

DALA

## Digital American Literature Anthology



### Unit Six: The New Nation and Its Literature

Version 1.5

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# Unit Six Introduction: The New Nation and Its Literature

Up until the creation of the United States of America, there was, in one sense, no true American literature written by actual citizens of this country. As we have discussed previously, however, our definition of what constitutes American literature is more expansive than simply literature created by a citizen. The birth of the United States is recognized as July 4, 1776, when the Declaration of Independence was adopted by the Continental Congress, creating 13 "united" states. Interestingly, John Adams thought the day the Declaration was "signed" on July 2 would be this country's day of celebration.

With the creation of this new nation there soon came calls from its citizenry for a national literature, that was uniquely American. The Norton Anthology of American Literature states it would take nearly half a century after the Declaration for such literature to come into existence.

*While the 1830s through 1850s is usually identified as the period when American literature came into its own, the 1820s were actually the years when critics first agreed that the United States had produced writers who wrote distinctively American works worthy of a great nation. This interest in producing identifiably American works, and celebrating those works, can be called "literary nationalism."* ("Overview")

Robert Spiller lays out the conditions of the creation of a new national literature in Chapter Two of his book, *The Cycle of American Literature*.

*One proof that there was a new nation in the making would be the appearance of a new and characteristic literature. No sooner was political independence from the Old World assured than the hue and cry for an independent literature set in. The problem was a simple one; the answer not easy. Here, far from the sophistication and corruption of Europe, were unspoiled nature waiting to be described and regenerated man eager to express his ideas. The materials of a new civilization and a new literature were at hand; but art is form, and new form does not suddenly appear. The colonists from long habit looked to British poetry, fiction, drama, and essay for their standards of literary expression. The eighteenth century had been a time of formal art. Somehow the new wine must be put into old bottles. Somehow American literature must equal or surpass its British models in perfection of expression and at the same time be faithful to its native ideas and experience. Caught between the urge of youth to break all ties with the past and*

*the need of art for a tradition and a model by which to bend the raw materials of life to formal expression, our earliest men of letters were at once naive, experimental, conformist, self-conscious, and imitative.*

*The first need was for the instruments of culture: the institutions and the equipment for creating and producing books and for training writers to write them and a public to read them. This process was well advanced by 1760, when the public attention was first drawn to the disturbing issues of the Revolution; it was somewhat delayed by the war itself; and it was greatly stimulated by the peace.*

*By 1764 seven colleges, of student age level not much above that of the modern high school, were established in the colonies. All but Pennsylvania were sectarian in their foundations, and religious training took its place with Latin, Greek, philosophy, mathematics, and other branches of learning. There was little study of English or modern literatures, almost none of history or geography, and comparatively little of natural science. But these struggling little colleges brought inquiring young minds together to read and think and talk, and education followed. In the 1790s the literary groups of Boston, Hartford, New York, and Philadelphia were composed chiefly of college students.*

*These young men turned to the circulating libraries for their books. The libraries of Harvard and Yale were large enough to issue catalogues by the middle of the century, but much richer collections were to be found in the library societies of Philadelphia, Newport, Charleston, and New York, the first of which was founded in 1731. Theological, political, historical, and scientific books predominated in these collections, but they also offered a generous selection of English and Continental authors, both classic and contemporary, and, as the century progressed, more and more books by American writers. As women gained leisure and influence, novels increased in numbers, as did poetry and drama.*

*Perhaps the most serious handicap that our early writers had to contend with was the lack of regular publishers. Colonial books by Americans were usually issued in London, although Franklin was printing books by 1740. Other provincial printers did the same thing, but most of these books were by British authors because of the absence or inequality of the American copyright laws. Usually an American author had to pay the costs of his own work and publish it through a local bookseller. The copyright law of 1790 made it illegal to reprint a book by a native American author, whereas foreign books had no such protection.*

*The first newspaper, published in Boston in 1690, was suppressed, but by 1800 most of the seaboard towns had at least one paper each; and in addition to news most of them printed an occasional poem or essay. Between 1741 and the end of the century, eighty magazines had been started, but only a few survived one or*

*two issues. As we turn the pages of these earlier journals, we may wonder how they could have encouraged literature. Even in their own day, the small type in double columns and the lack of vitality in their borrowed contents must have done little to stimulate reading.*

*The American theater had a slightly later but parallel growth. Plays had been written or acted in the colonies, chiefly by college students, before 1767, when Thomas Godfrey's sanguinary and conventional tragedy *The Prince of Parthia* was offered by a the American Company at the New Theatre in Southwark," Philadelphia, on the twenty-fourth of April. The "American" company was composed of British actors and had been producing British and Continental plays in American towns since 1752 in such makeshift halls as it could command. The real history of the American drama began in 1787, when a reorganized American Company presented Royall Tyler's *The Contrast*, a study of New York society which was the first dramatic treatment of an American subject by an American writer.*

*When the Peace of 1783 put a premium on native writing, a small group of young men was ready to answer the call. Most of them planned to go into law, politics, or the ministry, but many would have preferred a career in literature. Only a few, like Joseph Dennie, Charles Brockden Brown, Royall Tyler, and Philip Freneau, had anything resembling a literary career.*

*The accepted way of declaring literary independence of Britain was to write something on an American theme as nearly as possible in the manner of a favorite British author. Joel Barlow sang the eternal glories of Columbia in the measured couplets of Pope; Royall Tyler's "piece, which we may fairly call our own," had an American theme, but most of the characters and the situation suggested a comedy of Sheridan; Brockden Brown wrote Gothic novels that transplanted Horace Walpole's horrors from crumbling castles and dark dungeons to the haunted minds and the open forests of his imagination; and Philip Freneau had to pay lyric homage to the death of death before celebrating American heroism and the beauties of nature. It was too soon to have an American way of writing as well as American things to say.*

*Fortunately for American enthusiasm, British writing was by then becoming more and more romantic. In the distant background were the masters of the past, notably Shakespeare, Milton, and Dryden. In the near distance were the masters of the formal essay and poem, of criticism and satire, Defoe, Pope, Addison, and Swift. Among elder contemporaries were Samuel Johnson and Goldsmith, the novelists Richardson, Fielding, and Sterne, and the bluestocking ladies. The romantic impulse had already been felt in the poetry of Thomson, Gray, and Cowper, and was becoming more pronounced in that of Blake, Burns,*

*Wordsworth, and Coleridge. In the novel, just barely established as a reputable literary form, new experiments were already being tried in the Gothic horror of Walpole and Lewis, and in the ironic domestic comedy of manners of the gentle company of Jane Austen, while the short story was just beginning to emerge from emphasis on character rather than incident in the periodical essay. The era of Byron, Shelley, Scott, Lamb, and Bulwer was yet to come.*

*In spite of the growing spirit of nationalism, competition with British literature was too acute for the American writers. By 1800 most of the first group had turned from the frivolities of literature to more serious pursuits, and no new group had appeared to take their places. Brown, Freneau, and many others had turned to journalism; and Irving, Bryant, and Cooper did not publish their most characteristic work until about 1821. There were books published in the interval, but the contrast is sufficiently striking to draw a sharp line between the two generations. The first impulse had failed.*

*Most of the reasons for this failure are obscure, but two are fairly obvious. The first generation had overreached itself in its effort to create both a literature and an audience. It was forced ultimately to follow Freneau's advice: "Graft your authorship upon some other calling as the helpless ivy takes hold of the vigorous oak." The printers, the booksellers, the reviewers, the librarians, and the readers would require time to create the necessary conditions for a grass-roots literary movement; and the romantic movement in Western European literature, which was to give the United States its first real literary impulse, was still in its infancy in 1800.*

*The essence of romanticism is the ability to wonder and to reflect. In searching the meaning of the known, the human spirit reaches for the unknown; in trying to understand the present, it looks to the past and to the future. Faith and hope lead to a positive romanticism, fear and doubt to a negative; but when both reason and authority have failed, man has a further refuge in the larger emotions which are always his. Only when these are fully awakened is a really great literature born. Shakespeare lived in one such era, Goethe in another.*

*In Europe, at the close of the eighteenth century, the revolt against political and religious authority was followed by a revolt against reason, and the romantic movement swept through its peoples. Coming to the United States at the moment of an awakening national consciousness, it assumed an even more ardent nationalism than it had in the older countries abroad. This attitude was expressed in the denial of tradition and of the European cultural inheritance, a delight in the grand scale and the infinite mysteries of nature on the unexplored western continent, and a pride in the "American ideas" which had so successfully created the Republic. Later it was to move into the abstractions of philosophy, but for the*

*present the creation of an American myth out of the new materials was its first and greatest task.*

*In this task, the American writers Washington Irving, William Cullen Bryant, and James Fenimore Cooper had an advantage over their European contemporaries, for they had almost nothing to revolt against. Like them, European writers were also straining at traditions and conventions and seeking in nature and in forgotten corners of the past, and the far-away, for the "originality" which was the mark of the romantic temper, but the Americans had novelty at their doorstep. It was fortunate for them that the Old World was also going through a period of literary experimentation just at the moment when American writers most needed flexibility in the models they must use for their art. Irving still looked to Goldsmith, but Bryant had Wordsworth as well as Cowper, and Cooper had Walter Scott.*

The rest of this chapter is available in print or online at <http://archive.org/details/cycleofamericanl030045mbp>

Today, we like to identify a number of "firsts" in the literature of the United States. Although the list of these "firsts" have evolved over time, with new research and emerging theoretical points of view, here is a current listing, and one not without differences of opinion.

- First piece of writing in the United States of America: Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson main author, July 4, 1776
- First comedy play written by an American that was professionally produced, *The Contrast*, by Royall Tyler, in 1787 (although note the first professionally mounted American play written in the colonies, *The Prince of Parthia*, by Thomas Godfrey was staged in 1767 in New York)
- First American novel: *The Power of Sympathy*, by William Hill Brown, published January 21, 1789 in Boston
- First American novel by a woman: *Charlotte Temple*, by Susanna Rowson, published 1791 in London and 1794 in Philadelphia
- A second highly popular American novel by a woman, *The Coquette*, by Hannah Webster Foster, was published in 1797 in Boston
- First Gothic American novel: *Wieland*, by Charles Brockden Brown, published in September 14, 1798 in New York - *Wieland* was called "the first American novel" by many sources through the 1970s

All of the above writers, however, were "made" citizens at the creation of the United States, though their works were published in this country. The first writers of fame actually born as United States citizens after 1776, and benefiting from the influences of European romanticism include:

- Washington Irving (born 1783), first American story writer of international fame
- James Fenimore Cooper (born 1789), highly regarded for his sea novel and his Leatherstocking Tales
- William Cullen Bryant (born 1794), early romantic poet, journalist, and editor of the New York Evening Post
- Ralph Waldo Emerson (born 1803), essayist and poet, associated with American Transcendentalism
- Nathaniel Hawthorne (born 1804), story writer, novelist
- Edgar Allan Poe (born 1809), story writer, poet, novelist, critic
- Henry David Thoreau (born 1817), essayist, early naturalist, writer of Walden
- Walt Whitman (born 1819), poet and essayist
- Herman Melville (born 1819), novelist, story writer, and poet
- Emily Dickinson (born 1830), poet

A group of New England poets and writers were also quite famous in the 19th and early 20th centuries, sometimes known as the Fireside Poets. Their popularity has waned in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (born 1807), popular poet, translator, one of the Harvard School Brahmin and a Fireside Poet
- John Greenleaf Whittier (born 1807), Quaker poet and abolitionist, considered a Fireside Poet
- Oliver Wendall Holmes, Sr. (born 1809), poet, one of the the Harvard School Brahmin and a Fireside Poet
- James Russell Lowell (born 1819), essayist and poet, one of the the Harvard School Brahmin and a Fireside Poet



Some of the romantic writers in these lists were considered part of a literary period sometimes called the American Renaissance, greatly popularized by critics and scholars from the middle of the 20th century, such as F.O. Matthiessen and Howard Mumford Jones. F.O. Matthiessen's book, *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman* (1941) became representative of the thinking of this period of criticism, identifying east coast, white male authors like Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville, and Whitman as America's greatest early writers.

Yet, starting in the 1980s, and over the next few decades, the absence of women writers and writers of color become more and more obvious to critics and scholars, in the listing of those considered important writers of this period. Eventually, adjustments to the canon were made to address these oversights. Now we enjoy the study of works by more diverse writers from this time frame such as William Apess, Black Hawk, Susanna Rowson, Hannah Foster, Lydia Child, Margaret Fuller, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Fanny Fern, Harriet Jacobs, Harriet Wilson, and Frederick Douglass.

## **Questions and Considerations**

General Questions Considering the Craft of Writing

What is the time/place of the setting?

Who are the major characters? Is there a clear protagonist and antagonist?

Is there clear narrator? Is the narrator/speaker understood to be reliable?

Is the narrator/speaker an intentionally crafted persona?

How are plot expectations met, challenged, or exceeded?

Are there repeated images/concepts/symbols in the work?

If verse, how are the elements of poetry utilized and illustrated?

Reflection and Application

What is the theme, point, or moral of the writing?

How does the author wish readers to consider the subject?

More Specific Questions

How do the poems in this unit fall within the tradition of literary romanticism?

What aspects of the poems in this unit are specifically American?

Do a quick internet search on the seduction novel. Is the tradition of Rowson's 'seduction novel' *Charlotte* still alive today? In what forms?

What dominant impressions are you left with after reading Irving's works? Gothicism? Humor? Character development?

Irving's work draws heavily from European sources and models. So what makes them distinctly American?

Discuss Cooper's use of Native American characters in the context of our previous studies of native-white interactions.

Can Cooper be considered one of America's first 'naturalist' writers?

Consider how vestiges of Cooper's stories survive in the popular culture we consume today.

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## Unit Six Readings: The New Nation and Its Literature

### William Cullen Bryant (1794 - 1878)

[Resources for The New Nation and Its Literature](#)

[[image](#)] William Cullen Bryant, as an early citizen of the United States, was recognized by his generation as one of America's first important poetic voices. Indeed, at the core of the earliest canon of American literary studies are works by Bryant, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, James Russell Lowell, John Greenleaf Whittier, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and Ralph Waldo Emerson. Bryant was born on November 3, 1794, outside of Cummington, Massachusetts. He was educated at Williams College, then studied law, practicing in nearby Plainfield. Bryant's earliest poems, "Thanatopsis" (1817), and "To a Waterfowl" (1821) were well received. He gradually shifted from practicing law to a more literary career, as an editor in New York City, and is greatly known for his work as the Editor-in-Chief of the *New York Evening Post*. Inspired by the European Romantics, he updated his volumes of poetry throughout his life, along with writing travel essays and poetic translations. Bryant died on June 12, 1878 and is buried in Roslyn Cemetery on Long Island. More recent biographies include Charles H. Brown's *William Cullen Bryant*, New York: Scribners, 1971, Albert F. McLean's *William Cullen Bryant*, Boston: G. K. Hall & Company, 1989, and Gilbert H. Muller's *William Cullen Bryant: Author of America*, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2008.

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source of electronic text: <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/16341>

## Thanatopsis

To him who in the love of Nature holds  
Communion with her visible forms, she speaks  
A various language; for his gayer hours  
She has a voice of gladness, and a smile  
And eloquence of beauty, and she glides  
Into his darker musings, with a mild  
And gentle sympathy, that steals away  
Their sharpness, ere he is aware. When thoughts  
Of the last bitter hour come like a blight  
Over thy spirit, and sad images  
Of the stern agony, and shroud, and pall,  
And breathless darkness, and the narrow house,  
Make thee to shudder, and grow sick at heart;--  
Go forth under the open sky, and list  
To Nature's teachings, while from all around--  
Earth and her waters, and the depths of air,--  
Comes a still voice--Yet a few days, and thee  
The all-beholding sun shall see no more  
In all his course; nor yet in the cold ground,  
Where thy pale form was laid, with many tears,  
Nor in the embrace of ocean shall exist  
Thy image. Earth, that nourished thee, shall claim  
Thy growth, to be resolv'd to earth again;  
And, lost each human trace, surrend'ring up  
Thine individual being, shalt thou go  
To mix forever with the elements,  
To be a brother to th' insensible rock  
And to the sluggish clod, which the rude swain  
Turns with his share, and treads upon. The oak  
Shall send his roots abroad, and pierce thy mould.  
Yet not to thy eternal resting place  
Shalt thou retire alone--nor couldst thou wish  
Couch more magnificent. Thou shalt lie down  
With patriarchs of the infant world--with kings  
The powerful of the earth--the wise, the good,  
Fair forms, and hoary seers of ages past,  
All in one mighty sepulchre.--The hills  
Rock-ribb'd and ancient as the sun,--the vales  
Stretching in pensive quietness between;  
The vernal woods--rivers that move  
In majesty, and the complaining brooks  
That make the meadows green; and pour'd round all,  
Old ocean's grey and melancholy waste,--  
Are but the solemn decorations all

Of the great tomb of man. The golden sun,  
The planets, all the infinite host of heaven,  
Are shining on the sad abodes of death,  
Through the still lapse of ages. All that tread  
The globe are but a handful to the tribes  
That slumber in its bosom.--Take the wings  
Of morning--and the Barcan desert pierce,  
Or lost thyself in the continuous woods  
Where rolls the Oregon, and hears no sound,  
Save his own dashings--yet--the dead are there,  
And millions in those solitudes, since first  
The flight of years began, have laid them down  
In their last sleep--the dead reign there alone.--  
So shalt thou rest--and what if thou shalt fall  
Unnoticed by the living--and no friend  
Take note of thy departure? All that breathe  
Will share thy destiny. The gay will laugh,  
When thou art gone, the solemn brood of care  
Plod on, and each one as before will chase  
His favorite phantom; yet all these shall leave  
Their mirth and their employments, and shall come,  
And make their bed with thee. As the long train  
Of ages glide away, the sons of men,  
The youth in life's green spring, and he who goes  
In the full strength of years, matron, and maid,  
The bow'd with age, the infant in the smiles  
And beauty of its innocent age cut off,--  
Shall one by one be gathered to thy side,  
By those, who in their turn shall follow them.  
So live, that when thy summons comes to join  
The innumerable caravan, that moves  
To the pale realms of shade, where each shall take  
His chamber in the silent halls of death,  
Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,  
Scourged to his dungeon, but sustain'd and sooth'd  
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave,  
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch  
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.

