

You loved your last book...but what
are you going to read next?

Using our unique guidance tools, Lovereading will help you find new
books to keep you inspired and entertained.

Opening Extract from...

Golden Hill

Written by Francis Spufford

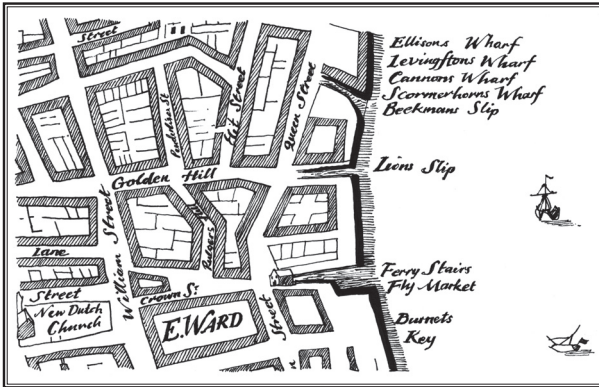
Published by Faber & Faber

All text is copyright © of the author

This Opening Extract is exclusive to Lovereading.
Please print off and read at your leisure.

Golden Hill

FRANCIS SPUFFORD



ff

FABER & FABER

by the same author

I MAY BE SOME TIME
THE CHILD THAT BOOKS BUILT
BACKROOM BOYS
RED PLENTY
UNAPOLOGETIC

First published in 2016
by Faber & Faber Limited, Bloomsbury House
74–77 Great Russell Street
London WC1B 3DA
This paperback edition first published in 2016

Typeset by Faber & Faber Limited
Printed in the UK by CPI Mackays, Chatham

All rights reserved
© Francis Spufford, 2016
Illustrations © Eleanor Crow, after eighteenth-century
originals, 2016

The right of Francis Spufford to be identified as author of this work
has been asserted in accordance with Section 77 of the Copyright,
Designs and Patents Act 1988

*This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or
otherwise, be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise circulated without the publisher's
prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published
and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the
subsequent purchaser*

A CIP record for this book
is available from the British Library

ISBN 978–0–571–22520–0



2 4 6 8 10 9 7 5 3 1

‘He advised me to correct the rebellious principles I had imbibed among the English, who, for their insolence to their kings, were notorious all over the world.’

TOBIAS SMOLLETT, *The Adventures of Roderick Random* (1748)



All Hallows

November 1st

20 Geo. II

1746

I

The brig *Henrietta* having made Sandy Hook a little before the dinner hour – and having passed the Narrows about three o'clock – and then crawling to and fro, in a series of tacks infinitesimal enough to rival the calculus, across the grey sheet of the harbour of New-York – until it seemed to Mr Smith, dancing from foot to foot upon deck, that the small mound of the city waiting there would hover ahead in the November gloom in perpetuity, never growing closer, to the smirk of Greek Zeno – and the day being advanced to dusk by the time *Henrietta* at last lay anchored off Tietjes Slip, with the veritable gables of the city's veritable houses divided from him only by one hundred foot of water – and the dusk moreover being as cold and damp and dim as November can afford, as if all the world were a quarto of grey paper dampened by drizzle until in danger of crumbling imminently to pap: – all this being true, the master of the brig pressed upon him the virtue of sleeping this one further night aboard, and pursuing his shore business in the morning. (He meaning by the offer to signal his esteem, having found Mr Smith a pleasant companion during the slow weeks of the crossing.) But Smith would not have it. Smith, bowing and smiling, desired nothing but to be rowed

to the dock. Smith, indeed, when once he had his shoes flat on the cobbles, took off at such speed despite the gambolling of his land-legs that he far out-paced the sailor dispatched to carry his trunk – and must double back for it, and seizing it hoist it instantly on his own shoulder – and gallop on, skidding over fish-guts and turnip leaves and cats' entrails, and the other effluvium of the port – asking for direction here, asking again there – so that he appeared most nearly as a type of smiling whirlwind when he shouldered open the door – just as it was about to be bolted for the evening – of the counting-house of the firm of Lovell & Company, on Golden Hill Street, and laid down his burden while the prentices were lighting the lamps, and the clock on the wall showed one minute to five, and demanded, very civilly, speech that moment with Mr Lovell himself.

