A Tooth for Paul Revere

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Some say it all happened because of Hancock and Adams (said the old man, pulling at his pipe), and some put it back to the Stamp Act and before. Then there's some hold out for Paul Revere and his little silver box. But the way I heard it, it broke loose because of Lige Butterwick and his tooth.

What's that? Why, the American Revolution, of course. What else would I be talking about? Well, your story about the land down South that they had to plough with alligators reminded me.

No, this is a true story—or at least that's how I heard it told.

My great-aunt was a Butterwick and I heard it from her. And, every now and then, she'd write it out and want to get it put in the history books. But they'd always put her off with some trifling sort of excuse. Till, finally, she got her dander up and wrote direct to the President of the United States. Well, no, he didn't answer himself exactly—the President's apt to be a pretty busy man. But the letter said he'd received her interesting communication and thanked her for it, so that shows you. We've got it framed, in the trailer—the ink's a little faded, but you can make out the man's name who signed it. It's either Bowers or Thorpe and he wrote a very nice hand.

You see, my great-aunt, she wasn't very respectful to the kind of history that does get into the books. What she liked was the queer corners of it and the tales that get handed down in families.

Take Paul Revere, for instance—all most folks think about, with him, is his riding a horse. But when she talked about Paul Revere—why, you could just see him in his shop, brewing the American Revolution in a silver teapot and waiting for it to settle. Oh yes, he was a silversmith by trade—but she claimed he was something more. She claimed there was a kind of magic in that quick, skillful hand of his—and that he was one of the kind of folks that can see just a little bit farther into a millstone than most. But it was when she got to Lige Butterwick that she really turned herself loose.

For she claimed that it took all sorts to make a country—and that meant the dumb ones, too. I don't mean ijits or nincompoops—just the ordinary folks that live along from day to day. And that day may be a notable day in history—but it's just Tuesday to them, till they read all about it in the papers. Oh, the heroes and the great men—they can plan and contrive and see ahead. But it isn't till the Lige Butterwicks get stirred up that things really start to happen. Or so she claimed. And the way that they do get stirred up is often curious, as she'd tell this story to prove.

For, now you take Lige Butterwick—and, before his tooth started aching, he was just like you and me. He lived on a farm about eight miles from Lexington, Massachusetts, and he was a peaceable man. It was troubled times in the American colonies, what with British warships in Boston Harbor and British soldiers in Boston and Sons of Liberty hooting the British soldiers—not to speak of Boston tea parties and such. But Lige Butterwick, he worked his farm and didn't pay much attention. There's lots of people like that, even in troubled times.

When he went into town, to be sure, there was high talk at the tavern. But he bought his goods and came home again—he had ideas about politics, but he didn't talk about them much. He had a good farm and it kept him busy—he had a wife and five children and they kept him humping. The young folks could argue about King George and Sam Adams—he wondered how the corn was going to stand that year. Now and then, if somebody said that this and that was a burning shame, he'd allow as how it might be, just to be neighborly. But, inside, he was wondering whether next year he mightn't make an experiment and plant the west field in rye.

Well, everything went along for him the way that it does for most folks with good years and bad years, till one April morning, in 1775, he woke up with a toothache. Being the kind of man he was, he didn't pay much attention to it at first. But he mentioned it that evening, at supper, and his wife got a bag of hot salt for him. He held it to his face and it seemed to ease him, but he couldn't hold it there all night, and, next morning, the tooth hurt worse than ever.

Well, he stood it the next day and the next, but it didn't improve any. He tried tansy tea and other remedies—he tried tying a string to it and having his wife slam the door. But, when it came to the pinch, he couldn't quite do it. So, finally, he took the horse and rode into Lexington town to have it seen to. Mrs. Butterwick made him—she said it might be an expense, but anything was better than having him act as if he wanted to kick the cat across tne room every time she put her feet down hard.

When he got into Lexington, he noticed that folks there seemed kind of excited. There was a lot of talk about muskets and powder and a couple of men called Hancock and Adams who were staying at Parson Clarke's, But Lige Butterwick had his own business to attend to—and, besides, his tooth was jumping so he wasn't in any mood for conversation. He set off for the local barber's, as being the likeliest man he knew to pull a tooth.