## **The Prairies**

These are the gardens of the Desert, these  
The unshorn fields, boundless and beautiful,  
For which the speech of England has no name--  
The Prairies. I behold them for the first,  
And my heart swells, while the dilated sight

Takes in the encircling vastness. Lo! they stretch,  
 In airy undulations, far away,  
 As if the ocean, in his gentlest swell,  
 Stood still, with an his rounded billows fixed,  
 And motionless forever.- Motionless?-  
 No- they are all unchained again. The clouds  
 Sweep over with their shadows, and, beneath,  
 The surface rolls and fluctuates to the eye;  
 Dark hollows seem to glide along and chase  
 The sunny ridges. Breezes of the South!  
 Who toss the golden and the flame-like flowers,  
 And pass the prairie-hawk that, poised on high,  
 Flaps his broad wings, yet moves not- ye have played  
 Among the palms of Mexico and vines  
 Of Texas, and have crisped the limpid brooks  
 That from the fountains of Sonora glide  
 Into the calm Pacific- have ye fanned  
 A nobler or a lovelier scene than this?  
 Man hath no power in all this glorious work:  
 The hand that built the firmament hath heaved  
 And smoothed these verdant swells, and sown their slopes  
 With herbage, planted them with island groves,  
 And hedged them round with forests. Fitting floor  
 For this magnificent temple of the sky-  
 With flowers whose glory and whose multitude  
 Rival the constellations! The great heavens  
 Seem to stoop down upon the scene in love,-  
 A nearer vault, and of a tenderer blue,  
 Than that which bends above our eastern hills. -  
 As o'er the verdant waste I guide my steed,  
 Among the high rank grass that sweeps his sides  
 The hollow beating of his footstep seems  
 A sacrilegious sound. I think of those  
 Upon whose rest he tramples. Are they here-  
 The dead of other days?- and did the dust  
 Of these fair solitudes once stir with life  
 And burn with passion? Let the mighty mounds  
 That overlook the rivers, or that rise  
 In the dim forest crowded with old oaks,  
 Answer. A race, that long has passed away,  
 Built them;- a disciplined and populous race  
 Heaped, with long toil, the earth, while yet the Greek

Was hewing the Pentelicus to forms  
Of symmetry, and rearing on its rock  
The glittering Parthenon. These ample fields  
Nourished their harvests, here their herds were fed,  
When haply by their stalls the bison lowed,  
And bowed his maned shoulder to the yoke.  
All day this desert murmured with their toils,  
Till twilight blushed, and lovers walked, and wooed  
In a forgotten language, and old tunes,  
From instruments of unremembered form,  
Gave the soft winds a voice. The red man came-  
The roaming hunter tribes, warlike and fierce,  
And the mound-builders vanished from the earth.  
The solitude of centuries untold  
Has settled where they dwelt. The prairie-wolf  
Hunts in their meadows, and his fresh-dug den  
Yawns by my path. The gopher mines the ground  
Where stood their swarming cities. All is gone;  
All- save the piles of earth that hold their bones,  
The platforms where they worshipped unknown gods,  
The barriers which they builded from the soil  
To keep the foe at bay- till o'er the walls  
The wild beleaguers broke, and, one by one,  
The strongholds of the plain were forced, and heaped  
With corpses. The brown vultures of the wood  
Flocked to those vast uncovered sepulchres,  
And sat unscared and silent at their feast.  
Haply some solitary fugitive,  
Lurking in marsh and forest, till the sense  
Of desolation and of fear became  
Bitterer than death, yielded himself to die.  
Man's better nature triumphed then. Kind words  
Welcomed and soothed him; the rude conquerors  
Seated the captive with their chiefs; he chose  
A bride among their maidens, and at length  
Seemed to forget- yet ne'er forgot- the wife  
Of his first love, and her sweet little ones,  
Butchered, amid their shrieks, with all his race. -

Thus change the forms of being. Thus arise  
Races of living things, glorious in strength,  
And perish, as the quickening breath of God  
Fills them, or is withdrawn. The red man, too,

Has left the blooming wilds he ranged so long,  
And, nearer to the Rocky Mountains, sought  
A wilder hunting-ground. The beaver builds  
No longer by these streams, but far away,  
On waters whose blue surface ne'er gave back  
The white man's face- among Missouri's springs,  
And pools whose issues swell the Oregon-  
He rears his little Venice. In these plains  
The bison feeds no more. Twice twenty leagues  
Beyond remotest smoke of hunter's camp,  
Roams the majestic brute, in herds that shake  
The earth with thundering steps--yet here I meet  
His ancient footprints stamped beside the pool.

Still this great solitude is quick with life.  
Myriads of insects, gaudy as the flowers  
They flutter over, gentle quadrupeds,  
And birds, that scarce have learned the fear of man  
Are heard, and sliding reptiles of the ground,  
Startlingly beautiful. The graceful deer  
Bounds to the wood at my approach. The bee,  
A more adventurous colonist than man,  
With whom he came across the eastern deep,  
Fills the savannas with his murmurings,  
And hides his sweets, as in the golden age,  
Within the hollow oak. I listen long  
To his domestic humm, and think I hear  
The sound of that advancing multitude  
Which soon shall fill these deserts. From the ground  
Comes up the laugh of children, the soft voice  
Of maidens, and the sweet and solemn hymn  
Of Sabbath worshippers. The low of herds  
Blends with the rustling of the heavy grain  
Over the dark-brown furrows. All at once  
A fresher wind sweeps by, and breaks my dream,  
And I am in the wilderness alone.

## **Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807 - 1882)**



## Resources for The New Nation and Its Literature

[[image](#)] Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, even more than Bryant, had the reputation in the nineteenth century as America's best and most beloved poet. He was born in Portland, Maine (Massachusetts at the time) on February 27, 1807, attended Bowdoin College with Nathaniel Hawthorne, and would later teach there as a professor of modern languages before moving on to a lengthy teaching career at Harvard. His long list of poetic works includes *Voices of the Night* (1839), *Ballads* (1841), *Evangeline* (1847), *Hiawatha* (1855), *The Courtship of Miles Standish* (1858), and *Tales of a Wayside Inn* (1863). Like Bryant, he was also known for his translations, especially of Dante's *Divine Comedy* (1867). In 1843, Longfellow married Fanny Appleton and they had six children. She died tragically in a house fire in 1861, in which Longfellow himself was badly burned attempting to save his wife. He died on March 24, 1882, with the legacy of being one of the most distinguished writers that this country had produced. Longfellow's biographers include his brother, Samuel Longfellow's *Life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*, Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1886, and Charles C. Calhoun's *Longfellow: A Rediscovered Life*, Boston: Beacon Press, 2003. A fine introduction to criticism is Robert L. Gale's encyclopedic *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Companion*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2003.

Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth. *Complete Poems of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*. Household Edition. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1902

source of electronic text: <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/1365>

### **Mezzo Cammin**

Half my life is gone, and I have let  
    The years slip from me and have not fulfilled  
    The aspiration of my youth, to build  
    Some tower of song with lofty parapet.  
Not indolence, nor pleasure, nor the fret  
    Of restless passions that would not be stilled,  
    But sorrow, and a care that almost killed,  
    Kept me from what I may accomplish yet;  
Though, half-way up the hill, I see the Past  
    Lying beneath me with its sounds and sights,--  
    A city in the twilight dim and vast,  
With smoking roofs, soft bells, and gleaming lights,--  
    And hear above me on the autumnal blast  
    The cataract of Death far thundering from the heights.

## **The Cross of Snow**

In the long, sleepless watches of the night,  
A gentle face--the face of one long dead--  
Looks at me from the wall, where round its head  
The night-lamp casts a halo of pale light.  
Here in this room she died, and soul more white  
Never through martyrdom of fire was led  
To its repose; nor can in books be read  
The legend of a life more benedight.  
There is a mountain in the distant West  
That, sun-defying, in its deep ravines  
Displays a cross of snow upon its side.  
Such is the cross I wear upon my breast  
These eighteen years, through all the changing scenes  
And seasons, changeless since the day she died.

## **My Lost Youth**

Often I think of the beautiful town  
That is seated by the sea;  
Often in thought go up and down  
The pleasant streets of that dear old town,  
And my youth comes back to me.  
And a verse of a Lapland song  
Is haunting my memory still:  
"A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I can see the shadowy lines of its trees,  
And catch, in sudden gleams,  
The sheen of the far-surrounding seas,  
And islands that were the Hesperides  
Of all my boyish dreams.  
And the burden of that old song,  
It murmurs and whispers still:  
"A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the black wharves and the ships,

And the sea-tides tossing free;  
And Spanish sailors with bearded lips,  
And the beauty and mystery of the ships,  
And the magic of the sea.  
And the voice of that wayward song  
Is singing and saying still:  
"A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the bulwarks by the shore,  
And the fort upon the hill;  
The sunrise gun, with its hollow roar,  
The drum-beat repeated o'er and o'er,  
And the bugle wild and shrill.  
And the music of that old song  
Throbs in my memory still:  
"A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the sea-fight far away,  
How it thundered o'er the tide!  
And the dead captains, as they lay  
In their graves, o'erlooking the tranquil bay  
Where they in battle died.  
And the sound of that mournful song  
Goes through me with a thrill:  
"A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I can see the breezy dome of groves,  
The shadows of Deering's Woods;  
And the friendships old and the early loves  
Come back with a Sabbath sound, as of doves  
In quiet neighborhoods.  
And the verse of that sweet old song,  
It flutters and murmurs still:  
"A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the gleams and glooms that dart  
Across the school-boy's brain;  
The song and the silence in the heart,

That in part are prophecies, and in part  
Are longings wild and vain.  
And the voice of that fitful song  
Sings on, and is never still:  
"A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

There are things of which I may not speak;  
There are dreams that cannot die;  
There are thoughts that make the strong heart weak,  
And bring a pallor into the cheek,  
And a mist before the eye.  
And the words of that fatal song  
Come over me like a chill:  
"A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

Strange to me now are the forms I meet  
When I visit the dear old town;  
But the native air is pure and sweet,  
And the trees that o'ershadow each well-known street,  
As they balance up and down,  
Are singing the beautiful song,  
Are sighing and whispering still:  
"A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

And Deering's Woods are fresh and fair,  
And with joy that is almost pain  
My heart goes back to wander there,  
And among the dreams of the days that were,  
I find my lost youth again.  
And the strange and beautiful song,  
The groves are repeating it still:  
"A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

# Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809 - 1894)

## [Resources for The New Nation and Its Literature](#)

[[image](#)] Oliver Wendell Holmes was born on August 29, 1809 in Cambridge, Massachusetts and died on October 7, 1894 in Boston. He became a medical doctor, training in Paris and Harvard, and he taught at both Dartmouth Medical School and Harvard. A writer of prose and poetry, his most famous work is *The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table* (1858). His poems like "Old Ironsides," and "The Chambered Nautilus," helped establish his reputation as an important poet of his age. His son, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., would go on to become a Supreme Court Justice in the early twentieth century.

Holmes, Oliver Wendell. *Poetical Works of Oliver Wendell Holmes*. Household Edition. Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1877.

source of electronic texts: <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/7400>

## **The Chambered Nautilus**

This is the ship of pearl, which, poets feign,  
Sails the unshadowed main, --  
The venturous bark that flings  
On the sweet summer wind its purpled wings  
In gulfs enchanted, where the Siren sings,  
And coral reefs lie bare,  
Where the cold sea-maids rise to sun their streaming hair.

Its webs of living gauze no more unfurl;  
Wrecked is the ship of pearl!  
And every chambered cell,  
Where its dim dreaming life was wont to dwell,  
As the frail tenant shaped his growing shell,  
Before thee lies revealed, --  
Its irised ceiling rent, its sunless crypt unsealed!

Year after year beheld the silent toil  
That spread his lustrous coil;  
Still, as the spiral grew,

He left the past year's dwelling for the new,  
Stole with soft step its shining archway through,  
Built up its idle door,  
Stretched in his last-found home, and knew the old no more.

Thanks for the heavenly message brought by thee,  
Child of the wandering sea,  
Cast from her lap, forlorn!  
From thy dead lips a clearer note is born  
Than ever Triton blew from wreathèd horn!  
While on mine ear it rings,  
Through the deep caves of thought I hear a voice that sings: --

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,  
As the swift seasons roll!  
Leave thy low-vaulted past!  
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,  
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,  
Till thou at length art free,  
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!

## **John Greenleaf Whittier (1807 - 1892)**

[Resources for The New Nation and Its Literature](#)

[[image](#)] John Greenleaf Whittier was an important American abolitionist and poet from a strong Quaker background. He is best known for his long pastoral poem, *Snow-Bound*. Whittier was born December 17, 1807 near Haverhill, Massachusetts. He grew up on a farm, much like the one described in his famous poem. Influenced by his Quakerism and helped early by abolitionist writer and editor, William Lloyd Garrison, Whittier edited a number of publications and dedicated himself to writing antislavery prose and poetry for decades. He was an earlier contributor to the *Atlantic Monthly*, and published the financially successful *Snow-Bound* in 1866. He died on September 7, 1892 and is buried in Amesbury, Massachusetts.

*Illustration: Title page for Snow-Bound: A Winter Idyl by American poet John Greenleaf Whittier. Published by Ticknor & Fields, 1866.*

Whittier, John Greenleaf. Snow-bound: A Winter Idyl. Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1872.

source of electronic text: <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/20226>

## **excerpt from Snow-bound: A Winter Idyl**

*To the Memory of the Household It Describes, This Poem is Dedicated by the Author*

*"As the Spirits of Darkness be stronger in the dark, so Good Spirits which be Angels of Light are augmented not only by the Divine Light of the Sun, but also by our common Wood fire: and as the celestial Fire drives away dark spirits, so also this our Fire of Wood doth the same."*

-- COR. AGRIPPA, *Occult Philosophy, Book I. chap. v.*

*"Announced by all the trumpets of the sky,  
Arrives the snow; and, driving o'er the fields,  
Seems nowhere to alight; the whited air  
Hides hills and woods, the river and the heaven,  
And veils the farm-house at the garden's end.  
The sled and traveller stopped, the courier's feet  
Delayed, all friends shut out, the housemates sit  
Around the radiant fireplace, enclosed  
In a tumultuous privacy of storm." -- EMERSON.*

The sun that brief December day  
Rose cheerless over hills of gray,  
And, darkly circled, gave at noon  
A sadder light than waning moon.  
Slow tracing down the thickening sky  
Its mute and ominous prophecy,  
A portent seeming less than threat,  
It sank from sight before it set.  
A chill no coat, however stout,  
Of homespun stuff could quite shut out,  
A hard, dull bitterness of cold,  
That checked, mid-vein, the circling race  
Of life-blood in the sharpened face,

The coming of the snow-storm told.  
The wind blew east; we heard the roar  
Of Ocean on his wintry shore,  
And felt the strong pulse throbbing there  
Beat with low rhythm our inland air.

Meanwhile we did our nightly chores, --  
Brought in the wood from out of doors,  
Littered the stalls, and from the mows  
Raked down the herd's-grass for the cows;  
Heard the horse whinnying for his corn;  
And, sharply clashing horn on horn,  
Impatient down the stanchion rows  
The cattle shake their walnut bows;  
While, peering from his early perch  
Upon the scaffold's pole of birch,  
The cock his crested helmet bent  
And down his querulous challenge sent.

Unwarmed by any sunset light  
The gray day darkened into night,  
A night made hoary with the swarm  
And whirl-dance of the blinding storm,  
As zigzag, wavering to and fro,  
Crossed and recrossed the wingèd snow:  
And ere the early bedtime came  
The white drift piled the window-frame,  
And through the glass the clothes-line posts  
Looked in like tall and sheeted ghosts.

So all night long the storm roared on:  
The morning broke without a sun;  
In tiny spherule traced with lines  
Of Nature's geometric signs,  
And, when the second morning shone,  
We looked upon a world unknown,  
On nothing we could call our own.  
Around the glistening wonder bent  
The blue walls of the firmament,



No cloud above, no earth below, --  
A universe of sky and snow!  
The old familiar sights of ours  
Took marvellous shapes; strange domes and towers  
Rose up where sty or corn-crib stood,  
Or garden-wall, or belt of wood;  
A smooth white mound the brush-pile showed,  
A fenceless drift what once was road;  
The bridle-post an old man sat  
With loose-flung coat and high cocked hat;  
The well-curb had a Chinese roof;  
And even the long sweep, high aloof,  
In its slant splendor, seemed to tell  
Of Pisa's leaning miracle.