'I'm Lovell,' said the merchant, rising from his place by the fire. His qualities in brief, to meet the needs of a first encounter: fifty years old; a spare body but a pouched and lumpish face, as if Nature had set to work upon the clay with knuckles; shrewd and anxious eyes; brown small-clothes; a bob-wig yellowed by tobacco smoke. 'Help ye?'

'Good day,' said Mr Smith, 'for I am certain it *is* a good day, never mind the rain and the wind. And the darkness. You'll forgive the dizziness of the traveller, sir. I have the honour to present a bill drawn upon you by your London correspondents, Messrs Banyard and Hythe. And request the favour of its swift acceptance.'

'Could it not have waited for the morrow?' said Lovell. 'Our hours for public business are over. Come back and replenish your purse at nine o'clock. Though for any amount over ten pound sterling I'll ask you to wait out the week, cash money being scarce.'

‘Ah,’ said Mr Smith. ‘It *is* for a greater amount. A far greater. And I am come to you now, hot-foot from the cold sea, salt still on me, dirty as a dog fresh from a duck-pond, not for payment, but to do you the courtesy of long notice.’

And he handed across a portfolio, which being opened revealed a paper cover clearly sealed in black wax with a B and an H. Lovell cracked it, his eyebrows already half-raised. He read, and they rose further.

‘Lord love us,’ he said. ‘This is a bill for a thousand pound.’

‘Yes, sir,’ said Mr Smith. ‘A thousand pounds sterling; or as it says there, one thousand seven hundred and thirty-eight pounds, fifteen shillings and fourpence, New-York money. May I sit down?’

Lovell ignored him. ‘Jem,’ he said, ‘fetch a lantern closer.’

The clerk brought one of the fresh-lit candles in its chimney, and Lovell held the page up close to the hot glass; so close that Smith made a start as if to snatch it away, which Lovell reproved with an out-thrust arm; but he did not scorch the paper, only tilted it where the flame shone through and showed in paler lines the watermark of a mermaid.

‘Paper’s right,’ said the clerk.

‘The hand too,’ said Lovell. ‘Benjamin Banyard’s own, I’d say.’

‘Yes,’ said Mr Smith, ‘though his name was Barnaby Banyard when he sat in his office in Mincing Lane and wrote the bill for me. Come, now, gentlemen; do you think I found this on a street-corner?’

Lovell surveyed him, clothes and hands and visage and speech, such as he had heard of it, and found nothing there that closed the question.

‘You might ha’ done,’ he said, ‘for all I know. For I don’t know you. What is this thing? And who are you?’

‘What it seems to be. What I seem to be. A paper worth a thousand pounds; and a traveller who owns it.’

‘Or a paper fit to wipe my arse, and a lying rogue. Ye’ll have to do better than that. I’ve done business with Banyard’s for twenty year, and settled with ’em for twenty year with bills on Kingston from my sugar traffic. Never this; never paper sent all on a sudden this side the water, asking money paid for the whole season’s account, almost, without a word, or a warning, or a by-your-leave. I’ll ask again: who are you? What’s your business?’

‘Well: in general, Mr Lovell, buying and selling. Going up and down in the world. Seeing what may turn to advantage; for which my thousand pounds may be requisite. But more specifically, Mr Lovell: the kind I choose not to share. The confidential kind.’

‘You impudent pup, flirting your mangled scripture at me! Speak plain, or your precious paper goes in the fire.’

‘You won’t do that,’ said Smith.

‘Oh, won’t I? You jumped enough a moment gone when I had it nigh the lamp. Speak, or it burns.’

‘And your good name with it. Mr Lovell, this is the plain kernel of the matter: I asked at the Exchange for London merchants in good standing, joined to solid traders here, and your name rose up with Banyard’s, as an honourable pair, and they wrote the bill.’

‘They never did before.’

‘They have done now. And assured me you were good for it. Which I was glad to hear, for I paid cash down.’

‘Cash down,’ repeated Lovell, flatly. He read out: “‘At sixty days’ sight, pay this our second bill to Mr Richard Smith, for value received . . .” You say you paid in coin, then?’

‘I did.’

