

**HEPHZIBAH GUINNESS;  
THEE AND YOU;  
AND A DRAFT ON  
THE BANK OF SPAIN**

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Hephzibah Guinness; Thee and You; And a Draft on the Bank of Spain by S. Weir Mitchell

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**S. WEIR MITCHELL**

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*Silas* BY  
S. WEIR MITCHELL, M.D.

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# HEPHZIBAH GUINNESS.

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## CHAPTER I.

ON the fifteenth day of October, in the year 1807, a young man about the age of twenty walked slowly down Front Street in the quiet city of Philadelphia. The place was strange to him, and with the careless curiosity of youth he glanced about and enjoyed alike the freshness of the evening hour and the novelty of the scene.

To the lad—for he was hardly more—the air was delicious, because only the day before he had first set foot on shore after a wearisome ocean-voyage. All the afternoon a torrent of rain had fallen, but as he paused and looked westward at the corner of Cedar Street, the lessening rain, of which he had taken little heed, ceased of a sudden, and below the dun masses of swiftly-changing clouds the western sky became all aglow with yellow light, which set a rainbow over the broad Delaware and touched with gold the large drops of the ceasing shower.

The young man stood a moment gazing at the changeful sky, and then with a pleasant sense of

sober contrast let his eyes wander over the broken roof-lines and broad gables of Front Street, noting how sombre the wetted brick houses became, and how black the shingled roofs with their patches of tufted green moss and smoother lichen. Then as he looked he saw, a few paces down the street, two superb buttonwoods from which the leaves were flitting fast, and his quick eye caught the mottled loveliness of their white and gray and green boles. Drawn by the unusual tints of these stately trunks, he turned southward, and walking towards them, stopped abruptly before the quaint house above which they spread their broad and gnarled branches.

The dwelling, of red and black-glazed bricks, set corner to corner, was what we still call a double house, having two windows on either side of a door, over which projected a peaked pent-house nearly hidden by scarlet masses of Virginia creeper, which also clung about the windows and the roof, and almost hid the chimneys. The house stood back from the street, and in front of it were two square grass-plots set round with low box borders. A paling fence, freshly whitewashed, bounded the little garden, and all about the house and its surroundings was an air of tranquil, easy comfort and well-bred dignity.

Along the whole line of Front Street—which was then the fashionable place of residence—the house-fronts were broken by white doorways with Doric pillars of wood, such as you may see to-day in certain city streets as you turn aside from the busy Strand in London. There were also many low Dutch stoops or porches, some roofed over and some uncovered,

but few mansions as large and important as the house we have described.

As the rain ceased old men with their long pipes came out on the porches, and women's heads peeped from open windows to exchange bits of gossip, while up and down the pavements, as if this evening chat were an every-day thing, men of all classes wandered to take the air so soon as the fierce afternoon storm had spent its force.

As the young stranger moved along among sparse groups of gentlemen and others, he was struck with the variety of costume. The middle-aged and old adhered to the knee-breeches and buckles, the younger wore pantaloons of tight-fitting stocking-net, with shoes and silk stockings, or sometimes high boots with polished tops adorned with silk tassels. It was a pretty, picturesque street-scene, with its variety of puce-colored or dark velvet coats and ample cravats under scroll-brimmed beaver hats.

The sailor of 1807 dressed like the sailor of to-day, and the lad's figure would have seemed no more strange now than it did then. But a certain pride of carriage, broad shoulders set off by a loose jacket, and clothes tight on narrow hips, drew appreciative looks as he passed; and the eye which wandered upward must have dwelt pleased, I fancy, on the brown, handsome face, with its strong lines of forehead and a mouth of great sweetness above a somewhat over-large chin.

As the young man drew near to the buttonwoods a notable-looking person came with slow and thought-laden steps from the south. This gentleman was a