

*An allegory of the causes of the American Revolution*

# A PRETTY STORY

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD

2774

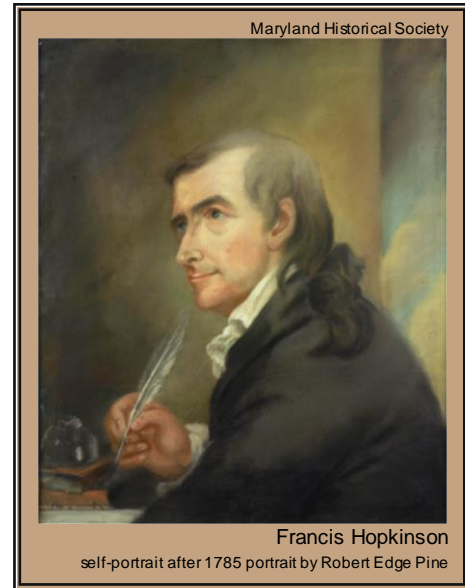
by

PETER GRIEVOUS, ESQUIRE

[Francis Hopkinson]

Williamsburg, Virginia, 1774 — EXCERPTS

A lawyer, statesman, signer of the Declaration of Independence, and a widely read political satirist, Francis Hopkinson penned this acerbic yet witty fable depicting the road to revolution in the American colonies.



## CHAPTER I.\*

Once upon a time, a great while ago, there lived a certain Nobleman who had long possessed a very valuable farm and had a great number of children and grandchildren. Besides the annual profits of his land, which were very considerable, he kept a large shop of goods; and, being very successful in trade, he became, in process of time, exceeding rich and powerful, insomuch that all his neighbors feared and respected him.

With respect to the management of his family, it was thought he had adopted the most perfect mode that could be devised, for he had been at the pains to examine the economy of all his neighbors and had selected from their plans all such parts as appeared to be equitable and beneficial, and omitted those which from experience were found to be inconvenient; or rather, by blending their several constitutions together, he had so ingeniously counterbalanced the evils of one mode of government with the benefits of another that the advantages were richly enjoyed and the inconveniencies scarcely felt. In short, his family was thought to be the best ordered of any in his neighborhood.

He never exercised any undue authority over his children or servants; neither, indeed, could he oppress them if he was so disposed, for it was particularly covenanted [agreed] in his marriage articles [vows] that he should not at any time impose any tasks or hardships whatever upon his children without the free consent of his wife.

Now the custom in his family was this, that at the end of every seven years his marriage became, of course, null and void, at which time his children and grandchildren met together and chose another wife for him, whom the old gentleman was obliged to marry under the same articles [vows] and restrictions as before. If his late [recent] wife had conducted herself during her seven years marriage with mildness, discretion, and integrity, she was selected; if otherwise, deposed. By which means the children had always a great interest in their stepmother,<sup>1</sup> and through her, a reasonable check upon their father's temper. For besides that he could do nothing material respecting his children without her approbation [approval], she was sole mistress of the purse strings and gave him out, from time to time, such sums of money as she thought necessary for the expenses of his family.

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\* Ch. 1. Who/what is represented in the allegory by the *nobleman*? his *family*? the *valuable farm*? the *large shop of goods*? the *perfect mode* of managing the family? the *selection of a new wife* every seven years by the children and grandchildren? the *stepmother* who is "sole mistress of the purse strings"? the *GREAT PAPER*?

<sup>1</sup> Hopkinson uses the term mother-in-law, which in English of the period (and still in French: *belle-mère*) also meant stepmother. Here *mother-in-law* is replaced with *stepmother* throughout the allegory.

Being one day in a very extraordinary good humor, he gave his children a writing under his hand and seal by which he released them from many badges of dependence and confirmed to them several very important privileges. The chief were the two followings, viz. [namely] that none of his children should be punished for any offense or supposed offense, until his brethren had first declared him worthy of such punishment, and secondly, he gave fresh assurances that he would impose no hardships upon them without the consent of their stepmother.

This writing, on account of its singular importance, was called THE GREAT PAPER. . . .

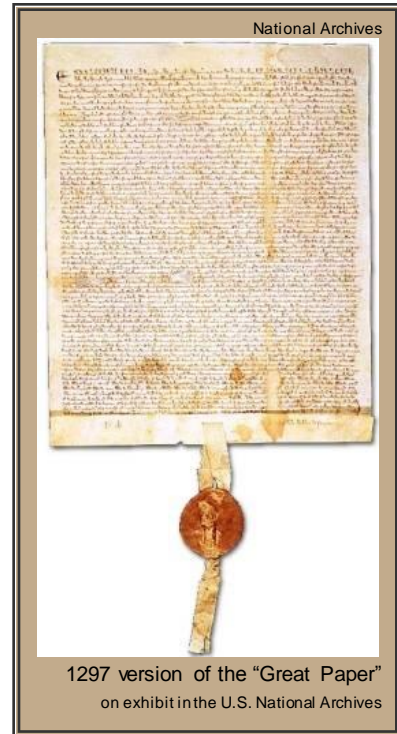
## CHAPTER II.\*

NOW it came to pass that this Nobleman had, by some means or other, obtained a right to an immense tract of wild, uncultivated country at a vast distance from his mansion house. But he set little store by this acquisition as it yielded him no profit, nor was it likely to do so, being not only difficult of access on account of the distance, but was also overrun with innumerable wild beasts, very fierce and savage, so that it would be extremely dangerous to attempt taking possession of it.

