

**Points of Contact in the Works of
Captain Frederick Marryat and James Fenimore Cooper:
Two Candidates for “The Helmsman of Lake Erie”**

by

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I. Introduction

Frederick Marryat, nowadays a much-neglected British author of so-called children’s literature, was a contemporary of James Fenimore Cooper, and, to a degree, a literary rival of Cooper. In the 1830’s, and 40’s, their works exhibit a number of common motifs suggesting that they were keeping track of each other’s progress. Also, although they never met, there are passages in which they specifically refer to each other, often not in glowing terms.

There is much that these two writers have in common. Both had a relatively short life span: Cooper, one day short of 62 years (1789-1851), and Marryat, a mere 56 years (1792-1848). Both men began professional writing relatively late in life: Cooper’s first novel, *Precaution*, was published anonymously in 1820. Marryat’s first literary work, *The Naval Officer*, appeared in 1829. Each writer was amazingly prolific. They even had, at times, the same British publisher in London, Richard Bentley. Marryat had served in the British navy much longer than Cooper in the American navy and had achieved through acts of heroism while in action the rank of captain. He was also famous for his invention of a system of naval signal flags, although the Blue Peter of “The Helmsman of Lake Erie” was a much earlier invention. It should also be noted that Marryat designed a much-improved lifeboat. [1] Marryat, unlike Cooper, served throughout the War of 1812.

Oliver Warner’s *Captain Marryat, A Rediscovery*, provides the following comparison:

“Fenimore Cooper is often spoken of with Marryat, and with reason. He had varied sea experience; his creative energy was vigorous and lasting; the young read him avidly, but he also wrote novels for adult readers, good ones too, which like Marryat’s have been forgotten; he shared with Marryat a strong interest in Red Indians. If still more points of resemblance were to be sought, Cooper published a book about English society which was quite as frank in its own way as was Marryat, two years later, when he came to give tongue about America; Cooper like Marryat, forbade the publication of a biography; and his temper was every bit as uncertain as that of the author of *Snarleyyow*.”

Captain Marryat, A Rediscovery, “The London Editor”, p. 93

A question generally not even considered is the degree to which these two writers exerted an influence on one another’s writing. As for Marryat and Cooper, it strikes this reviewer that rivalry due to patriotism is only one major component in their relationship, the one defending the U.S.A. and her institutions, the other defending Britain from American attacks. Particularly in Marryat’s 1836 novel, *Mr. Midshipman Easy*, young sixteen-year-old Jack, in attempting to put to practice his philosopher-father’s utopian belief that equality should reflect the true state of man, undergoes the following privations:

“...in promulgating your philosophy, in the short space of two days, I have been robbed of the fish I caught, and my rod and line—I have been soused into a fish-pond—I have been frightened out of my wits by a bull-dog—been stung to death by bees, and twice tumbled into a well. Now, if that happens in two days, what must I expect to suffer in a whole year?”



“At last his head appeared above the low wall, and he was about to extend his arms so as to secure a position on it, when those who were working at the windlass beheld him.”

MR. MIDSHIPMAN EASY.

Captain Marryat, *Mr. Midshipman Easy* (London & New York: George Routledge and Son, 1885?), Ch. VII, p. 38.

Jack's mishaps may be regarded as a humorous attack on the foundation of democracies.

Cooper, on the other hand, in his final European novel (1833) *The Headsman: The Abbaye des Vignerons*, attempts to show the injustice of Berne's aristocratic system by pointing out the ostracism faced by the executioner of Berne and his family whom Cooper mistakenly claims belong to the aristocracy of Berne! [2]

A certain ambivalence sometimes surfaces in Cooper, who saw many cultural benefits in a landed gentry. Although Cooper could protest the designation "aristocrat" while preferring the term "gentleman," both he and Marryat considered themselves duty bound to analyze weaknesses in both democratic and monarchical systems of government.

