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James Allen, State Print.





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THE
CHAINBEARER;
OR,
THE LITTLEPAGE MANUSCRIPTS.

BY J. FENIMORE COOPER.

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O bid our vain endeavours cease  
Revivè the just designs of Greece:  
Return in all thy simple state,  
Confirm the tale her sons relate!—*Col'ns.*

L. V. S. 1856

COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME.

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NEW EDITION.
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NEW YORK:  
STRINGER AND TOWNSEND.

1856.

THE CHAIN-BEARER.

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Entered, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1845, by  
J. FENIMORE COOPER,  
in the clerk's office of the District Court for the Northern District  
of New York.

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PREFACE.

THE plot has thickened in the few short months that have intervened since the appearance of the first portion of our Manuscripts, and bloodshed has come to deepen the stain left on the country by the widespread and bold assertion of false principles. This must long since have been foreseen; and it is perhaps a subject of just felicitation, that the violence which has occurred was limited to the loss of a single life, when the chances were, and still are, that it will extend to civil war. That portions of the community have behaved nobly under this sudden outbreak of a lawless and unprincipled combination to rob, is undeniable, and ought to be dwelt on with gratitude and an honest pride; that the sense of right of much the larger portion of the country has been deeply wounded, is equally true; that justice has been aroused, and is at this moment speaking in tones of authority to the offenders, is beyond contradiction: but, while all this is admitted, and admitted not altogether without hope, yet are there grounds for fear, so reasonable and strong, that no writer who is faithful to the real interests of his country ought, for a single moment, to lose sight of them.

High authority, in one sense, or that of political power, has pronounced the tenure of a durable lease to be opposed to the spirit of the institutions! Yet these tenures existed when the institutions were formed, and one of the provisions of the institutions themselves guarantees the observance of the cove-

nants under which the tenures exist. It would have been far wiser, and much nearer to the truth, had those who coveted their neighbours' goods been told that, in their attempts to subvert and destroy the tenures in question, they were opposing a solemn and fundamental provision of law, and in so much opposing the institutions. The capital error is becoming prevalent, which holds the pernicious doctrine that this is a government of men, instead of one of principles. Whenever this error shall so far come to a head as to get to be paramount in action, the well-disposed may sit down and mourn over, not only the liberties of their country, but over its justice and its morals, even should men be nominally so free as to do just what they please.

As the Littlepage Manuscripts advance, we find them becoming more and more suited to the times in which we live. There is an omission of one generation, however, owing to the early death of Mr. Malbone Littlepage, who left an only son to succeed him. This son has felt it to be a duty to complete the series by an addition from his own pen. Without this addition, we should never obtain views of Satans-toe, Lilacs-bush, Ravensnest, and Mooseridge, in their present aspects; while with it, we may possibly obtain glimpses that will prove not only amusing but instructive.

There is one point on which, as editor of these Manuscripts, we desire to say a word. It is thought by a portion of our readers, that the first Mr. Littlepage who has written, Cornelius of that name, has manifested an undue asperity on the subject of the New England character. Our reply to this charge

is as follows: In the first place, we do not pretend to be answerable for all the opinions of those whose writings are submitted to our supervision, any more than we should be answerable for all the contradictory characters, impulses, and opinions that might be exhibited in a representation of fictitious characters, purely of our own creation. That the Littlepages entertained New York notions, and if the reader will, New York prejudices, may be true enough; but in pictures of this sort, even prejudices become facts that ought not to be altogether kept down. Then, New England has long since anticipated her revenge, glorifying herself and underrating her neighbours in a way that, in our opinion, fully justifies those who possess a little Dutch blood, in expressing their sentiments on the subject. Those who give so freely should know how to take a little in return; and that more especially, when there is nothing very direct or personal in the hits they receive. For ourselves, we have not a drop of Dutch or New England blood in our veins, and only appear as a bottle-holder to one of the parties in this set-to. If we have recorded what the Dutchman says of the Yankee, we have also recorded what the Yankee says, and that with no particular hesitation, of the Dutchman. We know that these feelings are by-gones; but our Manuscripts, thus far, have referred exclusively to the times in which they certainly existed, and that, too, in a force quite as great as they are here represented to be.

We go a little farther. In our judgment the false principles that are to be found in a large portion of the educated classes, on the subject of the relation between landlord and tenant, are to be traced to the

provincial notions of those who have received their impressions from a state of society in which no such relations exist. The danger from the anti-rent doctrines is most to be apprehended from these false principles;—the misguided and impotent beings who have taken the field in the literal sense, not being a fourth part as formidable to the right, as those who have taken it in the moral. There is not a particle more of reason in the argument which says that there should be no farmers, in the strict meaning of the term, than there would be in that which said there should be no journeymen connected with the crafts; though it would not be easy to find a man to assert the latter doctrine. We dare say, if there did happen to exist a portion of the country in which the mechanics were all “bosses,” it would strike those who dwelt in such a state of society, that it would be singularly improper and anti-republican for any man to undertake journeywork.

