



EDITOR'S NOTE

James Fenimore Cooper was born in Burlington, New Jersey, in September, 1789; but while still an infant he was taken to the frontier region of New York State, watered by the Susquehanna River. There his father, who was a man of wealth, set up his homestead, and the boy's early impressions were of "the forest primeval"—of the free, open life of the settlement. There were opportunities galore for collecting information and stories of the conflicts between the white and the red man, and even for seeing the latter in his native state.

When thirteen years of age the lad was sent to Yale College; but the restrictions of school life proved a great trial, and the memories of the free days on the Susquehanna incited to rebellion. After three years his schooldays were rudely ended by his dismissal from Yale, and it was decided by his father that a sea life would be better for him. In 1806, therefore, he was entered as a common seaman on a vessel sailing for England, and after two years "before the mast" he was enrolled as midshipman in the American Navy. Three years completed his naval career, for in 1811 he married and resigned, with the rank of lieutenant. Farming, estate management, and other occupations engaged him for some years, and then he began to write. His first novel, *Precaution* (1820) was a failure, but six years later *The Last of the Mohicans* established his reputation as the romanticist of "the Wild West." He died on September 14th, 1851.