The barber took one look at it and shook his head.

"I can pull her, Lige," he said. "Oh, I can pull her, all right. But she's got long roots and strong roots and she's going to leave an awful gap when she's gone. Now, what you really

need," he said, kind of excited, for he was one of those perky little men who's always interested in the latest notion, "what you really need—though it's taking away my business—is one of these-here artificial teeth to go in the hole."

"Artificial teeth!" said Lige. "It's flying in the face of Nature!"

The barber shook his head. "No, Lige," he said, "that's where you're wrong. Artificial teeth is all the go these days, and Lexington ought to keep up with the times. It would do me good to see you with an artificial tooth—it would so."

"Well, it might do you good," said Lige, rather crossly, for his tooth was jumping, "but, supposing I did want one—how in tunket will I get one in Lexington?"

"Now you just leave that to me," said the barber, all excited, and he started to rummage around. "You'll have to go to Boston for it, but I know just the man." He was one of those men who can always tell you where to go and it's usually wrong. "See here," he went on. "There's a fellow called Revere in Boston that fixes them and they say he's a boss workman. Just take a look at this prospectus"—and he started to read from a paper: " Whereas many persons are so unfortunate as to lose their foreteeth'—that's you, Lige—'to their great detriment, not only in looks but in speaking, both in public and private, this is to inform all such that they may have them replaced by artificial ones'—see?—'that look as well as the natural and answer the end of speaking to all intents'—and then he's got his name—Paul Revere, goldsmith, near the head of Dr. Clarke's wharf, Boston."

"Sounds well enough," said Lige, "but what's it going to cost?"

"Oh, I know Revere," said the barber, swelling up like a robin. "Comes through here pretty often, as a matter of fact. And he's a decent fellow, if he is a pretty big bug in the Sons of Liberty. You just mention my name."

"Well, it's something I hadn't thought of," said Lige, as his tooth gave another red-hot jounce, "but in for a penny, in for a pound. I've missed a day's work already and that tooth's got to come out before I go stark, staring mad. But what sort of man is this Revere, anyway?"

"Oh, he's a regular wizard!" said the barber. "A regular wizard with his tools."

"Wizard!" said Lige. "Well, I don't know about wizards. But if he can fix my tooth I'll call him one."

"You'll never regret it," said the barber—and that's the way folks always talk when they're sending someone else to the dentist. So Lige Butterwick got on his horse again and started

out for Boston. A couple of people shouted at him as he rode down the street, but he didn't pay any attention. And, going by Parson Clarke's, he caught a glimpse of two men talking in the Parson's front room. One was a tallish, handsomish man in pretty fine clothes and the other was shorter and untidy, with a kind of bulldog face. But they were strangers to him and he didn't really notice them—just rode ahead.

II

But as soon as he got into Boston he started to feel queer—and it wasn't only his tooth. He hadn't been there in four years and he'd expected to find it changed, but it wasn't that. It was a clear enough day and yet he kept feeling there was thunder in the air. There'd be knots of people, talking and arguing, on street corners, and then, when you got closer to them, they'd kind of melt away. Or, if they stayed, they'd look at you, out of the corners of their eyes. And there, in the Port of Boston, were the British warships, black and grim. He'd known they'd be there, of course, but it was different, seeing them. It made him feel queer to see their guns pointed at the town. He'd known there was trouble and dispute, in Boston, but the knowledge had passed over him like rain and hail. But now here he was in the middle of it—and it smelt like earthquake weather. He couldn't make head or tail of it, but he wanted to be home.

All the same, he'd come to get his tooth fixed, and, being New England, he was bound to do it. But first he stopped at a tavern for a bite and a sup, for it was long past his dinnertime. And there, it seemed to him, things got even more curious.

"Nice weather we're having, these days," he said, in a friendly way, to the barkeep.

"It's bitter weather for Boston," said the barkeep, in an unfriendly voice, and a sort of low growl went up from the boys at the back of the room and every eye fixed on Lige.

