without further words. 'Tis but just sundown, boy, and you can go there and be home in your bed before the Old South strikes eight!"

"Yes; that all depends on which way you go," returned the reluctant changeling. "Now, I know, neighbor Hopper, you couldn't go to Ma'am Lechmere's in an hour, if you went along Lynn Street, and so along Prince Street, and back through Snow Hill; and especially if you should stop any time to look at the graves on Copp's."

"Pshaw! the fool is in one of his sulks now, with his Copp's Hill, and the graves!" interrupted the cripple, whose heart had warmed to his youthful townsman, and who would have volunteered to show the way himself, had his infirmities permitted the exertion. "The gentleman must call the grenadiers back, to bring the child to reason."

"'Tis quite unnecessary to be harsh with the unfortunate lad," said the young soldier; "my recollections will probably aid me as I advance; and should they not, I can inquire of any passenger I meet."

"If Boston was what Boston has been, you might ask such a question of a civil inhabitant, at any corner," said the cripple; "but it's rare to see many of our people in the streets at this hour, since the massacre. Besides, it is Saturday night, you know; a fit time for these rioters to choose for their revelries! For that matter, the soldiers have grown more insolent than ever, since they have met that disappointment about the cannon down at Salem; but I need n't tell such as you what the soldiers are when they get a little savage."

"I know my comrades but indifferently well, if their conduct to-night be any specimen of their ordinary demeanor, sir," returned the officer; "but follow, Meriton; I apprehend no great difficulty in our path."

The pliant valet lifted the cloak-bag he carried, from the ground, and they were about to proceed, when the natural edged himself in a sidelong, slovenly manner, nigher to the gentleman, and looked earnestly up in his face for a moment, where he seemed to be gathering confidence to say, "Job will show the officer Ma'am Lechmere's, if the officer won't let the grannies catch Job afore he gets off the North End ag'in."

"Ah!" said the young man, laughing, "there is something of the cunning of a fool in that arrangement. Well, I accept the conditions; but beware how you take me to contemplate the graves by moonlight, or I shall deliver you not only to the grannies, but to the light infantry, artillery, and all."

With this good-natured threat, the officer followed his nimble conductor, after taking a friendly leave of the obliging cripple, who continued his admonitions to

the natural, not to wander from the direct route, while the sounds of his voice were audible to the retiring party. The progress of his guide was so rapid as to require the young officer to confine his survey of the narrow and crooked streets through which they passed, to extremely hasty and imperfect glances. No very minute observation, however, was necessary to perceive that he was led along one of the most filthy and inferior sections of the town; and where, notwithstanding his efforts, he found it impossible to recall a single feature of his native place to his remembrance. The complaints of Meriton, who followed close at the heels of his master, were loud and frequent, until the gentleman, a little doubting the sincerity of his intractable conductor, exclaimed,—

"Have you nothing better than this to show a townsman, who has been absent seventeen years, on his return? Pray let us go through some better, streets than this, if any there are in Boston which can be called better."

The lad stopped short, and looked up in the face of the speaker, for an instant, with an air of undisguised amazement, and then, without replying, he changed the direction of his route, and after one or two more deviations in his path, suddenly turning again, he glided up an alley, so narrow that the passenger might touch the buildings on either side of him. The officer hesitated an instant to enter this dark and crooked passage, but perceiving that his guide was already hid by a bend in the houses, he quickened his steps, and immediately regained the ground he had lost. They soon emerged from the obscurity of the place, and issued on a street of greater width.

"There!" said Job, triumphantly, when they had effected this gloomy passage, "does the king live in so crooked and narrow a street as that?"

"His majesty must yield the point in your favor," returned the officer.

"Ma'am Lechmere is a grand lady!" continued the lad, seemingly following the current of his own fanciful conceits, "and she would n't live in that alley for the world, though it is narrow, like the road to heaven, as old Nab says; I suppose they call it after the Methodies for that reason."

