

THE WATER-WITCH; OR, THE SKIMMER OF THE SEAS. A TALE. BY J. FENIMORE COOPER. pdf

1: The Water-Witch by James Fenimore Cooper

*The Water-Witch; Or, the Skimmer of the Seas. a Tale. by J. Fenimore Cooper. [James Fenimore Cooper] on www.enganchecubano.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers. Many of the earliest books, particularly those dating back to the 1800s and before, are now extremely scarce and increasingly expensive.*

The water-witch; or, The skimmer of the seas. Cooper, James Fenimore, IT was a bold attempt to lay the scene of a work like this on the coast of America. We have had our Buccaneers on the water, and our Witches on the land, but we believe this is the first occasion on which the rule has been reversed. After an experience that has now lasted more than twenty years, the result has shown that the public prefer the original order of things. In other words, the book has proved a comparative failure. The facts of this country are all so recent, and so familiar, that every innovation on them, by means of the imagination, is coldly received, if it be not absolutely frowned upon. Perhaps it would have been safer to have written a work of this character without a reference to any particular locality. The few local allusions that are introduced, are not essential to the plot, and might have been dispensed with without lessening the interest of the tale. Nevertheless, this is probably the most imaginative book ever written by the author. Its fault is in blending too much of the real with the purely ideal. Halfway measures will not do in matters of this sort; and it is always safer to preserve the identity of a book by a fixed and determinate character, than to make the effort to steer between the true and the false. Several liberties have been taken with the usages of the colony, with a view to give zest to the descriptions. If the Dutch of this country ever resorted to the common practice of Holland, in giving such names as the "Lust in Rust" to their villas, it has not only passed out of sight, but out of mind. In the other country, as one inces along the canals, he sees names of this character, painted on different objects, every mile he advances, and admires the contentment which is satisfied with a summer-house, a pipe, a canal, a meadow that is almost under water, and, indeed, with a country that is what seamen term "awash. The fine natural scenery forbade it; and a villa on the banks of the Hudson was a residence that possessed in itself advantages to set at naught such small contrivances of luxury. Some persons may object to the manner in which we have sketched the conduct and character of Cornbury. Vii hoping to extort from Anne further concessions in behalf of her worthless relative. As for the Patroon of Kinderhook, the genus seems about to expire among us. Not only are we to have no more patroons, but the decree has gone forth from the virtuous and infallible voters that there are to be no more estates. The curse of mediocrity weighs upon us, and its blunders can be repaired only through the hard leaona of experience. This book was written in Italy, and first printed in English in Germany. To the last circumstance, is probably owing the great number of typographical errors that are to be found in it. The American compositor, however, quite likely conceiving that he had a right to correct the blunders of a foreigner, has taken the law into his own hands, and exercised a sovereign power over our labors. That our good old-fashioned mode of spelling should receive the modern improvements, was, perhaps, unavoidable; but surely, we never spelt "coamings" of a hatch, "colmbings;" "rulloek," "oar-lock," or "row-lock;" or made many other similar, "long-shore" blunders that are to be found in the original editions of this book. THE fine estuary which penetrates the American coast between the fortieth and forty-first degrees of latitude, is formed by the confluence of the Hudson, the Hackensack,. The islands of Nassau and Staten are happily placed to exclude the tempests of the open sea, while the deep and broad arms of the latter offer every desirable facility for foreign trade and internal intercourse. To this fortunate disposition of land and water, with a temperate climate, a central position, and an immense interior, that is now penetrated in every direction either by artificial or by natural streams, the city of New York is indebted for its extraordinary prosperity. Though not wanting in beauty, there are many bays that surpass this in the charms of scenery; but it may be questioned if the world possesses another site that unites so many natural advantages for the growth and support of a widely extended commerce. As if never wearied with her kindness, Nature has placed the Island of Manhattan at the precise point that is most desirable for the position of a town. The consequences of so unusual a concurrence