II. Jealousy and Mistaken Views Regarding Travelogues

A case can already be made for jealousy regarding travelogues. Just as Cooper was drawing comparisons between the sale of Alexander Slidell Mackenzie's 1836 *Spain Revisited* and his own travelogues while in Europe, it may be assumed that a jealous eye was also cast towards Marryat's travelogue *Olla Podrida* beginning April 3, 1835, and published by Bentley, Cooper's own British publisher, in 1840, of his travels in Europe. Marryat even attended the beheading of a criminal in Berne ("the blood flew up like a fountain"), equaling a contemporary Marvel pulp classic! [3] Here one wonders if Cooper's *The Headsman* (1833) may have piqued Marryat's interest in the executioner of Berne.

Cooper mistakenly thought that his England travelogue, *Gleanings in Europe: England*, had been unfavorably reviewed by Marryat (*The Letters and Journals of James Fenimore Cooper*, Vol. III, p. 324, fn. 9) although the caustic reviewer turned out to be J. G. Lockhart:

"...J.G. Lockhart, in a review of *Gleanings in Europe: England*, that Cooper certainly read, had snidely suggested that Cooper disliked British aristocratic society because he could not compete with its polish—he was too much a sailor to understand the finer points of life."

Steven P. Harthorn, *James Fenimore Cooper, Professional Authorship, and the American Literary Marketplace, 1838-1851* (Dissertation, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Dec. 2005), p. 161.

It should be pointed out that Marryat, too, was not exempt from attacks based on his career as a Royal Navy officer:

"He appears to me a frank, plain-spoken man, with some few erroneous (not many) notions, so commonly adopted by Englishmen. In his conversation there is nothing brilliant—not the slightest indication of the fecundity of fancy so copiously set forth in his works. There is no ambition to shine. He observes with a quick eye everything around him and speaks his thoughts upon what he sees with an offhand, seaman-like positiveness."

Excerpt from Diary of Samuel Breck in Forward by Jules Zanger, p. 16, of Captain Frederick Marryat, *Diary in America* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1960).

Each of these men placed great emphasis upon the importance of a European education and travel. Marryat, while in the service of the British Navy, was even engaged in the First Anglo-Burmese War (1824-26).

III. Cooper's 1844 Reference to Marryat out of the Blue

An inexplicable digression in Cooper's 1844 *Afloat and Ashore or, The Adventures of Miles Wallingford* (Part 2, Cooper Edition, Ch. VI, pp. 80-81) addresses the question of the quality of the American cuisine, which—according to Cooper, referring to himself in the third person—was inferior apart from the dishes offered in larger cities such as Baltimore. Interestingly, Marryat felt that this was an “unjust and ill-natured” assertion. The very fact that Cooper would be thinking of Marryat in 1844, the year part 2 was published, suggests that both writers were keeping their eyes on each other and, paradoxically, that Marryat could even defend aspects of the American kitchen from Cooper's criticism. Cooper also levelled a few unjustified salvos at the German cuisine: “the portions of the Christian world where eating and drinking are in the most primitive condition.”

In the US. and Canada, Marryat's travels were much more extensive than Cooper's and provide fascinating insights into regional differences.

IV. Marryat's Criticism of Cooper's Naval History

Also, Marryat apparently wrote a scathing review of Cooper's *History of the U. S. Navy (Letters and Journals)*, Vol. III, p.452, fn. 5). Cooper had even asked Bentley to allow him to write a "moderate" rebuttal, but nothing was forthcoming (*L&J*, Vol. IV. p.43 & fn. 1).

To maintain discipline in the navy, neither Cooper nor Marryat censored flogging. Cooper's greatest grievance of British naval practices was the impressment of American sailors. Interestingly, Marryat also felt that impressment should be abolished. His pamphlet addressing the barbarous act of impressment even cost him a knighthood. (—Oliver Warner, *Captain Marryat, A Rediscovery*, p.137)

V. Marryat: His Admirers and Detractors

Although Marryat supposedly wrote "juvenile" tales, it is obvious that adults can take great pleasure in reading them. His influence extended to some of the greatest writers of English and American literature:

“ Among those who admired them [=his works] were Mark Twain, Joseph Conrad, and Ernest Hemingway, and as the first nautical novels, served as models for later works by C. S. Forester and Patrick O'Brian.”

– “Frederick Marryat,” *Wikipedia*, “Literary Career.”

