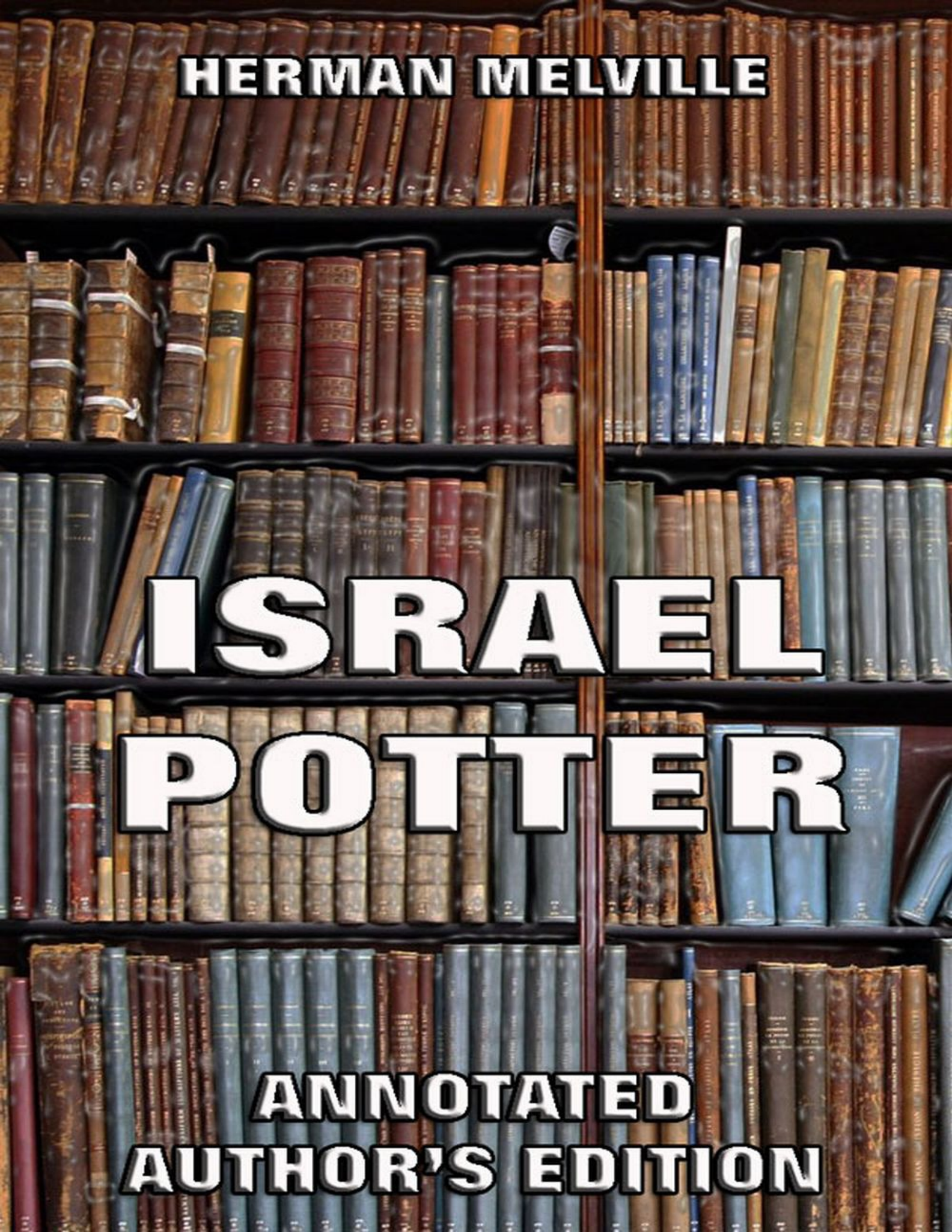
HERMAN MELVILLE
ISRAEL POTTER
ANNOTATED
AUTHOR'S EDITION

# Israel Potter

## His Fifty Years Of Exile

## Herman Melville

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## HERMAN MELVILLE – A PRIMER

CONSIDERED as a seed-time of eminent names, the year 1819 was one of remarkable fertility. Keeping to England and the United States alone, in that year were born Herman Melville, John Ruskin, J. R. Lowell, Walt Whitman, Charles Kingsley, W. W. Story, T. W. Parsons, C. A. Dana, E. P. Whipple, J. G. Holland, H. P. Gray, Thomas Hall, Cyrus Field, Julia Ward Howe, and Queen Victoria.

