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SATANSTOE;

OR,

THE LITTLEPAGE MANUSCRIPTS.

A Tale of the Colony.

BY J. FENIMORE COOPER.

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"The only amaranthine flower on earth,  
is virtue: the only treasure, truth."—*Spenser*.  
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COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME.

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NEW EDITION.  
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NEW YORK:
STRINGER AND TOWNSEND

1856.

INV. 1898.

SATANSTOE.

Entered, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1845, by

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PREFACE.

EVERY chronicle of manners has a certain value. When customs are connected with principles, in their origin, development, or end, such records have a double importance; and it is because we think we see such a connection between the facts and incidents of the Littlepage Manuscripts, and certain important theories of our own time, that we give the former to the world.

It is perhaps a fault of your professed historian, to refer too much to philosophical agencies, and too little to those that are humbler. The foundations of great events, are often remotely laid in very capricious and uncalculated passions, motives, or impulses. Chance has usually as much to do with the fortunes of states, as with those of individuals; or, if there be calculations connected with them at all, they are the calculations of a power superior to any that exists in man.

We had been led to lay these Manuscripts before the world, partly by considerations of the above nature, and partly on account of the manner in which the two works we have named, "Satanstoe" and the "Chainbearer," relate directly to the great New York question of the day, ANTI-RENTISM; which question will be found to be pretty fully laid bare, in the third and last book of the series. These three works,

which contain all the Littlepage Manuscripts, do not form sequels to each other, in the sense of personal histories, or as narratives; while they do in that of principles. The reader will see that the early career, the attachment, the marriage, &c. of Mr. Cornelius Littlepage are completely related in the present book, for instance; while those of his son, Mr. Mordaunt Littlepage, will be just as fully given in the "Chain-bearer," its successor. It is hoped that the connection, which certainly does exist between these three works, will have more tendency to increase the value of each, than to produce the ordinary effect of what are properly called sequels, which are known to lessen the interest a narrative might otherwise have with the reader. Each of these three books has its own hero, its own heroine, and its own picture of manners, complete; though the latter may be, and is, more or less thrown into relief by its *pendants*.

We conceive no apology is necessary for treating the subject of anti-rentism with the utmost frankness. Agreeably to our views of the matter, the existence of true liberty among us, the perpetuity of the institutions, and the safety of public morals, are all dependent on putting down, wholly, absolutely, and unqualifiedly, the false and dishonest theories and statements that have been boldly advanced in connection with this subject. In our view, New York is, at this moment, much the most disgraced state in the Union, notwithstanding she has never failed to pay the interest on her public debt; and her disgrace arises from the fact that her laws are trampled under foot, without any efforts, at all commensurate with the object, being made to enforce them.

If *words* and *professions* can save the character of a community, all may yet be well; but if states, like individuals, are to be judged by their actions, and the "tree is to be known by its fruit," God help us!

For ourselves, we conceive that true patriotism consists in laying bare everything like public vice, and in calling such things by their right names. The great enemy of the race has made a deep inroad upon us, within the last ten or a dozen years, under cover of a spurious delicacy on the subject of exposing national ills; and it is time that they who have not been afraid to praise, when praise was merited, should not shrink from the office of censuring, when the want of timely warnings may be one cause of the most fatal evils. The great practical defect of institutions like ours, is the circumstance that "what is everybody's business, is nobody's business;" a neglect that gives to the activity of the rogue a very dangerous ascendancy over the more dilatory correctives of the honest man.

The first part of the document is a letter from the Secretary of the Board of Directors to the stockholders. It is dated the 1st day of January, 1880. The letter is addressed to the stockholders of the company and is signed by the Secretary.

The second part of the document is a report of the Board of Directors for the year ending on the 31st day of December, 1879. The report is signed by the President of the Board.

The third part of the document is a list of the names of the stockholders of the company as of the 31st day of December, 1879. The list is signed by the Secretary.

SATANSTOE.

CHAPTER I.

“Look you,

Who comes here: a young man, and an old, in solemn talk.”

As You Like It.