Both Cooper and Marryat had large families, both of which were marred by the loss of children.. Also, Marryat finally separated from his wife who preferred staying in Lausanne, Switzerland, with his children when he set out for an 18-month tour of North America. Divorce was not allowed in Britain in the 1830's. [4]

Marryat's final years were devoted to “juvenile literature.” It would seem that Marryat often lacked a bit of tact when expressing his thoughts, the results being that he ended up in hot water with the Americans. Fortunately, he was able to get back to England without being tarred and feathered although he was hanged in effigy while the newspapers, with typical American subjectivity, to which Cooper was also subjected, depicted Marryat in unfavorable terms. (Just as Cooper's books were burned, so were Marryat's.)

VI. Marryat's Domesticated Leatherstocking in *The Settlers in Canada: Malachi Bone*

Perhaps the most amazing similarity between Cooper and Marryat is the Leatherstocking motif. A Great Lakes novel situated on Lake Ontario, an old scout and army guide living in the wilderness with his adopted Indian daughter Strawberry (whom he found as a small child in a Strawberry bush), a general dislike of the ways of the white man, Malachi Bone, through the course of the novel, becomes ever more domesticated and able to enjoy the company of his white compatriots. Perhaps his enjoyable hunting and fishing expeditions with the ten-year-old boy, John, who scarcely spoke a word, softened the aged recluse.



It was at first mistakenly assumed that the Strawberry was Malachi's wife. [5]

That Marryat should have chosen the Canadian side of Lake Ontario as the epicenter of his novel also gravitates against his authorship of “The Helmsman of Lake Erie,” which strangely ignores the role of settlers moving out west.

VII. The Parole of Honor in Marryat and Cooper

The notion of a “parole” is a central element in both Cooper’s *The Deerslayer* (1841) and *The Chainbearer* (1845). In the *Deerslayer*, the young Nathaniel, is willing to accept his freedom for a few days before voluntarily returning to a trial of torture among the Indians. In *The Chainbearer*, Andries Coejemann is not allowed freedom of movement by the squatter Aaron Thousandacres, who distrusts the code of honor of a white man. Ironically, Thousandacres allows Susquesus parole, and it is the Onondago Susquesus who delivers the fatal shot which leads to Thousandacres’s death.

Marryat makes use of “parole” as a central element in a number of his novels. As early as *Newton Forster* (1832), “parole of honour” surfaces. [6]

Particularly in Marryat’s very popular *Peter Simple* (1833), a wounded Peter and his Irish friend and protector O’Brien are saved from a return to a French prison:

“Mr. O’Brien, it is necessary that I should receive your parole of honour that you will not attempt to escape. Are you willing to give it?” (Ch. XXVIII, p. 137).

The role of a man’s honor can only be regarded as being on a much higher scale of importance in the distant past. One can only wonder if Marryat’s use of “parole” may have influenced the plot of several of Cooper’s novels.

VIII. Two Indians Chiefs and Two Young Braves Loved the Same Girls: Marryat (*Monsieur Violet*) vs. Cooper (*The Redskins*)

In Cooper’s *The Redskins* (1846), Susquesus, the chief of the Onondago tribe, fell in love with a beautiful Delaware squaw, who had been captured by a young warrior named Waterfowl. According to Onondago law, the warrior who captures the maiden, may keep her. Although the majority of the warriors felt that an exception could be made, Susquesus accepted the rule of law and gave up the girl. The result was that he went into a self-imposed banishment, never to return. [7]

In Marryat’s *Monsieur Violet* (1843), “two Apaches loved the same girl; one was a great chief, the other a young warrior, who had entered the war-path but a short time.” (see Ch. XVIII, pp. 125-126). The girl’s parents were naturally for a union with the chief, so the young warrior had no chance of marrying the girl of his dreams. One day, the young warrior was able to save the life of the chief when he lay helpless on the ground and was about to be attacked by a grizzly bear. The grateful chief not only gave his bride to the young warrior, but — with the feelings of a brother — shared not only his position of chief but all his possessions with the young warrior. He remained in command of his feelings and did not desert his tribe.

IX.. Without a groan: Marryat (*Olla Podrida*) vs. Cooper (*The Chainbearer* and “The Helmsman of Lake Erie”

Marryat’s *Olla Podrida* (London, 1840) contains “Diary on the Continent” and several shorter items (including the one quoted). The title refers to a Spanish stew or a potpourri of literary items.