Of these names, which will endure the longer as author or artist? It seems to me that Melville's Typee has an intrinsic charm, born of concurring genius and circumstance, that

make it surer of immortality than any other work by any other name on the list — not even excepting Queen Victoria's Journal in the Highlands. Hut re-incarnation is not as yet, and who shall know the future dealings of fate with these various fames?

But I am anticipating. Let me give a brief outline of the events of Melville's life, and indicate— within these limits I can do no more— how directly his writings flowed from real experience, like water from a spring. Melville was born August 1, 1819, the third in a family of eight children, in New York City — the last place that one looks for a poet to be born in. Eminent men generally, according to popular statistic-, are born in the country; they nourish their genius there, and come to town to win their fame. If this theory has any truth, it is simply due to the fact that more people are born in the country, anyway, than in the town; a circumstance that does not occur to the popular statisticians. In 1835 young Melville attended the " Albany Classical School; " his teacher, Dr. Charles E. West, still lives in Brooklyn, and makes an occasional appearance at the Saturday evenings of the Century Club. He speaks of his pupil as having been distinguished in English composition and weak in mathematics.

In 1837, when Melville was eighteen, he made his first voyage before the mast in a New York merchantman bound for Liverpool, returning after a short cruise. The record of this first voyage will be found in Redburn, which, however, was not his first but his fourth book, having been published in 1849. For three years young Melville had had enough of the sea. He spent the summer of 1838 working on his uncle's farm in Pittsfield, Mass., and at intervals he taught school, both there and in Greenbush, now East Albany, New York. This sea-going and this school-teaching were undertaken in the pluckiest spirit for self-support, his

father being then in straitened circumstances. Hut the seeds of adventure and unrest were also in his nature; and he shipped again before the mast in the whaler "Acushnet," sailing from New Bedford, January 1, 1841. This was the voyage that gave him his opportunity. In the summer of 1842, as detailed in the true history, Typee, he left his ship at the Hay of Nukuheva, in the Marquesas Islands, escaping to the Typee Valley. There he received from the natives the kindest treatment, and lived deliriously all the summer long; while, on the other hand, he was in constant fear of being sacrificed at any moment to their cannibal proclivities. He spent four months in this anxious paradise; finally he escaped from the valley to an Australian whaler, where he resumed the life of the forecastle. It would be curious to know whether any of the rough sailors with whom he herded during these tossing years recognized the presence of his gifts in their shipmate; in all probability they did not.

The Australian whaler touched at some of the smaller islands, and anchored at Tahiti on the day of its occupation by the French. These were stirring times in that peaceful group, and the young poet, as he sets forth in Omoo, was confined for alleged mutinous conduct, with others of his companions, but was honorably discharged. From Tahiti he made his way to Honolulu, where he spent four months. He has left some record of that time in the very biting comments upon political and missionary affairs, that may be found in the appendix to the English edition of Typee; an appendix, by the way, that is discreetly suppressed in the American edition. To get a passage homeward he shipped for the fourth time before the mast, this time upon the United States frigate "United States," then (I think) commanded by Captain James Armstrong, and thus added the experience of man-of-war service to that of life on a New York merchantman and on American and English

whaling-ships. He spent more than a year upon the frigate, and was discharged in Boston in the fall of 1844. He then returned to his mother's home in Lansingburgh, and began the literary work for which he had such varied, ample, and profoundly interesting material. Typee was written during the winter of 1845-46, and published in London and New York in 1846. Its success was immediate and great. The entire English reading-world knew Melville's name, if not the book itself; it was the talk of the public and of the coteries. Omoo, which followed shortly after, was very well received, but not so widely read. August 4, 1847, he married the daughter of Chief-Justice Shaw of Massachusetts, removed to New York, and lived there until 1850. Meanwhile he published Mardi, a South Sea romance, prefacing a note to the effect that, as Typee and Omoo had been received as romance instead of reality, he would now enter the field of avowed fiction. In the same year, 1849, was published Redburn, the record, as already noted, of his first voyage before the mast.

In 1850 Melville went to Pittsfield, Mass., and lived there thirteen years, returning to New York again in October, 1863; and here he spent the remainder of his life, with the exception of two brief visits to Europe and a voyage to California. Leaving New York, October 8, 1849, he went to London to arrange for the publication of his works, returning about the first of February, 1850. He now addressed himself to writing While Jacket, a most vivid record of his man-of-war experience; it was published in 1850. Moby Dick, the story of the great White Whale, appeared in 1851; the novel, Pierre, or The Ambiguities, in 1852; Israel Patter and The Confidence Man 1855, and the Piazza Tales in 1856. All of Melville's works, except Clarel, were published almost as soon as written.