‘Of your own, or of another’s? As agent, or principal? To settle a score or to write a new one? To lay out in investments, or to piss away on furbelows and sateen weskits?’

‘Just in coin, sir. Which spoke for itself, eloquently.’

‘You not finding it convenient, no doubt, to move so great a weight of gold across the ocean.’

‘Exactly.’

‘Or else hoping to find a booby on the other side as’d turn paper to gold for the asking.’

‘I never heard that New-Yorkers were so easy to impose on,’ said Mr Smith.

‘So we aren’t, sir,’ said Lovell, ‘so we aren’t.’ He drummed his fingers. ‘Especially when one won’t take the straight way to clear off the suspicion we may be gulled. – You’ll excuse my manner. I speak as I find, usually; but I don’t know how I find you, I don’t know how to take you, and you study to keep me uncertain, which I don’t see as a kindness, or as especial candid, I must say, in a strip of a boy who comes demanding payment of an awk’ard-sized fortune, on no surety.’

‘On all the ordinary surety of a right bill,’ protested Smith.

‘There you go,’ Lovell said. ‘Smiling again. Commerce is trust, sir. Commerce is need and need together, sir. Commerce is putting a hand in answer into a hand out-stretched; but when I call you a rogue, you don’t flare up, as is the natural answer at the mere accusation, and call me a rogue for doubting.’

‘No,’ returned Smith cheerfully. ‘For you’re right, of course. You don’t know me; and suspicion must be your wisest course, when I may be equally a gilded sprig of the *bon ton*, or a flash cully working the inkhorn lay.’

Lovell blinked. Smith’s voice had darkened to a rookery croak,

and there was no telling if he was putting on or taking off a mask.

‘There’s the lovely power of being a stranger,’ Smith went on, as pleasant as before. ‘I may as well have been born again when I stepped ashore. You’ve a new man before you, new-made. I’ve no history here, and no character: and what I am is all in what I will be. But the bill, sir, is a true one. How may I set your mind at rest?’

‘You’ve the oddest notion in the world of reassurance, if you’re in earnest,’ said Lovell, staring. ‘You could tell me why I’ve had no letter, to cushion this surprise. I’d have expected an explanation, a warning.’

‘Perhaps I out-paced it.’

‘Perhaps. But I believe I’ll keep my counsel till I see more than *perhaps*.’

‘Of course,’ said Mr Smith. ‘Nothing more natural, when I may be a rascal.’

‘Again, you make mighty free with that possibility,’ Lovell said.

‘I only name the difficulty you’re under. Would you trust me more if we pretended some other thing were at issue?’

‘I might,’ said Lovell. ‘I might well. An honest man would surely labour to keep off the taint of such a thing. You seem to be inviting it, Mr *Smith*. Yet I can’t be so casual, can I? My name’s my credit. Do you know what will happen if I accept your bill, for your secret business, your closed-mouth business, your smiling business, your *confidential* business? And you discount it with some good neighbour of mine, to lay your hands on the money as fast as may be, as I’ve no doubt you mean to? Then there’ll be sixty-day paper with my name upon’t, going round and round the island, playing the devil with my credit just at the turn of the season, in no kind of confidence at all. All will know it; all will know I’m to

be dunned for a thousand pound, and wonder should they try to mulct me first.'

'But I won't discount it.'

'What?'

'I won't discount it. I can wait. There is no hurry. I have no pressing need for funds; sixty days' sight, it says, and sixty days will suit me perfectly. Keep the bill; keep it under your eye; save it from wandering.'

'If I accept it, you mean.'

'Yes. If you accept it.'

'And if I don't?'

'Well, if you protest it, I shall make this the shortest landing in the colonies that ever was heard of. I shall walk back along the quay, and when the *Henrietta* is loaded, I shall ship home, and lodge my claim for damages with Banyard's.'

'I don't protest it,' said Lovell, slowly. 'Neither yet do I accept it. It says here, *our second bill*, and I've not seen hide or hair of first nor third. What ships d'ye say they're bound on?'

'*Sansom's Venture* and *Antelope*,' said Mr Smith.

'Well,' said Lovell, 'here's what we'll do. We'll wait and we'll see; and if the others of the set turn up, why then I'll say I accepted the bill today, and you shall have your sixty days, and if you're lucky you may be paid by quarter-day; and if they don't appear, why then you're the rascal you tease at being, and I'll have you before the justices for personation. What do you say?'