Well, that didn't help the toothache any, but, being a sociable person, Lige kept on.

"May be, for Boston," he said, "but out in the country we'd call it good planting weather."

The barkeep stared at him hard.

"I guess I was mistaken in you," he said. "It *is* good planting weather—for some kinds of trees."

"And what kind of trees were you thinking of?" said a sharpfaced man at Lige's left and squeezed his shoulder.

"There's trees and trees, you know," said a red-faced man at Lige's right, and gave him a dig

in the ribs.

“Well, now that you ask me—” said Lige, but he couldn’t even finish before the red-faced man dug him hard in the ribs again.

“The liberty tree!” said the red-faced man. “And may it soon be watered in the blood of tyrants!”

“The royal oak of England!” said the sharp-faced man. “And God save King George and loyalty!”

Well, with that it seemed to Lige Butterwick as if the whole tavern kind of riz up at him. He was kicked and pummeled and mauled and thrown into a corner and yanked out of it again, with the red-faced man and the sharp-faced man and all the rest of them dancing quadrilles over his prostrate form. Till, finally, he found himself out in the street with half his coat gone galley-west.

“Well,” said Lige to himself, “I always heard city folks were crazy. But politics must be getting serious in these American colonies when they start fighting about trees!”

Then he saw the sharp-faced man was beside him, trying to shake his hand. He noticed with some pleasure that the sharpfaced man had the beginnings of a beautiful black eye.

“Nobly done, friend,” said the sharp-faced man, “and I’m glad to find another true-hearted loyalist in this pestilent, rebellious city.”

“Well, I don’t know as I quite agree with you about that,” said Lige. “But I came here to get my tooth fixed, not to talk politics. And as long as you’ve spoken so pleasant, I wonder if you could help me out. You see, I’m from Lexington way—and I’m looking for a fellow named Paul Revere—”

“Paul Revere!” said the sharp-faced man, as if the name hit him like a bullet. Then he began to smile again—not a pleasant smile.

“Oh, it’s Paul Revere you want, my worthy and ingenuous friend from the country,” he said. “Well, I’ll tell you how to find him. You go up to the first British soldier you see and ask the way. But you better give the password first.”

“Password?” said Lige Butterwick, scratching his ear.

“Yes,” said the sharp-faced man, and his smile got wider.

“You say to that British soldier, ‘Any lobsters for sale today?’ Then you ask about Revere.”

“But why do I talk about lobsters first?” said Lige Butterwick, kind of stubborn.

“Well, you see,” said the sharp-faced man, “the British soldiers wear red coats. So they like being asked about lobsters. Try it and see.” And he went away, with his shoulders shaking.

Well, that seemed queer to Lige Butterwick, but no queerer than the other things that had happened that day. All the same, he didn’t quite trust the sharp-faced man, so he took care not to come too close to the British patrol when he asked them about the lobsters. And it was lucky he did, for no sooner were the words out of his mouth than the British soldiers took after him and chased him clear down to the wharves before he could get away. At that, he only managed it by hiding in an empty tar-barrel, and when he got out he was certainly a sight for sore eyes.

“Well, I guess that couldn’t have been the right password,” he said to himself, kind of grimly, as he tried to rub off some of the tar. “All the same, I don’t think soldiers ought to act like that when you ask them a civil question. But, city folks or soldiers, they can’t make a fool out of me. I came here to get my tooth fixed and get it fixed I will, if I have to surprise the whole British Empire to do it.”

And just then he saw a sign on a shop at the end of the wharf. And, according to my great-aunt, this was what was on the sign. It said “PAUL REVERE, SILVERSMITH” at the top, and then, under it, in smaller letters, “Large and small bells cast to order, engraving and printing done in job lots, artificial teeth sculptured and copper boilers mended, all branches of goldsmith and silversmith work and revolutions put up to take out. Express Service, Tuesdays and Fridays, to Lexington, Concord and Points West.”

“Well,” said Lige Butterwick, “kind of a Jack-of-all-trades. Now maybe I can get my tooth fixed.” And he marched up to the door.