In process of time, however, some of his children, more stout and enterprising than the rest, requested leave [permission] of their father to go and settle on this distant tract of land. Leave was readily obtained, but before they set out certain agreements were stipulated between them. The principal were: The old Gentleman, on his part, engaged [promised] to protect and defend the adventurers in their new settlements, to assist them in chasing away the wild beasts, and to extend to them all the benefits of the government under which they were born, assuring them that although they should be removed so far from his presence, they should nevertheless be considered as the children of his family, and treated accordingly. At the same time he gave each of them a bond for the faithful performance of these promises in which, among other things, it was covenanted that they should, each of them in their several [individual] families, have a liberty of making such rules and regulations for their own good government as they should find convenient, provided these rules and regulations should not contradict, or be inconsistent with, the general standing orders established in his farm.

In return for these favors, he insisted that they, on their parts, should at all times acknowledge him to be their father, that they should not deal [trade] with their neighbors without his leave but send to his shop only for such merchandise as they should want. But in order to enable them to pay for such goods as they should purchase, they were permitted to sell the produce of their lands to certain of his neighbors.

These preliminaries being duly adjusted, our adventurers bid adieu to the comforts and conveniences of their father's house and set off on their journey. Many and great difficulties they encountered on their way, but many more, and much greater, had they to combat on their arrival in the new country. Here they found nothing but wild nature. Mountains overgrown with inaccessible foliage, and plains steeped in stagnated waters. Their ears are no longer attentive to the repeated strokes of industrious labor and the busy hum of men; instead of these, the roaring tempest and incessant howlings of beasts of prey fill their minds with horror and dismay. The needful comforts of life are no longer in their power — no friendly roof to shelter them from inclement skies, no fortress to protect them from surrounding dangers. Unaccustomed as they were to hardships like these, some were cut off by sickness and disease, and others snatched away by the hands of barbarity [Indians]. They began, however, with great perseverance, to



<sup>2</sup> The omitted chapter conclusion relates to the condemnation of the Magna Carta in 1253 by the Archbishop of Canterbury, head of the Anglican church.

\* Ch. 2. Who/what is represented in the allegory by the *wild, uncultivated country*? the *certain agreements* and *bonds* between father and children? the *new farm* created by the adventuresome children?



A Design to Represent the Beginning and Completion of an American Settlement or Farm, 1768 (detail)  
engraving after sketch by Thomas Pownall, in *Scenographia Americana*, London, 1768

clear the land of encumbering rubbish, and the woods resound with the strokes of labor. They drain the waters from the sedged morass and pour the sunbeams on the reeking soil. They are forced to exercise all the powers of industry and economy for bare subsistence and, like their first parent when driven from Paradise, to earn their bread with the sweat of their brows. In this work they were frequently interrupted by the incursions of the wild beasts, against whom they defended themselves with heroic prowess and magnanimity.

After some time, however, by dint of indefatigable perseverance, they found themselves comfortably settled in this new farm, and had the delightful prospect of vast tracts of land waving with luxuriant harvests and perfuming the air with delicious fruits, which before had been a dreary wilderness, unfit for the habitation of men.

In the meantime, they kept up a constant correspondence with their father's family, and at a great expense provided wagons, horses, and drivers to bring from his shop such goods and merchandise as they wanted, for which they paid out of the produce of their lands.

### CHAPTER III.\*

**N**OW the new settlers had adopted a mode of government in their several families similar to that their father had established in the old farm, in taking a new wife at the end of certain periods of time, which wife was chosen for them by their children, and without whose consent they could do nothing material in the conduct of their affairs. Under these circumstances they thrived exceedingly and became very numerous, living in great harmony amongst themselves and in constitutional obedience to their father and his wife.

Notwithstanding their successful progress, however, they were frequently annoyed by the wild beasts, which were not yet expelled [from] the country, and were moreover troubled by some of their neighbors who wanted to drive them off the land and take possession of it themselves.

To assist them in these difficulties and protect them from danger, the old Nobleman sent over several of his servants who with the help of the new settlers drove away their enemies. But then he required that they should reimburse him for the expense and trouble he was at in their behalf. This they did with great cheerfulness by applying from time to time to their respective wives, who always commanded their cash.