From the rather lengthy excerpt below, it should be abundantly clear that Marryat’s vocabulary includes the notion of dying without a groan. Yet the Christ-like suffering of a Chainbearer or a John Maynard, is hardly evident in Marryat. Also, Marryat’s passage is more tongue in cheek than serious. Refer to Barnstaple’s begging Ansard to stop, “or you’ll kill me too —but not without a groan!”

The very question of just how much pain the dying Christian Chainbearer (Andries Coejemann) vs. the dying non-Christian (Aaron Thousandacres) can bear is treated in Cooper’s 1845 novel *The Chainbearer*. The Marryat excerpt does not even consider the role religion can play in lessening the pain of the dying.

A)

“Crouching as far back as he could, he held the wheel firmly with his left hand, till the flesh shrivelled, and the muscles cracked in the flames, and then he stretched forth his right, and bore the agony without a scream or a groan.” – “The Helmsman of Lake Erie”

B)

Ansard. But what I wish to read to you is the way in which I have managed that my secret shall never be divulged. It is known only to four.

Barnstaple. A secret known to four people! You must be quick then.

Ansard. So I am, as you shall hear; they all meet in a dark gallery, but do not expect to meet any one but the hero, whom they intend to murder, each one having, unknown to the others, made an appointment with him for that purpose, on the pretence of telling him the great secret. Altogether the scene is well described, but it is long, so I’ll come at once to the *dénouement*.

Barnstaple. Pray do.

Ansard. “Absenpresentini felt his way by the slimy wall, when the breath of another human being caught his ear: he paused and held his own breath. ‘No, no,’ muttered the other, ‘the *secret of blood and gold* shall remain with me alone. Let him come, and he shall find death.’ In a second, the dagger of Absenpresentini was in the mutterer’s bosom: — he fell without a groan. ‘To me alone the secret of blood and gold, and with me it remains,’ exclaimed Absenpresentini. ‘It does remain with you,’ cried Phosphorini, driving his dagger into his back: — Absenpresentini fell without a groan, and Phosphorini, withdrawing his dagger, exclaimed, ‘Who is now to tell the secret but me?’ ‘Not you,’ cried Vortiskini, raising up his sword and striking at where the voice proceeded. The trusty steel cleft the head of the abandoned Phosphorini, who fell without a groan. ‘Now will I retain the secret of blood and gold,’ said Vortiskini, as he sheathed his sword. ‘Thou shalt,’ exclaimed the wily Jesuit, as he struck his stiletto to

the heart of the robber, who fell without a groan. ‘With me only does the secret now rest, by which our order might be disgraced; with me it dies,’ and the Jesuit raised his hand. ‘Thus to the glory and the honour of his society does Manfredini sacrifice his life.’ He struck the keen-pointed instrument into his heart, and died without a groan. ‘Stop,’ cried our hero.”

Barnstaple. And I agree with your hero: stop, Ansard, or you’ll kill me too — but not without a groan.

Olla Podrida, “How to Write a Romance,” (London: Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street, 1849), pp. 304-305)

X. *Monsieur Violet* (1843): American Newspapers Charging Marryat with Plagiarism

In the latter part of 1843, a number of American newspapers [8] came to the defense of a Mr. Kendall, a writer of sketches for the New Orleans *Picayune*. Mr. Kendall asserted that Marryat, in his recently published novel *The Travels and Adventures of Monsieur Violet in California, Sonora, and Western Texas*, was guilty of wholesale plagiarism in that he had stolen a number of Kendall’s sketches, which he had written for the *Picayune*. [9] Only one sketch was specifically cited by Kendall, which dealt with the death of a Mr. Henry Golpin. Upon examination of Marryat’s treatment of the Golpin affair, it should first be stated that Marryat mentions Kendall by name and Kendall’s article in the *Picayune*, the text of which is placed in quotation marks. Secondly, to show that Kendall misrepresented the character and death of Golpin, he provides a long quotation from the New Orleans *Bee* (Jan. 1840).

It would appear that the writer Kendall attempted to strike back at Marryat with his illegitimate charges of plagiarism.