III

Paul Revere was behind the counter when Lige came in, turning a silver bowl over and over in his hands. A man of forty-odd he was, with a quick, keen face and snapping eyes. He was wearing Boston clothes, but there was a French look about him—for his father was Apollos Rivoire from the island of Guernsey, and good French Huguenot stock. They’d changed the name to Revere when they crossed the water.

It wasn’t such a big shop, but it had silver pieces in it that people have paid thousands for, since. And the silver pieces weren’t all. There were prints and engravings of the Port of

Boston and caricatures of the British and all sorts of goldsmith work, more than you could put a name to. It was a crowded place, but shipshape. And Paul Revere moved about it, quick and keen, with his eyes full of life and hot temper—the kind of man who knows what he wants to do and does it the next minute.

There were quite a few customers there when Lige Butterwick first came in—so he sort of scrooged back in a corner and waited his chance. For one thing, after the queer sign and the barber's calling him a wizard, he wanted to be sure about this fellow, Revere, and see what kind of customers came to his shop.

Well, there was a woman who wanted a christening mug for a baby and a man who wanted a print of the Boston Massacre. And then there was a fellow who passed Revere some sort of message, under cover—Lige caught the whisper, "powder" and "Sons of Liberty," though he couldn't make out the rest. And, finally, there was a very fine silk-dressed lady who seemed to be giving Revere considerable trouble. Lige peeked at her round the corner of his chair, and, somehow or other, she reminded him of a turkey-gobbler, especially the strut.

She was complaining about some silver that Paul Revere had made for her—expensive silver it must have been. And "Oh, Master Revere, I'm so disappointed!" she was saying. "When I took the things from the box, I could just have cried!"

Revere drew himself up a little at that, Lige noticed, but his voice was pleasant.

"It is I who am disappointed, madam," he said, with a little bow. "But what was the trouble? It must have been carelessly packed. Was it badly dented? I'll speak to my boy."

"Oh no, it wasn't dented," said the turkey-gobbler lady. "But I wanted a really impressive silver service—something I can use when the Governor comes to dinner with us. I certainly paid for the best. And what have you given me?"

Lige waited to hear what Paul Revere would say. When he spoke, his voice was stiff.

"I have given you the best work of which I am capable, madam," he said. "It was in my hands for six months—and I think they are skillful hands."

"Oh," said the woman, and rustled her skirts. "I know you're a competent artisan, Master Revere—"

"Silversmith, if you please—" said Paul Revere, and the woman rustled again.

"Well, I don't care what you call it," she said, and then you could see her fine accent was put on like her fine clothes. "But I know I wanted a real service—something I could show my

friends. And what have you given me? Oh, it's silver, if you choose. But it's just as plain and simple as a picket fence!"

Revere looked at her for a moment and Lige Butterwick thought he'd explode.

"Simple?" he said. "And plain? You pay me high compliments, madam!"

"Compliments indeed!" said the woman, and now she was getting furious. "I'm sending it back tomorrow! Why, there isn't as much as a lion or a unicorn on the cream jug. And I told you I wanted the sugar bowl covered with silver grapes! But you've given me something as bare as the hills of New England! And I won't stand it, I tell you! I'll send to England instead."

Revere puffed his cheeks and blew, but his eyes were dangerous.

"Send away, madam," he said. "We're making new things in this country—new men—new silver—perhaps, who knows, a new nation. Plain, simple, bare as the hills and rocks of New England—graceful as the boughs of her elm trees—if my silver were only like that indeed! But that is what I wish to make it. And, as for you, madam,"—he stepped toward her like a cat,—"with your lions and unicorns and grape leaves and your nonsense of bad ornament done by bad silversmiths—your imported bad taste and your imported British manners—puff!" And he blew at her, just the way you blow at a turkey-gobbler, till she fairly picked up her fine silk skirts and ran. Revere watched her out of the door and turned back, shaking his head.

"William!" he called to the boy who helped him in the shop.

"Put up the shutters—we're closing for the day. And William—no word yet from Dr. Warren?"

"Not yet, sir," said the boy, and started to put up the shutters.