Intercolonial Wars, esp.  
the French & Indian  
War, 1754-1763<sup>†</sup>

\* Ch. 3. Who/what is represented in the allegory by the *neighbors* who want to drive the children off the land? the father's *servants* who help defeat the neighbors, and the "lazy and useless" *servants* sent to give them jobs? the *reimbursement* demanded by the father? the *imperceptible steps* of the stepmother's plan for wealth and power? the settler's *refusal* to "provide bread and butter cut in a particular form"?

<sup>†</sup> Chronology sidebars added by NHC; not in original Hopkinson text.



Thus did matters go on for a considerable time to their mutual happiness and benefit. But now the Nobleman's wife began to cast an avaricious eye upon the new settlers, saying to herself, if by the natural consequences of their intercourse [trade] with us my wealth and power are so much increased, how much more would they accumulate if I can persuade them that all they have belonged to us, and therefore I may at any time demand from them such part of their earnings as I please. At the same time she was fully sensible of the promises and agreements her husband had made when they left the old farm and of the tenor and purport of the *Great Paper*. She therefore thought it necessary to proceed with great caution and art, and endeavored to gain her point by imperceptible steps.

In order to [do] this, she first issued an edict setting forth that, whereas the tailors of her family were greatly injured by the people of the new farm, inasmuch as they presumed to make their own clothes, whereby the said tailors were deprived of the benefit of their custom [trade], it was therefore ordained that for the future the new settlers should not be permitted to have amongst them any shears or scissors larger than a certain fixed size. In consequence of this, our adventurers were compelled to have their clothes made by their father's tailors, but out of regard to the old gentleman, they patiently submitted to this grievance.

Wool, hat, and iron production restrictions, 1699, 1732, 1750

Encouraged by this success, she proceeded in her plan. Observing that the new settlers were very fond of a particular kind of cider which they purchased of a neighbor, who was in friendship with their father (the apples proper for making this cider not growing on their own farm), she published another edict obliging them to pay her a certain stipend for every barrel of cider used in their families! To this likewise they submitted, not yet seeing the scope of her designs against them.

Import tax increase on molasses (for rum manufacture), 1733

After this manner [in this way] she proceeded, imposing taxes upon them on various pretenses and receiving the fruits of their industry with both hands. Moreover, she persuaded her husband to send amongst them from time to time a number of the most lazy and useless of his servants under the specious pretext of defending them in their settlements and of assisting to destroy the wild beasts; but in fact to rid his own house of their company, not having employment for them, and at the same time to be a watch and check upon the people of the new farm.

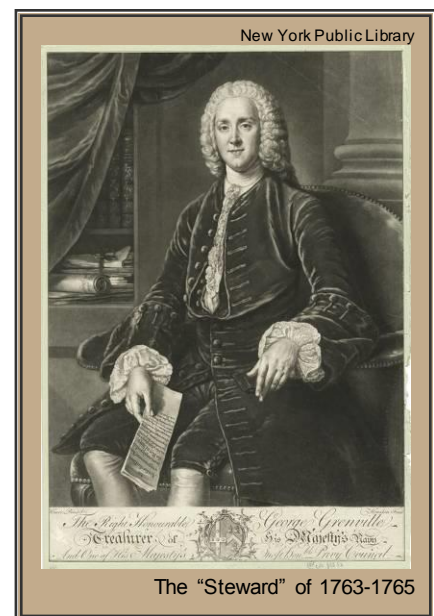
It was likewise ordered that these protectors, as they were called, should be supplied with bread and butter cut in a particular form, but the head of one of the families refused to comply with this order. He engaged to give the guests, thus forced upon him, bread and butter sufficient, but insisted that his wife should have the liberty of cutting it in what shape she pleased.

Quartering Acts 1765, 1774

This put the old Nobleman into a violent passion, insomuch that he had his son's wife put into jail for presuming to cut her loaf otherwise than had been directed.

#### CHAPTER IV. \*

AS the old Gentleman advanced in years, he began to neglect the affairs of his family, leaving them chiefly to the management of his steward. Now the steward had debauched his wife, and by that means gained an entire ascendancy [power] over her. She no longer deliberated what would most benefit either the old farm or the new, but said and did whatever the steward pleased. Nay, so much was she influenced by him that she could neither utter *Ay* or *No* but as he directed. For he had cunningly persuaded her that it was very fashionable for women to wear padlocks on their lips, and that he was sure they would become her exceedingly. He therefore fastened a padlock to each corner of her mouth. When the one was open, she



\* Ch. 4. Who/what is represented in the allegory by the steward and the steward's having gained an entire ascendancy over the nobleman's wife, the "old lady"? the forced marking of knives and spoons? the supplicating letters to the father? the doctrine of the "omnipotent" stepmother?



could only say *Ay*, and when the other was loosed, could only cry *No*. He took care to keep the keys of these locks himself, so that her will became entirely subject to his power.