During these years Melville applied himself so closely to literary work that his health became impaired, and he made another visit to England, sailing October II, and returning in May, 1857. During this time he visited his old friend, Nathaniel Hawthorne, at Southport; went up the Mediterranean, saw Constantinople and the Holy Land, and returned with new material for future work; but from this time he published little for some years. During the winters 1857 to 1860, however, he gave lectures in different cities, touching a large range of subjects: "The South Seas," "Travel," "Statues in Rome," among others. In 1860 he made a voyage to San Francisco via Cape Horn, sailing from Boston May 30, with his brother, Thomas Melville, who commanded the "Meteor," a fast-sailing clipper in the China trade, and returning in mid-November. In 1866 his poems, Baltic Pieces, were published; and on the fifth of December of that year he was appointed collector of customs in the New York Custom House by Henry A. Smyth, an office which he held for nineteen years and resigned the first of January, 1866. In the interim, 1876, his Clarel appeared, a work of which the germ had been unfolding for many years; his visit to the Holy Land gave much of the material and imagery in it. His latest books were privately printed. A copy of Jo/in Marr and Other Sailors, and one of his Timoleon, lie before me; each of these volumes of poetry appeared in an edition of twenty-five copies only. With these closed the exterior record of a life of extreme contrasts — years of the most restless activity, followed by a most unusual seclusion.

These data, now for the first time fully given, will help us to characterize Melville's life and literary work. Typee and Omoo, mistaken by the public for fiction, were, on the contrary, the most vivid truth expressed in the most telling and poetic manner. My father, the Rev. Titus Coan, went over Melville's ground in 1867, and while he has criticised

the topography of Typee as being somewhat exaggerated in the mountain distances, a very natural mistake, he told me that the descriptions were admirably true and the characterizations faultless in the main. The book is a masterpiece, the outcome of an opportunity that will never be repeated. Melville was the first and only man ever made captive in a valley full of Polynesian cannibals, who had the genius to describe the situation, and who got away alive to write his book.

His later works, equally great in their way — While Jacket and Moby Dick — had a different though equal misappreciation. They dealt with a life so alien to that of the average reader that they failed adequately to interest him; but they are life and truth itself. On this matter I may speak with some authority, for I have spent years at sea, and I cannot overpraise the wonderful vigor and beauty of these descriptions. The later works were less powerful, and Pierre roused a storm of critical opposition. Yet these misunderstandings and attacks were not the main cause of his withdrawal from society. The cause was intrinsic; his extremely proud and sensitive nature and his studious habits led to the seclusion of his later years. My acquaintance with Melville began in 1859, when I had a most interesting conversation with him at his home in Pittsfield, and wrote of him as follows:

In vain I sought to hear of "Typee " and those paradise islands; he preferred to pour forth instead his philosophy and his theories of life. The shade of Aristotle arose like a cold mist between myself and Fayaway. . . . He seems to put away the objective side of life, and to shut himself up as a cloistered thinker and poet. This seclusion endured to the end. He never denied himself to his friends; but he sought no one. I visited him repeatedly in New York, and had the most interesting talks with him. What stores of reading,

what reaches of philosophy, were his I He took the attitude of absolute independence toward the world. He said, " My books will speak for themselves, and all the better if I avoid the rattling egotism by which so many win a certain vogue for a certain time." He missed immediate success; he won the distinction of a hermit. It may appear, in the end, that he was right. No other autobiographical books in our literature suggest more vividly than Typee, Omoo, White Jacket, and Moby Dick, the title of Goethe, "Truth and Beauty from my own life." Typee, at least, is one of those books that the world cannot let die.

In conclusion: does any one know whether the "Toby" of Typee, Mr. Richard T. Greene, is living? He has disappeared from ken a second time, as heretofore he disappeared from " Tommo " in Typee Valley; has he gone where a second quest would be useless? If not, and if this meets the eye of any friend of his, will he send me word?

## Dedication

TO HIS HIGHNESS THE Bunker-Hill Monument

Biography, in its purer form, confined to the ended lives of the true and brave, may be held the fairest meed of human virtue—one given and received in entire disinterestedness —since neither can the biographer hope for acknowledgment from the subject, nor the subject at all avail himself of the biographical distinction conferred.