A prompt, decisive man, no breath  
Our father wasted: "Boys, a path!"  
Well pleased, (for when did farmer boy  
Count such a summons less than joy?)  
Our buskins on our feet we drew;  
    With mittened hands, and caps drawn low,  
    To guard our necks and ears from snow,  
We cut the solid whiteness through.  
And, where the drift was deepest, made  
A tunnel walled and overlaid  
With dazzling crystal: we had read  
Of rare Aladdin's wondrous cave,  
And to our own his name we gave,  
With many a wish the luck were ours  
To test his lamp's supernal powers.  
We reached the barn with merry din,  
And roused the prisoned brutes within.  
The old horse thrust his long head out,  
And grave with wonder gazed about;  
The cock his lusty greeting said,  
And forth his speckled harem led;  
The oxen lashed their tails, and hooked,  
And mild reproach of hunger looked;  
The horned patriarch of the sheep,  
Like Egypt's Amun roused from sleep,  
Shook his sage head with gesture mute,

And emphasized with stamp of foot.

All day the gusty north-wind bore  
The loosening drift its breath before;  
Low circling round its southern zone,  
The sun through dazzling snow-mist shone.  
No church-bell lent its Christian tone  
To the savage air, no social smoke  
Curled over woods of snow-hung oak.  
A solitude made more intense  
By dreary-voicëd elements,  
The shrieking of the mindless wind,  
The moaning tree-boughs swaying blind,  
And on the glass the unmeaning beat  
Of ghostly finger-tips of sleet.  
Beyond the circle of our hearth  
No welcome sound of toil or mirth  
Unbound the spell, and testified  
Of human life and thought outside.  
We minded that the sharpest ear  
The buried brooklet could not hear,  
The music of whose liquid lip  
Had been to us companionship,  
And, in our lonely life, had grown  
To have an almost human tone.

As night drew on, and, from the crest  
Of wooded knolls that ridged the west,  
The sun, a snow-blown traveller, sank  
From sight beneath the smothering bank,  
We piled, with care, our nightly stack  
Of wood against the chimney-back, --  
The oaken log, green, huge, and thick,  
And on its top the stout back-stick;  
The knotty forestick laid apart,  
And filled between with curious art

The ragged brush; then, hovering near,  
We watched the first red blaze appear,

Heard the sharp crackle, caught the gleam  
On whitewashed wall and sagging beam,  
Until the old, rude-furnished room  
Burst, flower-like, into rosy bloom;  
While radiant with a mimic flame  
Outside the sparkling drift became,  
And through the bare-boughed lilac-tree  
Our own warm hearth seemed blazing free.  
The crane and pendent trammels showed,  
The Turks' heads on the andirons glowed;  
While childish fancy, prompt to tell  
The meaning of the miracle,  
Whispered the old rhyme: "Under the tree,  
When fire outdoors burns merrily,  
There the witches are making tea."

The moon above the eastern wood  
Shone at its full; the hill-range stood  
Transfigured in the silver flood,  
Its blown snows flashing cold and keen,  
Dead white, save where some sharp ravine  
Took shadow, or the sombre green  
Of hemlocks turned to pitchy black  
Against the whiteness at their back.  
For such a world and such a night  
Most fitting that unwarming light,  
Which only seemed where'er it fell  
To make the coldness visible.

Shut in from all the world without,  
We sat the clean-winged hearth about,  
Content to let the north-wind roar  
In baffled rage at pane and door,  
While the red logs before us beat  
The frost-line back with tropic heat;  
And ever, when a louder blast  
Shook beam and rafter as it passed,  
The merrier up its roaring draught  
The great throat of the chimney laughed;  
The house-dog on his paws outspread

Laid to the fire his drowsy head,  
The cat's dark silhouette on the wall  
A couchant tiger's seemed to fall;  
And, for the winter fireside meet,  
Between the andirons' straddling feet,  
The mug of cider simmered slow,  
The apples sputtered in a row,  
And, close at hand, the basket stood  
With nuts from brown October's wood.

[text omitted]

## James Russell Lowell (1819-1891)

[Resources for The New Nation and Its Literature](#)

[[image](#)] James Russell Lowell succeeded Longfellow as professor of modern languages at Harvard College in 1855 and is known as an early American satirist and critic. His 1848 *A Fable for Critics* offers an interesting and humorous mid-century critical perspective of the U.S. literary scene. Lowell was born on February 22, 1819 in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Educated at Harvard as a lawyer, he turned to writing and teaching for his life's work. He died on August 12, 1891 and is buried in Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

### Excerpts from *A Fable for Critics*

Lowell, James Russell. *The Complete Poetic Works of James Russell Lowell*. Cabinet Edition. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1892.

sources of electronic text: <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/13310>

[text omitted]

'There comes Emerson first, whose rich words, every one,  
Are like gold nails in temples to hang trophies on,  
Whose prose is grand verse, while his verse, the Lord knows,  
Is some of it pr— No, 'tis not even prose; 530  
I'm speaking of metres; some poems have welled  
From those rare depths of soul that have ne'er been excelled;  
They're not epics, but that doesn't matter a pin,

In creating, the only hard thing's to begin;  
 A grass-blade's no easier to make than an oak;  
 If you've once found the way, you've achieved the grand stroke;  
 In the worst of his poems are mines of rich matter,  
 But thrown in a heap with a crash and a clatter;  
 Now it is not one thing nor another alone  
 Makes a poem, but rather the general tone, 540  
 The something pervading, uniting the whole,  
 The before unconceived, unconceivable soul,  
 So that just in removing this trifle or that, you  
 Take away, as it were, a chief limb of the statue;  
 Roots, wood, bark, and leaves singly perfect may be,  
 But, clapt hodge-podge together, they don't make a tree.  
 'But, to come back to Emerson (whom, by the way,  
 I believe we left waiting),—his is, we may say,  
 A Greek head on right Yankee shoulders, whose range  
 Has Olympus for one pole, for t'other the Exchange; 550  
 He seems, to my thinking (although I'm afraid  
 The comparison must, long ere this, have been made),  
 A Plotinus-Montaigne, where the Egyptian's gold mist  
 And the Gascon's shrewd wit cheek-by-jowl coexist;  
 All admire, and yet scarcely six converts he's got  
 To I don't (nor they either) exactly know what;  
 For though he builds glorious temples, 'tis odd  
 He leaves never a doorway to get in a god.  
 'Tis refreshing to old-fashioned people like me  
 To meet such a primitive Pagan as he, 560  
 In whose mind all creation is duly respected  
 As parts of himself—just a little projected;  
 And who's willing to worship the stars and the sun,  
 A convert to—nothing but Emerson.  
 So perfect a balance there is in his head,  
 That he talks of things sometimes as if they were dead;  
 Life, nature, love, God, and affairs of that sort,  
 He looks at as merely ideas; in short,  
 As if they were fossils stuck round in a cabinet,  
 Of such vast extent that our earth's a mere dab in it; 570  
 Composed just as he is inclined to conjecture her,  
 Namely, one part pure earth, ninety-nine parts pure lecturer;  
 You are filled with delight at his clear demonstration,  
 Each figure, word, gesture, just fits the occasion,  
 With the quiet precision of science he'll sort 'em,

But you can't help suspecting the whole a *post mortem*.

'There are persons, mole-blind to the soul's make and style,  
Who insist on a likeness 'twixt him and Carlyle;  
To compare him with Plato would be vastly fairer,  
Carlyle's the more burly, but E. is the rarer; 580  
He sees fewer objects, but clearer, truelier,  
If C.'s as original, E.'s more peculiar;  
That he's more of a man you might say of the one,  
Of the other he's more of an Emerson;  
C.'s the Titan, as shaggy of mind as of limb,—  
E. the clear-eyed Olympian, rapid and slim;  
The one's two thirds Norseman, the other half Greek,  
Where the one's most abounding, the other's to seek;  
C.'s generals require to be seen in the mass,—  
E.'s specialties gain if enlarged by the glass; 590  
C. gives nature and God his own fits of the blues,  
And rims common-sense things with mystical hues,—  
E. sits in a mystery calm and intense,  
And looks coolly around him with sharp common-sense;  
C. shows you how every-day matters unite  
With the dim transdiurnal recesses of night,—  
While E., in a plain, preternatural way,  
Makes mysteries matters of mere every day;  
C. draws all his characters quite *à la* Fuseli,—  
Not sketching their bundles of muscles and thews illy, 600  
He paints with a brush so untamed and profuse,  
They seem nothing but bundles of muscles and thews;  
E. is rather like Flaxman, lines strait and severe,  
And a colorless outline, but full, round, and clear;—  
To the men he thinks worthy he frankly accords  
The design of a white marble statue in words.  
C. labors to get at the centre, and then  
Take a reckoning from there of his actions and men;  
E. calmly assumes the said centre as granted,  
And, given himself, has whatever is wanted. 610

'He has imitators in scores, who omit  
No part of the man but his wisdom and wit,—  
Who go carefully o'er the sky-blue of his brain,  
And when he has skimmed it once, skim it again;  
If at all they resemble him, you may be sure it is  
Because their shoals mirror his mists and obscurities,  
As a mud-puddle seems deep as heaven for a minute,

While a cloud that floats o'er is reflected within it.

'There comes—, for instance; to see him's rare sport,  
Tread in Emerson's tracks with legs painfully short; 620  
How he jumps, how he strains, and gets red in the face.

To keep step with the mystagogue's natural pace!

He follows as close as a stick to a rocket,

His fingers exploring the prophet's each pocket.

Fie, for shame, brother bard; with good fruit of your own,

Can't you let Neighbor Emerson's orchards alone?

Besides, 'tis no use, you'll not find e'en a core,—

— has picked up all the windfalls before.

They might strip every tree, and E. never would catch 'em,

His Hesperides have no rude dragon to watch 'em; 630

When they send him a dishful, and ask him to try 'em,

He never suspects how the sly rogues came by 'em;

He wonders why 'tis there are none such his trees on,

And thinks 'em the best he has tasted this season.

[text omitted]

'There is Bryant, as quiet, as cool, and as dignified,

As a smooth, silent iceberg, that never is ignifed,

Save when by reflection 'tis kindled o' nights

With a semblance of flame by the chill Northern Lights.

He may rank (Griswold says so) first bard of your nation

(There's no doubt that he stands in supreme iceolation),

Your topmost Parnassus he may set his heel on, 820

But no warm applauses come, peal following peal on,—

He's too smooth and too polished to hang any zeal on:

Unqualified merits, I'll grant, if you choose, he has 'em,

But he lacks the one merit of kindling enthusiasm;

If he stir you at all, it is just, on my soul,

Like being stirred up with the very North Pole.

'He is very nice reading in summer, but *inter*

*Nos*, we don't want *extra* freezing in winter;

Take him up in the depth of July, my advice is,

When you feel an Egyptian devotion to ices. 830

But, deduct all you can, there's enough that's right good in him,

He has a true soul for field, river, and wood in him;

And his heart, in the midst of brick walls, or where'er it is,

Glow, softens, and thrills with the tenderest charities—

To you mortals that delve in this trade-ridden planet?

No, to old Berkshire's hills, with their limestone and granite.

If you're one who *in loco* (add *foco* here) *desipis*,

You will get out of his outermost heart (as I guess) a piece;  
 But you'd get deeper down if you came as a precipice,  
 And would break the last seal of its inwardest fountain, 840  
 If you only could palm yourself off for a mountain.  
 Mr. Quivis, or somebody quite as discerning,  
 Some scholar who's hourly expecting his learning,  
 Calls B. the American Wordsworth; but Wordsworth  
 May be rated at more than your whole tuneful herd's worth.  
 No, don't be absurd, he's an excellent Bryant;  
 But, my friends, you'll endanger the life of your client,  
 By attempting to stretch him up into a giant;  
 If you choose to compare him, I think there are two per-  
 -sons fit for a parallel—Thomson and Cowper; [2] 850  
 I don't mean exactly,—there's something of each,  
 There's T.'s love of nature, C.'s penchant to preach;  
 Just mix up their minds so that C.'s spice of craziness  
 Shall balance and neutralize T.'s turn for laziness,  
 And it gives you a brain cool, quite frictionless, quiet,  
 Whose internal police nips the buds of all riot,—  
 A brain like a permanent strait-jacket put on  
 The heart that strives vainly to burst off a button,—  
 A brain which, without being slow or mechanic,  
 Does more than a larger less drilled, more volcanic; 860  
 He's a Cowper condensed, with no craziness bitten,  
 And the advantage that Wordsworth before him had written.

'But, my dear little bardlings, don't prick up your ears  
 Nor suppose I would rank you and Bryant as peers;  
 If I call him an iceberg, I don't mean to say  
 There is nothing in that which is grand in its way;  
 He is almost the one of your poets that knows  
 How much grace, strength, and dignity lie in Repose;  
 If he sometimes fall short, he is too wise to mar  
 His thought's modest fulness by going too far; 870  
 'T would be well if your authors should all make a trial  
 Of what virtue there is in severe self-denial,  
 And measure their writings by Hesiod's staff,  
 Which teaches that all has less value than half.

'There is Whittier, whose swelling and vehement heart  
 Strains the strait-breasted drab of the Quaker apart,  
 And reveals the live Man, still supreme and erect,  
 Underneath the bemummying wrappers of sect;  
 There was ne'er a man born who had more of the swing



Of the true lyric bard and all that kind of thing; 880  
 And his failures arise (though he seem not to know it)  
 From the very same cause that has made him a poet,—  
 A fervor of mind which knows no separation  
 'Twixt simple excitement and pure inspiration,  
 As my Pythoness erst sometimes erred from not knowing  
 If 'twere I or mere wind through her tripod was blowing;  
 Let his mind once get head in its favorite direction  
 And the torrent of verse bursts the dams of reflection,  
 While, borne with the rush of the metre along,  
 The poet may chance to go right or go wrong, 890  
 Content with the whirl and delirium of song;  
 Then his grammar's not always correct, nor his rhymes,  
 And he's prone to repeat his own lyrics sometimes,  
 Not his best, though, for those are struck off at white-heats  
 When the heart in his breast like a trip-hammer beats,  
 And can ne'er be repeated again any more  
 Than they could have been carefully plotted before:  
 Like old what's-his-name there at the battle of Hastings  
 (Who, however, gave more than mere rhythmical bastings),  
 Our Quaker leads off metaphorical fights 900  
 For reform and whatever they call human rights,  
 Both singing and striking in front of the war,  
 And hitting his foes with the mallet of Thor;  
*Anne haec*, one exclaims, on beholding his knocks,  
*Vestis filii tui*, O leather-clad Fox?  
 Can that be thy son, in the battle's mid din,  
 Preaching brotherly love and then driving it in  
 To the brain of the tough old Goliath of sin,  
 With the smoothest of pebbles from Castaly's spring  
 Impressed on his hard moral sense with a sling? 910  
 'All honor and praise to the right-hearted bard  
 Who was true to The Voice when such service was hard,  
 Who himself was so free he dared sing for the slave  
 When to look but a protest in silence was brave;  
 All honor and praise to the women and men  
 Who spoke out for the dumb and the down-trodden then!  
 It needs not to name them, already for each  
 I see History preparing the statue and niche;  
 They were harsh, but shall *you* be so shocked at hard words  
 Who have beaten your pruning-hooks up into swords, 920  
 Whose rewards and hurrahs men are surer to gain

By the reaping of men and of women than grain?  
Why should *you* stand aghast at their fierce wordy war, if  
You scalp one another for Bank or for Tariff?  
Your calling them cut-throats and knaves all day long  
Doesn't prove that the use of hard language is wrong;  
While the World's heart beats quicker to think of such men  
As signed Tyranny's doom with a bloody steel-pen,  
While on Fourth-of-Julys beardless orators fright one  
With hints at Harmodius and Aristogeiton, 930  
You need not look shy at your sisters and brothers  
Who stab with sharp words for the freedom of others;—  
No, a wreath, twine a wreath for the loyal and true  
Who, for sake of the many, dared stand with the few,  
Not of blood-spattered laurel for enemies braved,  
But of broad, peaceful oak-leaves for citizens saved!  
[text omitted]

'There is Hawthorne, with genius so shrinking and rare  
That you hardly at first see the strength that is there;  
A frame so robust, with a nature so sweet,  
So earnest, so graceful, so lithe and so fleet, 1000  
Is worth a descent from Olympus to meet;  
'Tis as if a rough oak that for ages had stood,  
With his gnarled bony branches like ribs of the wood,  
Should bloom, after cycles of struggle and scathe,  
With a single anemone trembly and rathe;  
His strength is so tender, his wildness so meek,  
That a suitable parallel sets one to seek,—  
He's a John Bunyan Fouque, a Puritan Tieck;  
When Nature was shaping him, clay was not granted  
For making so full-sized a man as she wanted, 1010  
So, to fill out her model, a little she spared  
From some finer-grained stuff for a woman prepared,  
And she could not have hit a more excellent plan  
For making him fully and perfectly man.  
The success of her scheme gave her so much delight,  
That she tried it again, shortly after, in Dwight;  
Only, while she was kneading and shaping the clay,  
She sang to her work in her sweet childish way,  
And found, when she'd put the last touch to his soul,  
That the music had somehow got mixed with the whole. 1020

'Here's Cooper, who's written six volumes to show  
He's as good as a lord: well, let's grant that he's so;

If a person prefer that description of praise,  
 Why, a coronet's certainly cheaper than bays;  
 But he need take no pains to convince us he's not  
 (As his enemies say) the American Scott.  
 Choose any twelve men, and let C. read aloud  
 That one of his novels of which he's most proud,  
 And I'd lay any bet that, without ever quitting  
 Their box, they'd be all, to a man, for acquitting. 1030  
 He has drawn you one character, though, that is new,  
 One wildflower he's plucked that is wet with the dew  
 Of this fresh Western world, and, the thing not to mince,  
 He has done naught but copy it ill ever since;  
 His Indians, with proper respect be it said,  
 Are just Natty Bumppo, daubed over with red,  
 And his very Long Toms are the same useful Nat,  
 Rigged up in duck pants and a sou'wester hat  
 (Though once in a Coffin, a good chance was found  
 To have slipped the old fellow away underground). 1040  
 All his other men-figures are clothes upon sticks,  
 The *dernière chemise* of a man in a fix  
 (As a captain besieged, when his garrison's small,  
 Sets up caps upon poles to be seen o'er the wall);  
 And the women he draws from one model don't vary.  
 All sappy as maples and flat as a prairie.  
 When a character's wanted, he goes to the task  
 As a cooper would do in composing a cask;  
 He picks out the staves, of their qualities heedful,  
 Just hoops them together as tight as is needful, 1050  
 And, if the best fortune should crown the attempt, he  
 Has made at the most something wooden and empty.  
 'Don't suppose I would underrate Cooper's abilities;  
 If I thought you'd do that, I should feel very ill at ease;  
 The men who have given to *one* character life  
 And objective existence are not very rife;  
 You may number them all, both prose-writers and singers,  
 Without overrunning the bounds of your fingers,  
 And Natty won't go to oblivion quicker  
 Than Adams the parson or Primrose the vicar. 1060  
 'There is one thing in Cooper I like, too, and that is  
 That on manners he lectures his countrymen gratis;  
 Not precisely so either, because, for a rarity,  
 He is paid for his tickets in unpopularity.