Now the old Lady and the steward had set themselves against the people of the new farm and began to devise ways and means to impoverish and distress them.

They prevailed on the Nobleman to sign an edict against the new settlers in which it was declared that it was their duty, as children, to pay something towards the supplying their father's table with provisions, and to the supporting the dignity of his family; and for that purpose it was ordained that all their spoons, knives, and forks, plates and porringers [bowls], should be marked with a certain mark by officers appointed for that end, for which marking they were to pay a certain stipend; and that they should not, under severe penalties, presume

Stamp Act  
1765

to make use of any spoon, knife or fork, plate or porringer, before it had been so marked and the said stipend paid to the officer.

The inhabitants of the new farm began to see that their father's affections were alienated from them, and that their mother was but a base stepmother, debauched by their enemy, the steward. They were thrown into great confusion and distress. They wrote the most supplicating letters to the old Gentleman in which they acknowledged him to be their father in terms of the greatest respect and affection. They recounted to him the hardships and difficulties they had suffered in settling his new farm and pointed out the great addition of wealth and power his family had acquired by the improvement of that wilderness, and showed him that all the fruits of the labors must, in the natural course of things, unite in the long run in his money box.

They also, in humble terms, reminded him of his promises and engagements on their leaving home, and of the bonds he had given them, of the solemnity and importance of the *Great Paper* . . .<sup>3</sup> They acknowledged that he ought to be reimbursed the expenses he was at on their account, and that it was their duty to assist in supporting the dignity of his family. All this they declared they were ready and willing to do, but requested that they might do it agreeable to the purport of the *Great Paper* by applying to their several wives for the keys of their money boxes, and furnishing him from thence, and not be subject to the tyranny and caprice of an avaricious stepmother whom they had never chosen, and of a steward who was their declared enemy.

Some of these letters were intercepted by the steward. Others were delivered to the old Gentleman who was at the same time persuaded to take no notice of them, but, on the contrary, to inflict the more strenuously upon the right his wife claimed of marking their spoons, knives and forks, plates and porringers.

The new settlers, observing how matters were conducted in their father's family, became exceedingly distressed and mortified. They met together and agreed, one and all, that they would no longer submit to the arbitrary impositions of their stepmother and their enemy, the steward. They determined to pay no manner of regard to the new decree, considering it as a violation of the *Great Paper*, but to go on and eat their broth and pudding as usual. The cooks also and butlers served up their spoons, knives, and forks, plates and porringers without having them marked by the new officers.

Stamp Act Congress  
1765

The Nobleman at length thought fit to reverse the order which had been made respecting [concerning] the spoons, knives, and forks, plates and porringers, of the new settlers, but he did this with a very ill grace, for he at the same time avowed and declared that he and his wife had a right to mark all their furniture, if they pleased, from the silver tankard down to the very chamber pots, that, as he was their father, he had a absolute control over them, and that their liberties, lives, and properties were at the

Stamp Act Repeal, 18 March 1766

Declaratory Act, 18 March 1766

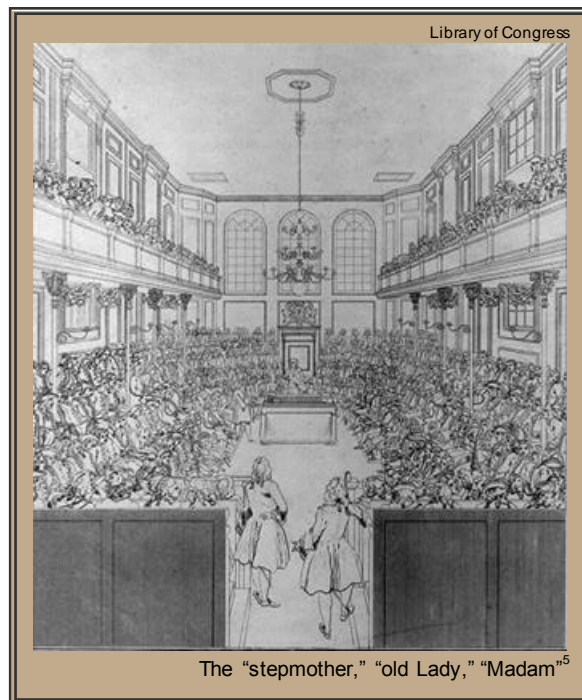
<sup>3</sup> See footnote 2.

entire disposal of him and his wife, that it was not fit that he who was allowed to be *omnipresent, immortal, and incapable of error*<sup>4</sup> should be confined by the shackles of the *Great Paper* or obliged to fulfill the bonds he had given them, which he averred he had a right to cancel whenever he pleased.

His wife also became intoxicated with vanity. The steward had told her that she was an *omnipotent Goddess* and ought to be worshipped as such, that it was the height of impudence and disobedience in the new settlers to dispute her authority which, with respect to them, was unlimited; that, as they had moved from their father's family, they had forfeited all pretensions to be considered as his children, and left the privileges of the *Great Paper*; that, therefore, she might look on them only as tenants at will upon her husband's farm and exact from them what rent she pleased.