That Marryat was well aware of the danger of the charge of plagiarism is humorously treated in his “How to Write a Book of Travels” [10], in which Barnstaple advises the helpless ongoing author Ansard, who is planning a travelogue to a place he has never visited:

“B. All you have to do is to portray the scene in nearly the same words. You have as much right to visit a cathedral as he has, and as for the rest—here is the secret. You must visit it at *night*.”

A minor theft is confessed by Ansard in “How to Write a Romance [11]:

She put forth her beauteous hand, whose ‘faint tracery’—(I stole from Cooper)—whose faint tracery had so often given to others the idea that it was ethereal,....

Needless to say, Marryat’s “sins” only stand as confirmation that he was widely read, not that he committed plagiarism. It is also obvious that both Cooper and Marryat did not always hold American newspaper reporting in esteem.

Of interest is the question which of Cooper’s novels was the object of Ansard’s “theft.” *The Wept of Wish-Ton-Wish* (1829) is the most likely victim. Here, however, the context is not a girl’s hand but her face. Also, instead of “faint,” “delicate” is used:

“Flaxen locks that half covered a forehead and face across which the most delicate tracery of veins, added lustre to a skin as spotlessly fair as if the warm breezes of that latitude had never fanned the countenance of the girl.” [12]

XI. *The Oak Openings: or, the Bee-Hunter* (1846): Inspired by Marryat’s *The Settlers in Canada* (1844) and *The Mission* (1845)?

a) The Bee-Hunter

The notion of a bee-hunter is predominant in both works. Below, the frontispiece of an edition of Marryat’s *The Settlers in Canada*:



George Routledge and Sons, London: Broadway, Ludgate Hill. New York: 9 Lafayette Place.

Certainly, no work by Cooper seems to have been more under the influence of Marryat than *Oak Openings*. Although Cooper provides the first *American* description of a bee hunter and his techniques, it is difficult to believe that he had not consulted Marryat's *The Settlers in Canada*:

"...and sometimes we go bee-hunting, for the honey."

"Pray tell us how you take the honey, Malachi."

"Why, ma'am, the bees always live in the hollow of old trees, and it is very difficult in a forest to find them out, for the hole which they enter by is very small and very high up sometimes; however, when we get the lead, we generally manage it."

"Tell us what you mean, Malachi."

"We catch the bees as they settle upon the flowers to obtain honey, and then we let them go again. The bee, as soon as it is allowed to escape, flies straight toward its hive; we watch it till we can no longer see it, and walk in that direction and catch another, and so we go on till we see them settle upon a tree, and then we know that the hive and honey must be in that tree, so we cut it down."

"How very clever," said Percival,

"It requires a sharp eye though," said Martin, "to watch the bee far; some of the trappers catch the bees and give them sugar mixed with whisky. This makes them very tipsy, and they can not fly so fast, and then they discover the hive much sooner, as they can run almost as fast as the bee flies." [13]

b) Unexpected Conversion

The conversion of the savage Afrikaner in Marryat's *The Mission* may presage the conversion of Scalping Peter in *Oak Openings*:

"...a great change was soon observable in Afrikaner; and, from having been one of the most remorseless pursuers of his vengeance—a firebrand spreading discord, war, and animosity among the neighbouring tribes—he would now make every concession and any sacrifice to prevent collisions and bloodshed between contending parties."

The Mission, (Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1845), Ch. XX, p.176

Marryat provides a delightful description of America's "Oak Openings" in his *Diary of America*:

"The prairies here are not very large, seldom being above six or seven miles in length or breadth: generally speaking, they lie in gentle undulating flats, and the ridges and hills between them are composed of oak openings. To form an idea of these oak openings, imagine an inland country covered with splendid trees, about as thickly planted as our English parks; in fact, it is English park scenery, Nature having here spontaneously produced what it has been the care and labour of centuries in our own country to effect.

Diary of America, (Delphi Classic, Series Four, Book 2, Ch. 3 (position 162091/Kindle)

XII. The Lost Tribe of Israel in Marryat's *Diary in America* and in Cooper's *Oak Openings*

Parson Amen of Cooper's *Oak Openings* is somewhat derided for his contention that the American Indian is, in fact, descended from the Lost Tribes of Israel:

“We trust that no one of our readers will be disposed to deride Parson Amen's speculations on this subject, although this may happen to be the first occasion on which he has ever heard the practice of taking scalps justified by Scripture.