"I have heard the road you mention termed narrow, certainly, but it is also called *strait*," returned the officer, a little amused with the humor of the lad; "but forward, the time is slipping away, and we loiter."

Again Job turned, and moving onward, he led the way, with swift steps, along another narrow and crooked path, which, however, better deserved the name of a street, under the projecting stories of the wooden buildings which lined its sides. After following the irregular windings of their route for some distance, they entered a triangular area of a few rods in extent, where Job, disregarding the use of the narrow walk, advanced directly into the centre of the open space. Here he stopped once more, and turning his vacant face with an air of much seriousness

towards a building which composed one side of the triangle, he said, with a voice that expressed his own deep admiration,—

"There—that's the Old North did you ever see such a meetin'us' afore? does the king worship God in such a temple?"

The officer did not chide the idle liberties of the fool, for in the antiquated and quiet architecture of the wooden edifice, he recognized one of those early efforts of the simple, puritan builders, whose rude tastes have been transmitted to their posterity with so many deviations in the style of the same school, but so little of improvement. Blended with these considerations, were the dawns of revived recollections; and he smiled, as he recalled the time when he also used to look up at the building with feelings somewhat allied to the profound admiration of the idiot. Job watched his countenance narrowly, and easily mistaking its expression, he extended his arm towards one of the narrowest of the avenues that entered the area, where stood a few houses of more than common pretension.

"And there ag'in!" he continued; "there's places for you! stingy Tommy lived in the one with the pile-axters, and the flowers hanging to their tops; and see the crowns on them, too! stingy Tommy loved crowns, they say; but Province'us' was n't good enough for him, and he lived here—now they say he lives in one of the king's cupboards!"

"And who was stingy Tommy? and what right had he to dwell in Province House, if he would?"

"What right has any governor to live in Province'us'? because it's the king's, though the people paid for it!"

"Pray, sir, excuse me," said Meriton, from behind; "but do the Americans usually call their governors stingy Tommies?"

The officer turned his head at this vapid question from his valet, and perceived that he had been accompanied thus far by the aged stranger, who stood at his elbow, leaning on his staff, studying with close attention the late dwelling of Hutchinson, while the light of the moon fell, unobstructed, on the deep lines of his haggard face. During the first surprise of this discovery he forgot to reply, and Job took the vindication of his language into his own hands.

"To be sure they do—they call people by their right names," he said. "Insygn Peck is called Insygn Peck; and you call Deacon Winslow anything but Deacon Winslow, and see what a look he'll give you! and I am Job Pray, so called; and why shouldn't a governor be called Stingy Tommy, if he is a stingy Tommy?"

"Be careful how you speak lightly of the king's representative," said the young officer, raising his light cane with the affectation of correcting the changeling. "Forget you that I am a soldier?"

The idiot shrunk back a little, timidly, and then leering from under his sunken brow, he answered,—

"I heard you say you were a Boston boy."

The gentleman was about to make a playful reply, when the aged stranger passed swiftly before him, and took his stand at the side of the lad with a manner so remarkable for its earnestness that it entirely changed the current of his thoughts.

"The young man knows the ties of blood and country," the stranger muttered; "and I honor him!"