Now he may overcharge his American pictures,  
But you'll grant there's a good deal of truth in his strictures;  
And I honor the man who is willing to sink  
Half his present repute for the freedom to think,  
And, when he has thought, be his cause strong or weak,  
Will risk t'other half for the freedom to speak, 1070  
Caring naught for what vengeance the mob has in store,  
Let that mob be the upper ten thousand or lower.

[text omitted]

'There comes Poe, with his raven, like Barnaby Rudge,  
Three fifths of him genius and two fifths sheer fudge,  
Who talks like a book of iambs and pentameters,  
In a way to make people of common sense damn metres, 1300  
Who has written some things quite the best of their kind,  
But the heart somehow seems all squeezed out by the mind,  
Who—But hey-day! What's this? Messieurs Mathews and Poe,  
You mustn't fling mud-balls at Longfellow so,  
Does it make a man worse that his character's such  
As to make his friends love him (as you think) too much?  
Why, there is not a bard at this moment alive  
More willing than he that his fellows should thrive;  
While you are abusing him thus, even now  
He would help either one of you out of a slough; 1310  
You may say that he's smooth and all that till you're hoarse,  
But remember that elegance also is force;  
After polishing granite as much as you will,  
The heart keeps its tough old persistency still;  
Deduct all you can, *that* still keeps you at bay;  
Why, he'll live till men weary of Collins and Gray.  
I'm not over-fond of Greek metres in English,  
To me rhyme's a gain, so it be not too jinglish,  
And your modern hexameter verses are no more  
Like Greek ones than sleek Mr. Pope is like Homer; 1320  
As the roar of the sea to the coo of a pigeon is,  
So, compared to your moderns, sounds old Melesigenes;  
I may be too partial, the reason, perhaps, o't is  
That I've heard the old blind man recite his own rhapsodies,  
And my ear with that music impregnate may be,  
Like the poor exiled shell with the soul of the sea,  
Or as one can't bear Strauss when his nature is cloven  
To its deeps within deeps by the stroke of Beethoven;  
But, set that aside, and 'tis truth that I speak,

Had Theocritus written in English, not Greek, 1330  
I believe that his exquisite sense would scarce change a line  
In that rare, tender, virgin-like pastoral Evangeline.  
That's not ancient nor modern, its place is apart  
Where time has no sway, in the realm of pure Art,  
'Tis a shrine of retreat from Earth's hubbub and strife  
As quiet and chaste as the author's own life.  
[text omitted]

'What! Irving? thrice welcome, warm heart and fine brain,  
You bring back the happiest spirit from Spain, 1440  
And the gravest sweet humor, that ever were there  
Since Cervantes met death in his gentle despair;  
Nay, don't be embarrassed, nor look so beseeching,  
I sha'n't run directly against my own preaching,  
And, having just laughed at their Raphaels and Dantes,  
Go to setting you up beside matchless Cervantes;  
But allow me to speak what I honestly feel,—  
To a true poet-heart add the fun of Dick Steele,  
Throw in all of Addison, *minus* the chill, 1449  
With the whole of that partnership's stock and good-will,  
Mix well, and while stirring, hum o'er, as a spell,  
The fine *old* English Gentleman, simmer it well,  
Sweeten just to your own private liking, then strain,  
That only the finest and clearest remain,  
Let it stand out of doors till a soul it receives  
From the warm lazy sun loitering down through green leaves,  
And you'll find a choice nature, not wholly deserving  
A name either English or Yankee,—just Irving.  
[text omitted]

'There's Holmes, who is matchless among you for wit;  
A Leyden-jar always full-charged, from which flit  
The electrical tingles of hit after hit;  
In long poems 'tis painful sometimes, and invites 1560  
A thought of the way the new Telegraph writes,  
Which pricks down its little sharp sentences spitefully  
As if you got more than you'd title to rightfully,  
And you find yourself hoping its wild father Lightning  
Would flame in for a second and give you a fright'ning.  
He has perfect sway of what I call a sham metre,  
But many admire it, the English pentameter,  
And Campbell, I think, wrote most commonly worse,  
With less nerve, swing, and fire in the same kind of verse,

Nor e'er achieved aught in't so worthy of praise 1570  
As the tribute of Holmes to the grand *Marseillaise*.  
You went crazy last year over Bulwer's New Timon;—  
Why, if B., to the day of his dying, should rhyme on,  
Heaping verses on verses and tomes upon tomes,  
He could ne'er reach the best point and vigor of Holmes.  
His are just the fine hands, too, to weave you a lyric  
Full of fancy, fun, feeling, or spiced with satiric  
In a measure so kindly, you doubt if the toes  
That are trodden upon are your own or your foes'.

'There is Lowell, who's striving Parnassus to climb 1580  
With a whole bale of *isms* tied together with rhyme,  
He might get on alone, spite of brambles and boulders,  
But he can't with that bundle he has on his shoulders,  
The top of the hill he will ne'er come nigh reaching  
Till he learns the distinction 'twixt singing and preaching;  
His lyre has some chords that would ring pretty well,  
But he'd rather by half make a drum of the shell,  
And rattle away till he's old as Methusalem,  
At the head of a march to the last new Jerusalem. 1589

[text omitted]

## Susanna Rowson (1762-1824)

### [Resources for The New Nation and Its Literature](#)

[[image](#)] Susanna Rowson was born in Portsmouth, England in 1762, though she grew up in Massachusetts, where she worked as a governess, stage actress and operator of a boarding school. She married William Rowson, a merchant, in 1786. Writing throughout her life, in all genres, she first published *Charlotte: A Tale of Truth* in 1791, which was later renamed *Charlotte Temple*. The first American edition was published in 1794. It became this country's most popular and best-selling novel up until Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was published over 50 years later. Rowson died in Boston on March 2, 1824.

*Charlotte* is one of many moralizing and melodramatic "seduction novels" published during this period, unfolding the tale of an innocent English schoolgirl who runs away with handsome British Lieutenant Montraville, sent to the Colonies to fight the rebellion, and is abandoned by him, pregnant and penniless. The novel seems greatly influenced by Richardson's *Pamela* (1740) and his *Clarissa*

(1747), along with Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766). In the field of American studies, this popular novel was largely ignored and forgotten by critics until the 1970s and 80s.

## **"Chapter 18: Reflections" from Charlotte Temple**

Rowson, Susanna. "Chapter 18: Reflections." *Charlotte Temple. A Tale of Truth*. New York: Evert Duyckinck, 1784.

source of electronic text: <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/171>

"AND am I indeed fallen so low," said Charlotte, "as to be only pitied? Will the voice of approbation no more meet my ear? and shall I never again possess a friend, whose face will wear a smile of joy whenever I approach? Alas! how thoughtless, how dreadfully imprudent have I been! I know not which is most painful to endure, the sneer of contempt, or the glance of compassion, which is depicted in the various countenances of my own sex: they are both equally humiliating. Ah! my dear parents, could you now see the child of your affections, the daughter whom you so dearly loved, a poor solitary being, without society, here wearing out her heavy hours in deep regret and anguish of heart, no kind friend of her own sex to whom she can unbosom her griefs, no beloved mother, no woman of character will appear in my company, and low as your Charlotte is fallen, she cannot associate with infamy."

These were the painful reflections which occupied the mind of Charlotte. Montraville had placed her in a small house a few miles from New-York: he gave her one female attendant, and supplied her with what money she wanted; but business and pleasure so entirely occupied his time, that he had little to devote to the woman, whom he had brought from all her connections, and robbed of innocence. Sometimes, indeed, he would steal out at the close of evening, and pass a few hours with her; and then so much was she attached to him, that all her sorrows were forgotten while blest with his society: she would enjoy a walk by moonlight, or sit by him in a little arbour at the bottom of the garden, and play on the harp, accompanying it with her plaintive, harmonious voice. But often, very often, did he promise to renew his visits, and, forgetful of his promise, leave her to mourn her disappointment. What painful hours of expectation would she pass! She would sit at a window which looked toward a field he used to cross, counting the minutes, and straining her eyes to catch the first glimpse of his person, till blinded with tears of disappointment, she would lean her head on her hands, and give free vent to her sorrows: then catching at some new hope, she would again renew her watchful position, till the shades of evening enveloped every object in a dusky cloud: she would then renew her complaints, and, with a heart bursting with disappointed love and wounded sensibility, retire to a bed

which remorse had strewed with thorns, and court in vain that comforter of weary nature (who seldom visits the unhappy) to come and steep her senses in oblivion.

Who can form an adequate idea of the sorrow that preyed upon the mind of Charlotte? The wife, whose breast glows with affection to her husband, and who in return meets only indifference, can but faintly conceive her anguish. Dreadfully painful is the situation of such a woman, but she has many comforts of which our poor Charlotte was deprived. The duteous, faithful wife, though treated with indifference, has one solid pleasure within her own bosom, she can reflect that she has not deserved neglect—that she has ever fulfilled the duties of her station with the strictest exactness; she may hope, by constant assiduity and unremitted attention, to recall her wanderer, and be doubly happy in his returning affection; she knows he cannot leave her to unite himself to another: he cannot cast her out to poverty and contempt; she looks around her, and sees the smile of friendly welcome, or the tear of affectionate consolation, on the face of every person whom she favours with her esteem; and from all these circumstances she gathers comfort: but the poor girl by thoughtless passion led astray, who, in parting with her honour, has forfeited the esteem of the very man to whom she has sacrificed every thing dear and valuable in life, feels his indifference in the fruit of her own folly, and laments her want of power to recall his lost affection; she knows there is no tie but honour, and that, in a man who has been guilty of seduction, is but very feeble: he may leave her in a moment to shame and want; he may marry and forsake her for ever; and should he, she has no redress, no friendly, soothing companion to pour into her wounded mind the balm of consolation, no benevolent hand to lead her back to the path of rectitude; she has disgraced her friends, forfeited the good opinion of the world, and undone herself; she feels herself a poor solitary being in the midst of surrounding multitudes; shame bows her to the earth, remorse tears her distracted mind, and guilt, poverty, and disease close the dreadful scene: she sinks unnoticed to oblivion. The finger of contempt may point out to some passing daughter of youthful mirth, the humble bed where lies this frail sister of mortality; and will she, in the unbounded gaiety of her heart, exult in her own unblemished fame, and triumph over the silent ashes of the dead? Oh no! has she a heart of sensibility, she will stop, and thus address the unhappy victim of folly—

"Thou had'st thy faults, but sure thy sufferings have expiated them: thy errors brought thee to an early grave; but thou wert a fellow-creature—thou hast been unhappy—then be those errors forgotten."

Then, as she stoops to pluck the noxious weed from off the sod, a tear will fall, and consecrate the spot to Charity.



For ever honoured be the sacred drop of humanity; the angel of mercy shall record its source, and the soul from whence it sprang shall be immortal.

My dear Madam, contract not your brow into a frown of disapprobation. I mean not to extenuate the faults of those unhappy women who fall victims to guilt and folly; but surely, when we reflect how many errors we are ourselves subject to, how many secret faults lie hid in the recesses of our hearts, which we should blush to have brought into open day (and yet those faults require the lenity and pity of a benevolent judge, or awful would be our prospect of futurity) I say, my dear Madam, when we consider this, we surely may pity the faults of others.

Believe me, many an unfortunate female, who has once strayed into the thorny paths of vice, would gladly return to virtue, was any generous friend to endeavour to raise and re-assure her; but alas! it cannot be, you say; the world would deride and scoff. Then let me tell you, Madam, 'tis a very unfeeling world, and does not deserve half the blessings which a bountiful Providence showers upon it.

Oh, thou benevolent giver of all good! how shall we erring mortals dare to look up to thy mercy in the great day of retribution, if we now uncharitably refuse to overlook the errors, or alleviate the miseries, of our fellow-creatures.

## Washington Irving (1783-1859)

### [Resources for The New Nation and Its Literature](#)

[[image](#)] Washington Irving was born on April 3, 1783 at New York City near the conclusion of the American Revolutionary War. He was named after war hero and future President, George Washington. In 1802-1803, Irving began to write in his brother, Peter's, periodical, the *Morning Chronicle*, under the pseudonym Jonathan Oldstyle. Irving passed the bar exam in 1806, though he continued to write essays and anecdotes. In 1807-1808, Irving worked alongside his brother William and James Kirke Paulding to create the popular magazine *Salmagundi*. Here, Irving wrote as William Wizard and Lancelot Lanstaff. Irving served in the New York State Militia for the War of 1812, a war that helped to cripple the family's business, which failed in 1818. Shortly after this collapse, starting in 1819 and 1820, Irving published his best known and most popular works, in *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon*. The book was published in seven installments in New York and in two volumes in London. The popular "Legend of Sleepy Hollow" appeared in this collection. Some additional works from Irving include *Tales of a Traveler* (1822), *The Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus* (1828)—which was the first of his works to be published under his real name—, *The Chronicle of*

*the Conquest of Granada* (1829), *Tales of the Alhambra* (1832), and the five volume biography *The Life of Washington* (1855-1859). Throughout his life, Irving received awards from the Royal Society of Literature in 1830 and an honorary doctorate of civil law from Oxford University in 1831. In 1842, Irving became the minister to Spain and held this position for four years. Finally, in 1859, just a short eight months after completing his Washington series, Irving passed away. He died on November 28, 1859 in Tarrytown, New York and was buried under a simple headstone in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery. Irving's key biographers are Stanley T. Williams (1935), William L. Hedges (1965), Andrew Burstein (2007), and Brian Jay Jones (2008). Important criticism can be found in Andrew Myer's *A Century of Commentary on the Works of Washington Irving* (1976), James Tuttleton's *Washington Irving: The Critical Reaction* (1993), and Jeffrey Rubin-Dorsky's *Adrift in the Old World: The Psychological Pilgrimage of Washington Irving* (1988).

## **Rip Van Winkle**

Irving, Washington. "Rip Van Winkle." *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* New York: C.S. Van Winkle, 1819.

Source of electronic text: <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/2048>

*Illustration: [The Return of Rip Van Winkle](#), by John Quidor, 1849.*

By Woden, God of Saxons, From whence comes Wensday, that is Wodensday, Truth is a thing that ever I will keep Unto thylke day in which I creep into My sepulchre-- CARTWRIGHT.

The following Tale was found among the papers of the late Diedrich Knickerbocker, an old gentleman of New York, who was very curious in the Dutch History of the province and the manners of the descendants from its primitive settlers. His historical researches, however, did not lie so much among books as among men; for the former are lamentably scanty on his favorite topics; whereas he found the old burghers, and still more, their wives, rich in that legendary lore, so invaluable to true history. Whenever, therefore, he happened upon a genuine Dutch family, snugly shut up in its low-roofed farm-house, under a spreading sycamore, he looked upon it as a little clasped volume of black-letter, and studied it with the zeal of a bookworm.

The result of all these researches was a history of the province, during the reign of the Dutch governors, which he published some years since. There have been various opinions as to the literary character of his work, and, to tell the truth, it is not a whit better than it should be. Its chief merit is its scrupulous accuracy,

which indeed was a little questioned on its first appearance, but has since been completely established; and it is now admitted into all historical collections, as a book of unquestionable authority.

The old gentleman died shortly after the publication of his work; and now that he is dead and gone, it cannot do much harm to his memory to say that his time might have been much better employed in weightier labors. He, however, was apt to ride his hobby his own way; and though it did now and then kick up the dust a little in the eyes of his neighbors, and grieve the spirit of some friends, for whom he felt the truest deference and affection, yet his errors and follies are remembered "more in sorrow than in anger," and it begins to be suspected, that he never intended to injure or offend. But however his memory may be appreciated by critics, it is still held dear among many folks, whose good opinion is well worth having; particularly by certain biscuit-bakers, who have gone so far as to imprint his likeness on their new-year cakes, and have thus given him a chance for immortality, almost equal to the being stamped on a Waterloo medal, or a Queen Anne's farthing.]

WHOEVER has made a voyage up the Hudson must remember the Kaatskill mountains. They are a dismembered branch of the great Appalachian family, and are seen away to the west of the river, swelling up to a noble height, and lording it over the surrounding country. Every change of season, every change of weather, indeed, every hour of the day produces some change in the magical hues and shapes of these mountains; and they are regarded by all the good wives, far and near, as perfect barometers. When the weather is fair and settled, they are clothed in blue and purple, and print their bold outlines on the clear evening sky; but sometimes, when the rest of the landscape is cloudless, they will gather a hood of gray vapors about their summits, which, in the last rays of the setting sun, will glow and light up like a crown of glory.