James Fenimore Cooper, *The Oak Openings*, The Complete Works, Vol. 32, (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing Classic Texts, Ch. XIII, 2009). p.141.

Marryat, on the other hand, provides in Chapter Twelve (vol. III) of his *American Diary* a lengthy “Discourse on the Evidences of the American Indian being the Descendants of the Lost Tribes of Israel.” (—Kindle: *Complete Works of Frederick Marryat*, Delphi Classics, Pos. 174080 ff.)

XIII. Cooper and Marryat: No Authorized Biographer. *The Daughters Florence Marryat (1833-1899) and Susan Fenimore Cooper (1813-1894)*.

A singular distrust of biographers has resulted in the loss of important documentation on both Cooper and Marryat. Both writers, did, however, have talented novelist daughters who attempted, rather too late, to piece together their fathers' lives.. Florence Marryat's *The Life and Letters of Captain Marryat* did not appear until 1872. In her PREFACE she writes:

“I make no apology for offering these sketches to the public, for they do not profess to rank as a biography, nor to claim a place upon the bookshelf beside the complete memoirs of Thackeray or Dickens. Had the same justice been done to my father as was considered due to his contemporaries in the world of letters, his life would have been written and published within six months of his death, but no one came forward to do it: his friends were either unwilling or incapable, and his children were too young.” [14]

Apparently Florence forgot to mention that her father, like Cooper, was not disposed to commission an official biographer of his life.

Marryat's wife, Kate (1796-1883), from whom Marryat was separated, took no interest in her husband's literary legacy. Oliver Warner's comment on Kate: “...it is likely that whatever mystery surrounds her reflects not so much upon her heart as upon her health and temperament.” [15]

XIV. Why Marryat Was Not in a Position to Write “*The Helmsman of Lake Erie*”

Marryat's novels often take the form of a Bildungsroman in which a child or children are taken under the wing of a self-sacrificing mentor or adult of advanced years to be able to cope with the hard knocks of growing up and acquiring the experience necessary to see the world through adult eyes. The closest one gets to a Helmsman is Marryat's first so-called children's novel, *Masterman Ready, or The Wreck of the Pacific* (1841). In what is obviously a Robinson Crusoe form of novel, Old Ready, through his logical and well-thought-out advice, is able to transform a deserted island into a sort of paradise until savages make their appearance. This

novel is, in many ways, reminiscent of Cooper's *The Crater* (1847). Ready, in an act of self-sacrifice, dies getting water for the family under attack by savages from a neighboring island. [16]

Marryat, unlike Cooper, is much more drawn to the outward form of the Anglican Church. In his novels, the Sabbath is always respected. Grace is said before every meal. A sense of stoic resignation pervades the minds of those bereft of family members: "The Lord gives and the Lord takes away; blessed be the name of the Lord." On the other hand, it should be pointed out that Marryat, "being of a Dissenting family, had not been baptized according to the ceremonies of the Church of England, and could not produce the usual certificates of birth and christening," [17]

In Cooper's *The Crater*, which develops from a deserted island to a model colony under the stewardship of Mark Woolston, the role of the Anglican priest Hornblower is questioned by Mark's Presbyterian wife, who notes that not everyone in the growing colony is Anglican. Cooper himself, although his family was strongly Episcopalian and his brother-in-law the Episcopalian Bishop of Western New York, did not officially join the Anglican Church until shortly before his death. (And, without the urging of his family, it is doubtful that he would have joined.) In other words, Cooper may be described as deeply religious but without the outward dogmatic trappings of an established church.

The missing link explaining the elapse of four years before the appearance of "The Helmsman of Lake Erie" is the *Swallow* tragedy on the Hudson. Neither the *Erie* nor the *Swallow* play a role in Marryat's writings. Added to this, the problem of access to information is crucial. Not only was the dissemination of news regarding the *Swallow* hindered by the North Atlantic, but even Marryat's residence in Norfolk in the village of Langham was off the beaten path. It is also hard to imagine that Marryat would have chosen anonymity for the sketch.

The fact that Marryat was occupied with *The Mission, or Scenes in Africa* in 1845 does not jive with a Lake Erie steamboat tragedy. *The Mission*, although not without memorable passages, deteriorated into a big game African safari to see who could bag the biggest and most dangerous animals.