All this was perfectly agreeable to Madam, who admitted this new doctrine in its full sense.

The people of the new farm, however, took little notice of these pompous declarations. They were glad the marking decree was reversed and were in hopes that things were gradually settle into their former channel [mode of life].



## CHAPTER V. \*

**I**N the meantime the new settlers increased exceedingly, and as they increased their dealings at their father's shop were proportionably enlarged.

It is true they suffered some inconveniences from the protectors that had been sent amongst them, who became very troublesome in their houses. They seduced their daughters, introduced riot and intemperance into their families, and derided and insulted the orders and regulations they had made for their own good government. Moreover the old Nobleman had sent amongst them a great number of thieves, ravishers, and murderers, who did a great deal of mischief by practicing those crimes for which they had been banished [from] the old farm. But they bore these grievances with as much patience as could be expected, not choosing to trouble their aged father with complaints, unless in cases of important necessity.

Now the steward continued to hate the new settlers with exceeding great hatred and determined to renew his attack upon their peace and happiness. He artfully insinuated to the old Gentleman and his foolish wife that it was very mean and unbecoming in them to receive the contributions of the people of the new farm towards supporting the dignity of his family through the hands of their respective wives; that upon this footing it would be in their power to refuse his requisitions whenever they should be thought to be unreasonable, of which they would pretend to be judges themselves; and that it was high time they should be compelled to acknowledge his arbitrary power and his wife's *Omnipotence*.

For this purpose another decree was prepared and published, ordering that the new settlers should pay a certain stipend [tax] upon particular goods which they were not allowed to purchase anywhere but at their father's shop, and that this stipend should not be deemed an advance upon the original price of the goods but be paid on their arrival at the new farm, for the express purpose of supporting the dignity of the old Gentleman's family and of defraying the expenses he affected to afford them.

Revenue Act, 1767  
(one of the Townshend Acts)

<sup>4</sup> I.e., with godlike powers.

<sup>5</sup> As "she" appeared in 1741-42; courtesy of the Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-50207.

\* Ch. 5. Who/what is represented in the allegory by the *protectors*? the banished *thieves, ravishers, and murderer*? the children's *solemn engagement* not to deal anymore at their father's shop? the *Water Gruel* that continued to be taxed? the *Gruel merchants*? The *decoy* meant to trick the settlers?



This new decree gave our adventurers the utmost uneasiness. They saw that the steward and their stepmother were determined to oppress and enslave them. They again met together and wrote to their father, as before, the most humble and persuasive letters, but to little purpose. A deaf ear was turned to all their remonstrances and their dutiful requests treated with contempt.

Finding this moderate and decent conduct brought them no relief, they had recourse to another expedient. They bound themselves in a solemn engagement not to deal anymore at their father's shop until this unconstitutional decree should be reversed, which they declared to be a violation of the *Great Paper*.

This agreement was so strictly adhered to that in a few months the clerks and apprentices in the old gentleman's shop began to make a sad outcry. They declared that their master's trade was declining exceedingly and that his wife and steward would, by their mischievous machinations, ruin the whole farm. They forthwith sharpened their pens and attacked the steward, and even the old lady herself, with great severity, insomuch that it was thought proper to withdraw this attempt likewise upon the rights and liberties of the new settlers. One part only of the new decree remained unreserved, viz. the tax upon *Water Gruel*.

Now there were certain men on the old farm who had obtained from the nobleman an exclusive right of selling *Water Gruel*. Vast quantities of this *Gruel* were vended [sold] amongst the new settlers, for it became very fashionable for them to use it in their families in great abundance. They did not, however, trouble themselves much about the tax on *Water Gruel*; they were

well pleased with the reversal of the other parts of the decree and, considering *Gruel* as not absolutely necessary to the comfort of life, they were determined to endeavor to do without it, and by that means avoid the remaining effects of the new decree.

The steward found his designs [plans] once more frustrated, but was not discouraged by this disappointment. He formed another scheme, so artfully contrived that he thought himself sure of success. He sent for the persons who had the sole right of vending *Water Gruel* and after reminding them of the obligations they were under to the Nobleman and his wife for their exclusive privilege, he desired that they would send sundry [a number of] wagon loads of *Gruel* to the new farm, promising that the accustomed duty which they paid for their exclusive right should be taken off from all the *Gruel* they should send amongst the new settlers, and that in case their cargoes should come to any damage, he would take care that the loss should be repaired out of the old Gentleman's coffers.