On this subject we shall only add one word. The column of society must have its capital as well as its base. It is only perfect while each part is entire, and discharges its proper duty. In New York the great landholders long have, and do still, in a social sense, occupy the place of the capital. On the supposition that this capital is broken and hurled to the ground, of what material will be the capital that must be pushed into its place! We know of none half so likely to succeed, as the country extortioner and the country usurer! We would caution those who now raise the cry of feudality and aristocracy, to have a care of what they are about. In lieu of King Log, they may be devoured by King Stork.



# THE CHAINBEARER.

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## CHAPTER I.

"The steady brain, the sinewy limb,  
To leap, to climb, to dive, to swim;  
The iron frame, inured to bear  
Each dire inclemency of air;  
Nor less confirmed to undergo  
Fatigue's faint chill, and famine's throe."

ROKERY.

My father was Cornelius Littlepage, of Satanstoe, in the county of West Chester, and State of New York; and my mother was Anneke Mordaunt, of Lilacs-bush, a place long known by that name, which still stands near Kingsbridge, but on the island of Manhattan, and consequently in one of the wards of New York, though quite eleven miles from town. I shall suppose that *my* readers know the difference between the Island of Manhattan, and Manhattan Island; though I *have* found *soi-disant* Manhattanese, of mature years, but of alien birth, who had to be taught it. Lilacs-bush, I repeat therefore, was on the Island of Manhattan, eleven miles from town, though in the city of New York, and *not* on Manhattan Island.

Of my progenitors further back, I do not conceive it necessary to say much. They were partly of English, and partly of Low Dutch extraction; as is apt to be the case with those who come of New York families of any standing in the colony. I retain tolerably distinct impressions of both of my grandfathers, and of one of my grandmothers; my mother's mother having died long before my own parents were married.



Of my maternal grandfather I know very little, however, he having died while I was quite young, and before I had seen much of him. He paid the great debt of nature in England, whither he had gone on a visit to a relative, a Sir Something Bulstrode, who had been in the colonies himself, and who was a great favourite with Herman Mordaunt, as my mother's parent was universally called in New York. My father often said, it was perhaps fortunate in one respect, that his father-in-law died as he did, since he had no doubt he would have certainly taken sides with the crown, in the quarrel that so soon after occurred, in which case it is probable his estates, or those which were my mother's, and are now mine, would have shared the fate of those of the de Lanceys, of the Philipseys, of some of the Van Cortlandts, of the Floyds, of the Joneses, and of various others of the heavy families, who remained loyal, as it was called; meaning loyalty to a prince, and not loyalty to the land of their nativity. It is hard to say which were right, in such a quarrel, if we look at the opinions and prejudices of the times, though the Littlepages to a man, which means only my father, and grandfather, and self, took sides with the country. In the way of self-interest, it ought to be remarked, however, that the wealthy American who opposed the crown, showed much the most disinterestedness, inasmuch as the chances of being subdued were for a long time very serious, while the certainty of confiscation, not to say of being hanged, was sufficiently well established, in the event of failure. But, my paternal grandfather was what was called a whig, of the high caste. He was made a brigadier in the militia, in 1776, and was actively employed in the great campaign of the succeeding year; that in which Burgoyne was captured, as indeed was my father, who held the rank of lieutenant-colonel in the New York line. There was also a major Dirck Van Volkenburgh, or Follock, as he was usually called, in the same regiment with my father, who was a sworn friend. This major Follock was an old bachelor, and he lived quite as much in my father's house as he did in his own; his proper residence being across the river, in Rockland. My mother had a friend, as well as my father, in the person of Miss Mary Wallace; a single lady, well turned of thirty at the commencement of the re-

volution. Miss Wallace was quite at ease in her circumstances, but she lived altogether at Lilacs-bush, never having any other home, unless it might be at our house in town.