It is easy to foresee that this country is destined to undergo great and rapid changes. Those that more properly belong to history, history will doubtless attempt to record, and probably with the questionable veracity and prejudice that are apt to influence the labours of that particular muse; but there is little hope that any traces of American society, in its more familiar aspects, will be preserved among us, through any of the agencies usually employed for such purposes. Without a stage, in a national point of view at least, with scarcely such a thing as a book of memoirs that relate to a life passed within our own limits, and totally without light literature, to give us simulated pictures of our manners and the opinions of the day, I see scarcely a mode by which the next generation can preserve any memorials of the distinctive usages and thoughts of this. It is true, they will have traditions of certain leading features of the colonial society, but scarcely any records; and, should the next twenty years do as much as the last, towards substituting an entirely new race for the descendants of our own immediate fathers, it is scarcely too much to predict that even these traditions will be lost in the whirl and excitement of a throng of strangers. Under all the circumstances, therefore, I have come to a determination to make an effort, however feeble it may prove, to preserve some vestiges of household life in New York, at least; while I have endeavoured to stimulate certain friends in New Jersey, and farther south, to undertake similar tasks in those sections of the country. What success

will attend these last applications, is more than I can say ; but, in order that the little I may do myself shall not be lost for want of support, I have made a solemn request in my will, that those who come after me will consent to continue this narrative, committing to paper their own experience, as I have here committed mine, down as low at least as my grandson, if I ever have one. Perhaps, by the end of the latter's career, they will begin to publish books in America, and the fruits of our joint family labours may be thought sufficiently matured to be laid before the world.

It is possible that which I am now about to write will be thought too homely, to relate to matters much too personal and private, to have sufficient interest for the public eye ; but it must be remembered that the loftiest interests of man are made up of a collection of those that are lowly ; and, that he who makes a faithful picture of only a single important scene in the events of single life, is doing something towards painting the greatest historical piece of his day. As I have said before, the leading events of my time will find their way into the pages of far more pretending works than this of mine, in some form or other, with more or less of fidelity to the truth, and real events, and real motives ; while the humbler matters it will be my office to record, will be entirely overlooked by writers who aspire to enrol their names among the Tacituses of former ages. It may be well to say here, however, I shall not attempt the historical mood at all, but content myself with giving the feelings, incidents, and interests of what is purely private life, connecting them no farther with things that are of a more general nature, than is indispensable to render the narrative intelligible and accurate. With these explanations, which are made in order to prevent the person who may happen first to commence the perusal of this manuscript from throwing it into the fire, as a silly attempt to write a more silly fiction, I shall proceed at once to the commencement of my proper task.

I was born on the 3d May, 1737, on a neck of land, called Satanstoe, in the county of West Chester, and in the colony of New York ; a part of the widely extended empire that then owned the sway of His Sacred Majesty, George II., King of Great Britain, Ireland, and France ; Defender

of the Faith; and, I may add, the shield and panoply of the Protestant Succession; God bless him! Before I say anything of my parentage, I will first give the reader some idea of the *locus in quo*, and a more precise notion of the spot on which I happened first to see the light.

A "neck," in West Chester and Long Island parlance, means something that might be better termed a "head and shoulders," if mere shape and dimensions are kept in view. Peninsula would be the true word, were we describing things on a geographical scale; but, as they are, I find it necessary to adhere to the local term, which is not altogether peculiar to our county, by the way. The "neck" or peninsula of Satanstoe, contains just four hundred and sixty-three acres and a half of excellent West Chester land; and that, when the stone is hauled and laid into wall, is saying as much in its favour as need be said of any soil on earth. It has two miles of beach, and collects a proportionate quantity of sea-weed for manure, besides enjoying near a hundred acres of salt-meadow and sedges, that are not included in the solid ground of the neck proper. As my father, Major Evans Littlepage, was to inherit this estate from his father, Capt. Hugh Littlepage, it might, even at the time of my birth, be considered old family property, it having indeed, been acquired by my grandfather, through his wife, about thirty years after the final cession of the colony to the English by its original Dutch owners. Here we had lived, then, near half a century, when I was born, in the direct line, and considerably longer if we included maternal ancestors; here I now live, at the moment of writing these lines, and here I trust my only son is to live after me.

Before I enter into a more minute description of Satanstoe, it may be well, perhaps, to say a word concerning its somewhat peculiar name. The neck lies in the vicinity of a well-known pass that is to be found in the narrow arm of the sea that separates the island of Manhattan from its neighbour, Long Island, and which is called Hell Gate. Now, there is a tradition, that I confess is somewhat confined to the blacks of the neighbourhood, but which says that the Father of Lies, on a particular occasion, when he was violently expelled from certain roystering taverns in the New Netherlands, made his exit by this well-known dangerous

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