Israel Potter well merits the present tribute—a private of Bunker Hill, who for his faithful services was years ago promoted to a still deeper privacy under the ground, with a

posthumous pension, in default of any during life, annually paid him by the spring in ever-new mosses and sward.

I am the more encouraged to lay this performance at the feet of your Highness, because, with a change in the grammatical person, it preserves, almost as in a reprint, Israel Potter's autobiographical story. Shortly after his return in infirm old age to his native land, a little narrative of his adventures, forlornly published on sleazy gray paper, appeared among the peddlers, written, probably, not by himself, but taken down from his lips by another. But like the crutch-marks of the cripple by the Beautiful Gate, this blurred record is now out of print. From a tattered copy, rescued by the merest chance from the rag-pickers, the present account has been drawn, which, with the exception of some expansions, and additions of historic and personal details, and one or two shiftings of scene, may, perhaps, be not unfitly regarded something in the light of a dilapidated old tombstone retouched.

Well aware that in your Highness' eyes the merit of the story must be in its general fidelity to the main drift of the original narrative, I forbore anywhere to mitigate the hard fortunes of my hero; and particularly towards the end, though sorely tempted, durst not substitute for the allotment of Providence any artistic recompense of poetical justice; so that no one can complain of the gloom of my closing chapters more profoundly than myself.

Such is the work, and such, the man, that I have the honor to present to your Highness. That the name here noted should not have appeared in the volumes of Sparks, may or may not be a matter for astonishment; but Israel Potter seems purposely to have waited to make his, popular advent under the present exalted patronage, seeing that your Highness, according to the definition above, may, in

the loftiest sense, be deemed the Great Biographer: the national commemorator of such of the anonymous privates of June 17, 1775, who may never have received other requital than the solid reward of your granite.

Your Highness will pardon me, if, with the warmest ascriptions on this auspicious occasion, I take the liberty to mingle my hearty congratulations on the recurrence of the anniversary day we celebrate, wishing your Highness (though indeed your Highness be somewhat prematurely gray) many returns of the same, and that each of its summer's suns may shine as brightly on your brow as each winter snow shall lightly rest on the grave of Israel Potter.

Your Highness' Most devoted and obsequious,

**THE EDITOR.**

JUNE 17th, 1854.

# ISRAEL POTTER

## CHAPTER I.

**THE BIRTHPLACE OF ISRAEL.**

The traveller who at the present day is content to travel in the good old Asiatic style, neither rushed along by a locomotive, nor dragged by a stage-coach; who is willing to enjoy hospitalities at far-scattered farmhouses, instead of paying his bill at an inn; who is not to be frightened by any amount of loneliness, or to be deterred by the roughest roads or the highest hills; such a traveller in the eastern part of Berkshire, Massachusetts, will find ample food for

poetic reflection in the singular scenery of a country, which, owing to the ruggedness of the soil and its lying out of the track of all public conveyances, remains almost as unknown to the general tourist as the interior of Bohemia.

Travelling northward from the township of Otis, the road leads for twenty or thirty miles towards Windsor, lengthwise upon that long broken spur of heights which the Green Mountains of Vermont send into Massachusetts. For nearly the whole of the distance, you have the continual sensation of being upon some terrace in the moon. The feeling of the plain or the valley is never yours; scarcely the feeling of the earth. Unless by a sudden precipitation of the road you find yourself plunging into some gorge, you pass on, and on, and on, upon the crests or slopes of pastoral mountains, while far below, mapped out in its beauty, the valley of the Housatonie lies endlessly along at your feet. Often, as your horse gaining some lofty level tract, flat as a table, trots gayly over the almost deserted and sodded road, and your admiring eye sweeps the broad landscape beneath, you seem to be Bootes driving in heaven. Save a potato field here and there, at long intervals, the whole country is either in wood or pasture. Horses, cattle and sheep are the principal inhabitants of these mountains. But all through the year lazy columns of smoke, rising from the depths of the forest, proclaim the presence of that half-outlaw, the charcoal-burner; while in early spring added curls of vapor show that the maple sugar-boiler is also at work. But as for farming as a regular vocation, there is not much of it here. At any rate, no man by that means accumulates a fortune from this thin and rocky soil, all whose arable parts have long since been nearly exhausted.