At the foot of these fairy mountains, the voyager may have descried the light smoke curling up from a Village, whose shingle roofs gleam among the trees, just where the blue tints of the upland melt away into the fresh green of the nearer landscape. It is a little village of great antiquity, having been founded by some of the Dutch colonists, in the early times of the province, just about the beginning of the government of the good Peter Stuyvesant (may he rest in peace!), and there were some of the houses of the original settlers standing within a few years, built of small yellow bricks, brought from Holland, having latticed windows and gable fronts, surmounted with weathercocks.

In that same village, and in one of these very houses (which, to tell the precise truth, was sadly time-worn and weather-beaten), there lived, many years since, while the country was yet a province of Great Britain, a simple, good-natured

fellow, of the name of Rip Van Winkle. He was a descendant of the Van Winkles who figured so gallantly in the chivalrous days of Peter Stuyvesant, and accompanied him to the siege of Fort Christina. He inherited, however, but little of the martial character of his ancestors. I have observed that he was a simple, good-natured man; he was, moreover, a kind neighbor, and an obedient henpecked husband. Indeed, to the latter circumstance might be owing that meekness of spirit which gained him such universal popularity; for those men are apt to be obsequious and conciliating abroad, who are under the discipline of shrews at home. Their tempers, doubtless, are rendered pliant and malleable in the fiery furnace of domestic tribulation, and a curtain-lecture is worth all the sermons in the world for teaching the virtues of patience and long-suffering. A termagant wife may, therefore, in some respects, be considered a tolerable blessing, and if so, Rip Van Winkle was thrice blessed.

Certain it is, that he was a great favorite among all the good wives of the village, who, as usual with the amiable sex, took his part in all family squabbles, and never failed, whenever they talked those matters over in their evening gossipings, to lay all the blame on Dame Van Winkle. The children of the village, too, would shout with joy whenever he approached. He assisted at their sports, made their playthings, taught them to fly kites and shoot marbles, and told them long stories of ghosts, witches, and Indians. Whenever he went dodging about the village, he was surrounded by a troop of them hanging on his skirts, clambering on his back, and playing a thousand tricks on him with impunity; and not a dog would bark at him throughout the neighborhood.

The great error in Rip's composition was an insuperable aversion to all kinds of profitable labor. It could not be for want of assiduity or perseverance; for he would sit on a wet rock, with a rod as long and heavy as a Tartar's lance, and fish all day without a murmur, even though he should not be encouraged by a single nibble. He would carry a fowling-piece on his shoulder, for hours together, trudging through woods and swamps, and up hill and down dale, to shoot a few squirrels or wild pigeons. He would never refuse to assist a neighbor even in the roughest toil, and was a foremost man in all country frolics for husking Indian corn, or building stone fences; the women of the village, too, used to employ him to run their errands, and to do such little odd jobs as their less obliging husbands would not do for them. In a word, Rip was ready to attend to anybody's business but his own; but as to doing family duty, and keeping his farm in order, he found it impossible.

In fact, he declared it was of no use to work on his farm; it was the most pestilent little piece of ground in the whole country; everything about it went wrong, in spite of him. His fences were continually falling to pieces; his cow would either go

astray, or get among the cabbages; weeds were sure to grow quicker in his fields than anywhere else; the rain always made a point of setting in just as he had some out-door work to do; so that though his patrimonial estate had dwindled away under his management, acre by acre, until there was little more left than a mere patch of Indian corn and potatoes, yet it was the worst-conditioned farm in the neighborhood.

His children, too, were as ragged and wild as if they belonged to nobody. His son Rip, an urchin begotten in his own likeness, promised to inherit the habits, with the old clothes, of his father. He was generally seen trooping like a colt at his mother's heels, equipped in a pair of his father's cast-off galligaskins, which he had much ado to hold up with one hand, as a fine lady does her train in bad weather.

Rip Van Winkle, however, was one of those happy mortals, of foolish, well-oiled dispositions, who take the world easy, eat white bread or brown, whichever can be got with least thought or trouble, and would rather starve on a penny than work for a pound. If left to himself, he would have whistled life away, in perfect contentment; but his wife kept continually dinning in his ears about his idleness, his carelessness, and the ruin he was bringing on his family. Morning, noon, and night, her tongue was incessantly going, and every thing he said or did was sure to produce a torrent of household eloquence. Rip had but one way of replying to all lectures of the kind, and that, by frequent use, had grown into a habit. He shrugged his shoulders, shook his head, cast up his eyes, but said nothing. This, however, always provoked a fresh volley from his wife, so that he was fain to draw off his forces, and take to the outside of the house--the only side which, in truth, belongs to a henpecked husband.

Rip's sole domestic adherent was his dog Wolf, who was as much henpecked as his master; for Dame Van Winkle regarded them as companions in idleness, and even looked upon Wolf with an evil eye, as the cause of his master's going so often astray. True it is, in all points of spirit befitting in honorable dog, he was as courageous an animal as ever scoured the woods--but what courage can withstand the evil-doing and all-besetting terrors of a woman's tongue? The moment Wolf entered the house, his crest fell, his tail drooped to the ground, or curled between his legs, he sneaked about with a gallows air, casting many a sidelong glance at Dame Van Winkle, and at the least flourish of a broomstick or ladle, he would fly to the door with yelping precipitation.

Times grew worse and worse with Rip Van Winkle as years of matrimony rolled on; a tart temper never mellows with age, and a sharp tongue is the only edged tool that grows keener with constant use. For a long while he used to console himself, when driven from home, by frequenting a kind of perpetual club of the

sages, philosophers, and other idle personages of the village, which held its sessions on a bench before a small inn, designated by a rubicund portrait of his Majesty George the Third. Here they used to sit in the shade through a long, lazy summer's day, talking listlessly over village gossip, or telling endless, sleepy stories about nothing. But it would have been worth any statesman's money to have heard the profound discussions which sometimes took place, when by chance an old newspaper fell into their hands from some passing traveller. How solemnly they would listen to the contents, as drawled out by Derrick Van Bummel, the school-master, a dapper learned little man, who was not to be daunted by the most gigantic word in the dictionary; and how sagely they would deliberate upon public events some months after they had taken place.

The opinions of this junto were completely controlled by Nicholas Vedder, a patriarch of the village, and landlord of the inn, at the door of which he took his seat from morning till night, just moving sufficiently to avoid the sun, and keep in the shade of a large tree; so that the neighbors could tell the hour by his movements as accurately as by a sun-dial. It is true, he was rarely heard to speak, but smoked his pipe incessantly. His adherents, however (for every great man has his adherents), perfectly understood him, and knew how to gather his opinions. When any thing that was read or related displeased him, he was observed to smoke his pipe vehemently, and to send forth, frequent, and angry puffs; but when pleased, he would inhale the smoke slowly and tranquilly, and emit it in light and placid clouds, and sometimes, taking the pipe from his mouth, and letting the fragrant vapor curl about his nose, would gravely nod his head in token of perfect approbation.

From even this stronghold the unlucky Rip was at length routed by his termagant wife, who would suddenly break in upon the tranquillity of the assemblage, and call the members all to nought; nor was that august personage, Nicholas Vedder himself, sacred from the daring tongue of this terrible virago, who charged him outright with encouraging her husband in habits of idleness.

Poor Rip was at last reduced almost to despair; and his only alternative, to escape from the labor of the farm and the clamor of his wife, was to take gun in hand, and stroll away into the woods. Here he would sometimes seat himself at the foot of a tree, and share the contents of his wallet with Wolf, with whom he sympathized as a fellow-sufferer in persecution. "Poor Wolf," he would say, "thy mistress leads thee a dog's life of it; but never mind, my lad, whilst I live thou shalt never want a friend to stand by thee!" Wolf would wag his tail, look wistfully in his master's face, and if dogs can feel pity, I verily believe he reciprocated the sentiment with all his heart.

In a long ramble of the kind, on a fine autumnal day, Rip had unconsciously scrambled to one of the highest parts of the Kaatskill mountains. He was after his favorite sport of squirrel-shooting, and the still solitudes had echoed and re-echoed with the reports of his gun. Panting and fatigued, he threw himself, late in the afternoon, on a green knoll, covered with mountain herbage, that crowned the brow of a precipice. From an opening between the trees, he could overlook all the lower country for many a mile of rich woodland. He saw at a distance the lordly Hudson, far, far below him, moving on its silent but majestic course, with the reflection of a purple cloud, or the sail of a lagging bark, here and there sleeping on its glassy bosom and at last losing itself in the blue highlands.

On the other side he looked down into a deep mountain glen, wild, lonely, and shagged, the bottom filled with fragments from the impending cliffs, and scarcely lighted by the reflected rays of the setting sun. For some time Rip lay musing on this scene; evening was gradually advancing; the mountains began to throw their long blue shadows over the valleys; he saw that it would be dark long before he could reach the village; and he heaved a heavy sigh when he thought of encountering the terrors of Dame Van Winkle.

As he was about to descend, he heard a voice from a distance hallooing: "Rip Van Winkle! Rip Van Winkle!" He looked around, but could see nothing but a crow winging its solitary flight across the mountain. He thought his fancy must have deceived him, and turned again to descend, when he heard the same cry ring through the still evening air, "Rip Van Winkle! Rip Van Winkle!"--at the same time Wolf bristled up his back, and giving a low growl, skulked to his master's side, looking fearfully down into the glen. Rip now felt a vague apprehension stealing over him; he looked anxiously in the same direction, and perceived a strange figure slowly toiling up the rocks, and bending under the weight of something he carried on his back. He was surprised to see any human being in this lonely and unfrequented place, but supposing it to be some one of the neighborhood in need of his assistance, he hastened down to yield it.

On nearer approach, he was still more surprised at the singularity of the stranger's appearance. He was a short, square-built old fellow, with thick bushy hair, and a grizzled beard. His dress was of the antique Dutch fashion--a cloth jerkin strapped round the waist--several pairs of breeches, the outer one of ample volume, decorated with rows of buttons down the sides, and bunches at the knees. He bore on his shoulders a stout keg, that seemed full of liquor, and made signs for Rip to approach and assist him with the load. Though rather shy and distrustful of this new acquaintance, Rip complied with his usual alacrity; and mutually relieving each other, they clambered up a narrow gully, apparently the dry bed of a mountain torrent. As they ascended, Rip every now and then heard

long rolling peals, like distant thunder, that seemed to issue out of a deep ravine, or rather cleft between lofty rocks, toward which their rugged path conducted. He paused for an instant, but supposing it to be the muttering of one of those transient thunder-showers which often take place in the mountain heights, he proceeded. Passing through the ravine, they came to a hollow, like a small amphitheatre, surrounded by perpendicular precipices, over the brinks of which impending trees shot their branches, so that you only caught glimpses of the azure sky, and the bright evening cloud. During the whole time Rip and his companion had labored on in silence; for though the former marvelled greatly what could be the object of carrying a keg of liquor up this wild mountain, yet there was something strange and incomprehensible about the unknown, that inspired awe, and checked familiarity.

On entering the amphitheatre, new objects of wonder presented themselves. On a level spot in the centre was a company of odd-looking personages playing at ninepins. They were dressed in quaint outlandish fashion; some wore short doublets, others jerkins, with long knives in their belts, and most of them had enormous breeches, of similar style with that of the guide's. Their visages, too, were peculiar; one had a large head, broad face, and small piggish eyes; the face of another seemed to consist entirely of nose, and was surmounted by a white sugar-loaf hat, set off with a little red cock's tail. They all had beards, of various shapes and colors. There was one who seemed to be the commander. He was a stout old gentleman, with a weather-beaten countenance; he wore a laced doublet, broad belt and hanger, high-crowned hat and feather, red stockings, and high-heeled shoes, with roses in them. The whole group reminded Rip of the figures in an old Flemish painting, in the parlor of Dominie Van Schaick, the village parson, and which had been brought over from Holland at the time of the settlement.

What seemed particularly odd to Rip was, that though these folks were evidently amusing themselves, yet they maintained the gravest faces, the most mysterious silence, and were, withal, the most melancholy party of pleasure he had ever witnessed. Nothing interrupted the stillness of the scene but the noise of the balls, which, whenever they were rolled, echoed along the mountains like rumbling peals of thunder.

As Rip and his companion approached them, they suddenly desisted from their play, and stared at him with such a fixed statue-like gaze, and such strange uncouth, lack-lustre countenances, that his heart turned within him, and his knees smote together. His companion now emptied the contents of the keg into large flagons, and made signs to him to wait upon the company. He obeyed with



fear and trembling; they quaffed the liquor in profound silence, and then returned to their game.

By degrees, Rip's awe and apprehension subsided. He even ventured, when no eye was fixed upon him, to taste the beverage which he found had much of the flavor of excellent Hollands. He was naturally a thirsty soul, and was soon tempted to repeat the draught. One taste provoked another; and he reiterated his visits to the flagon so often, that at length his senses were overpowered, his eyes swam in his head, his head gradually declined, and he fell into a deep sleep.

On waking, he found himself on the green knoll whence he had first seen the old man of the glen. He rubbed his eyes--it was a bright sunny morning. The birds were hopping and twittering among the bushes, and the eagle was wheeling aloft, and breasting the pure mountain breeze. "Surely," thought Rip, "I have not slept here all night." He recalled the occurrences before he fell asleep. The strange man with the keg of liquor--the mountain ravine--the wild retreat among the rocks--the woe-begone party at ninepins--the flagon--"Oh! that flagon! that wicked flagon!" thought Rip--"what excuse shall I make to Dame Van Winkle?"

He looked round for his gun, but in place of the clean well-oiled fowling-piece, he found an old firelock lying by him, the barrel encrusted with rust, the lock falling off, and the stock worm-eaten. He now suspected that the grave roysterers of the mountains had put a trick upon him, and, having dosed him with liquor, had robbed him of his gun. Wolf, too, had disappeared, but he might have strayed away after a squirrel or partridge. He whistled after him and shouted his name, but all in vain; the echoes repeated his whistle and shout, but no dog was to be seen.

He determined to revisit the scene of the last evening's gambol, and if he met with any of the party, to demand his dog and gun. As he rose to walk, he found himself stiff in the joints, and wanting in his usual activity. "These mountain beds do not agree with me," thought Rip, "and if this frolic, should lay me up with a fit of the rheumatism, I shall have a blessed time with Dame Van Winkle." With some difficulty he got down into the glen: he found the gully up which he and his companion had ascended the preceding evening; but to his astonishment a mountain stream was now foaming down it, leaping from rock to rock, and filling the glen with babbling murmurs. He, however, made shift to scramble up its sides, working his toilsome way through thickets of birch, sassafras, and witch-hazel; and sometimes tripped up or entangled by the wild grape vines that twisted their coils and tendrils from tree to tree, and spread a kind of network in his path.

At length he reached to where the ravine had opened through the cliffs to the amphitheatre; but no traces of such opening remained. The rocks presented a high impenetrable wall, over which the torrent came tumbling in a sheet of feathery foam, and fell into a broad deep basin, black from the shadows of the surrounding forest. Here, then, poor Rip was brought to a stand. He again called and whistled after his dog; he was only answered by the cawing of a flock of idle crows, sporting high in the air about a dry tree that overhung a sunny precipice; and who, secure in their elevation, seemed to look down and scoff at the poor man's perplexities. What was to be done? The morning was passing away, and Rip felt famished for want of his breakfast. He grieved to give up his dog and gun; he dreaded to meet his wife; but it would not do to starve among the mountains. He shook his head, shouldered the rusty firelock, and, with a heart full of trouble and anxiety, turned his steps homeward.

As he approached the village, he met a number of people, but none whom he knew, which somewhat surprised him, for he had thought himself acquainted with every one in the country round. Their dress, too, was of a different fashion from that to which he was accustomed. They all stared at him with equal marks of surprise, and whenever they cast eyes upon him, invariably stroked their chins. The constant recurrence of this gesture, induced Rip, involuntarily, to do the same, when, to his astonishment, he found his beard had grown a foot long!

He had now entered the skirts of the village. A troop of strange children ran at his heels, hooting after him, and pointing at his gray beard. The dogs, too, not one of which he recognized for an old acquaintance, barked at him as he passed. The very village was altered: it was larger and more populous. There were rows of houses which he had never seen before, and those which had been his familiar haunts had disappeared. Strange names were over the doors--strange faces at the windows--everything was strange. His mind now misgave him; he began to doubt whether both he and the world around him were not bewitched. Surely this was his native village, which he had left but a day before. There stood the Kaatskill mountains--there ran the silver Hudson at a distance--there was every hill and dale precisely as it had always been--Rip was sorely perplexed--"That flagon last night," thought he, "has addled my poor head sadly!"

It was with some difficulty that he found the way to his own house, which he approached with silent awe, expecting every moment to hear the shrill voice of Dame Van Winkle. He found the house gone to decay--the roof had fallen in, the windows shattered, and the doors off the hinges. A half-starved dog, that looked like Wolf, was skulking about it. Rip called him by name, but the cur snarled, showed his teeth, and passed on. This was an unkind cut indeed.--"My very dog," sighed poor Rip, "has forgotten me!"

He entered the house, which, to tell the truth, Dame Van Winkle had always kept in neat order. It was empty, forlorn, and apparently abandoned. This desolateness overcame all his connubial fears--he called loudly for his wife and children--the lonely chambers rang for a moment with his voice, and then all again was silence.