'It's irregular,' said Mr Smith, 'but something should be allowed for teasing. Very well: done.'

'Done,' echoed Lovell. 'Jem, note and date the document, will you? And add a memorandum of this agreement; and make another note that we're to write to Banyard's on our own

account, by the first vessel, asking explanations. And then let's have it in the strongbox, to show in evidence, as I suspect, for the assizes. Now, sir, I believe I'll bid you—' Lovell checked himself, for Smith was feeling through the pockets of his coat. 'Was there something else?' he asked heavily.

'Yes,' said Smith, bringing forth a purse. 'I'm told I should I break my guineas to smaller change. Could you furnish me the value of these in pieces convenient for the city?'

Lovell looked at the four golden heads of the King glittering in Smith's palm.

'Are they brass?' said one of the prentices, grinning.

'No, they're not brass,' said Lovell. 'Use your eyes, and not your mouth. Why ever—?' he said to Smith. 'Never mind. Never mind. Yes, I believe we can oblige you. Jem, get out the penny-weights, and check these.'

'Full weight,' the clerk reported.

'Thought so,' said Lovell. 'I am learning your humours, Mr Smith. Well, now, let's see. We don't get much London gold, the flow being, as you might say, all the other way; it's moidores, and half-joes, mostly, when the yellow lady shows her face. So I believe I could offer you a hundred and eighty per centum on face, in New-York money. Which, for four guineas, would come to—'

'One hundred and fifty one shillings, twopence-halfpenny.'

'You're a calculator, are you? A sharp reckoner. Now I'm afraid you can have only a little of it in coin; the reason being, as I said when first we began, that little coin is current at the present.' Lovell opened a box with a key from his fob chain and dredged up silver – worn silver, silver knocked and clatter'd in the battles of circulation – which he built into a little stack in front of Smith. 'A Mexica dollar, which we pass at eight-and-fourpence. A piece of four, half

that. A couple of Portugee cruzeiros, three shillings New-York. A quarter-guilder. Two kreutzers, Lemberg. One kreutzer, Danish. Five sous. And a Moresco piece we can't read, but it weighs at fourteen pennyweight, sterling, so we'll call it two-and-six, New-York. Twenty-one and fourpence, total. Leaving a hundred and twenty-nine, tenpence-halfpenny to find in paper.'

Lovell accordingly began to count out a pile of creased and folded slips next to the silver, some printed black and some printed red and some brown, like the despoiled pages of a prayerbook, only of varying shapes and sizes; some limp and torn; some leathery with grease; some marked only with dirty letterpress and others bearing coats-of-arms, whales spouting, shooting stars, feathers, leaves, savages; all of which he laid down with the rapidity of a card-dealer, licking his fingers for the better passage of it all.

'Wait a minute,' said Mr Smith. 'What's this?'

'You don't know our money, sir?' said the clerk. 'They didn't tell you we use notes, specie being so scarce, this side?'

'No,' said Smith.

The pile grew.

'Fourpence Connecticut, eightpence Rhode Island,' murmured Lovell. 'Two shilling Rhode Island, eighteenpence Jersey, one shilling Jersey, eighteenpence Philadelphia, one shilling Maryland . . .' He had reached the bottom of the box. 'Excuse me, Mr Smith; for the rest we're going to have to step upstairs to my bureau. We don't commonly have the call for so much at once. Jem, you can commence to close up; Isaiah, stop gawping, start sweeping. If you'd like to follow me, then. — Bring your winnings, by all means; we wouldn't want you to lose count.'

'I see you mean to tease me back,' said Mr Smith, now possessed of a double handful of rustling, doubtful currency.

‘One turn deserves another,’ said Lovell. ‘This way.’