Yet during the first settlement of the country, the region was not unproductive. Here it was that the original settlers came, acting upon the principle well known to have

regulated their choice of site, namely, the high land in preference to the low, as less subject to the unwholesome miasmas generated by breaking into the rich valleys and alluvial bottoms of primeval regions. By degrees, however, they quitted the safety of this sterile elevation, to brave the dangers of richer though lower fields. So that, at the present day, some of those mountain townships present an aspect of singular abandonment. Though they have never known aught but peace and health, they, in one lesser aspect at least, look like countries depopulated by plague and war. Every mile or two a house is passed untenanted. The strength of the frame-work of these ancient buildings enables them long to resist the encroachments of decay. Spotted gray and green with the weather-stain, their timbers seem to have lapsed back into their woodland original, forming part now of the general picturesqueness of the natural scene. They are of extraordinary size, compared with modern farmhouses. One peculiar feature is the immense chimney, of light gray stone, perforating the middle of the roof like a tower.

On all sides are seen the tokens of ancient industry. As stone abounds throughout these mountains, that material was, for fences, as ready to the hand as wood, besides being much more durable. Consequently the landscape is intersected in all directions with walls of uncommon neatness and strength.

The number and length of these walls is not more surprising than the size of some of the blocks comprising them. The very Titans seemed to have been at work. That so small an army as the first settlers must needs have been, should have taken such wonderful pains to enclose so ungrateful a soil; that they should have accomplished such herculean undertakings with so slight prospect of reward;

this is a consideration which gives us a significant hint of the temper of the men of the Revolutionary era.

Nor could a fitter country be found for the birthplace of the devoted patriot, Israel Potter.

To this day the best stone-wall builders, as the best wood-choppers, come from those solitary mountain towns; a tall, athletic, and hardy race, unerring with the axe as the Indian with the tomahawk; at stone-rolling, patient as Sisyphus, powerful as Samson.

In fine clear June days, the bloom of these mountains is beyond expression delightful. Last visiting these heights ere she vanishes, Spring, like the sunset, flings her sweetest charms upon them. Each tuft of upland grass is musked like a bouquet with perfume. The balmy breeze swings to and fro like a censer. On one side the eye follows for the space of an eagle's flight, the serpentine mountain chains, southwards from the great purple dome of Taconic —the St. Peter's of these hills—northwards to the twin summits of Saddleback, which is the two-steepled natural cathedral of Berkshire; while low down to the west the Housatonie winds on in her watery labyrinth, through charming meadows basking in the reflected rays from the hill-sides. At this season the beauty of every thing around you populates the loneliness of your way. You would not have the country more settled if you could. Content to drink in such loveliness at all your senses, the heart desires no company but Nature.

With what rapture you behold, hovering over some vast hollow of the hills, or slowly drifting at an immense height over the far sunken Housatonie valley, some lordly eagle, who in unshared exaltation looks down equally upon plain and mountain. Or you behold a hawk sallying from some

crag, like a Rhenish baron of old from his pinnacled castle, and darting down towards the river for his prey. Or perhaps, lazily gliding about in the zenith, this ruffian fowl is suddenly beset by a crow, who with stubborn audacity pecks at him, and, spite of all his bravery, finally persecutes him back to his stronghold. The otherwise dauntless bandit, soaring at his topmost height, must needs succumb to this sable image of death. Nor are there wanting many smaller and less famous fowl, who without contributing to the grandeur, yet greatly add to the beauty of the scene. The yellow-bird flits like a winged jonquil here and there; like knots of violets the blue-birds sport in clusters upon the grass; while hurrying from the pasture to the grove, the red robin seems an incendiary putting torch to the trees. Meanwhile the air is vocal with their hymns, and your own soul joys in the general joy. Like a stranger in an orchestra, you cannot help singing yourself when all around you raise such hosannas.

But in autumn, those gay northerners, the birds, return to their southern plantations. The mountains are left bleak and sere. Solitude settles down upon them in drizzling mists. The traveller is beset, at perilous turns, by dense masses of fog. He emerges for a moment into more penetrable air; and passing some gray, abandoned house, sees the lofty vapors plainly eddy by its desolate door; just as from the plain you may see it eddy by the pinnacles of distant and lonely heights. Or, dismounting from his frightened horse, he leads him down some scowling glen, where the road steeply dips among grim rocks, only to rise as abruptly again; and as he warily picks his way, uneasy at the menacing scene, he sees some ghost-like object looming through the mist at the roadside; and wending towards it, beholds a rude white stone, uncouthly inscribed, marking the spot where, some fifty or sixty years ago, some

farmer was upset in his wood-sled, and perished beneath the load.