He now hurried forth, and hastened to his old resort, the village inn--but it too was gone. A large rickety wooden building stood in its place, with great gaping windows, some of them broken, and mended with old hats and petticoats, and over the door was painted, "The Union Hotel, by Jonathan Doolittle." Instead of the great tree that used to shelter the quiet little Dutch inn of yore, there now was reared a tall naked pole, with something on the top that looked like a red nightcap, and from it was fluttering a flag, on which was a singular assemblage of stars and stripes--all this was strange and incomprehensible. He recognized on the sign, however, the ruby face of King George, under which he had smoked so many a peaceful pipe, but even this was singularly metamorphosed. The red coat was changed for one of blue and buff, a sword was held in the hand instead of a sceptre, the head was decorated with a cocked hat, and underneath was painted in large characters, "GENERAL WASHINGTON."

There was, as usual, a crowd of folk about the door, but none that Rip recollected. The very character of the people seemed changed. There was a busy, bustling, disputatious tone about it, instead of the accustomed phlegm and drowsy tranquillity. He looked in vain for the sage Nicholas Vedder, with his broad face, double chin, and fair long pipe, uttering clouds of tobacco-smoke, instead of idle speeches; or Van Bummel, the schoolmaster, doling forth the contents of an ancient newspaper. In place of these, a lean, bilious-looking fellow, with his pockets full of handbills, was haranguing, vehemently about rights of citizens--elections--members of Congress--liberty--Bunker's hill--heroes of seventy-six--and other words, which were a perfect Babylonish jargon to the bewildered Van Winkle.

The appearance of Rip, with his long, grizzled beard, his rusty fowling-piece, his uncouth dress, and the army of women and children at his heels, soon attracted the attention of the tavern politicians. They crowded round him, eying him from head to foot, with great curiosity. The orator hustled up to him, and, drawing him partly aside, inquired, "on which side he voted?" Rip stared in vacant stupidity. Another short but busy little fellow pulled him by the arm, and rising on tiptoe, inquired in his ear, "whether he was Federal or Democrat." Rip was equally at a loss to comprehend the question; when a knowing, self-important old gentleman, in a sharp cocked hat, made his way through the crowd, putting them to the right and left with his elbows as he passed, and planting himself before Van Winkle, with one arm akimbo, the other resting on his cane, his keen eyes and sharp hat

penetrating, as it were, into his very soul, demanded in an austere tone, "What brought him to the election with a gun on his shoulder, and a mob at his heels; and whether he meant to breed a riot in the village?"

"Alas! gentlemen," cried Rip, somewhat dismayed, "I am a poor, quiet man, a native of the place, and a loyal subject of the King, God bless him!"

Here a general shout burst from the bystanders—"a tory! a tory! a spy! a refugee! hustle him! away with him!" It was with great difficulty that the self-important man in the cocked hat restored order; and having assumed a tenfold austerity of brow, demanded again of the unknown culprit, what he came there for, and whom he was seeking. The poor man humbly assured him that he meant no harm, but merely came there in search of some of his neighbors, who used to keep about the tavern.

"Well--who are they?--name them."

Rip bethought himself a moment, and inquired, Where's Nicholas Vedder?

There was a silence for a little while, when an old man replied, in a thin, piping voice, "Nicholas Vedder? why, he is dead and gone these eighteen years! There was a wooden tombstone in the churchyard that used to tell all about him, but that's rotten and gone too."

"Where's Brom Dutcher?"

"Oh, he went off to the army in the beginning of the war; some say he was killed at the storming of Stony-Point--others say he was drowned in a squall at the foot of Antony's Nose. I don't know --he never came back again."

"Where's Van Bummel, the schoolmaster?"

"He went off to the wars, too; was a great militia general, and is now in Congress."

Rip's heart died away, at hearing of these sad changes in his home and friends, and finding himself thus alone in the world. Every answer puzzled him too, by treating of such enormous lapses of time, and of matters which he could not understand: war--Congress-Stony-Point;--he had no courage to ask after any more friends, but cried out in despair, "Does nobody here know Rip Van Winkle?"

"Oh, Rip Van Winkle!" exclaimed two or three. "Oh, to be sure! that's Rip Van Winkle yonder, leaning against the tree."

Rip looked, and beheld a precise counterpart of himself as he went up the mountain; apparently as lazy, and certainly as ragged. The poor fellow was now completely confounded. He doubted his own identity, and whether he was himself or another man. In the midst of his bewilderment, the man in the cocked hat demanded who he was, and what was his name?

"God knows!" exclaimed he at his wit's end; "I'm not myself--I'm somebody else--that's me yonder--no--that's somebody else, got into my shoes--I was myself last night, but I fell asleep on the mountain, and they've changed my gun, and everything's changed, and I'm changed, and I can't tell what's my name, or who I am!"

The by-standers began now to look at each other, nod, wink significantly, and tap their fingers against their foreheads. There was a whisper, also, about securing the gun, and keeping the old fellow from doing mischief; at the very suggestion of which, the self-important man with the cocked hat retired with some precipitation. At this critical moment a fresh, comely woman pressed through the throng to get a peep at the gray-bearded man. She had a chubby child in her arms, which, frightened at his looks, began to cry. "Hush, Rip," cried she, "hush, you little fool; the old man won't hurt you." The name of the child, the air of the mother, the tone of her voice, all awakened a train of recollections in his mind.

"What is your name, my good woman?" asked he.

"Judith Cardenier."

"And your father's name?"

"Ah, poor man, Rip Van Winkle was his name, but it's twenty years since he went away from home with his gun, and never has been heard of since,--his dog came home without him; but whether he shot himself, or was carried away by the Indians, nobody can tell. I was then but a little girl."

Rip had but one more question to ask; but he put it with a faltering voice:

"Where's your mother?"

Oh, she too had died but a short time since; she broke a blood-vessel in a fit of passion at a New-England pedler.

There was a drop of comfort, at least, in this intelligence. The honest man could contain himself no longer. He caught his daughter and her child in his arms. "I am

your father!" cried he--"Young Rip Van Winkle once--old Rip Van Winkle now--Does nobody know poor Rip Van Winkle!"

All stood amazed, until an old woman, tottering out from among the crowd, put her hand to her brow, and peering under it in his face for a moment exclaimed, "sure enough! it is Rip Van Winkle--it is himself. Welcome home again, old neighbor. Why, where have you been these twenty long years?"

Rip's story was soon told, for the whole twenty years had been to him but as one night. The neighbors stared when they heard it; some were seen to wink at each other, and put their tongues in their cheeks; and the self-important man in the cocked hat, who, when the alarm was over, had returned to the field, screwed down the corners of his mouth, and shook his head--upon which there was a general shaking of the head throughout the assemblage.

It was determined, however, to take the opinion of old Peter Vanderdonk, who was seen slowly advancing up the road. He was a descendant of the historian of that name, who wrote one of the earliest accounts of the province. Peter was the most ancient inhabitant of the village, and well versed in all the wonderful events and traditions of the neighborhood. He recollected Rip at once, and corroborated his story in the most satisfactory manner. He assured the company that it was a fact, handed down from his ancestor, the historian, that the Kaatskill mountains had always been haunted by strange beings. That it was affirmed that the great Hendrick Hudson, the first discoverer of the river and country, kept a kind of vigil there every twenty years, with his crew of the Half-moon; being permitted in this way to revisit the scenes of his enterprise, and keep a guardian eye upon the river and the great city called by his name. That his father had once seen them in their old Dutch dresses playing at ninepins in the hollow of the mountain; and that he himself had heard, one summer afternoon, the sound of their balls, like distant peals of thunder.

To make a long story short, the company broke up, and returned to the more important concerns of the election. Rip's daughter took him home to live with her; she had a snug, well-furnished house, and a stout cheery farmer for a husband, whom Rip recollected for one of the urchins that used to climb upon his back. As to Rip's son and heir, who was the ditto of himself, seen leaning against the tree, he was employed to work on the farm; but evinced an hereditary disposition to attend to any thing else but his business.

Rip now resumed his old walks and habits; he soon found many of his former cronies, though all rather the worse for the wear and tear of time; and preferred

making friends among the rising generation, with whom he soon grew into great favor.

Having nothing to do at home, and being arrived at that happy age when a man can be idle with impunity, he took his place once more on the bench, at the inn door, and was revered as one of the patriarchs of the village, and a chronicle of the old times "before the war." It was some time before he could get into the regular track of gossip, or could be made to comprehend the strange events that had taken place during his torpor. How that there had been a revolutionary war--that the country had thrown off the yoke of old England--and that, instead of being a subject to his Majesty George the Third, he was now a free citizen of the United States. Rip, in fact, was no politician; the changes of states and empires made but little impression on him; but there was one species of despotism under which he had long groaned, and that was--petticoat government. Happily, that was at an end; he had got his neck out of the yoke of matrimony, and could go in and out whenever he pleased, without dreading the tyranny of Dame Van Winkle. Whenever her name was mentioned, however, he shook his head, shrugged his shoulders, and cast up his eyes; which might pass either for an expression of resignation to his fate, or joy at his deliverance.

He used to tell his story to every stranger that arrived at Mr. Doolittle's hotel. He was observed, at first, to vary on some points every time he told it, which was, doubtless, owing to his having so recently awaked. It at last settled down precisely to the tale I have related, and not a man, woman, or child in the neighborhood, but knew it by heart. Some always pretended to doubt the reality of it, and insisted that Rip had been out of his head, and that this was one point on which he always remained flighty. The old Dutch inhabitants, however, almost universally gave it full credit. Even to this day, they never hear a thunder-storm of a summer afternoon about the Kaatskill, but they say Hendrick Hudson and his crew are at their game of ninepins; and it is a common wish of all henpecked husbands in the neighborhood, when life hangs heavy on their hands, that they might have a quieting draught out of Rip Van Winkle's flagon.

## **The Legend of Sleepy Hollow**

Irving, Washington. "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* New York: C.S. Van Winkle, 1819.

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*Illustration: [The Headless Horseman Pursuing Ichabod Crane](#), by John Quidor, 1858.*

A pleasing land of drowsy-head it was,  
Of dreams that wave before the half-shut eye,  
And of gay castles in the clouds that pays,  
For ever flushing round a summer sky. - - Castle of Indolence

IN the bosom of one of those spacious coves which indent the eastern shore of the Hudson, at that broad expansion of the river denominated by the ancient Dutch navigators the Tappan Zee, and where they always prudently shortened sail and implored the protection of St. Nicholas when they crossed, there lies a small market-town or rural port which by some is called Greensburg, but which is more generally and properly known by the name of Tarry Town. This name was given, we are told, in former days by the good housewives of the adjacent country from the inveterate propensity of their husbands to linger about the village tavern on market days. Be that as it may, I do not vouch for the fact, but merely advert to it for the sake of being precise and authentic. Not far from this village, perhaps about two miles, there is a little valley, or rather lap of land, among high hills, which is one of the quietest places in the whole world. A small brook glides through it, with just murmur enough to lull one to repose, and the occasional whistle of a quail or tapping of a woodpecker is almost the only sound that ever breaks in upon the uniform tranquillity.

I recollect that when a stripling my first exploit in squirrel-shooting was in a grove of tall walnut trees that shades one side of the valley. I had wandered into it at noontime, when all Nature is peculiarly quiet, and was startled by the roar of my own gun as it broke the Sabbath stillness around and was prolonged and reverberated by the angry echoes. If ever I should wish for a retreat whither I might steal from the world and its distractions and dream quietly away the remnant of a troubled life, I know of none more promising than this little valley.

From the listless repose of the place and the peculiar character of its inhabitants, who are descendants from the original Dutch settlers, this sequestered glen has long been known by the name of SLEEPY HOLLOW, and its rustic lads are called the Sleepy Hollow Boys throughout all the neighboring country. A drowsy, dreamy influence seems to hang over the land and to pervade the very atmosphere. Some say that the place was bewitched by a High German doctor during the early days of the settlement; others, that an old Indian chief, the prophet or wizard of his tribe, held his powwows there before the country was discovered by Master Hendrick Hudson. Certain it is, the place still continues under the sway of some witching power that holds a spell over the minds of the good people, causing them to walk in a continual reverie. They are given to all kinds of marvellous



beliefs, are subject to trances and visions, and frequently see strange sights and hear music and voices in the air. The whole neighborhood abounds with local tales, haunted spots, and twilight superstitions; stars shoot and meteors glare oftener across the valley than in any other part of the country, and the nightmare, with her whole ninefold, seems to make it the favorite scene of her gambols.

The dominant spirit, however, that haunts this enchanted region, and seems to be commander-in-chief of all the powers of the air, is the apparition of a figure on horseback without a head. It is said by some to be the ghost of a Hessian trooper whose head had been carried away by a cannonball in some nameless battle during the Revolutionary War, and who is ever and anon seen by the country-folk hurrying along in the gloom of night as if on the wings of the wind. His haunts are not confined to the valley, but extend at times to the adjacent roads, and especially to the vicinity of a church at no great distance. Indeed, certain of the most authentic historians of those parts, who have been careful in collecting and collating the floating facts concerning this spectre, allege that the body of the trooper, having been buried in the churchyard, the ghost rides forth to the scene of battle in nightly quest of his head, and that the rushing speed with which he sometimes passes along the Hollow, like a midnight blast, is owing to his being belated and in a hurry to get back to the churchyard before daybreak.

Such is the general purport of this legendary superstition, which has furnished materials for many a wild story in that region of shadows; and the spectre is known at all the country firesides by the name of the Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow.

It is remarkable that the visionary propensity I have mentioned is not confined to the native inhabitants of the valley, but is unconsciously imbibed by every one who resides there for a time. However wide awake they may have been before they entered that sleepy region, they are sure in a little time to inhale the witching influence of the air and begin to grow imaginative--to dream dreams and see apparitions.

I mention this peaceful spot with all possible laud, for it is in such little retired Dutch valleys, found here and there embosomed in the great State of New York, that population, manners, and customs remain fixed, while the great torrent of migration and improvement, which is making such incessant changes in other parts of this restless country, sweeps by them unobserved. They are like those little nooks of still water which border a rapid stream where we may see the straw and bubble riding quietly at anchor or slowly revolving in their mimic harbor, undisturbed by the rush of the passing current. Though many years have elapsed since I trod the drowsy shades of Sleepy Hollow, yet I question whether I should

not still find the same trees and the same families vegetating in its sheltered bosom.

In this by-place of Nature there abode, in a remote period of American history--that is to say, some thirty years since--a worthy wight of the name of Ichabod Crane, who sojourned, or, as he expressed it, "tarried," in Sleepy Hollow for the purpose of instructing the children of the vicinity. He was a native of Connecticut, a State which supplies the Union with pioneers for the mind as well as for the forest, and sends forth yearly its legions of frontier woodmen and country schoolmasters. The cognomen of Crane was not inapplicable to his person. He was tall, but exceedingly lank, with narrow shoulders, long arms and legs, hands that dangled a mile out of his sleeves, feet that might have served for shovels, and his whole frame most loosely hung together. His head was small, and flat at top, with huge ears, large green glassy eyes, and a long snip nose, so that it looked like a weathercock perched upon his spindle neck to tell which way the wind blew. To see him striding along the profile of a hill on a windy day, with his clothes bagging and fluttering about him, one might have mistaken him for the genius of Famine descending upon the earth or some scarecrow eloped from a cornfield.

His school-house was a low building of one large room, rudely constructed of logs, the windows partly glazed and partly patched with leaves of old copybooks. It was most ingeniously secured at vacant hours by a withe twisted in the handle of the door and stakes set against the window-shutters, so that, though a thief might get in with perfect ease, he would find some embarrassment in getting out---an idea most probably borrowed by the architect, Yost Van Houten, from the mystery of an eel-pot. The school-house stood in a rather lonely but pleasant situation, just at the foot of a woody hill, with a brook running close by and a formidable birch tree growing at one end of it. From hence the low murmur of his pupils' voices, conning over their lessons, might be heard in a drowsy summer's day like the hum of a bee-hive, interrupted now and then by the authoritative voice of the master in the tone of menace or command, or, peradventure, by the appalling sound of the birch as he urged some tardy loiterer along the flowery path of knowledge. Truth to say, he was a conscientious man, and ever bore in mind the golden maxim, "Spare the rod and spoil the child." Ichabod Crane's scholars certainly were not spoiled.

I would not have it imagined, however, that he was one of those cruel potentates of the school who joy in the smart of their subjects; on the contrary, he administered justice with discrimination rather than severity, taking the burden off the backs of the weak and laying it on those of the strong. Your mere puny stripling, that winced at the least flourish of the rod, was passed by with

indulgence; but the claims of justice were satisfied by inflicting a double portion on some little tough, wrong-headed, broad-skirted Dutch urchin, who sulked and swelled and grew dogged and sullen beneath the birch. All this he called "doing his duty by their parents;" and he never inflicted a chastisement without following it by the assurance, so consolatory to the smarting urchin, that "he would remember it and thank him for it the longest day he had to live."

When school-hours were over he was even the companion and playmate of the larger boys, and on holiday afternoons would convoy some of the smaller ones home who happened to have pretty sisters or good housewives for mothers noted for the comforts of the cupboard. Indeed it behooved him to keep on good terms with his pupils. The revenue arising from his school was small, and would have been scarcely sufficient to furnish him with daily bread, for he was a huge feeder, and, though lank, had the dilating powers of an anaconda; but to help out his maintenance he was, according to country custom in those parts, boarded and lodged at the houses of the farmers whose children he instructed. With these he lived successively a week at a time, thus going the rounds of the neighborhood with all his worldly effects tied up in a cotton handkerchief.