He led him through a door in the panelling, and Smith found himself in what was plainly the hall-way of the merchant’s private residence, for it ran perpendicular to another street-door, whence fell the faint remaining light of the day; and where the counting office had smelled of ink, smoke, charcoal and the sweat of men, this had the different savour of waxed wood, food, rosewater and tea-leaves, with a suggestion of (what is common to both sexes) the necessary-house. At the end of the hall a stair spiralled steeply up in the dark. At each turn it passed a window but, the outlook being to the east, little came in through the glass but roofs and spars in black outline, upon the ground of a slice of heaven but one degree brighter. Stray gleams of polish showed the placing of the banisters and newel posts; picture frames set faint rumours of gold around rectangles of darkness or curious glitters too shadowed to make out, as if Lovell had somehow collected, and drowned, a stairwell’s-worth of distant constellations. This being Lovell’s home, it might be expected that the merchant would put off the weight of business, and resume the legerity of domestic life, yet on the first step he paused for a moment, and Smith saw the level of his shoulders fall, as if they had taken on them some effort, perhaps the effortful thought of the thousand pounds, and Smith anticipated a slow, perhaps a wheezing, ascent. But instead, that moment past, Lovell set off up the narrow house at the pace of a climbing monkey, swarming aloft in the boughs of a familiar tree, and it was Smith, his hands too full to balance with, who followed the dark stair warily – and when Lovell crossed a landing and rushed on, he paused, arrested at a door-way.

The long room it opened on did have western windows, a pair of them letting in the day’s last glow of light, rather the silver of

rain than of the metal, streaked with a faint crimson admitting to the distant existence of the sun; brilliant light to Mr Smith, and it burnished with borrowed brilliance the faces of the three young women in the room, plain-dressed among the plain furniture. One, fair-headed, was standing at the window with her hand to her mouth; one, darker, was sitting and reading something; and one, an African servant in a white kerchief, was holding a taper to a fresh white candle. When they saw him at the door, they all turned and looked at him. He looked back.

What a difference a frame makes! To Mr Smith, gazing inward, the uprights of the painted door seemed to set out the three of them like some tableau representing the New World itself, of which his acquaintance to this point totalled forty-seven minutes, and which therefore he could not yet feel to be entirely solid, entirely *terra firma* as ordinarily founded on its bed of earth; but only to constitute a kind of scene, backed by drops and flats, where you must step forth at your cue to act your part, ready or not, ignorant as yet of the temper of the audience; ignorant of the temper of the other players, which will so much determine the drama you compose together, turn by turn, speech by speech, line by line. — The blonde one was extremely pretty, with a wide mouth of candid pink. The dark one not much less so, though she seemed just to have left off scowling, and her brows met in a knot. The African was turning eyes black as liquorice on him, in a gaze of perfect blankness. — What was more, what seemed to him a rarity fitting them to model the Three Graces, none of the three was in the slightest marked by the pox. He would learn that this exemption was, in the colony, almost too common to deserve notice, but it had for the moment the force of an original astonishment. Thus Smith, on the one side, gazing in. To the three gazing outward, however, into the

dark of the stairwell, where a face had bloomed, and two pale hands clutching paper, he had only appeared in the ordinary aperture of an ordinary day. For them the blue-grey pediment of Connecticut pine faced the everyday world, as it always did, and they were their everyday selves, well launched (it seemed to them) into the middle of their histories, with loves, sorrows, resentments, hopes, all far advanced and long settled already into three familiar fortunes. He was the one unshackled, as yet unconfined; the one from whom diversion, or news, or any other of the new worlds a stranger may contain, were to be expected. And perhaps desired. For if your fortune at present is not such as pleases you, there is a prospect of mercy, as much as of doom, in the thought that Fortuna is fickle. The goddess's renown is all in her changeableness, and strangers are her acknowledged messengers. They bear with them a glimmering of new chances. When this stranger came forward to the threshold, he could be seen to be a youth of about four-and-twenty dressed in plain green, wearing his own hair in short rust-brown curls, smiling in a fashion that crinkled the freckles across his nose, and staring shamelessly.

'Hello,' he said.

The dark one yawned deliberately. 'Zephyra, shut the door,' she said.

'Don't do that,' said Smith.

'Why not? This is a parlour, sir, not a peep show. The place of business is downstairs. A very little glimpse must suffice you – in proportion to your manners.'

'But my curiosity is great.'

'How sad for you. Very well. Zephyra, count to three, and *then* shut the door. – What? Not enough?'

‘Never,’ Smith said. The fair girl dimpled. The African turned back to the candle with a slow shake of the head.