Then Lige Butterwick thought it was about time to make his presence known.

So he coughed, and Paul Revere whirled and Lige Butterwick felt those quick, keen eyes boring into his. He wasn't exactly afraid of them, for he was stubborn himself, but he knew this was an unexpected kind of man.

"Well, my friend," said Revere, impatiently, "and who in the world are you?"

"Well, Mr. Revere," said Lige Butterwick. "It is Mr. Revere, isn't it? It's kind of a long story. But, closing or not, you've got to listen to me. The barber told me so."

“The barber!” said Revere, kind of dumbfounded.

“Uh-huh,” said Lige, and opened his mouth. “You see, it’s my tooth.”

“Tooth!” said Revere, and stared at him as if they were both crazy. “You’d better begin at the beginning. But wait a minute. You don’t talk like a Boston man. Where do you come from?”

“Oh, around Lexington way,” said Lige. “And, you see—”

But the mention of Lexington seemed to throw Revere into a regular excitement. He fairly shook Lige by the shoulders.

“Lexington!” he said. “Were you there this morning?”

“Of course I was,” said Lige. “That’s where the barber I told you about—”

“Never mind the barber!” said Revere. “Were Mr. Hancock and Mr. Adams still at Parson Clarke’s?”

“Well, they might have been, for all I know,” said Lige. “But I couldn’t say.”

“Great heaven!” said Revere. “Is there a man in the American colonies who doesn’t know Mr. Hancock and Mr. Adams?”

“There seems to be me,” said Lige. “But, speaking of strangers—there *was* two of them staying at the parsonage, when I rode past. One was a handsomish man and the other looked more like a bulldog-”

“Hancock and Adams!” said Revere. “So they are still there.” He took a turn or two up and down the room. “And the British ready to march!” he muttered to himself. “Did you see many soldiers as you came to my shop, Mr. Butterwick?”

“See them?” said Lige. “They chased me into a tar-barrel. And there was a whole passel of them up by the Common with guns and flags. Looked as if they meant business.”

Revere took his hand and pumped it up and down.

“Thank you, Mr. Butterwick,” he said. “You’re a shrewd observer. And you have done me—and the colonies—an invaluable service.”

“Well, that’s nice to know,” said Lige. “But, speaking about this tooth of mine—”

Revere looked at him and laughed, while his eyes crinkled.

“You’re a stubborn man, Mr. Butterwick,” he said. “All the better. I like stubborn men. I wish we had more of them. Well, one good turn deserves another-you’ve helped me and I’ll do my best to help you. I’ve made artificial teeth-but drawing them is hardly my trade. All the same, I’ll do what I can for you.”

So Lige sat down in a chair and opened his mouth.

“Whew!” said Revere, with his eyes dancing. His voice grew solemn. “Mr. Butterwick,” he said, “it seems to be a compound, agglutinated infraction of the upper molar. I’m afraid I can’t do anything about it tonight.”

“But-” said Lige.

“But here’s a draught-that will ease the pain for a while,” said Revere, and poured some medicine into a cup. “Drink!” he said, and Lige drank. The draught was red and spicy, with a queer, sleepy taste, but pungent. It wasn’t like anything Lige had ever tasted before, but he noticed it eased the pain.

“There,” said Revere. “And now you go to a tavern and get a good night’s rest. Come back to see me in the morning—I’ll find a tooth-drawer for you, if I’m here. And—oh yes—you’d better have some liniment.”

He started to rummage in a big cupboard at the back of the shop. It was dark now, with the end of day and the shutters up, and whether it was the tooth, or the tiredness, or the draught Paul Revere had given him, Lige began to feel a little queer. There was a humming in his head and a lightness in his feet. He got up and stood looking over Paul Revere’s shoulder, and it seemed to him that things moved and scampered in that cupboard in a curious way, as Revere’s quick nngers took down this box and that. And the shop was full of shadows and murmurings.

“It’s a queer kind of shop you’ve got here, Mr. Revere,” he said, glad to hear the sound of his own voice.