That all this might not be too onerous on the purses of his rustic patrons, who are apt to consider the costs of schooling a grievous burden and schoolmasters as mere drones, he had various ways of rendering himself both useful and agreeable. He assisted the farmers occasionally in the lighter labors of their farms, helped to make hay, mended the fences, took the horses to water, drove the cows from pasture, and cut wood for the winter fire. He laid aside, too, all the dominant dignity and absolute sway with which he lorded it in his little empire, the school, and became wonderfully gentle and ingratiating. He found favor in the eyes of the mothers by petting the children, particularly the youngest; and like the lion bold, which whilom so magnanimously the lamb did hold, he would sit with a child on one knee and rock a cradle with his foot for whole hours together.

In addition to his other vocations, he was the singing-master of the neighborhood and picked up many bright shillings by instructing the young folks in psalmody. It was a matter of no little vanity to him on Sundays to take his station in front of the church-gallery with a band of chosen singers, where, in his own mind, he completely carried away the palm from the parson. Certain it is, his voice resounded far above all the rest of the congregation, and there are peculiar quavers still to be heard in that church, and which may even be heard half a mile off, quite to the opposite side of the mill-pond on a still Sunday morning, which are said to be legitimately descended from the nose of Ichabod Crane. Thus, by divers little makeshifts in that ingenious way which is commonly denominated "by hook and by crook," the worthy pedagogue got on tolerably enough, and was

thought, by all who understood nothing of the labor of headwork, to have a wonderfully easy life of it.

The schoolmaster is generally a man of some importance in the female circle of a rural neighborhood, being considered a kind of idle, gentleman-like personage of vastly superior taste and accomplishments to the rough country swains, and, indeed, inferior in learning only to the parson. His appearance, therefore, is apt to occasion some little stir at the tea-table of a farmhouse and the addition of a supernumerary dish of cakes or sweetmeats, or, peradventure, the parade of a silver tea-pot. Our man of letters, therefore, was peculiarly happy in the smiles of all the country damsels. How he would figure among them in the churchyard between services on Sundays, gathering grapes for them from the wild vines that overrun the surrounding trees; reciting for their amusement all the epitaphs on the tombstones; or sauntering, with a whole bevy of them, along the banks of the adjacent mill-pond, while the more bashful country bumpkins hung sheepishly back, envying his superior elegance and address.

From his half-itinerant life, also, he was a kind of travelling gazette, carrying the whole budget of local gossip from house to house, so that his appearance was always greeted with satisfaction. He was, moreover, esteemed by the women as a man of great erudition, for he had read several books quite through, and was a perfect master of Cotton Mather's History of New England Witchcraft, in which, by the way, he most firmly and potently believed.

He was, in fact, an odd mixture of small shrewdness and simple credulity. His appetite for the marvellous and his powers of digesting it were equally extraordinary, and both had been increased by his residence in this spellbound region. No tale was too gross or monstrous for his capacious swallow. It was often his delight, after his school was dismissed in the afternoon, to stretch himself on the rich bed of clover bordering the little brook that whimpered by his school-house, and there con over old Mather's direful tales until the gathering dusk of the evening made the printed page a mere mist before his eyes. Then, as he wended his way by swamp and stream and awful woodland to the farmhouse where he happened to be quartered, every sound of Nature at that witching hour fluttered his excited imagination--the moan of the whip-poor-will\* from the hillside; the boding cry of the tree-toad, that harbinger of storm; the dreary hooting of the screech-owl, or the sudden rustling in the thicket of birds frightened from their roost. The fire-flies, too, which sparkled most vividly in the darkest places, now and then startled him as one of uncommon brightness would stream across his path; and if, by chance, a huge blockhead of a beetle came winging his blundering flight against him, the poor varlet was ready to give up the ghost, with the idea that he was struck with a witch's token. His only resource on

such occasions, either to drown thought or drive away evil spirits, was to sing psalm tunes; and the good people of Sleepy Hollow, as they sat by their doors of an evening, were often filled with awe at hearing his nasal melody, "in linked sweetness long drawn out," floating from the distant hill or along the dusky road.

\* The whip-poor-will is a bird which is only heard at night. It receives its name from its note, which is thought to resemble those words.

Another of his sources of fearful pleasure was to pass long winter evenings with the old Dutch wives as they sat spinning by the fire, with a row of apples roasting and spluttering along the hearth, and listen to their marvellous tales of ghosts and goblins, and haunted fields, and haunted brooks, and haunted bridges, and haunted houses, and particularly of the headless horseman, or Galloping Hessian of the Hollow, as they sometimes called him. He would delight them equally by his anecdotes of witchcraft and of the direful omens and portentous sights and sounds in the air which prevailed in the earlier times of Connecticut, and would frighten them woefully with speculations upon comets and shooting stars, and with the alarming fact that the world did absolutely turn round and that they were half the time topsy-turvy.

But if there was a pleasure in all this while snugly cuddling in the chimney-corner of a chamber that was all of a ruddy glow from the crackling wood-fire, and where, of course, no spectre dared to show its face, it was dearly purchased by the terrors of his subsequent walk homewards. What fearful shapes and shadows beset his path amidst the dim and ghastly glare of a snowy night! With what wistful look did he eye every trembling ray of light streaming across the waste fields from some distant window! How often was he appalled by some shrub covered with snow, which, like a sheeted spectre, beset his very path! How often did he shrink with curdling awe at the sound of his own steps on the frosty crust beneath his feet, and dread to look over his shoulder, lest he should behold some uncouth being tramping close behind him! And how often was he thrown into complete dismay by some rushing blast howling among the trees, in the idea that it was the Galloping Hessian on one of his nightly scourings!

All these, however, were mere terrors of the night, phantoms of the mind that walk in darkness; and though he had seen many spectres in his time, and been more than once beset by Satan in divers shapes in his lonely perambulations, yet daylight put an end to all these evils; and he would have passed a pleasant life of it, in despite of the devil and all his works, if his path had not been crossed by a being that causes more perplexity to mortal man than ghosts, goblins, and the whole race of witches put together, and that was--a woman.

Among the musical disciples who assembled one evening in each week to receive his instructions in psalmody was Katrina Van Tassel, the daughter and only child of a substantial Dutch farmer. She was a blooming lass of fresh eighteen, plump as a partridge, ripe and melting and rosy-cheeked as one of her father's peaches, and universally famed, not merely for her beauty, but her vast expectations. She was withal a little of a coquette, as might be perceived even in her dress, which was a mixture of ancient and modern fashions, as most suited to set off her charms. She wore the ornaments of pure yellow gold which her great-great-grandmother had brought over from Saardam, the tempting stomacher of the olden time, and withal a provokingly short petticoat to display the prettiest foot and ankle in the country round.

Ichabod Crane had a soft and foolish heart towards the sex, and it is not to be wondered at that so tempting a morsel soon found favor in his eyes, more especially after he had visited her in her paternal mansion. Old Baltus Van Tassel was a perfect picture of a thriving, contented, liberal-hearted farmer. He seldom, it is true, sent either his eyes or his thoughts beyond the boundaries of his own farm, but within those everything was snug, happy, and well-conditioned. He was satisfied with his wealth but not proud of it, and piqued himself upon the hearty abundance, rather than the style, in which he lived. His stronghold was situated on the banks of the Hudson, in one of those green, sheltered, fertile nooks in which the Dutch farmers are so fond of nestling. A great elm tree spread its broad branches over it, at the foot of which bubbled up a spring of the softest and sweetest water in a little well formed of a barrel, and then stole sparkling away through the grass to a neighboring brook that bubbled along among alders and dwarf willows. Hard by the farmhouse was a vast barn, that might have served for a church, every window and crevice of which seemed bursting forth with the treasures of the farm; the flail was busily resounding within it from morning to night; swallows and martins skimmed twittering about the eaves; and rows of pigeons, some with one eye turned up, as if watching the weather, some with their heads under their wings or buried in their bosoms, and others, swelling, and cooing, and bowing about their dames, were enjoying the sunshine on the roof. Sleek, unwieldy porkers were grunting in the repose and abundance of their pens, whence sallied forth, now and then, troops of sucking pigs as if to snuff the air. A stately squadron of snowy geese were riding in an adjoining pond, convoying whole fleets of ducks; regiments of turkeys were gobbling through the farmyard, and guinea-fowls fretting about it, like ill-tempered housewives, with their peevish, discontented cry. Before the barn-door strutted the gallant cock, that pattern of a husband, a warrior, and a fine gentleman, clapping his burnished wings and crowing in the pride and gladness of his heart--sometimes tearing up

the earth with his feet, and then generously calling his ever-hungry family of wives and children to enjoy the rich morsel which he had discovered.

The pedagogue's mouth watered as he looked upon this sumptuous promise of luxurious winter fare. In his devouring mind's eye he pictured to himself every roasting-pig running about with a pudding in his belly and an apple in his mouth; the pigeons were snugly put to bed in a comfortable pie and tucked in with a coverlet of crust; the geese were swimming in their own gravy; and the ducks pairing cosily in dishes, like snug married couples, with a decent competency of onion sauce. In the porkers he saw carved out the future sleek side of bacon and juicy relishing ham; not a turkey but he beheld daintily trussed up, with its gizzard under its wing, and, peradventure, a necklace of savory sausages; and even bright Chanticleer himself lay sprawling on his back in a side-dish, with uplifted claws, as if craving that quarter which his chivalrous spirit disdained to ask while living.

As the enraptured Ichabod fancied all this, and as he rolled his great green eyes over the fat meadow-lands, the rich fields of wheat, of rye, of buckwheat, and Indian corn, and the orchards burdened with ruddy fruit, which surrounded the warm tenement of Van Tassel, his heart yearned after the damsel who was to inherit these domains, and his imagination expanded with the idea how they might be readily turned into cash and the money invested in immense tracts of wild land and shingle palaces in the wilderness. Nay, his busy fancy already realized his hopes, and presented to him the blooming Katrina, with a whole family of children, mounted on the top of a wagon loaded with household trumpery, with pots and kettles dangling beneath, and he beheld himself bestriding a pacing mare, with a colt at her heels, setting out for Kentucky, Tennessee, or the Lord knows where.

When he entered the house the conquest of his heart was complete. It was one of those spacious farmhouses with high-ridged but lowly-sloping roofs, built in the style handed down from the first Dutch settlers, the low projecting eaves forming a piazza along the front capable of being closed up in bad weather. Under this were hung flails, harness, various utensils of husbandry, and nets for fishing in the neighboring river. Benches were built along the sides for summer use, and a great spinning-wheel at one end and a churn at the other showed the various uses to which this important porch might be devoted. From this piazza the wondering Ichabod entered the hall, which formed the centre of the mansion and the place of usual residence. Here rows of resplendent pewter, ranged on a long dresser, dazzled his eyes. In one corner stood a huge bag of wool ready to be spun; in another a quantity of linsey-woolsey just from the loom; ears of Indian corn and strings of dried apples and peaches hung in gay festoons along the

walls, mingled with the gaud of red peppers; and a door left ajar gave him a peep into the best parlor, where the claw-footed chairs and dark mahogany tables shone like mirrors; andirons, with their accompanying shovel and tongs, glistened from their covert of asparagus tops; mock-oranges and conch-shells decorated the mantelpiece; strings of various-colored birds' eggs were suspended above it; a great ostrish egg was hung from the centre of the room, and a corner cupboard, knowingly left open, displayed immense treasures of old silver and well-mended china.

From the moment Ichabod laid his eyes upon these regions of delight the peace of his mind was at an end, and his only study was how to gain the affections of the peerless daughter of Van Tassel. In this enterprise, however, he had more real difficulties than generally fell to the lot of a knight-errant of yore, who seldom had anything but giants, enchanters, fiery dragons, and such-like easily-conquered adversaries to contend with, and had to make his way merely through gates of iron and brass and walls of adamant to the castle keep, where the lady of his heart was confined; all which he achieved as easily as a man would carve his way to the centre of a Christmas pie, and then the lady gave him her hand as a matter of course. Ichabod, on the contrary, had to win his way to the heart of a country coquette beset with a labyrinth of whims and caprices, which were forever presenting new difficulties and impediments, and he had to encounter a host of fearful adversaries of real flesh and blood, the numerous rustic admirers who beset every portal to her heart, keeping a watchful and angry eye upon each other, but ready to fly out in the common cause against any new competitor.

Among these the most formidable was a burly, roaring, roistering blade of the name of Abraham--or, according to the Dutch abbreviation, Brom--Van Brunt, the hero of the country round, which rang with his feats of strength and hardihood. He was broad-shouldered and double-jointed, with short curly black hair and a bluff but not unpleasant countenance, having a mingled air of fun and arrogance. From his Herculean frame and great powers of limb, he had received the nickname of BROM BONES, by which he was universally known. He was famed for great knowledge and skill in horsemanship, being as dexterous on horseback as a Tartar. He was foremost at all races and cockfights, and, with the ascendancy which bodily strength acquires in rustic life, was the umpire in all disputes, setting his hat on one side and giving his decisions with an air and tone admitting of no gainsay or appeal. He was always ready for either a fight or a frolic, but had more mischief than ill-will in his composition; and with all his overbearing roughness there was a strong dash of waggish good-humor at bottom. He had three or four boon companions who regarded him as their model, and at the head of whom he scoured the country, attending every scene of feud or merriment for miles around. In cold weather he was distinguished by a fur cap surmounted with a



flaunting fox's tail; and when the folks at a country gathering descried this well-known crest at a distance, whisking about among a squad of hard riders, they always stood by for a squall. Sometimes his crew would be heard dashing along past the farm-houses at midnight with whoop and halloo, like a troop of Don Cossacks, and the old dames, startled out of their sleep, would listen for a moment till the hurry-scurry had clattered by, and then exclaim, "Ay, there goes Brom Bones and his gang!" The neighbors looked upon him with a mixture of awe, admiration, and good-will, and when any madcap prank or rustic brawl occurred in the vicinity always shook their heads and warranted Brom Bones was at the bottom of it.

This rantipole hero had for some time singled out the blooming Katrina for the object of his uncouth gallantries, and, though his amorous toyings were something like the gentle caresses and endearments of a bear, yet it was whispered that she did not altogether discourage his hopes. Certain it is, his advances were signals for rival candidates to retire who felt no inclination to cross a line in his amours; insomuch, that when his horse was scene tied to Van Tassel's paling on a Sunday night, a sure sign that his master was courting--or, as it is termed, "sparking"--within, all other suitors passed by in despair and carried the war into other quarters.

Such was the formidable rival with whom Ichabod Crane had to contend, and, considering all things, a stouter man than he would have shrunk from the competition and a wiser (\*)man would have despaired. He had, however, a happy mixture of pliability and perseverance in his nature; he was in form and spirit like a supple jack--yielding, but although; though he bent, he never broke and though he bowed beneath the slightest pressure, yet the moment it was away, jerk! he was as erect and carried his head as high as ever.

To have taken the field openly against his rival would have been madness for he was not man to be thwarted in his amours, any more than that stormy lover, Achilles. Ichabod, therefore, made his advances in a quiet and gently-insinuating manner. Under cover of his character of singing-master, he made frequent visits at the farm-house; not that he had anything to apprehend from the meddlesome interference of parents, which is so often a stumbling-block in the path of lovers. Balt Van Tassel was an easy, indulgent soul; he loved his daughter better even than his pipe, and, like a reasonable man and an excellent father, let her have her way in everything. His notable little wife, too, had enough to do to attend to her housekeeping and manage her poultry for, as she sagely observed, ducks and geese are foolish things and must be looked after, but girls can take care of themselves. Thus while the busy dame bustled about the house or plied her spinning-wheel at one end of the piazza, honest Balt would sit smoking his

evening pipe at the other, watching the achievements of a little wooden warrior who, armed with a sword in each hand, was most valiantly fighting the wind on the pinnacle of the barn. In the meantime, Ichabod would carry on his suit with the daughter by the side of the spring under the great elm, or sauntering along in the twilight, that hour so favorable to the lover's eloquence.

I profess not to know how women's hearts are wooed and won. To me they have always been matters of riddle and admiration. Some seem to have but one vulnerable point, or door of access, while others have a thousand avenues and may be captured in a thousand different ways. It is a great triumph of skill to gain the former, but still greater proof of generalship to maintain possession of the latter, for the man must battle for his fortress at every door and window. He who wins a thousand common hearts is therefore entitled to some renown, but he who keeps undisputed sway over the heart of a coquette is indeed a hero. Certain it is, this was not the case with the redoubtable Brom Bones; and from the moment Ichabod Crane made his advances, the interests of the former evidently declined; his horse was no longer seen tied at the palings on Sunday nights, and a deadly feud gradually arose between him and the preceptor of Sleepy Hollow.

Brom, who had a degree of rough chivalry in his nature, would fain have carried matters to open warfare, and have settled their pretensions to the lady according to the mode of those most concise and simple reasoners, the knights-errant of yore--by single combat; but Ichabod was too conscious of the superior might of his adversary to enter the lists against him: he had overheard a boast of Bones, that he would "double the schoolmaster up and lay him on a shelf of his own school-house;" and he was too wary to give him an opportunity. There was something extremely provoking in this obstinately pacific system; it left Brom no alternative but to draw upon the funds of rustic waggery in his disposition and to play off boorish practical jokes upon his rival. Ichabod became the object of whimsical persecution to Bones and his gang of rough riders. They harried his hitherto peaceful domains; smoked out his singing school by stopping up the chimney; broke into the schoolhouse at night in spite of its formidable fastenings of withe and window stakes, and turned everything topsy-turvy; so that the poor schoolmaster began to think all the witches in the country held their meetings there. But, what was still more annoying, Brom took all opportunities of turning him into ridicule in presence of his mistress, and had a scoundrel dog whom he taught to whine in the most ludicrous manner, and introduced as a rival of Ichabod's, to instruct her in psalmody.

In this way, matters went on for some time without producing any material effect on the relative situation of the contending powers. On a fine autumnal afternoon Ichabod, in pensive mood, sat enthroned on the lofty stool whence he usually

watched all the concerns of his little literary realm. In his hand he swayed a ferule, that sceptre of despotic power; the birch of justice reposed on three nails behind the throne, a constant terror to evildoers; while on the desk before him might be seen sundry contraband articles and prohibited weapons detected upon the persons of idle urchins, such as half-munched apples, popguns, whirligigs, fly-cages, and whole legions of rampant little paper gamecocks. Apparently there had been some appalling act of justice recently inflicted, for his scholars were all busily intent upon their books or slyly whispering behind them with one eye kept upon the master, and a kind of buzzing stillness reigned throughout the school-room. It was suddenly interrupted by the appearance of a negro in tow-cloth jacket and trowsers, a round-crowned fragment of a hat like the cap of Mercury, and mounted on the back of a ragged, wild, half-broken colt, which he managed with a rope by way of halter. He came clattering up to the school door with an invitation to Ichabod to attend a merry-making or "quilting frolic" to be held that evening at Mynheer Van Tassel's; and, having delivered his message with that air of importance and effort at fine language which a negro is apt to display on petty embassies of the kind, he dashed over the brook, and was seen scampering away up the hollow, full of the importance and hurry of his mission.

All was now bustle and hubbub in the late quiet school-room. The scholars were hurried through their lessons without stopping at trifles; those who were nimble skipped over half with impunity, and those who were tardy had a smart application now and then in the rear to quicken their speed or help them over a tall word. Books were flung aside without being put away on the shelves, inkstands were overturned, benches thrown down, and the whole school was turned loose an hour before the usual time, bursting forth like a legion of young imps, yelping and racketing about the green in joy at their early emancipation.

The gallant Ichabod now spent at least an extra half hour at his toilet, brushing and furbishing up his best, and indeed only, suit of rusty black, and arranging his locks by a bit of broken looking-glass that hung up in the school-house. That he might make his appearance before his mistress in the true style of a cavalier, he borrowed a horse from the farmer with whom he was domiciliated, a choleric old Dutchman of the name of Hans Van Ripper, and, thus gallantly mounted, issued forth like a knight-errant in quest of adventures. But it is meet I should, in the true spirit of romantic story, give some account of the looks and equipments of my hero and his steed. The animal he bestrode was a broken-down plough-horse that had outlived almost everything but his viciousness. He was gaunt and shagged, with a ewe neck and a head like a hammer; his rusty mane and tail were tangled and knotted with burrs; one eye had lost its pupil and was glaring and spectral, but the other had the gleam of a genuine devil in it. Still, he must have had fire and mettle in his day, if we may judge from the name he bore of

Gunpowder. He had, in fact, been a favorite steed of his master's, the choleric Van Ripper, who was a furious rider, and had infused, very probably, some of his own spirit into the animal; for, old and broken down as he looked, there was more of the lurking devil in him than in any young filly in the country.

Ichabod was a suitable figure for such a steed. He rode with short stirrups, which brought his knees nearly up to the pommel of the saddle; his sharp elbows stuck out like grasshoppers'; he carried his whip perpendicularly in his hand like a sceptre; and as his horse jogged on the motion of his arms was not unlike the flapping of a pair of wings. A small wool hat rested on the top of his nose, for so his scanty strip of forehead might be called, and the skirts of his black coat fluttered out almost to his horse's tail. Such was the appearance of Ichabod and his steed as they shambled out of the gate of Hans Van Ripper, and it was altogether such an apparition as is seldom to be met with in broad daylight.

It was, as I have said, a fine autumnal day, the sky was clear and serene, and Nature wore that rich and golden livery which we always associate with the idea of abundance. The forests had put on their sober brown and yellow, while some trees of the tenderer kind had been nipped by the frosts into brilliant dyes of orange, purple, and scarlet. Streaming files of wild-ducks began to make their appearance high in the air; the bark of the squirrel might be heard from the groves of beech and hickory nuts, and the pensive whistle of the quail at intervals from the neighboring stubble-field.

The small birds were taking their farewell banquets. In the fulness of their revelry they fluttered, chirping and frolicking, from bush to bush and tree to tree, capricious from the very profusion and variety around them. There was the honest cock robin, the favorite game of stripling sportsmen, with its loud querulous note; and the twittering blackbirds, flying in sable clouds; and the golden-winged woodpecker, with his crimson crest, his broad black gorget, and splendid plumage; and the cedar-bird, with its red-tipt wings and yellow-tipt tail and its little monteiro cap of feathers; and the blue jay, that noisy coxcomb, in his gay light-blue coat and white under-clothes, screaming and chattering, bobbing and nodding and bowing, and pretending to be on good terms with every songster of the grove.

As Ichabod jogged slowly on his way his eye, ever open to every symptom of culinary abundance, ranged with delight over the treasures of jolly Autumn. On all sides he beheld vast store of apples--some hanging in oppressive opulence on the trees, some gathered into baskets and barrels for the market, others heaped up in rich piles for the cider-press. Farther on he beheld great fields of Indian corn, with its golden ears peeping from their leafy coverts and holding out the promise of cakes and hasty pudding; and the yellow pumpkins lying beneath them,

turning up their fair round bellies to the sun, and giving ample prospects of the most luxurious of pies; and anon he passed the fragrant buckwheat-fields, breathing the odor of the beehive, and as he beheld them soft anticipations stole over his mind of dainty slapjacks, well buttered and garnished with honey or treacle by the delicate little dimpled hand of Katrina Van Tassel.

Thus feeding his mind with many sweet thoughts and "sugared suppositions," he journeyed along the sides of a range of hills which look out upon some of the goodliest scenes of the mighty Hudson. The sun gradually wheeled his broad disk down into the west. The wide bosom of the Tappan Zee lay motionless and glassy, excepting that here and there a gentle undulation waved and prolonged the blue shadow of the distant mountain. A few amber clouds floated in the sky, without a breath of air to move them. The horizon was of a fine golden tint, changing gradually into a pure apple green, and from that into the deep blue of the mid-heaven. A slanting ray lingered on the woody crests of the precipices that overhung some parts of the river, giving greater depth to the dark-gray and purple of their rocky sides. A sloop was loitering in the distance, dropping slowly down with the tide, her sail hanging uselessly against the mast, and as the reflection of the sky gleamed along the still water it seemed as if the vessel was suspended in the air.

It was toward evening that Ichabod arrived at the castle of the Heer Van Tassel, which he found thronged with the pride and flower of the adjacent country--old farmers, a spare leathern-faced race, in homespun coats and breeches, blue stockings, huge shoes, and magnificent pewter buckles; their brisk withered little dames, in close crimped caps, long-waisted shortgowns, homespun petticoats, with scissors and pincushions and gay calico pockets hanging on the outside; buxom lasses, almost as antiquated as their mothers, excepting where a straw hat, a fine ribbon, or perhaps a white frock, gave symptoms of city innovation; the sons, in short square-skirted coats with rows of stupendous brass buttons, and their hair generally queued in the fashion of the times, especially if they could procure an eel-skin for the purpose, it being esteemed throughout the country as a potent nourisher and strengthener of the hair.

Brom Bones, however, was the hero of the scene, having come to the gathering on his favorite steed Daredevil--a creature, like himself full of metal and mischief, and which no one but himself could manage. He was, in fact, noted for preferring vicious animals, given to all kinds of tricks, which kept the rider in constant risk of his neck, for he held a tractable, well-broken horse as unworthy of a lad of spirit.

Fain would I pause to dwell upon the world of charms that burst upon the enraptured gaze of my hero as he entered the state parlor of Van Tassel's mansion. Not those of the bevy of buxom lasses with their luxurious display of red

and white, but the ample charms of a genuine Dutch country teat-able in the sumptuous time of autumn. Such heaped-up platters of cakes of various and almost indescribable kinds, known only to experienced Dutch housewives! There was the doughty doughnut, the tenderer oily koek, and the crisp and crumbling cruller; sweet cakes and short cakes, ginger cakes and honey cakes, and the whole family of cakes. And then there were apple pies and peach pies and pumpkin pies; besides slices of ham and smoked beef; and moreover delectable dishes of preserved plums and peaches and pears and quinces; not to mention broiled shad and roasted chickens; together with bowls of milk and cream,--all mingled higgledy-piggledy, pretty much as I have enumerated them, with the motherly teapot sending up its clouds of vapor from the midst. Heaven bless the mark! I want breath and time to discuss this banquet as it deserves, and am too eager to get on with my story. Happily, Ichabod Crane was not in so great a hurry as his historian, but did ample justice to every dainty.

He was a kind and thankful creature, whose heart dilated in proportion as his skin was filled with good cheer, and whose spirits rose with eating as some men's do with drink. He could not help, too, rolling his large eyes round him as he ate, and chuckling with the possibility that he might one day be lord of all this scene of almost unimaginable luxury and splendor. Then, he thought, how soon he'd turn his back upon the old school-house, snap his fingers in the face of Hans Van Ripper and every other niggardly patron, and kick any itinerant pedagogue out of doors that should dare to call him comrade!

Old Baltus Van Tassel moved about among his guests with a face dilated with content and good-humor, round and jolly as the harvest moon. His hospitable attentions were brief, but expressive, being confined to a shake of the hand, a slap on the shoulder, a loud laugh, and a pressing invitation to "fall to and help themselves."

And now the sound of the music from the common room, or hall, summoned to the dance. The musician was an old gray-headed negro who had been the itinerant orchestra of the neighborhood for more than half a century. His instrument was as old and battered as himself. The greater part of the time he scraped on two or three strings, accompanying every movement of the bow with a motion of the head, bowing almost to the ground and stamping with his foot whenever a fresh couple were to start.

Ichobod prided himself upon his dancing as much as upon his vocal powers. Not a limb, not a fibre about him was idle; and to have seen his loosely hung frame in full motion and clattering about the room you would have thought Saint Vitus himself, that blessed patron of the dance, was figuring before you in person. He was the admiration of all the negroes, who, having gathered, of all ages and

sizes, from the farm and the neighborhood, stood forming a pyramid of shining black faces at every door and window, gazing with delight at the scene, rolling their white eyeballs, and showing grinning rows of ivory from ear to ear. How could the flogger of urchins be otherwise than animated and joyous? The lady of his heart was his partner in the dance, and smiling graciously in reply to all his amorous oglings, while Brom Bones, sorely smitten with love and jealousy, sat brooding by himself in one corner.

When the dance was at an end Ichabod was attracted to a knot of the sager folks, who, with old Van Tassel, sat smoking at one end of the piazza gossiping over former times and drawing out long stories about the war.

This neighborhood, at the time of which I am speaking, was one of those highly favored places which abound with chronicle and great men. The British and American line had run near it during the war; it had therefore been the scene of marauding and infested with refugees, cow-boys, and all kinds of border chivalry. Just sufficient time had elapsed to enable each storyteller to dress up his tale with a little becoming fiction, and in the indistinctness of his recollection to make himself the hero of every exploit.

There was the story of Doffue Martling, a large blue-bearded Dutchman, who had nearly taken a British frigate with an old iron nine-pounder from a mud breastwork, only that his gun burst at the sixth discharge. And there was an old gentleman who shall be nameless, being too rich a mynheer to be lightly mentioned, who, in the battle of Whiteplains, being an excellent master of defence, parried a musket-ball with a small sword, insomuch that he absolutely felt it whiz round the blade and glance off at the hilt: in proof of which he was ready at any time to show the sword, with the hilt a little bent. There were several more that had been equally great in the field, not one of whom but was persuaded that he had a considerable hand in bringing the war to a happy termination.

But all these were nothing to the tales of ghosts and apparitions that succeeded. The neighborhood is rich in legendary treasures of the kind. Local tales and superstitions thrive best in these sheltered, long-settled retreats but are trampled under foot by the shifting throng that forms the population of most of our country places. Besides, there is no encouragement for ghosts in most of our villages, for they have scarcely had time to finish their first nap and turn themselves in their graves before their surviving friends have travelled away from the neighborhood; so that when they turn out at night to walk their rounds they have no acquaintance left to call upon. This is perhaps the reason why we so seldom hear of ghosts except in our long-established Dutch communities.

The immediate causes however, of the prevalence of supernatural stories in these parts, was doubtless owing to the vicinity of Sleepy Hollow. There was a contagion in the very air that blew from that haunted region; it breathed forth an atmosphere of dreams and fancies infecting all the land. Several of the Sleepy Hollow people were present at Van Tassel's, and, as usual, were doling out their wild and wonderful legends. Many dismal tales were told about funeral trains and mourning cries and wailings heard and seen about the great tree where the unfortunate Major Andre was taken, and which stood in the neighborhood. Some mention was made also of the woman in white that haunted the dark glen at Raven Rock, and was often heard to shriek on winter nights before a storm, having perished there in the snow. The chief part of the stories, however, turned upon the favorite spectre of Sleepy Hollow, the headless horseman, who had been heard several times of late patrolling the country, and, it was said, tethered his horse nightly among the graves in the churchyard.

The sequestered situation of this church seems always to have made it a favorite haunt of troubled spirits. It stands on a knoll surrounded by locust trees and lofty elms, from among which its decent whitewashed walls shine modestly forth, like Christian purity beaming through the shades of retirement. A gentle slope descends from it to a silver sheet of water bordered by high trees, between which peeps may be caught at the blue hills of the Hudson. To look upon its grass-grown yard, where the sunbeams seem to sleep so quietly, one would think that there at least the dead might rest in peace. On one side of the church extends a wide woody dell, along which raves a large brook among broken rocks and trunks of fallen trees. Over a deep black part of the stream, not far from the church, was formerly thrown a wooden bridge; the road that led to it and the bridge itself were thickly shaded by overhanging trees, which cast a gloom about it even in the daytime, but occasioned a fearful darkness at night. Such was one of the favorite haunts of the headless horseman, and the place where he was most frequently encountered. The tale was told of old Brouwer, a most heretical disbeliever in ghosts, how he met the horseman returning from his foray into Sleepy Hollow, and was obliged to get up behind him; how they galloped over bush and brake, over hill and swamp, until they reached the bridge, when the horseman suddenly turned into a skeleton, threw old Brouwer into the brook, and sprang away over the tree-tops with a clap of thunder.

This story was immediately matched by a thrice-marvellous adventure of Brom Bones, who made light of the galloping Hessian as an arrant jockey. He affirmed that on returning one night from the neighboring village of Sing-Sing he had been over taken by this midnight trooper; that he had offered to race with him for a bowl of punch, and should have won it too, for Daredevil beat the goblin horse all



hollow, but just as they came to the church bridge the Hessian bolted and vanished in a flash of fire.

All these tales, told in that drowsy undertone with which men talk in the dark, the countenances of the listeners only now and then receiving a casual gleam from the glare of a pipe, sank deep in the mind of Ichabod. He repaid them in kind with large extracts from his invaluable author, Cotton Mather, and added many marvellous events that had taken place in his native state of Connecticut and fearful sights which he had seen in his nightly walks about Sleepy Hollow.

The revel now gradually broke up. The old farmers gathered together their families in their wagons, and were heard for some time rattling along the hollow roads and over the distant hills. Some of the damsels mounted on pillions behind their favorite swains, and their light-hearted laughter, mingling with the clatter of hoofs, echoed along the silent woodlands, sounding fainter and fainter until they gradually died away, and the late scene of noise and frolic was all silent and deserted. Ichabod only lingered behind, according to the custom of country lovers, to have a tete-a-tete with the heiress, fully convinced that he was now on the high road to success. What passed at this interview I will not pretend to say, for in fact I do not know. Something, however, I fear me, must have gone wrong, for he certainly sallied forth, after no very great interval, with an air quite desolate and chop-fallen. Oh these women! these women! Could that girl have been playing off any of her coquettish tricks? Was her encouragement of the poor pedagogue all a mere sham to secure her conquest of his rival? Heaven only knows, not I! Let it suffice to say, Ichabod stole forth with the air of one who had been sacking a hen-roost, rather than a fair lady's heart. Without looking to the right or left to notice the scene of rural wealth on which he had so often gloated, he went straight to the stable, and with several hearty cuffs and kicks roused his steed most uncourteously from the comfortable quarters in which he was soundly sleeping, dreaming of mountains of corn and oats and whole valleys of timothy and clover.

It was the very witching time of night that Ichabod, heavy-hearted and crestfallen, pursued his travel homewards along the sides of the lofty hills which rise above Tarry Town, and which he had traversed so cheerily in the afternoon. The hour was as dismal as himself. Far below him the Tappan Zee spread its dusky and indistinct waste of waters, with here and there the tall mast of a sloop riding quietly at anchor under the land. In the dead hush of midnight he could even hear the barking of the watch-dog from the opposite shore of the Hudson; but it was so vague and faint as only to give an idea of his distance from this faithful companion of man. Now and then, too, the long-drawn crowing of a cock, accidentally awakened, would sound far, far off, from some farm-house away

among the hills; but it was like a dreaming sound in his ear. No signs of life occurred near him, but occasionally the melancholy chirp of a cricket, or perhaps the guttural twang of a bull-frog from a neighboring marsh, as if sleeping uncomfortably and turning suddenly in his bed.

All the stories of ghosts and goblins that he had heard in the afternoon now came crowding upon his recollection. The night grew darker and darker; the stars seemed to sink deeper in the sky, and driving clouds occasionally hid them from his sight. He had never felt so lonely and dismal. He was, moreover, approaching the very place where many of the scenes of the ghost-stories had been laid. In the centre of the road stood an enormous tulip tree which towered like a giant above all the other trees of the neighborhood and formed a kind of landmark. