

**THE SPY; A TALE OF THE  
NEUTRAL GROUND. IN  
TWO VOLUMES. VOL. I**

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The spy; a tale of the neutral ground. In two volumes. Vol. I by James Fenimore Cooper

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**JAMES FENIMORE COOPER**

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# THE SPY;

A TALE OF

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## THE NEUTRAL GROUND.



"Breathes there a man with soul so dead,  
Who never to himself hath said,  
This is my own, my native land?"

[James Fenimore Cooper]



BY

THE AUTHOR OF "PRECAUTION."



IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



THIRD EDITION.



NEW-YORK:

WILEY AND HALSTED, 3, WALL-STREET,

Wm. Grattan, Printer.

1852.

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*Southern District of New-York, ss.*

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the seventh day of September, in the forty-sixth year of the Independence of the United States of America, WILEY & HALSTED, of the said District, have deposited in this Office, the title of a Book, the right whereof they claim as proprietors in the words following, to wit:

The Spy, a Tale of the Neutral Ground.

"Breathes there a man with soul so dead,

Who never to himself hath said,

This is my own, my native land—"

by the author of *Precaution*". In two volumes.

In conformity to the Act of Congress of the United States, entitled, "An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned;" And also, to an Act, entitled, "An Act, supplementary to an Act, entitled, an Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching, historical and other prints."

JAMES DILL,

Clerk of the Southern District of New-York.

*James Smith*

TO

**JAMES AITCHISON.**

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I AVAIL myself with great pleasure of the opportunity that is offered to me, of again manifesting the esteem which I entertain for you. I repeat the assurances of my regard the more readily, because there are those who are anxious to interpret some of the incidents in this fiction, to the disadvantage of the British character. To you, who know my private sentiments on all subjects, it will be unnecessary to say, that national illiberality is not among my foibles; or that I am in the smallest degree insensible to the many valuable qualities which form the groundwork of an Englishman's virtues. I think the book itself is my justification on this point. If there be any individual criminality portrayed, that is not to be traced to the faults of our common nature, under the operation of

peculiar circumstances, I am not conscious of it; and I am aware that all Englishmen, who, like yourself, are educated, liberal, and intelligent, will readily admit, that less offensive matter could not easily be introduced in a tale, professedly written with a view to draw the imaginations of our readers of fiction, from the contemplation of English scenes, to the homebred virtues of their own fire-sides. That there are Col. Wellmeres in every army, any man in the least acquainted with life, will readily admit;—that I represented him as your countryman, was owing to the fact, that it was against your country that my own was, at the time of my tale, contending.

Our intimacy has existed many years, and I sincerely hope that it may so continue, until one of us ceases to live.

Assuredly your friend,

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PREFACE  
TO THE  
THIRD EDITION.

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IT would be affectation to retain in this edition of our book, a preface, that professes to doubt of its favourable reception ; we find ourselves, therefore, compelled to write something new.

We are told by the Booksellers, that the public is pleased with the tale, and we take this occasion to say, that we are delighted with the public. We hope that this reciprocity of good-will may continue.

Many people think, that as the United States is, in the way of works of fiction, untrodden ground, it is a fine field for the pen of an author. We can only speak of it as we have found it. It is true, that we are a people composed of emigrants from every country of the Christian world :—but they

did not come here by chance, nor do they stay here through necessity. They emigrated to improve their temporal conditions; and they remain, because they have been successful. When men assemble with such commendable intentions, and under circumstances that afford a just ground for hope, whatever is peculiar in customs, is soon merged in the expedients, which the most ingenious invent for their mutual benefit. It is a general remark amongst travellers, that, contrary to their expectations, they find less originality of character in this country than in England. They make the comparison with England, because we are parts of the same people; and the surprise is occasioned, that so unexpected a result should proceed from the extraordinary freedom of our government. If by originality they mean oddness and eccentricity, the observation is just; but if invention, quickness to remedy evils, and boldness of thought be intended, it is wrong.

Common sense is the characteristic of the American people: it is the foundation of

their institutions ; it pervades society, bringing the high and the low near to each other : it tempers our religion, yielding that indulgence to each other's weakness, which should follow the mandates of God ; it wears down the asperities of character—but it ruins the *beau ideal*.

The difficulty is only increased in works of fiction that are founded on the customs of America, when a writer attempts to engraft the *scions* of the imagination, on the *stock* of history. The plant is too familiar to the senses, and the freshness of the exotic is tarnished by the connexion. This very book will, probably, be cited as an instance of the fallacy of this opinion. We wish that we could think so. "The Spy" was introduced at a happy moment, and the historical incidents were but little known, at the same time that they were capable of deep interest ; but, so far as well known characters are concerned, we have been assailed with every variety of criticism, from the cock of a hat to the colour of a horse.

Besides the familiarity of the subject, there