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of favorable circumstances, are well known. A vigorous, healthful, and continued growth, that has no parallel even in the history of this extraordinary and fortunate country, has already raised the insignificant provincial town of the last century to the level of the second-rate cities of the other hemisphere. The New Amsterdam of this continent already rivals its parent of the other; and, so far as human powers may pretend to predict, a few fleeting years will place her on a level with the proudest capitals of Europe. It would seem that, as Nature has given its periods to the stages of animal life, it has also set limits to all moral and political ascendancy. While the city of the Medici is receding from its crumbling walls, like the human form shrinking into "the lean and slippered pantaloon," the Queen of the Adliatic sleeping on her muddy isles, and Rome itself is only to be traced by fallen temples and buried columns, the youthful vigor of America is fast covering the wilds of the West with the hanpiest fruits of human industry. By the Manhattanese who is familiar with the forest of masts, the miles of wharves, the countless villas, the hundred churches, the castles, the smoking and busy vessels that crowd his bay, the daily increase and the general movement of his native town, the picture we are about to sketch will scarcely be recognised. He who shall come a generation later will probably smile, that subject of admiration should have been found in the existing condition of the city; and yet we shall attempt to carry the recollections of the reader but a century back in the brief history of his country. As the sun rose on the morning of the 3d of June, , the report of a cannon was heard rolling along the waters of the Hudson. The explosion was followed by the appearance of a flag, which, as it rose to the summit of its staff and unfolded itself heavily in the light current of air, showed the blue field and red cross of the English ensign. At the distance of several miles, the dark masts of a ship were to be seen, faintly relieved by the verdant background of the heights of Staten Island. A little cloud floated over this object, and then an answering signal came dull and rumbling to the town. The flag that the cruiser set was not visible in the distance. At the precise moment that the noise of the first gun was heard, the door of one of the principal dwellings of the town opened, and a man, who might have been its master, appeared on its stoop, as the ill-arranged entrances of the buildings of the place are still termed. He was seemingly prepared for some expedition that was likely to consume the day. A black of middle age followed the burgher to the threshold; and another negro, who had not yet reached the stature of manhood, bore under his arm a small bundle, that probably contained articles of the first necessity to the comfort of his master. It is thrift which has built up the credit of my house, and, though it is said by myself, a broader back and firmer base belongs to no merchant in the colonies. If the substance is wasted, what will become of the shadow? When I get delicate you will sicken; when I am a-hungered, you will be famished; when I die, you may be -ahem -Euclid. I leave thee in charge with goods and chattels, house and stable, with my character in the neighborhood. I am going to the Lust in Rust, for a mouthful of better air. I believe the people will continue to coma into this crowded town, until it gets to be as pestilent as Rotterdam in the dogdays. You have now come to years when a man obtains his reflection, boy, and I expect suitable care and discretion about the premises, while my back is turned. I am not entirely pleased with the character of thy company. It is not altogether as respectable as becomes the confidential servant of a man of a certain station in the world. Thou hast the other locks at disposal, and," drawing with visible reluctance the instrument from his pocket, "here is the key of the stable. Not a hoof is to quit it, but to go to the pump; and see that each animal has its food to a minute. If masters had no eyes, a pretty world would the negroes make of it! I have got the measure of every black heel on the island registered in the big book you see me so often looking into, especially on Sundays; and, if either of the tire-legs I have named dares to enter my grounds, let him expect to pay a visit to the city Provost. What do the wild-cats mean? His fate should be a warning to every nigger in the colony. The imps of darkness! The English have no such scarcity of rogues at home, that they could not spare us the pirate to hang up on one of the islands, as a scarecrow to the blacks of Manhattan. The air of the negro had been a little equivocal during the parting admonition. That night the confidential servant attended to the interests of his absent master with a fidelity and care which proved he felt his own existence identified with that of a man who claimed so close a right in his person; and just as the clock struck ten, he and the negro last mentioned mounted the sluggish and over-fattened horses, and galloped as hard as foot could be laid to the

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earth, several miles deeper into the island, to attend a frolic at one of the usual haunts of the people of their color and condition. Had Alderman Myndert Van Beverout suspected the calamity which was so soon to succeed his absence, it is probable that his mien would have been less composed, as he pursued his way from his own door, on the occasion named. That he had confidence in the virtue of his menaces, however, may be inferred from the tranquillity which immediately took possession of features that were never disturbed without wearing an appearance of unnatural effort. The substantial burgher was a little turned of fifty; and an English wag who had imported from the mother country a love for the humor of his nation, had once, in a conflict of wits before the city council, described him to be a man of alliterations. If we add, that he was a trader of great wealth and shrewdness, and a bachelor, we need say no more in this stage of the narrative. Notwithstanding the early hour at which this industrious and flourishing merchant quitted his abode, his movement along the narrow streets of his native town was measured and dignified. From this it would seem, that, while he had so exaggerated notions of domestic discipline, the worthy burgher was far from being one who indulged, by inclination, in the leniencies he has been heard to utter. He had just dismissed one of these loitering negroes, when, on turning a corner, a man of his own color, for the first time that morning, suddenly stood before him. The startled citizen made an involuntary movement to avoid the unexpected interview, and then, perceiving the difficulty of such a step, he submitted, with as good a grace as if it had been one of his own seeking. Uncovering his head, he bowed so ceremoniously as to leave the other no reason to exult in his pleasantry, as he answered "The colony has reason to regret the services of a governor who can quit his bed so soon. That we of business habits stir betimes is quite in reason; but there are those in this town, who would scarce believe their eyes did they enjoy my present happiness. Now, were I a king-at-arms, there should be a concession made in thy favor, Myndert, of a shield bearing the animal mordant, a mantle of fur, with two Mohawk hunters for supporters, and the motto, . This is an ill-judged step, Alderman Van Beverout, that lets a gentleman out by night, like the ghost in Hamlet, to flee into the narrow house with the crowing of the cock. His air, which had borne the character of a genteel trifler, became more grave and dignified; and notwithstanding there was the evidence of a reckless disposition in his features, dress, and carriage, his tall and not ungraceful form, as he walked slowly onwards, by the side of the compact Alderman, was not without much of that insinuating ease and blandishment, which long familiarity with good company can give even to the lowest moral worth. It is true that the Queen has been persuaded to sign the mandate of my recall, and it is certain that Mr. I do not disclaim certain indiscretions, Sir; it would ill become me to deny them, in presence of one whose virtue is as severe as that of Alderman Van Beverout. I have my failings; perhaps, as you have just been pleased to intimate, it would have been better had my motto been frugality; but the open hand, dear Sir, is a part of the design you will not deny me, either. If I have weaknesses, my enemies cannot refuse to say that I never yet deserted a friend. But honesty, and riches, and generosity, are of little value, without influence. Men should have their natural consideration in society. Now is this colony rather Dutch than English, and yet, you see, how few names are found in the list of the Council, that have been known in the province half a century! All nations and religions have precedency, in the royal favor, over the children of the Patriarchs. The Collelnian Felipses; the Huguenot de Lanceys, and Bayards, and Jays; the King-hating Morrisises and Ludlows-in short, all have greater estimation in the eyes of government, than the most ancient Patroon! I cannot remember when it was otherwise! But it would little become political discretion to affect precipitancy in the judgment of character. Time was wanting to enlighten my mind, and that time has been refused me. In another year, my worthy Sir, the Council should have been filled with Vans! It is time Anne had been undeceived, and her mind regained. There wanteth nothing to such a consummation of justice, Sir, but opportunity. It touches me to the heart, to think that this disgrace should befall one so near the royal blood! Alderman Myndert Van Beverout â€" Worn, and worn worthily! There is affinity between the people, and there is reason in that reply. How have I failed in wisdom, in not seeking earlier the aid of thy advice, excellent Sir! Ah, Myndert, there is a blessing on the enterprises of all who come of the Low Countries! I am an adorer of constancy in friendship, Sir, and hold the principle that men should aid each other through this dark vale of life-Mr.

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2: The water-witch; or, The skimmer of the seas. A tale. By J. Fenimore Cooper.

Water Witch is to this day, a small community near Highlands. NJ, and I grew up on and around these waters, sailing, swimming, surfing and living, so the setting was especially familiar to me.

3: The Water Witch or the Skimmer of the Seas a Tale

Page III TIE WATER-WITCH OR THE SKIMMER OF THE SEAS A TALE BY J. FENIMORE COOPER "Mais, que diable allolt-il faire dans cette galore?" ILLUSTRATED FROM DRAWINGS BY F. O. C. DARLEY NEW YORK: PUBLISHED BY HURD AND HOUGHTON.

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James Fenimore Cooper was a popular and prolific American writer. He is best known for his historical novel The Last of the Mohicans, one of the Leatherstocking Tales stories, and he also wrote political fiction, maritime fiction, travelogues, and essays on the American politics of the time.

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