‘Gallantry,’ observed the dark girl, with the air of someone naming a common insect. ‘Dull.’

‘My sister thinks everything is dull,’ broke in the yellow-haired girl. ‘Everything but a wounding tongue. Or she makes it so. But some of us aren’t so sour. *Some* of us don’t take compliments amiss a-purpose. You are a client of Father’s, sir? Won’t you step in?’ A blush had appeared in her cheeks, as she made this speech of defiance. It was apparent that she was very young; maybe only sixteen or seventeen.

‘You are kind,’ said Smith, remaining where he was. ‘Yet truly, it was not gallantry speaking, I swear, but gluttony. Six weeks I have been at sea, and every wave looking just like the one before, in wet procession. By now my eyes, being starved so long, have as many stomachs as a horse.’

The dark sister snorted. ‘As many—? That is the most grotesque similitude I ever heard.’

‘And yet it served its purpose.’

‘None I can perceive.’

‘To make you smile.’

‘But I am not smiling.’

‘I would warrant you did for a moment.’

‘No; you and your eyes’ horses’ stomachs are all mistaken. Though I doubt that will stop them vomiting words.’

‘Now who is grotesque?’

‘Your bad habits are catching. You have infected us.’

‘May I come in, then, and do it more conveniently?’

‘We can hear you quite well from where you are.’

‘Tabitha!’ protested the other, and was ignored.

‘So, you’d stare as boldly at anything, would you? Any object would do?’

‘Sorry: I have it on authority that gallantry is dull.’

‘Have you come from London, sir?’ the fair girl tried again.

‘Yes, I have,’ he said.

‘I wonder, do you – do you – have you – perhaps—’

‘What my sister Flora wants to say,’ said dark Tabitha, slipping into a mocking falsetto, ‘is: “Do-you-do-you, could-you-could-you, might-you-might-you, possibly have in your baggage any novels?” For she consumes them like laudanum, and has read all that New-York can afford, so must beg new supplies from every traveller.’

‘Hush!’ cried Flora, the spots back in her cheeks.

‘I do have a book or two in my trunk,’ said Smith, ‘and I would be happy to look them out for you. You don’t approve?’ he asked Tabitha.

‘I am not a great one for novels.’

‘You are not a great one for anything but grumbling, and poking fun.’

‘I do not think it makes the bird feel better if the cage has pictures pasted to’t, however pretty. Good evening, Papa.’

Smith jumped. Lovell had returned on padding feet, a caddy of japanned wood in his hands, and had been standing in the shadows at his side, it was not evident how long, with a speculative look upon his face.

‘I see you’ve met my daughters, sir. Tabitha, Flora, this is Mr Smith, a man of affairs; just don’t ask him what. Well, step in, step in; don’t block the door. And just lay what you have in your hands on the tabletop, will you, for I perceive I’ve made an error, fool that I am.’

‘How unaccountable of you, Papa,’ said Tabitha.

Lovell shot her a look, but only said, ‘Ah, yes . . .’

The card-dealing began again, except that Lovell was, as well as paying down new paper, also whisking back certain bills he had already dispensed, and replacing them with other, similar scraps of print, equally mysterious. This time, he didn’t count aloud, and this time, every note marked ‘Rhode Island’ seemed to return to the box.

‘What a lot of money you’ve got, Mr Stomachs,’ said Tabitha.

‘If it *is* money,’ said Smith, ‘and not a printer’s foul-papers.’

‘You’ll get used to it. – Papa, you should invite him to dinner.’

‘I was about to, my dear,’ said Lovell. ‘There’s your guineas rendered, fair and square. Would ye care to dine with us tomorrow night?’

‘Are you sure you want to do that?’ said Smith.

‘Come now, come on now,’ said Lovell, with a grin that seemed, from disuse, in need of the oil-can, to ease the rusty motion of his jaws. ‘Let’s not let a poor beginning spoil matters. Our compact is made, sir, and if all goes well – if all goes as you promise – why then, there’s no quarrel between us, but the contrary. And you’ve made landing on a far shore, and you’ll thrive the better for a change from hard tack, I’ll be bound.’