The *Gruel* merchants readily consented to this proposal, knowing that if their cargoes were sold they would reap considerable profits, and if they failed the steward was to make good the damage. On the other hand, the steward concluded that the new settlers could not resist purchasing the *Gruel* to which they had been so long accustomed, and if they did purchase it when subject to the tax aforesaid, this would be an avowed acknowledgment on their parts that their father and his wife had a right to break through the tenor [meaning] of the *Great Paper* and to lay on them what impositions they pleased, without the consent of their respective wives.

But the new settlers were well aware of this decoy. They saw clearly that the *Gruel* was not sent to accommodate but to enslave them, and they if they suffered [allowed] any part of it to be sold amongst them it would be deemed a submission to the assumed *Omnipotence* of the *Great Madam*.



<sup>6</sup> Created by Josiah Austin (American, 1719/20–ca. 1780); Metropolitan Museum of Art, #24.109.7; reproduced by permission.

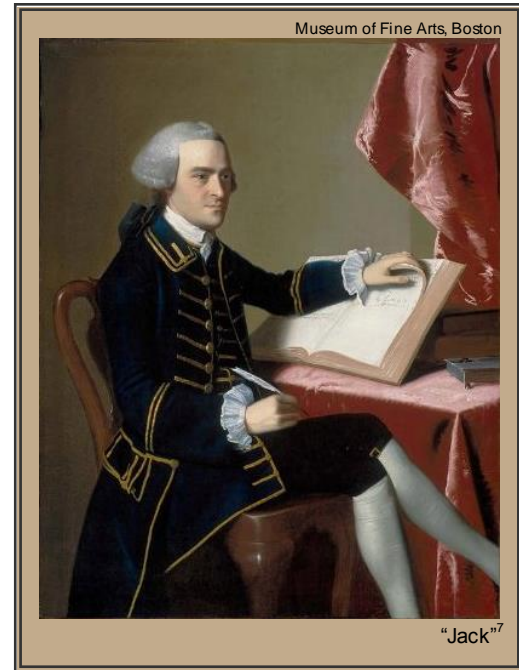
## CHAPTER VI.\*

ON the arrival of the *Water Gruel*, the people of the new farm were again thrown into great alarms and confusions. Some of them would not suffer [allow] the wagons to be unloaded at all but sent them immediately back to the *Gruel* merchants. Others permitted the wagons to unload but would not touch the hateful commodity, so that it lay neglected about their roads and highways until it grew sour and spoiled. But one of the new settlers, whose name was *Jack*, either from a keener sense of the injuries attempted against him, or from the necessity of his situation, which was such that he could not send back the *Gruel* because of a number of mercenaries whom his father had stationed before his house to watch and be a check upon his conduct, he, I say, being almost driven to despair, fell to work, and with great zeal stove to pieces the casks of *Gruel* which had been sent him and utterly demolished the whole cargo.

These proceedings were soon known at the old farm. Great and terrible was the uproar there. The old Gentleman fell into great wrath, declaring that his absent children meant to throw off all dependence upon him and to become altogether disobedient. His wife also tore the padlocks from her lips, and raved and stormed like a Billingsgate.<sup>8</sup> The steward lost all patience and moderation, swearing most profanely that he would leave no stone unturned till he had *humbled the settlers of the new farm at his feet*<sup>9</sup> and caused their father to trample on their necks. Moreover, the *Gruel* merchants roared and bellowed for the loss of their *Gruel*, and the clerks and apprentices were in the utmost consternations, lest the people of the new farm should again agree to have no dealings with their father's shop. Vengeance was immediately set on foot, particularly against *Jack*. With him they determined to begin, hoping that by making an example of him they should so terrify the other families of the new settlers that they would all submit to the designs of the steward and the *Omnipotence* of the old Lady.

A very large *Padlock* was accordingly prepared to be fastened upon *Jack's* great gate, the key of which was to be given to the old Gentleman, who was not to open it again until he [Jack] had paid for the *Gruel* he had spilt and resigned all claim to the privileges of the *Great Paper*; nor then, neither, unless he [Gentleman] thought fit. Secondly, a decree was made to new model the regulations and economy of *Jack's* family in such manner that they might for the future be more subject to the will of the steward. And thirdly, a large gallows was erected before the mansion house in the old farm, and an order made that if any of *Jack's* children or servants should be suspected of misbehavior they should not be convicted or acquitted by the consent of the brethren (agreeable to the purport of the *Great Paper*) but to be tied neck and heels and dragged to the gallows at the mansion house, and there be hanged without mercy.