In winter this region is blocked up with snow. Inaccessible and impassable, those wild, unfrequented roads, which in August are overgrown with high grass, in December are drifted to the arm-pit with the white fleece from the sky. As if an ocean rolled between man and man, intercommunication is often suspended for weeks and weeks.

Such, at this day, is the country which gave birth to our hero: prophetically styled Israel by the good Puritans, his parents, since, for more than forty years, poor Potter wandered in the wild wilderness of the world's extremest hardships and ills.

How little he thought, when, as a boy, hunting after his father's stray cattle among these New England hills he himself like a beast should be hunted through half of Old England, as a runaway rebel. Or, how could he ever have dreamed, when involved in the autumnal vapors of these mountains, that worse bewilderments awaited him three thousand miles across the sea, wandering forlorn in the coal-foes of London. But so it was destined to be. This little boy of the hills, born in sight of the sparkling Housatonic, was to linger out the best part of his life a prisoner or a pauper upon the grimy banks of the Thames.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE YOUTHFUL ADVENTURES OF ISRAEL.

Imagination will easily picture the rural day of the youth of Israel.
Let us pass on to a less immature period.

It appears that he began his wanderings very early; moreover, that ere, on just principles throwing off the yoke off his king, Israel, on equally excusable grounds, emancipated himself from his sire. He continued in the enjoyment of parental love till the age of eighteen, when, having formed an attachment for a neighbor's daughter—for some reason, not deemed a suitable match by his father—he was severely reprimanded, warned to discontinue his visits, and threatened with some disgraceful punishment in case he persisted. As the girl was not only beautiful, but amiable—though, as will be seen, rather weak—and her family as respectable as any, though unfortunately but poor, Israel deemed his father's conduct unreasonable and oppressive; particularly as it turned out that he had taken secret means to thwart his son with the girl's connections, if not with the girl herself, so as to place almost insurmountable obstacles to an eventual marriage. For it had not been the purpose of Israel to marry at once, but at a future day, when prudence should approve the step. So, oppressed by his father, and bitterly disappointed in his love, the desperate boy formed the determination to quit them both for another home and other friends.

It was on Sunday, while the family were gone to a farmhouse church near by, that he packed up as much of his clothing as might be contained in a handkerchief, which, with a small quantity of provision, he hid in a piece of woods in the rear of the house. He then returned, and continued in the house till about nine in the evening, when, pretending to go to bed, he passed out of a back door, and hastened to the woods for his bundle.

It was a sultry night in July; and that he might travel with the more ease on the succeeding day, he lay down at the foot of a pine tree, reposing himself till an hour before

dawn, when, upon awaking, he heard the soft, prophetic sighing of the pine, stirred by the first breath of the morning. Like the leaflets of that evergreen, all the fibres of his heart trembled within him; tears fell from his eyes. But he thought of the tyranny of his father, and what seemed to him the faithlessness of his love; and shouldering his bundle, arose, and marched on.

His intention was to reach the new countries to the northward and westward, lying between the Dutch settlements on the Hudson, and the Yankee settlements on the Housatonic. This was mainly to elude all search. For the same reason, for the first ten or twelve miles, shunning the public roads, he travelled through the woods; for he knew that he would soon be missed and pursued.

He reached his destination in safety; hired out to a farmer for a month through the harvest; then crossed from the Hudson to the Connecticut. Meeting here with an adventurer to the unknown regions lying about the head waters of the latter river, he ascended with this man in a canoe, paddling and pulling for many miles. Here again he hired himself out for three months; at the end of that time to receive for his wages two hundred acres of land lying in New Hampshire. The cheapness of the land was not alone owing to the newness of the country, but to the perils investing it. Not only was it a wilderness abounding with wild beasts, but the widely-scattered inhabitants were in continual dread of being, at some unguarded moment, destroyed or made captive by the Canadian savages, who, ever since the French war, had improved every opportunity to make forays across the defenceless frontier.

His employer proving false to his contract in the matter of the land, and there being no law in the country to force him to fulfil it, Israel—who, however brave-hearted, and even

much of a dare-devil upon a pinch, seems nevertheless to have evinced, throughout many parts of his career, a singular patience and mildness—was obliged to look round for other means of livelihood than clearing out a farm for himself in the wilderness. A party of royal surveyors were at this period surveying the unsettled regions bordering the Connecticut river to its source. At fifteen shillings per month, he engaged himself to this party as assistant chain-bearer, little thinking that the day was to come when he should clank the king's chains in a dungeon, even as now he trailed them a free ranger of the woods. It was midwinter; the land was surveyed upon snow-shoes. At the close of the day, fires were kindled with dry hemlock, a hut thrown up, and the party ate and slept.

