

**THE PATHFINDER, OR
THE INLAND SEA; IN
TWO VOLUMES: VOL. II**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9781760578381

The Pathfinder, or the Inland Sea; in two volumes: Vol. II by James Fenimore Cooper

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Cover @ 2017

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JAMES FENIMORE COOPER

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THE INLAND SEA; IN
TWO VOLUMES: VOL. II**

THE
PATHFINDER:

OR,

THE INLAND SEA.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF

"THE PIONEERS," "LAST OF THE MOHICANS," "PRAIRIE," &c.

— Here the heart
May give a useful lesson to the head,
And Learning wiser grow without his books.
COWPER.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

PHILADELPHIA:
LEA AND BLANCHARD,

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1840.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1839, by
J. FENIMORE COOPER,
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States,
in and for the Northern District of New York.

STEREOTYPED BY J. FAGAN.....PHILADELPHIA.

PRINTED BY T. K. AND P. G. COLLINS.

(3)

THE PATHFINDER.

CHAPTER I.

"Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form
Glasses itself in tempests; in all time,
Calm or convulsed—in breeze, or gale, or storm,
Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime
Dark heaving;—boundless, endless, and sublime—
The image of Eternity; the throne
Of the Invisible; even from out thy slime
The monsters of the deep are made; each zone
Obeys thee; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone."

BYRON.

As the day advanced, that portion of the inmates of the vessel which had the liberty of doing so, appeared on deck. As yet, the sea was not very high, from which it was inferred, that the cutter was still under the lee of the islands; but it was apparent to all who understood the lake, that they were about to experience one of the heavy autumnal gales of that region. Land was nowhere visible; and the horizon, on every side, exhibited that gloomy void, which lends to all views, on vast bodies of water, the sublimity of mystery. The swells, or, as landsmen term them, the waves, were short and curling, breaking of necessity sooner than the longer seas of the ocean; while the element itself, instead of presenting that beautiful hue, which rivals the deep tint of the southern sky, looked green and angry, though wanting in the lustre that is derived from the rays of the sun.

The soldiers were soon satisfied with the prospect, and, one by one, they disappeared, until none were left on deck, but the crew, the serjeant, Cap, Pathfinder, the Quarter-Master, and Mabel. There was a shade on the brow of the

latter, who had been made acquainted with the real state of things; and who had fruitlessly ventured an appeal in favour of Jasper's restoration to the command. A night's rest, and a night's reflection, appeared also to have confirmed the Pathfinder in his opinion of the young man's innocence; and he, too, had made a warm appeal in behalf of his friend, though with the same want of success.

Several hours passed away, the wind gradually getting to be heavier, and the sea rising, until the motion of the cutter compelled Mabel and the Quarter-Master to retreat, also. Cap wore several times; and it was now evident that the Scud was drifting into the broader and deeper parts of the lake, the seas raging down upon her in a way that none but a vessel of superior mould and build could have long ridden, and withstood. All this, however, gave Cap no uneasiness; but like the hunter that pricks his ears at the sound of the horn, or the war-horse that paws and snorts with pleasure at the roll of the drum, the whole scene awakened all that was man within him; and instead of the captious, supercilious, and dogmatic critic, quarrelling with trifles, and exaggerating immaterial things, he began to exhibit the qualities of the hardy and experienced seaman, that he truly was. The hands soon imbibed a respect for his skill; and, though they wondered at the disappearance of their old commander, and the pilot, for which no reason had been publicly given, they soon yielded an implicit and cheerful obedience to the new one.

"This bit of fresh-water, after all, brother Dunham, has some spirit, I find," cried Cap, about noon, rubbing his hands in pure satisfaction at finding himself once more wrestling with the elements. "The wind seems to be an honest old-fashioned gale, and the seas have a fanciful resemblance to those of the gulf stream. I like this, serjeant, I like this; and shall get to respect your lake, if it hold out twenty-four hours longer in the fashion in which it has begun."

"Land, ho!" shouted the man who was stationed on the fore-castle.

Cap hurried forward; and there, sure enough, the land was visible through the drizzle, at the distance of about half a mile,—the cutter heading directly towards it. The first impulse of the old seaman was to give an order to "stand

by, to wade off shore;" but the cool-headed soldier restrained him.

"By going a little nearer," said the serjeant, "some of us may recognize the place. Most of us know the American shore, in this part of the lake; and it will be something gained to learn our position."

"Very true—very true; if, indeed, there is any chance of that, we will hold on. What is this off here, a little on our weather bow? It looks like a low headland."

"The garrison, by Jove!" exclaimed the other, whose trained eye sooner recognized the military outlines than the less instructed senses of his connection.