The rather dismal distribution of the original 1845 sketch, "The Helmsman of Lake Erie," in England (only a Lancaster newspaper reprinted it in that year) and the fact that the sketch caught on like wildfire in the United States hardly suggest that it was written for British consumption. Only after 1860 did the savagely abbreviated and mutilated sketch by John Bartholomew Gough, a British temperance leader, enjoy a wide distribution in both England and the United States.

Marryat, apart from an anecdote about a steamboat passenger who tricked the steamboat's captain to throw him out at Poughkeepsie without paying his fare [18] (he claimed he was penniless and begged to be taken to Albany) also lacked any ties with Poughkeepsie where "The Helmsman" was first published in the United States. [19]. The choice of the name of the steamboat *Jersey* in the sketch does not ring any bells with Marryat whereas Cooper regarded himself as a Jerseyman due to his place of birth. [20] Finally, personal contact with individuals who were directly or indirectly involved in the *Erie* and *Swallow* tragedies is nowhere to be found in Marryat. [21]

As Marryat is the strongest British contender for authorship of the "The Helmsman," much stronger than his friend Charles Dickens [22], it is clear that he, in spite of his uncanny literary

points of contact with Cooper, must be ruled out. In retrospect, it is a pity that Cooper and Marryat, with so much in common, should have been at odds.

NOTES

1) Oliver Warner, **Captain Marryat, A Rediscovery** (London: Constable and Company, Ltd., & Toronto, Cape Town, Nairobi, Bombay, Calcutta & Madras: Longman, 1953), pp. 60-61:

“Tireless in his inventions, he devised a form of lifeboat, a whaler. He made a model, drew plans, provided a detailed description, and submitted it to the Royal Humane Society with all the necessary specifications. Although the model is no longer in existence, Marryat’s submission, and an engraving for his design, appears in the annual report of the Society for 1821.

“For his boat, Marryat proposed to make ample use of air-chambers and cork. This material, he reckoned, ‘should give enough buoyancy even if all air vessels were stove in’. The model was for a boat 30 foot long, 8 foot wide, 3 foot deep, nearly flat, with a deep keel, the oars pulled on iron outriggers which ‘gives the men more power and enables them to row with ease in a crowded boat’. Marryat received a gold medal from the Society for his idea, together with its ‘warmest thanks’ for his ‘most gallant and benevolent exertions....’”

2) See Norman Barry, “John Maynard’s European Roots,” XVI. “A Structural Difficulty in *The Headsman*, pp. 26-29: <http://johnmaynard.net/Headsman2.pdf>.

3) Marryat, Frederick, *Olla Podrida*, “Diary on the Continent,” (London: Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street, 1849), Ch. XXXIX (Lausanne), p. 192.

4) For an amusing depiction of a “happy family” see:

<https://www.tumblr.com/marryat92/622447399326105600/the-marryats-a-happy-family?source=share>

5) The Strawberry was a mere two years old when Malachi found her hidden in a strawberry bush. Malachi stated he had never married her: “...what has an old man of near 70 to do with marrying?...I have been a father to her.” In *The Settlers in Canada*, Ch. XXI, pp. 178-179. Historical Reprint, George Routledge and Sons, ISBN 9798493181399.

6) Marryat, *Newton Forster or The Merchant Service* (London and New York: George Routledge and Sons, 1895?), Ch. XXI, p. 132 & p. 137.

7) Norman Barry, “Incongruities in *The Redskins*,” in *James Fenimore Cooper Society Journal*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 2, Fall/Winter 2022:

https://johnmaynard.net/Redskins_published.pdf

8) *The Dollar Newspaper*, Dec. 13, 1843 (Philadelphia, PA), *The Charleston Courier*, Dec. 1, 1843, *The Daily Evening Transcript*, Nov. 22, 1843 (Boston, MA), *The Daily Globe*, Nov. 28, 1843 (Washington, D. C.), etc.

9) Marryat, Frederick, *The Travels and Adventures of Monsieur Violet in California, Sonora, and Western Texas* (London: George Routledge and Sons, Broadway, Ludgate Hill & New York: Lafayette Place, undated and unnumbered volume of Marryat’s Collected Works), Ch. XXV, pp. 191-193.