Paid off at last, Israel bought a gun and ammunition, and turned hunter. Deer, beaver, etc., were plenty. In two or three months he had many skins to show. I suppose it never entered his mind that he was thus qualifying himself for a marksman of men. But thus were tutored those wonderful shots who did such execution at Bunker's Hill; these, the hunter-soldiers, whom Putnam bade wait till the white of the enemy's eye was seen.

With the result of his hunting he purchased a hundred acres of land, further down the river, toward the more settled parts; built himself a log hut, and in two summers, with his own hands, cleared thirty acres for sowing. In the winter seasons he hunted and trapped. At the end of the two years, he sold back his land—now much improved—to the original owner, at an advance of fifty pounds. He conveyed his cash and furs to Charlestown, on the Connecticut (sometimes called No. 4), where he trafficked them away for Indian blankets, pigments, and other showy articles adapted to the business of a trader among savages. It was now winter again. Putting his goods on a hand-sled,

he started towards Canada, a peddler in the wilderness, stopping at wigwams instead of cottages. One fancies that, had it been summer, Israel would have travelled with a wheelbarrow, and so trundled his wares through the primeval forests, with the same indifference as porters roll their barrows over the flagging of streets. In this way was bred that fearless self-reliance and independence which conducted our forefathers to national freedom.

This Canadian trip proved highly successful. Selling his glittering goods at a great advance, he received in exchange valuable peltries and furs at a corresponding reduction. Returning to Charlestown, he disposed of his return cargo again at a very fine profit. And now, with a light heart and a heavy purse, he resolved to visit his sweetheart and parents, of whom, for three years, he had had no tidings.

They were not less astonished than delighted at his reappearance; he had been numbered with the dead. But his love still seemed strangely coy; willing, but yet somehow mysteriously withheld. The old intrigues were still on foot. Israel soon discovered, that though rejoiced to welcome the return of the prodigal son—so some called him—his father still remained inflexibly determined against the match, and still inexplicably countermined his wooing. With a dolorous heart he mildly yielded to what seemed his fatality; and more intrepid in facing peril for himself, than in endangering others by maintaining his rights (for he was now one-and-twenty), resolved once more to retreat, and quit his blue hills for the bluer billows.

A hermitage in the forest is the refuge of the narrow-minded misanthrope; a hammock on the ocean is the asylum for the generous distressed. The ocean brims with

natural griefs and tragedies; and into that watery immensity of terror, man's private grief is lost like a drop.

Travelling on foot to Providence, Rhode Island, Israel shipped on board a sloop, bound with lime to the West Indies. On the tenth day out, the vessel caught fire, from water communicating with the lime. It was impossible to extinguish the flames. The boat was hoisted out, but owing to long exposure to the sun, it needed continual bailing to keep it afloat. They had only time to put in a firkin of butter and a ten-gallon keg of water. Eight in number, the crew entrusted themselves to the waves, in a leaky tub, many leagues from land. As the boat swept under the burning bowsprit, Israel caught at a fragment of the flying-jib, which sail had fallen down the stay, owing to the charring, nigh the deck, of the rope which hoisted it. Tanned with the smoke, and its edge blackened with the fire, this bit of canvass helped them bravely on their way. Thanks to kind Providence, on the second day they were picked up by a Dutch ship, bound from Eustatia to Holland. The castaways were humanely received, and supplied with every necessary. At the end of a week, while unsophisticated Israel was sitting in the maintop, thinking what should befall him in Holland, and wondering what sort of unsettled, wild country it was, and whether there was any deer-shooting or beaver-trapping there, lo! an American brig, bound from Piscataqua to Antigua, comes in sight. The American took them aboard, and conveyed them safely to her port. There Israel shipped for Porto Rico; from thence, sailed to Eustatia.

Other rovings ensued; until at last, entering on board a Nantucket ship, he hunted the leviathan off the Western Islands and on the coast of Africa, for sixteen months; returning at length to Nantucket with a brimming hold. From that island he sailed again on another whaling

voyage, extending, this time, into the great South Sea. There, promoted to be harpooner, Israel, whose eye and arm had been so improved by practice with his gun in the wilderness, now further intensified his aim, by darting the whale-lance; still, unwittingly, preparing himself for the Bunker Hill rifle.