The serjeant was not mistaken. There was the fort, sure enough, though it looked dim and indistinct through the fine rain, as if it were seen in the dusk of evening, or the haze of morning. The low, sodded, and verdant ramparts, the sombre palisades, now darker than ever with water, the roof of a house or two, the tall, solitary flag-staff, with its halcyons blown steadily out, into a curve that appeared traced in immovable lines in the air, were all soon to be seen, though no sign of animated life could be discovered. Even the sentinel was housed; and, at first, it was believed that no eye would detect the presence of their own vessel. But the unceasing vigilance of a border garrison did not slumber. One of the look-outs probably made the interesting discovery; a man or two were seen on some elevated stands, and then the entire ramparts, next the lake, were dotted with human beings.

The whole scene was one in which sublimity was singularly relieved by the picturesque. The raging of the tempest had a character of duration, that rendered it easy to imagine it might be a permanent feature of the spot. The roar of the wind was without intermission, and the raging water answered to its dull but grand strains, with hissing spray, a menacing wash, and sullen surges. The drizzle made a medium for the eye which closely resembled that of a thin mist, softening and rendering mysterious the images it revealed, while the genial feeling that is apt to accompany a gale of wind on water, contributed to aid the milder influences of the moment. The dark, interminable forest hove up out of the obscurity, grand, sombre and impressive, while

the solitary, peculiar and picturesque glimpses of life that were caught in and about the fort, formed a refuge for the eye to retreat to, when oppressed with the more imposing objects of nature.

"They see us," said the serjeant, "and think we have returned on account of the gale, and have fallen to leeward of the port. Yes, there is Major Duncan himself, on the north-eastern bastion; I know him by his height, and by the officers around him!"

"Serjeant, it would be worth standing a little jeering, if we could fetch into the river, and come safely to an anchor! In that case, too, we might land this Master Eau-douce, and purify the boat."

"It would indeed; but as poor a sailor as I am, I well know it cannot be done. Nothing that sails the lake can turn to windward against this gale; and there is no anchorage outside, in weather like this."

"I know it—I see it—serjeant, and pleasant as is that sight to you landsmen, we must leave it. For myself, I am never as happy, in heavy weather, as when I am certain that the land is behind me."

The Scud had now forged so near in, that it became indispensable to lay her head off shore, again, and the necessary orders were given. The storm-staysail was set forward, the gaff lowered, the helm put up, and the light craft, that seemed to sport with the elements like a duck, fell off a little, drew ahead swiftly, obeyed her rudder, and was soon flying away on the top of the surges, dead before the gale. While making this rapid flight, though the land still remained in view, on her larboard beam, the fort, and the groups of anxious spectators on its rampart, were swallowed up in the mist. Then followed the evolutions necessary to bring the head of the cutter up to the wind, when she again began to wallow her weary way towards the north shore.

Hours now passed, before any further change was made, the wind increasing in force, until even the dogmatical Cap fairly admitted it was blowing a thorough gale of wind. About sunset the Scud wore again, to keep her off the north shore, during the hours of darkness; and at midnight her temporary master, who, by questioning the crew in an indirect manner, had obtained some general knowledge of the size and shape

of the lake, believed himself to be about midway between the two shores. The height and length of the seas, aided this impression; and it must be added that Cap, by this time, began to feel a respect for fresh-water, that twenty-four hours earlier, he would have derided as impossible. Just as the night turned, the fury of the wind became so great, that he found it impossible to bear up against it, the water falling on the deck of the little craft in such masses as to cause it to shake to the centre, and, though a vessel of singularly lively qualities, to threaten to bury it beneath its weight. The people of the Scud averred that never before had they been out in such a tempest; which was true; for, possessing a perfect knowledge of all the rivers and head-lands and havens, Jasper would have carried the cutter in shore, long ere this, and placed her in safety, in some secure anchorage. But, Cap still disdained to consult the young master, who continued below, determining to act like a mariner of the broad ocean.

It was one in the morning, when the storm-staysail was again got on the Scud, the head of the mainsail lowered, and the cutter put before the wind. Although the canvass now exposed was merely a rag in surface, the little craft nobly justified the use of the name she bore. For eight hours did she scud, in truth; and it was almost with the velocity of the gulls that wheeled wildly over her in the tempest, apparently afraid to alight in the boiling caldron of the lake. The dawn of day brought little change; for no other horizon became visible, than the little circle of drizzling sky and water, already described, in which it seemed as if the elements were rioting in a sort of chaotic confusion. During this time the crew and passengers of the cutter were of necessity passive. Jasper and the pilot remained below; but, the motion of the vessel having become easier, nearly all the rest were on deck. The morning meal had been taken in silence, and eye met eye, as if their owners asked each other, in dumb show, what was to be the end of this strife in the elements. Cap, however, was perfectly composed, and his face brightened, his step grew firmer, and his whole air more assured, as the storm increased, making larger demands on his professional skill, and personal spirit. He stood on the forecastle, his arms crossed, balancing his body with a seaman's instinct,