No sooner did tidings [news] of this undue severity reach the new farm but the people were almost ready to despair. They were altogether at a loss how to act or by what means they should avert the vengeance to which they were doomed, but the old Lady and steward soon determined the matter, for the *Padlock* was sent over and without ceremony fastened upon *Jack's* great gate. They did not wait to know whether he would pay for the *Gruel* or not, or make the required acknowledgements, nor give him the



Boston Port Pill, 1774  
(one of the Coercive Acts)

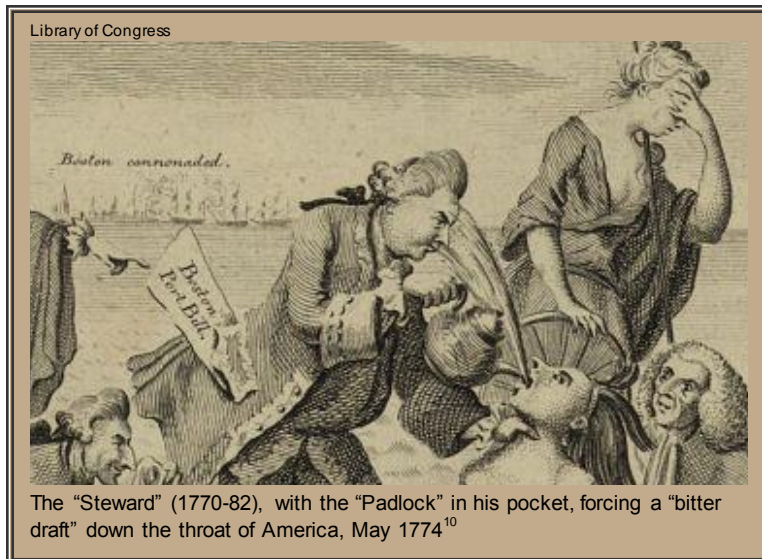
\* Ch. 6. Who/what is represented in the allegory by the unloaded wagons? the merchant *Jack*? the destruction of the *whole cargo* of *Gruel*? the *Padlock* on "*Jack's* great gate"? the *gallows* at the mansion house? the new *overseer*?

<sup>7</sup> Oil portrait by John Singleton Copley, 1765; Museum of Fine Arts Boston, #L-R 30.76d; reproduced by permission.

<sup>8</sup> Billingsgate: London fish market known for the loud boisterous calls of the fishmongers.

<sup>9</sup> The British "steward" ostensibly asserted that the reviled act would not be repealed until America is "prostrate at our feet."





least opportunity to make his defense. The great gate was locked and the key given to the old Nobleman, as had been determined.

Poor *Jack* found himself in a most deplorable condition. The great inlet to his farm was entirely blocked up so that he could neither carry out the produce of his land for sale nor receive from abroad the necessaries for his family.

But this was not all. His father, along with the *Padlock* aforesaid, had sent an overseer to hector and domineer over him and his family, and to endeavor to break his spirit by exercising every possible severity, for

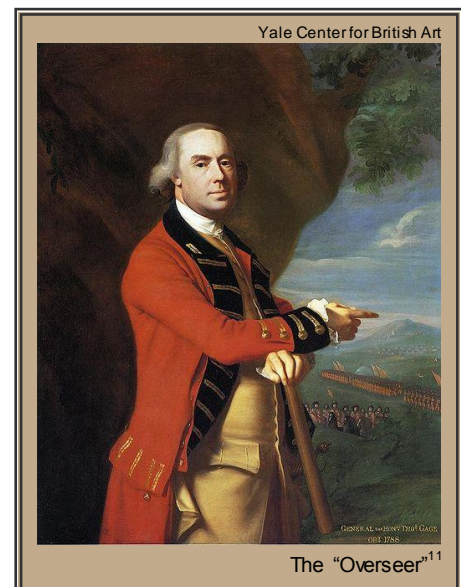
which purpose he was attended by a great number of mercenaries and armed with more than common authorities.

On his first arrival in *Jack's* family he was received with considerable respect because he was the delegate of their aged father, for, notwithstanding all that had passed, the people of the new settlers loved and revered the old Gentleman with a truly filial attachment, attributing his unkindness entirely to the intrigue of their enemy, the steward. But this fair weather did not last long. The new overseer took the first opportunity of showing that he had no intentions of living in harmony and friendship with the family. Some of *Jack's* domestics [servants] had put on their Sunday clothes and attended [waited for] the overseer in the great parlor in order to pay him their compliments on his arrival and to request his assistance in reconciling them to their father, but he rudely stopped them short in the midst of their speech, called them a parcel of disobedient scoundrels, and bid them go about their business. So saying, he turned upon his heel and with great contempt left the room.

## CHAPTER VII. \*

NOW *Jack* and his family, finding themselves oppressed, insulted, and tyrannized over in the most cruel and arbitrary manner, advised with their brethren what measures would be adopted to relieve them from their intolerable grievances. Their brethren, one and all, united in sympathizing with their afflictions. They advised them to bear their suffering with fortitude for a time, assuring them that they looked on the punishments and insults laid upon them with the same indignation as if they been inflicted on themselves, and that they would stand by and support them to the last. But, above all, earnestly recommended it to them to be firm and steady in the cause of liberty and justice, and never acknowledge the *Omnipotence* of their stepmother nor yield to the machinations of their enemy, the steward.