In this last voyage, our adventurer experienced to the extreme all the hardships and privations of the whaleman's life on a long voyage to distant and barbarous waters—hardships and privations unknown at the present day, when science has so greatly contributed, in manifold ways, to lessen the sufferings, and add to the comforts of seafaring men. Heartily sick of the ocean, and longing once more for the bush, Israel, upon receiving his discharge at Nantucket at the end of the voyage, hied straight back for his mountain home.

But if hopes of his sweetheart winged his returning flight, such hopes were not destined to be crowned with fruition. The dear, false girl was another's.

## CHAPTER III.

**ISRAEL GOES TO THE WARS; AND REACHING BUNKER HILL IN TIME TO BE OF SERVICE THERE, SOON AFTER IS FORCED TO EXTEND HIS TRAVELS ACROSS THE SEA INTO THE ENEMY'S LAND.**

Left to idle lamentations, Israel might now have planted deep furrows in his brow. But stifling his pain, he chose rather to plough, than be ploughed. Farming weans man from his sorrows. That tranquil pursuit tolerates nothing but tranquil meditations. There, too, in mother earth, you may plant and reap; not, as in other things, plant and see the planting torn up by the roots. But if wandering in the wilderness, and wandering upon the waters, if felling trees,

and hunting, and shipwreck, and fighting with whales, and all his other strange adventures, had not as yet cured poor Israel of his now hopeless passion, events were at hand for ever to drown it.

It was the year 1774. The difficulties long pending between the colonies and England were arriving at their crisis. Hostilities were certain. The Americans were preparing themselves. Companies were formed in most of the New England towns, whose members, receiving the name of minute-men, stood ready to march anywhere at a minute's warning. Israel, for the last eight months, sojourning as a laborer on a farm in Windsor, enrolled himself in the regiment of Colonel John Patterson of Lenox, afterwards General Patterson.

The battle of Lexington was fought on the 18th of April, 1775; news of it arrived in the county of Berkshire on the 20th about noon. The next morning at sunrise, Israel swung his knapsack, shouldered his musket, and, with Patterson's regiment, was on the march, quickstep, towards Boston.

Like Putnam, Israel received the stirring tidings at the plough. But although not less willing than Putnam to fly to battle at an instant's notice, yet—only half an acre of the field remaining to be finished—he whipped up his team and finished it. Before hastening to one duty, he would not leave a prior one undone; and ere helping to whip the British, for a little practice' sake, he applied the gad to his oxen. From the field of the farmer, he rushed to that of the soldier, mingling his blood with his sweat. While we revel in broadcloth, let us not forget what we owe to linsey-woolsey.

With other detachments from various quarters, Israel's regiment remained encamped for several days in the vicinity of Charlestown. On the seventeenth of June, one

thousand Americans, including the regiment of Patterson, were set about fortifying Bunker's Hill. Working all through the night, by dawn of the following day, the redoubt was thrown up. But every one knows all about the battle. Suffice it, that Israel was one of those marksmen whom Putnam harangued as touching the enemy's eyes. Forbearing as he was with his oppressive father and unfaithful love, and mild as he was on the farm, Israel was not the same at Bunker Hill. Putnam had enjoined the men to aim at the officers; so Israel aimed between the golden epaulettes, as, in the wilderness, he had aimed between the branching antlers. With dogged disdain of their foes, the English grenadiers marched up the hill with sullen slowness; thus furnishing still surer aims to the muskets which bristled on the redoubt. Modest Israel was used to aver, that considering his practice in the woods, he could hardly be regarded as an inexperienced marksman; hinting, that every shot which the epauletted grenadiers received from his rifle, would, upon a different occasion, have procured him a deerskin. And like stricken deers the English, rashly brave as they were, fled from the opening fire. But the marksman's ammunition was expended; a hand-to-hand encounter ensued. Not one American musket in twenty had a bayonet to it. So, wielding the stock right and left, the terrible farmers, with hats and coats off, fought their way among the furred grenadiers, knocking them right and left, as seal-hunters on the beach knock down with their clubs the Shetland seal. In the dense crowd and confusion, while Israel's musket got interlocked, he saw a blade horizontally menacing his feet from the ground. Thinking some fallen enemy sought to strike him at the last gasp, dropping his hold on his musket, he wrenched at the steel, but found that though a brave hand held it, that hand was powerless for ever. It was some British officer's laced sword-arm, cut from the trunk in the act of fighting, refusing to yield up its blade to the last. At