



Edward Randolph's Portrait

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Nothing is left of Province House, the old home of the royal governors, in Boston, but the gilded Indian that served as its weathercock and aimed his arrow at the winds from the cupola. The house itself was swept away long ago in the so-called march of improvement. In one of its rooms hung a picture so dark that when Lieutenant-Governor Hutchinson went to live there hardly anybody could say what it represented. There were hints that it was a portrait of the devil, painted at a witch-meeting near Salem, and that on the eve of disasters in the province a dreadful face had glared from the canvas. Shirley had seen it on the night of the fall of Ticonderoga, and servants had gone shuddering from the room, certain that they had caught the glance of a malignant eye.

It was known to the governors, however, that the portrait, if not that of the arch fiend, was that of one who in the popular mind was none the less a devil: Edward Randolph, the traitor, who had repealed the first provincial charter and deprived the colonists of their liberties. Under the curse of the people he grew pale and pinched and ugly, his face at last becoming so hateful that men were unwilling to look at it. Then it was that he sat for his portrait. Threescore or odd years afterward, Hutchinson sat in the hall wondering vaguely if coming events would consign him to the obloquy that had fallen on his predecessor, for at his bidding a fleet had come into the harbor with three regiments of red coats on board, despatched from Halifax to overawe the city. The coming of the selectmen to protest against quartering these troops on the people and the substitution of martial for civic law, interrupted his reverie, and a warm debate arose. At last the governor seized his pen

impatiently, and cried, "The king is my master and England is my home. Upheld by them, I defy the rabble."

He was about to sign the order for bringing in the troops when a curtain that had hung before the picture was drawn aside. Hutchinson stared at the canvas in amazement, then muttered, "It is Randolph's spirit! It wears the look of hell." The picture was seen to be that of a man in antique garb, with a despairing, hunted, yet evil expression in the face, and seemed to stare at Hutchinson.

"It is a warning," said one of the company.

Hutchinson recovered himself with an effort and turned away. "It is a trick," he cried; and bending over the paper he fixed his name, as if in desperate haste. Then he trembled, turned white, and wiped a sweat from his brow. The selectmen departed in silence but in anger, and those who saw Hutchinson on the streets next day affirmed that the portrait had stepped out of its canvas and stood at his side through the night. Afterward, as he lay on his death-bed, he cried that the blood of the Boston massacre was filling his throat, and as his soul passed from him his face, in its agony and rage, was the face of Edward Randolph.

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