Mr Lovell could not be said to have succeeded in the paternal note he tried to strike, for ‘impudent pup’ and ‘lying rogue’ are not obliging terms, and do not vanish from conversation, once spoken, without leaving a trace of awkwardness: but the invitation was pressed, and at the first refusal pressed again; until Mr Smith, having found (at least) much in the house to interest him, at last accepted it. The arrangement made, he bowed goodbyes to Miss Tabitha and Miss Flora, and two minutes later found

himself back in the street, having been loaned the prentice Isaiah to bear his trunk.

It was now raining in good earnest, and the kennel was running, carrying city swill and city ordure down the centre of Golden Hill Street. Uphill and inland the narrow roadway dimmed to a windy darkness, faintly broken by lanterns. Isaiah swore, and tried to shift the box higher on his shoulders, to serve in the office of a wooden roof, but the weight sank his feet deeper. He was bullcalf-broad of figure beside the spindly, phthisical merchants' boys Smith knew, and his skin shone with unearthly cleanness, but a Mannahatta youth seemed to share very fully his Eastcheap cousins' taste for flash in the article of clothes. Isaiah's coat had more gold lace on its facings than many admirals' did, though the colour was all paint and not bullion, and his shoes were elaborately double-buckled and pointed in the toes.

'God's bollocks,' he said again, shifting unhappily. 'Where away, then?'

'You tell me, cully,' Smith said amiably. 'Where's clean and comfortable, with a decent chop-house to hand, and won't bleed my purse too fast? – Not a school of Venus,' he added, seeing a particular light kindle in Isaiah's eye. 'Just a plain lodging.'

'Mrs Lee in the Broad Way, then,' said Isaiah. 'But I hain't your cully, whate'er that be. I don't cotton to your cant.'

And he kept a sullen silence as he led Smith over oozy cobbles. It was not a joyous procession, between the half-seen house-fronts, some rising tall in brick and others mere hovels of wood, or black empty lots where animals complained unseen. Everything trickled, gurgled, spattered, dripped; kept up a watery unwelcoming music. The rain drilled in slantwise, as cold as ocean, and almost as immersing, soaking collar and hair, filling ears

with icy drams of floodwater, making soused fingers to ache. The few passers-by scurried along at a crouch, holding canvas sacks overhead if they had 'em, and Smith lost his count of the turns through the town-maze that took them to the door upon which Isaiah, after fifteen sodden minutes, knocked. Yet his spirits rose. A task begun is easier than a task contemplated; besides, he was a young man with money in his pocket, new-fallen to land in a strange city on the world's farther face, new-come or (as he himself had declared) new-born, in the metropolis of Thule. And these things are pleasant still, if the money be of some strange kind easily confus'd with waste paper, if the city be such as to fill you with fear as well as expectation. For what soul, to whom the world still is relatively new, does not feel the sensible excitement, the faster breath and expansion of hope, where every alley may yet contain an adventure, every door be back'd by danger, or by pleasure, or by bliss?

Mr Lovell, to whom few things retained the force of novelty, and who misliked extremely the sensation when they did, as if firm ground underfoot had been replaced on the instant by a scrabbling fall *in vacuo* – was, at the moment the door opened on Broad Way, hesitating in his parlour. Flora was downstairs, commanding from Zephyra the supper that would have arrived whether she commanded it or not. Only Tabitha still sat on the sofa, her hands quite still in her lap. It had been his custom, since his wife died these three years past, to call from time to time on his elder daughter's intelligence, in the same office her mother's had served; but now, for particular reasons, the issue might touch on her own self in terms that made advice unwise to solicit.

GOLDEN HILL

‘Why do you suppose,’ he said slowly, ‘that a young fellow who has money might pretend he does not – or, at any rate, keep it doubtful?’

‘*Does* he have money?’ Tabitha asked.

‘I think so, yes. I *think* the rest is all palaver, confusion a-purpose. Sand thrown in our eyes. Why, though, is what I cannot tell. What do you make of him?’

The same question was asked that night by Isaiah of Jem, at the kitchen fire; and again, by the master of the *Henrietta* of its mate, as the ship rode at anchor, on the swelling black rain-pored skin of the East River.

By morning, the news was all around the town that a stranger had arrived with a fortune in his pocket.