“Well, some people think so,” said Revere—and that time Lige was almost sure he saw something move in the cupboard. He coughed. “Say—what’s in that little bottle?” he said, to keep his mind steady.

“That?” said Paul Revere, with a smile, and held the bottle up. “Oh, that’s a little chemical

experiment of mine. I call it Essence of Boston. But there's a good deal of East Wind in it."

"Essence of Boston," said Lige, with his eyes bulging. "Well, they did say you was a wizard. It's gen-u-wine magic, I suppose?"

"Genuine magic, of course," said Revere, with a chuckle. "And here's the box with your liniment. And here—"

He took down two little boxes—a silver and a pewter one—and placed them on the counter. But Lige's eyes went to the silver one—they were drawn to it, though he couldn't have told you why.

"Pick it up," said Paul Revere, and Lige did so and turned it in his hands. It was a handsome box. He could make out a growing tree and an eagle fighting a lion. "It's mighty pretty work," he said.

"It's my own design," said Paul Revere. "See the stars around the edge—thirteen ot them? You could make a very pretty design with stars—for a new country, say—if you wanted to—I've sometimes thought of it."

"But what's in it?" said Lige.

"What's in it?" said Paul Revere, and his voice was light but steely. "Why, what's in the air around us? Gunpowder and war and the making of a new nation. But the time isn't quite ripe yet—not quite ripe."

"You mean," said Lige, and he looked at the box very respectful, "that this-here revolution folks keep talking about—"

"Yes," said Paul Revere, and he was about to go on. But just then his boy ran in, with a letter in his hand.

"Master!" he said. "A message from Dr. Warren!"

IV

Well, with that Revere started moving, and, when he started to move, he moved fast. He was calling for his riding boots in one breath and telling Lige Butterwick to come back tomorrow in another—and, what with all the bustle and confusion, Lige Butterwick nearly went off without his liniment after all. But he grabbed up a box from the counter, just as Revere was practically shoving him out of the door—and it wasn't till he'd got to his tavern and gone to bed for the night that he found out he'd taken the wrong box.

He found it out then because, when he went to bed, he couldn't get to sleep. It wasn't his tooth that bothered him—that had settled to a kind of dull ache and he could have slept through that. But his mind kept going over all the events of the day—the two folks he'd seen at Parson Clarke's and being chased by the British and what Revere had said to the turkey-gobbler woman—till he couldn't get any peace. He could feel something stirring in him, though he didn't know what it was.

"'Tain't right to have soldiers chase a fellow down the street," he said to himself. "And 'tain't right to have people like that woman run down New England. No, it ain't. Oh me—I better look for that liniment of Mr. Revere's."

So he got up from his bed and went over and found his coat.

Then he reached his hand in the pocket and pulled out the silver box.

Well, at first he was so flustrated that he didn't know rightly what to do. For here, as well as he could remember it, was gunpowder and war and the makings of a new nation—the revolution itself, shut up in a silver box by Paul Revere. He mightn't have believed there could be such things before he came to Boston. But now he did.

The draught was still humming in his head, and his legs felt a mite wobbly. But, being human, he was curious. "Now, I wonder what is inside that box," he said.

He shook the box and handled it, but that seemed to make it warmer, as if there was something alive inside it, so he stopped that mighty quick. Then he looked all over it for a keyhole, but there wasn't any keyhole, and, if there had been, he didn't have a key.

Then he put his ear to the box and listened hard. And it seemed to him that he heard, very tiny and far away, inside the box, the rolling fire of thousands of tiny muskets and the tiny, faraway cheers of many men. "Hold your fire!" he heard a voice say. "Don't fire till you're fired on—but, if they want a war, let it begin here!" And then there was a rolling of drums and a squeal of fifes. It was small, still, and far away, but it made him shake all over, for he knew he was listening to something in the future—and something that he didn't have a right to hear. He sat down on the edge of his bed, with the box in his hands.

"Now, what am I going to do with this?" he said. "It's too big a job for one man."