10) Marryat, Frederick, *Olla Podrida*, “How to Write a Book of Travels” (London, Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street, 1849), p. 295.

11) Ibid, “How to Write a Romance,” p. 303.

12) Cooper, James Fenimore, *The Wept of Wish-Ton-Wish* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 12 Back Chapman Road: Cambridge Scholars Publishing Classic Texts, 2009, The Complete Works, Vol. 12), Ch. XII, p. 110.

13) *The Settlers in Canada*, op. cit. Ch. XXIII, p. 198. Historical Reprint.

14) Florence Marryat [Church], *The Life and Letters of Captain Marryat, Preface*, London, 1872, in *Complete Works of Frederick Marryat* (Delphi Classics), Kindle e-Book, Position 174668.

15) Warner, op. cit. p. 191.

16) The death of old Ready deserves a word of explanation. The water saved in a tub for an emergency or aboriginal attack was discovered to be empty. The spoiled child, 6-year-old Tommy (Thomas) who was supposed to fetch water from the well had saved himself the effort of walking so far and taken water from the emergency water-tub. As a consequence of the boy’s laziness, Ready was fatally injured during an aboriginal attack while fetching water for the family. A moral question inserts itself at this point: Ready stated that “a child does not reflect upon consequences...It was an idle trick of his, and whatever may be the consequences, it still can be considered as such and nothing more.” (*Masterman Ready*, Ch. LXIII, p. 300). Ready then stated that Tommy should not be told the fatal consequences of his actions. Does the reader agree? Thomas is described as “a very thoughtless but good-tempered boy, full of mischief, and always in a scrape.” (—p. 6).

17) Warner, op. cit., p. 43.

18) Marryat, Frederick, *A Diary in America*, Kindle e-Book, Vol. Two, Ch. Ten, Position 162745 & 162755.

19) See Norman Barry, “The Poughkeepsie Factor: The Link to James Fenimore Cooper: <http://johnmaynard.net/Poughkeepsie.pdf>

20) See Norman Barry, “The Author’s Signature: The Good Ship *Jersey* in ‘The Helmsman of Lake Erie’, and the Significance of the Geography of New Jersey in the Works of James Fenimore Cooper:” <http://johnmaynard.net/Jersey.pdf>.

21) See Norman Barry, “James Fenimore Cooper’s Personal Links to the 1841 *Erie* and 1845 *Swallow* Tragedies”: <http://johnmaynard.net/Personallinks.pdf>

22) See Norman Barry, “Who Wrote ‘The Helmsman of Lake Erie?’ An Examination of Two Candidates: Charles Dickens and James Fenimore Cooper:” <https://johnmaynard.net/DICKENSvsCOOPER.pdf>

Thus far, the following works (George Routledge & Sons publication of the *Complete Works of Captain Marryat*, 1885?, have been read with pleasure by this reviewer:

- 1) *Peter Simple* (1834)
- 2) *Mr. Midshipman Easy* (1836)
- 3) *The Pirate* (1836)
- 4) *The Dog Fiend or Snarleyyow* (1837)
- 4) *Diary in America* (1839)
- 5) *Olla Podrida* (1840)
- 6) *Masterman Ready or The Wreck of the Pacific* (1841)
- 7) *The Poacher* (1841)
- 8) *Monsieur Violet in California, Sonora and Western Texas* (1843)
- 9) *The Settlers in Canada* (1844)
- 10) *The Mission: or, Scenes in Africa* (1845)
- 11) *The Children of the New Forest* (1847)

The search machine of Kindle's e-book: *The Complete Works of Captain Frederick Marryat* (Delphi Classics) has also been of help.

Secondary Literature:

- 1) Florence Marryat, *Life and Letters of Captain Marryat* (1872)
- 2) Hannay, David, *Life of Frederick Marrayat* (Kindle e-book, Prabhat Books, 1889).
- 3) Oliver Warner, *Captain Marryat, A Rediscovery* (London: Constable and Company, Ltd., & Toronto, Cape Town, Nairobi, Bombay, Calcutta & Madras: Longman, 1953)
- 4) Jules Zanger; Editor and Forward of Marryat's *Diary in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1960)

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