In the meantime, lest *Jack's* family should suffer for want of



<sup>10</sup> *The Able Doctor, or, America Swallowing the Bitter Draught*, London, 1 May 1774 (detail); courtesy of the Library of Congress, #LC-DIG-ppmsca-19467.

\* Ch. 7. Who/what is represented in the allegory by the *brethren* "united in sympathizing" with *Jack's* family? the *seasonable bounty* collected for *Jack's* family? the overseer's *thundering proclamation*?

<sup>11</sup> Oil portrait by John Singleton Copley, 1768-1769, Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B1977.14.45; reproduced by permission.

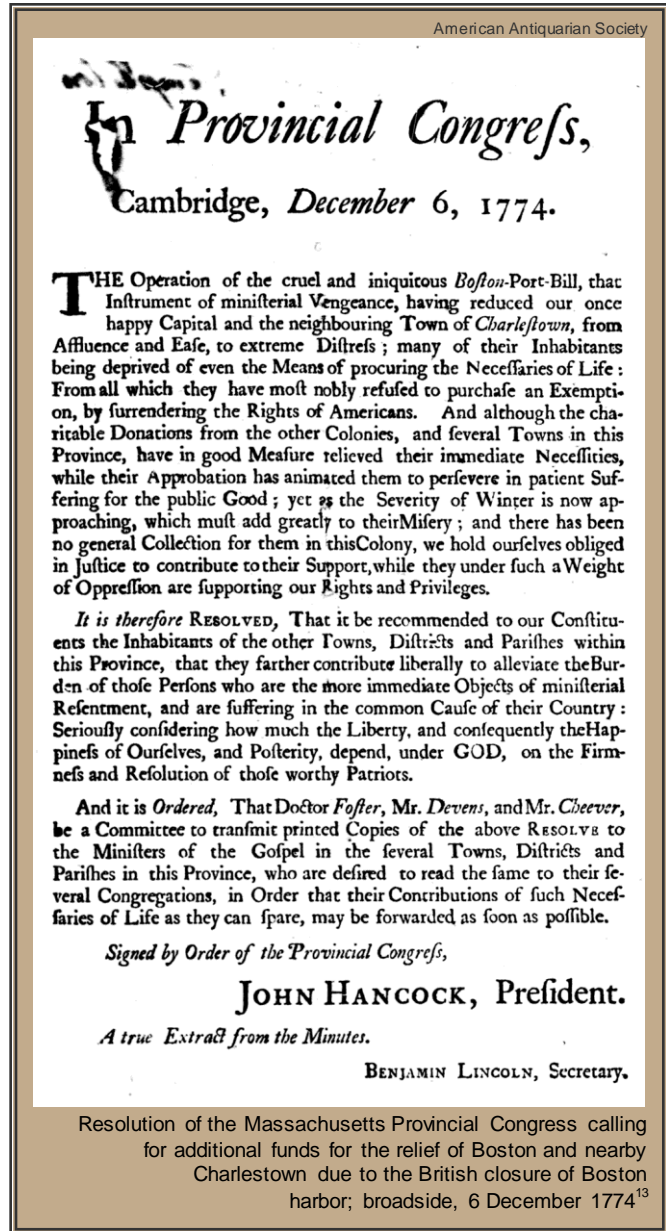
necessaries — their great gate being fast locked — liberal and very generous contributions were raised among the several families of the new settlements for their present relief. This seasonable bounty was handed to *Jack* over the garden wall, all access to the front of his house being shut up.

Now the overseer observed that the children and domestics of *Jack*'s family had frequent meetings and consultations together, sometimes in the garret and sometimes in the stable. Understanding likewise that an agreement not to deal in their father's shop until their grievances should be redressed was much talked of amongst them, he wrote a thundering prohibition, much like a Pope's Bull,<sup>12</sup> which he caused to be pasted upon every room in the house, in which he declared and protested that the meetings were treasonable, traitorous, and rebellious, contrary to the dignity of their father, and inconsistent with the *Omnipotence* of their stepmother, denouncing also terrible punishments against any two of the family who should from henceforth be seen whispering together and strictly forbidding the domestics to hold any more meetings in the garret or stable.

These harsh and unconstitutional proceedings irritated *Jack* and the other inhabitants of the new farm to such a degree that \* \* \* \* \*

*Cætera desunt.*

[Latin: "The rest is missing."]



Portraits:

PAGE	CAPTION	IDENTITY
4	"The Steward of 1764-1765"	George Grenville, Prime Minister of Great Britain
6	The "stepmother," "old Lady," "Madam"	Parliament
8	"Jack"	John Hancock
9	"The Overseer"	Thomas Gage, British general, governor of the Massachusetts Bay colony

<sup>12</sup> Official document issued by the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church. To Protestant colonists, calling a governor's declaration a papal bull would be deeming it tyrannical and arbitrary.

<sup>13</sup> Early American Imprints, Doc. 13418, courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society with Readex/NewsBank.