It might have been the sudden recollection of the danger of those allusions, which the officer so well understood, and to which his accidental association with the singular being who uttered them had begun to familiarize his ear, that induced the youth to resume his walk, silently, and in deep thought, along the street. By this movement he escaped observing the cordial grasp of the hand which the old stranger bestowed on the idiot, while he muttered a few more terms of commendation. Job took his station in front, and the whole party moved on again, though with less rapid strides. As the lad advanced deeper into the town he evidently wavered once or twice in his choice of streets, and the officer began to suspect that the changeling contemplated one of his wild circuits, to avoid the direct route to a house that he manifestly approached with great reluctance. Once or twice the young soldier looked about him, intending to inquire the direction of the first passenger he might see; but the quiet of deep night already pervaded the place, and not an individual, but those who accompanied him, appeared in the long ranges of streets they had passed. The air of the guide was becoming so dogged and hesitating that his follower had just determined to make an application at one of the doors, when they emerged from a dark, dirty, and gloomy street on an open space of much greater extent than the one they had so recently left. Passing under the walls of a blackened dwelling, Job led the way to the centre of a swinging bridge, which was thrown across an inlet from the harbor, that extended a short distance into the area, forming a shallow dock. Here he took his stand, and allowed the view of the surrounding objects to work its own effect on those he had conducted thither. The square was composed of rows of low, gloomy, and irregular houses, most of which had the appearance of being but little used. Stretching from the end of the basin, and a little on one side, a long, narrow edifice, ornamented with pilasters, perforated with arched windows, and surmounted by a humble cupola, reared its walls of brick under the light of the moon. The story which held the rows of silent, glistening windows, was supported on abutments and arches of the same material, through the narrow vista of which were to be seen the shambles of the common market-place. Heavy cornices of stone were laid above and beneath the pilasters, and something more than the unskilful architecture of the dwelling-houses they had passed was affected throughout the whole structure. While the officer gazed at this scene the idiot watched his countenance with a keenness

exceeding his usual observation, until, impatient at hearing no words of pleasure or of recognition, he exclaimed,—

"If you don't know Funnel Hall, you are no Boston boy!"

"But I do know Faneuil Hall, and I am a Boston boy," returned the amused gentleman. "The place begins to freshen on my memory, and I now recall the scenes of my childhood."

"This, then," said the aged stranger, "is the spot where liberty has found so many bold advocates!"

"It would do the king's heart good to hear the people talk in old Funnel, sometimes," said Job. "I was on the cornishes, and looked into the winders, the last town-meet-in'-da', and if there was soldiers on the common, there was them in the hall that did n't care for them!"

"All this is very amusing, no doubt," said the officer, gravely, "but it does not advance me a foot on my way to Mrs. Lechmere's."

"It is also instructing," exclaimed the stranger; "go on, child; I love to hear his simple feelings thus expressed they indicate the state of the public mind."

"Why," said Job, "they were plain-spoken, that's all; and it would be better for the king to come over and hear them; it would pull down his pride, and make him pity the people, and then he would n't think of shutting up Boston harbor. Suppose he should stop the water from coming in by the Narrows, why, we should get it by Broad Sound! and if it did n't come by Broad Sound, it would by Nantasket! He need n't think that the Boston folks are so dumb as to be cheated out of God's water by acts of Parliament, while old Funnel stands in the Dock Square!"

"Sirrah!" exclaimed the officer, a little angrily, "we have already loitered until the clocks are striking eight."

The idiot lost his animation, and lowered in his looks again, as he answered,—

"Well, I told neighbor Hopper there was more ways to Ma'am Lechmere's than straight forward; but everybody knows Job's business better than Job himself. Now you make me forget the road; let us go in and ask old Nab; she knows the way too well!"

"Old Nab! you wilful dolt! who is Nab, and what have I to do with any but yourself?"

"Everybody in Boston knows Abigail Pray."

"What of her?" asked the startling voice of the stranger; "what of Abigail Pray, boy? is she not honest?"

"Yes, as poverty can make her," returned the natural, gloomily; "now the king has said there shall be no goods but tea sent to Boston, and the people won't have the

bohea, it's easy living rent free. Nab keeps her huckster stuff in the old ware'us', and a good place it is, too. Job and his mother have each a room to sleep in, and they say the king and queen have n't more!"

While he was speaking, the eyes of his listeners were drawn by his gestures towards the singular edifice to which he alluded. Like most of the others adjacent to the square, it was low, old, dirty, and dark. Its shape was triangular, a street bounding it on each side, and its extremities were flanked by as many low hexagonal towers, which terminated, like the main building itself, in high pointed roofs, tiled, and capped with rude ornaments. Long ranges of small windows were to be seen in the dusky walls, through one of which the light of a solitary candle was glimmering, the only indication of the presence of life about the silent and gloomy building.

"Nab knows Ma'am Lechmere better than Job," continued the idiot, after a moment's pause, "and she will know whether Ma'am Lechmere will have Job whipped for bringing company on Saturday night, though they say she's so full of scoffery as to talk, drink tea, and laugh on that night, just the same as any other time."

"I will pledge myself to her courteous treatment," the officer replied, beginning to be weary of the fool's delay.

"Let us see this Abigail Pray," cried the aged stranger, suddenly seizing Job by the arm, and leading him, with a sort of irresistible power, towards the walls of the building, through one of the low doors of which they immediately disappeared.

Thus left on the bridge, with his valet, the young officer hesitated a single instant how to act; but yielding to the secret and powerful interest which the stranger had succeeded in throwing around all his movements and opinions, he bade Meriton await his return, and followed his guide and the old man into the cheerless habitation of the former. On passing the outer door he found himself in a spacious but rude apartment, which, from its appearance, as well as from the few articles of heavy but valueless merchandise it now contained, would seem to have been used once as a storehouse. The light drew his steps towards a room in one of the towers, where, as he approached its open door, he heard the loud, sharp tones of a woman's voice exclaiming,—

"Where have you been, graceless, this Saturday night? tagging at the heels of the soldiers, or gazing at the men-of-war, with their ungodly fashions of music and revelry at such a time, I dare to say! and you knew that a ship was in the bay, and that Madam Lechmere had desired me to send her the first notice of its arrival. Here have I been waiting for you to go up to Tremont Street since sundown, with the news, and you are out of call,—you, that know so well who it is she expects!"

"Don't be cross to Job, mother, for the grannies have been cutting his back with cords till the blood runs! Ma'am Lechmere! I do believe, mother, that Ma'am

Lechmere has moved; for I've been trying to find her house this hour, because there's a gentleman who landed from the ship wanted Job to show him the way."

"What means the ignorant boy?" exclaimed his mother.

"He alludes to me," said the officer, entering the apartment; "I am the person, if any, expected by Mrs. Lechmere, and have just landed from the Avon, of Bristol; but your son has led me a circuitous path, indeed; at one time he spoke of visiting the graves on Copp's Hill."

"Excuse the ignorant and witless child, sir," exclaimed the matron, eyeing the young man keenly through her spectacles; "he knows the way as well as to his own bed, but' he is wilful at times. This will be a joyful night in Tremont Street! So handsome, and so stately, too! Excuse me, young gentleman," she added, raising the candle to his features with an evident unconsciousness of the act, "he has the sweet smile of the mother, and the terrible eye of his father! God forgive us all our sins, and make us happier in another world than in this place of evil and wickedness!" As she muttered the latter words, the woman set aside her candle with an air of singular agitation. Each syllable, notwithstanding her secret intention, was heard by the officer, across whose countenance there passed a sudden gloom that doubled its sad expression. He however said,—

"You know me and my family, then?"

"I was at your birth, young gentleman, and a joyful birth it was! but Madam Lechmere waits for the news, and my unfortunate child shall speedily conduct you to her door; she will tell you all that it is proper to know. Job, you Job, where are you getting to, in that corner? take your hat, and show the gentleman to Tremont Street directly; you know, my son, you love to go to Madam Lechmere's."

"Job would never go, if Job could help it," muttered the sullen boy; "and if Nab had never gone, 'twould have been better for her soul."

"Do you dare, disrespectful viper!" exclaimed the angry quean, seizing, in the violence of her fury, the tongs, and threatening the head of her stubborn child.

"Woman, peace!" said a voice behind.

The dangerous weapon fell from the nerveless hand of the vixen, and the hues of her yellow and withered countenance changed to the whiteness of death. She stood motionless for near a minute, as if riveted to the spot by a superhuman power, before she succeeded in muttering, "Who speaks to me?"

"It is I," returned the stranger, advancing from the shadow of the door into the dim light of the candle; "a man who has numbered ages, and who knows that as God loves him, so is he bound to love the children of his loins."

The rigid limbs of the woman lost their stability in a tremor that shook every fibre in her body; she sunk in her chair, and her eyes rolled from the face of one visitor

to that of the other, while her unsuccessful efforts to utter, denoted that she had temporarily lost the command of speech. Job stole to the side of the stranger, in this short interval, and looking up in his face piteously, he said,—

"Don't hurt old Nab; read that good saying to her out of the Bible, and she'll never strike Job with tongs ag'in; will you, mother? See her cup, where she hid it under the towel, when you came in! Ma'am Lechmere gives her the pi'son tea to drink, and then Nab is never so good to Job as Job would be to mother, if mother was half-witted, and Job was old Nab."

The stranger considered the moving countenance of the boy, while he pleaded thus earnestly in behalf of his mother, with marked attention, and when he had done, he stroked the head of the natural compassionately, and said,—

"Poor, imbecile child! God has denied the most precious of his gifts, and yet his Spirit hovers around thee; for thou canst distinguish between austerity and kindness, and thou hast learnt to know good from evil. Young man, see you no moral in this dispensation? nothing which says that Providence bestows no gift in vain; while it points to the difference between the duty that is fostered by indulgence, and that which is extorted by power?"

The officer avoided the ardent looks of the stranger, and after an embarrassing pause of a moment, he expressed his readiness, to the reviving woman, to depart on his way. The matron, whose eye had never ceased to dwell on the features of the old man, since her faculties were restored, arose slowly, and in a feeble voice directed her son to show the road to Tremont Street. She had acquired, by long practice, a manner that never failed to control, when necessary, the wayward humors of her child, and on the present occasion, the unwonted solemnity imparted to her voice by deep agitation, aided in effecting her object. Job quietly arose and prepared himself to comply. The manners of the whole party wore a restraint, which implied they had touched on feelings that it would be wiser to smother, and the separation would have been silent, though courteous, on the part of the youth, had he not perceived the passage still filled by the motionless form of the stranger.

"You will precede me, sir," he said; "the hour grows late, and you, too, may need a guide to find your dwelling."

"To me the streets of Boston have long been familiar," returned the old man. "I have noted the increase of the town as the parent notes the increasing stature of his child; nor is my love for it less than paternal. It is enough that I am within its limits, where liberty is prized as the greatest good; and it matters not under what roof I lay my head; this will do as well as another."

"This!" echoed the other, glancing his eyes over the miserable furniture, and scanning the air of poverty that pervaded the place; "why, this house has even less of comfort than the ship we have left!"

"It has enough for my wants," said the stranger, seating himself with composure, and deliberately placing his bundle by his side. "Go you to your palace in Tremont Street; it shall be my care that we meet again."

The officer understood the character of his companion too well to hesitate, and bending low, he quitted the apartment, leaving the other leaning his head on his cane, in absent musing, while the amazed matron was gazing at her unexpected guest with a wonder that was not unmingled with dread.

CHAPTER III

"From silver spouts the grateful liquors glide,
While China's earth receives the smoking tide;
At once they gratify their scent and taste,
And frequent cups prolong the rich repast."

—*Rape of the Lock.*

THE recollection of the repeated admonitions of his mother served to keep Job to his purpose. The instant the officer appeared, he held his way across the bridge, and after proceeding for a short distance farther along the water's edge, they entered a broad and well-built avenue, which lead from the principal wharf into the upper parts of the town. Turning up this street, the lad was making his way, with great earnestness, when sounds of high merriment and conviviality, breaking from an opposite building, caught his attention, and induced him to pause.

"Remember your mother's injunction," said the officer; "what see you in that tavern to stare at?"

"'Tis the British Coffee House," said Job, shaking his head; "yes, anybody might know that by the noise they make in't on Saturday night! See! it's filled now with Lord Boot's officers, flaring afore the windows, just like so many red devils; but to-morrow, when the Old South bell rings, they'll forget their Lord and Maker, every sinner among them!"

"Fellow!" exclaimed the officer, "this is trespassing too far; proceed to Tremont Street, or leave me, that I may, at once, procure another guide."

The changeling cast a look aside at the angry eye of the other, and then turned and proceeded, muttering so loud as to be overheard,—"Every boy that's raised in Boston knows how to keep Saturday night; and if you 're a Boston boy, you should love Boston ways."

The officer did not reply, and as they now proceeded with great diligence, they soon passed through King and Queen Streets, and entered that of Tremont. At a little distance from the turning, Job stopped, and pointing to a building near them, he said,—

"There; that house with the courtyard afore it; and the pile-axters, and the grand-looking door, that's Ma'am Lechmere's; and everybody says she's a grand lady; but I say it is a pity she is n't a better woman."

"And who are you, that ventures thus boldly to speak of a lady so much your superior?"

"I!" said the idiot, looking up simply into the face of his interrogator, "I am Job Pray, so called."

"Well, Job Pray, here is a crown for you. The next time you act as guide, keep more to your business. I tell you, lad, I offer a crown."

"Job don't love crowns; they say the king wears a crown, and it makes him flaunty and proud like."

"The disaffection must have spread itself wide indeed, if such as he refuse silver, rather than offend their principles!" muttered the officer to himself. "Here then is half a guinea, if you like gold better."

The natural continued kicking a stone about with his toes, without taking his hands from his pockets where he wore them ordinarily, with a sort of idle air, as he peered from under his slouched hat at this renewed offer, answering—

"You would n't let the grannies whip Job, and Job won't take your money."

"Well, boy, there is more of gratitude in that than a wiser man would always feel! Come, Meriton, I shall meet the poor fellow again, and will not forget this. I commission you to see the lad better dressed, in the beginning of the week."

"Lord, sir," said the valet, "if it is your pleasure, most certainly; but I declare I don't know in what style I should dress such a figure and countenance, to make anything of them!"

"Sir, sir!" cried the lad, running a few steps after the officer, who had already proceeded, "if you won't let the grannies beat Job any more, Job will always show you the way through Boston; and run your arr'nds too!"

"Poor fellow! well, I promise that you shall not be again abused by any of the soldiery. Good-night, my honest friend; let me see you again."

The idiot appeared satisfied with this assurance, for he immediately turned, and gliding along the street with a sort of shuffling gait, he soon disappeared round the first corner. In the meantime the young officer advanced to the entrance which led into the courtyard of Mrs. Lechmere's dwelling. The house was of bricks, and of an exterior altogether more pretending than most of those in the lower parts of the town. It was heavily ornamented in wood, according to the taste of a somewhat earlier day, and presented a front of seven windows in its two upper stories, those at the extremes being much narrower than the others. The lower floor had the same arrangement, with the exception of the principal door.

Strong lights were shining in many parts of the house, which gave it, in comparison with the gloomy and darkened edifices in its vicinity, an air of peculiar gayety and life. The rap of the gentleman was answered instantly by an old black, dressed in a

becoming, and what, for the colonies, was a rich livery. The inquiry for Mrs. Lechmere was successful, and the youth was conducted through a hall of some dimensions, into an apartment which opened from one of its sides. This room would be considered, at the present day, much too small to contain the fashion of a country town; but what importance it wanted in size, was amply compensated for in the richness and labor of its decorations. The walls were divided into compartments, by raised panel-work, beautifully painted with imaginary landscapes and ruins. The glittering, varnished surfaces of these pictures were burdened with armorial bearings, which were intended to illustrate the alliances of the family. Beneath the surbase were smaller divisions of panels, painted with various architectural devices; and above it rose, between the compartments, fluted pilasters of wood, with gilded capitals. A heavy wooden and highly ornamented cornice stretched above the whole, furnishing an appropriate outline to the walls. The use of carpets was at that time but little known in the colonies, though the wealth and station of Mrs. Lechmere would probably have introduced the luxury, had not her age, and the nature of the building, tempted her to adhere to, ancient custom. The floor, which shone equally with the furniture, was tessellated with small alternate squares of red-cedar and pine, and in the centre were the "salient lions" of Lechmere, attempted by the blazonry of the joiner. On either side of the ponderous and labored mantel were arched compartments, of plainer work, denoting use, the sliding panels of one of which, being raised, displayed a buffet groaning with massive plate. The furniture was old, rich, and heavy, but in perfect preservation. In the midst of this scene of colonial splendor, which was rendered as impressive as possible by the presence of numerous waxen lights, a lady, far in the decline of life, sat, in formal propriety, on a small settee. The officer had thrown his cloak into the hands of Meriton, in the hall, and as he advanced up the apartment, his form appeared in the gay dress of a soldier, giving to its ease and fine proportions the additional charm of military garnish. The hard, severe eye of the lady sensibly softened with pleased surprise, as it dwelt on his person for an instant after she arose to receive her guest; but the momentary silence was first broken by the youth, who said,—

"I have entered unannounced, for my impatience has exceeded my breeding, madam, while each step I have taken in this house recalls the days of my boyhood, and of my former freedom within its walls."

"My cousin Lincoln!" interrupted the lady, who was Mrs. Lechmere; "that dark eye, that smile, nay, your very step, announces you! I must have forgotten my poor brother, and one also who is still so dear to us, not to have known you a true Lincoln."

There was a distance in the manner of both, at meeting, which might easily have been imparted by the precise formula of the provincial school, of which the lady was so distinguished a member, but which was not sufficient to explain the sad expression that suddenly and powerfully blended with the young man's smile, as

she spoke. The change, however, was but momentary, and he answered courteously to her assurances of recognition,—

"I have long been taught to expect a second home in Tremont Street, and I find by your flattering remembrance of myself and parents, dear madam, that my expectations are justified."

The lady was sensibly pleased at this remark, and she suffered a smile to unbend her rigid brow, as she answered:

"A home, certainly, though it be not such a one as the heir of the wealthy house of Lincoln may have been accustomed to dwell in. It would be strange, indeed, could any allied to that honorable family forget to entertain its representative with due respect."

The youth seemed conscious that quite as much had now been said as the occasion required, as he raised his head from bowing respectfully on her hand, with the intention of changing the subject to one less personal, when his eye caught a glimpse of the figure of another, and more youthful female, who had been concealed, hitherto, by the drapery of a window-curtain. Advancing to this young lady, he said, with the quickness that rather betrayed his willingness to suspend further compliment,—

"And here I see one also, to whom I have the honor of being related, Miss Dynevor?"

"Though it be not my grandchild," said Mrs. Lechmere, "it is one who claims an equal affinity to you, Major Lincoln; it is Agnes Danforth, the daughter of my late niece."

"Twas my eye, then, and not my feelings, that were mistaken," returned the young soldier; "I hope this lady will admit my claim to call her cousin?"

A simple inclination of the body was the only answer he received, though she did not decline the hand which he offered with his salutations. After a few more of the usual expressions of pleasure, and the ordinary inquiries that succeed such meetings, the party became seated, and a more regular discourse followed.

"I am pleased to find you remember us then, cousin Lionel," said Mrs. Lechmere; "we have so little in this remote province that will compare with the mother country, I had feared no vestiges of the place of your birth could remain on your mind."

"I find the town greatly altered, it is true, but there are many places in it which I still remember, though certainly their splendor is a little diminished, in my eyes, by absence and a familiarity with other scenes."

"Doubtless an acquaintance with the British court will have no tendency to exalt our humble customs in your imagination; neither do we possess many buildings to