We were very proud of the brigadier, both on account of his rank and on account of his services. He actually commanded in one expedition against the Indians during the revolution, a service in which he had some experience, having been out on it, on various occasions, previously to the great struggle for independence. It was in one of these early expeditions of the latter war that he first distinguished himself, being then under the orders of a colonel Brom Follock, who was the father of major Dirck of the same name, and who was almost as great a friend of my grandfather as the son was of my own parent. This colonel Brom loved a carouse, and I have heard it said that, getting among the High Dutch on the Mohawk, he kept it up for a week, with little or no intermission, under circumstances that involved much military negligence. The result was that a party of Canada Indians made an inroad on his command, and the old colonel, who was as bold as a lion, and as drunk as a lord, though why lords are supposed to be particularly inclined to drink I never could tell, was both shot down and scalped early one morning as he was returning from an adjacent tavern to his quarters in the "garrison," where he was stationed. My grandfather nobly revenged his death, scattering to the four winds the invading party, and receiving the mutilated body of his friend, though the scalp was irretrievably lost.

General Littlepage did not survive the war, though it was not his good fortune to die on the field, thus identifying his name with the history of his country. It happens in all wars, and most especially did it often occur in our own great national struggle, that more soldiers lay down their lives in the hospitals than on the field of battle, though the shedding of blood seems an indispensable requisite to glory of this nature; an ungrateful posterity taking little heed of the thousands who pass into another state of being, the victims of exposure and camp diseases, to sound the praises of the hundreds who are slain amid the din of battle. Yet, it may be questioned if it do not require more true courage to face death, when he approaches in the invisible form of

disease, than to meet him when openly arrayed under the armed hand. My grandfather's conduct in remaining in camp, among hundreds of those who had the smallpox, the loathsome malady of which he died, was occasionally alluded to, it is true, but never in the manner the death of an officer of his rank would have been mentioned, had he fallen in battle. I could see that major Follock had an honourable pride in the fate of *his* father, who was slain and scalped by the enemy in returning from a drunken carouse, while my worthy parent ever referred to the death of the brigadier as an event to be deplored, rather than exulted in. For my own part, I think my grandfather's end was much the most creditable of the two; but, as such, it will never be viewed by the historian, or the country. As for historians, it requires a man to be singularly honest to write against a prejudice; and it is so much easier to celebrate a deed as it is imagined than as it actually occurred, that I question if we know the truth of a tenth part of the exploits about which we vapour, and in which we fancy we glory. Well! we are taught to believe that the time will come when all things are to be seen in their true colours, and when men and deeds will be known as they actually were, rather than as they have been recorded in the pages of history.

I was too young myself to take much part in the war of the revolution, though accident made me an eye-witness of some of its most important events, and that at the tender age of fifteen. At twelve—the American intellect ever was and continues to be singularly precocious—I was sent to Nassau Hall, Princeton, to be educated, and I remained there until I finally got a degree, though it was not without several long and rude interruptions of my studies. Although so early sent to college, I did not actually graduate until I was nineteen, the troubled times requiring nearly twice as long a servitude to make a Bachelor of Arts of me as would have been necessary in the more halcyon days of peace. Thus I made a fragment of a campaign when only a sophomore, and another the first year I was junior. I say the *first* year, because I was obliged to pass two years in each of the two higher classes of the institution, in order to make up for lost time. A youth cannot very well be campaigning and studying Euclid in the academic bowers, at the same

moment. Then I was so young, that a year, more or less, was of no great moment.

My principal service in the war of the revolution was in 1777, or in the campaign in which Burgoyne was met and captured. That important service was performed by a force that was composed partly of regular troops, and partly of militia. My grandfather commanded a brigade of the last, or what was called a brigade, some six hundred men at most; while my father led a regular battalion of one hundred and sixty troops of the New York line, into the German intrenchments, the memorable and bloody day the last were stormed. How many he brought out I never heard him say. The way in which I happened to be present in these important scenes, is soon told.

Lilacsbush being on the Island of Manhattan, (not Manhattan Island, be it always remembered), and our family being whig, we were driven from both our town and country houses, the moment Sir William Howe took possession of New York. At first, my mother was content with going merely to Satanstoe, which was only a short distance from the enemy's lines; but the political character of the Littlepages being too well established to render this a safe residence, my grandmother and mother, always accompanied by Miss Wallace, went up above the Highlands, where they established themselves in the village of Fishkill, for the remainder of the war, on a farm that belonged to Miss Wallace, in fee. Here it was thought they were safe, being seventy miles from the capital, and quite within the American lines. As this removal took place at the close of the year 1776, and after independence had been declared, it was understood that our return to our proper homes at all depended on the result of the war. At that time I was a sophomore, and at home in the long vacation. It was in this visit that I made my fragment of a campaign, accompanying my father through all the closing movements of his regiment, while Washington and Howe were manœuvring in Westchester. My father's battalion happening to be posted in such a manner as to be in the centre of battle at White Plains, I had an opportunity of seeing some pretty serious service on that occasion. Nor did I quit the army, and return to my studies until after the brilliant affairs at



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