Well, he thought, kind of scared, of going down to the river and throwing the box in, but, when he thought of doing it, he knew he couldn't. Then he thought of his farm near Lexington and the peaceful days. Once the revolution was out of the box, there'd be an end to that. But then he remembered what Revere had said when he was talking with the woman

about the silver—the thing about building a new country and building it clean and plain. "Why, I'm not a Britisher," he thought. "I'm a New Englander. And maybe there's something beyond that—something people like Hancock and Adams know about. And, if it has to come with a revolution—well, I guess it has to come. We can't stay Britishers forever, here in this country."

He listened to the box again, and now there wasn't any shooting in it—just a queer tune played on a fife. He didn't know the name of the tune, but it lifted his heart.

He got up, sort of slow and heavy. "I guess I'll have to take this back to Paul Revere," he said.

Well, the first place he went was Dr. Warren's, having heard Revere mention it, but he didn't get much satisfaction there. It took quite a while to convince them that he wasn't a spy, and, when he did, all they'd tell him was that Revere had gone over the river to Charlestown. So he went down to the waterfront to look for a boat. And the first person he met was a very angry woman.

"No," she said, "you don't get any boats from me. There was a crazy man along here an hour ago and he wanted a boat, too, and my husband was crazy enough to take him. And then, do you know what he did?"

"No, mam," said Lige Butterwick.

"He made my husband take my best petticoat to muffle the oars so they wouldn't make a splash when they went past that Britisher ship," she said, pointing out where the man-of-war *Somerset* lay at anchor. "My best petticoat, I tell you! And when my husband comes back he'll get a piece of my mind!"

"Was his name Revere?" said Lige Butterwick. "Was he a man of forty-odd, keen-looking and kind of Frenchy?"

"I don't know what his right name is," said the woman, "but his name's mud with me. My best petticoat tore into strips and swimming in that nasty river!" And that was all he could get out of her.

All the same, he managed to get a boat at last—the story doesn't say how—and row across the river. The tide was at young flood and the moonlight bright on the water, and he passed under the shadow of the *Somerset*, right where Revere had passed. When he got to the Charlestown side, he could see the lanterns in North Church, though he didn't know what they signified. Then he told the folks at Charlestown he had news for Revere and they got him a horse and so he started to ride. And, all the while, the silver box was burning his

pocket.

Well, he lost his way more or less, as you well might in the darkness, and it was dawn when he came into Lexington by a side road. The dawn in that country's pretty, with the dew still on the grass. But he wasn't looking at the dawn. He was feeling the box burn his pocket and thinking hard.

Then, all of a sudden, he reined up his tired horse. For there, on the side road, were two men carrying a trunk—and one of them was Paul Revere.

They looked at each other and Lige began to grin. For Revere was just as dirty and mud-splashed as he was—he'd warned Hancock and Adams all right, but then, on his way to Concord, he'd got caught by the British and turned loose again. So he'd gone back to Lexington to see how things were there—and now he and the other fellow were saving a trunk of papers that Hancock had left behind, so they wouldn't fall into the hands of the British.

Lige swung off his horse. "Well, Mr. Revere," he said, "you see, I'm on time for that little appointment about my tooth. And, by the way, I've got something for you." He took the box from his pocket. And then he looked over toward Lexington Green and caught his breath. For, on the Green, there was a little line of Minute Men—neighbors of his, as he knew—and, in front of them, the British regulars. And, even as he looked, there was the sound of a gunshot, and, suddenly, smoke wrapped the front of the British line and he heard them shout as they ran forward.

Lige Butterwick took the silver box and stamped on it with his heel. And with that the box broke open—and there was a dazzle in his eyes for a moment and a noise of men shouting—and then it was gone.

"Do you know what you've done?" said Revere. "You've let out the American Revolution!"

"Well," said Lige Butterwick, "I guess it was about time. And I guess I'd better be going home, now. I've got a gun on the wall there. And I'll need it."

"But what about your tooth?" said Paul Revere.

"Oh, a tooth's a tooth," said Lige Butterwick. "But a country's a country. And, anyhow, it's stopped aching."

All the same, they say Paul Revere made a silver tooth for him, after the war. But my great-aunt wasn't quite sure of it, so I won't vouch for that.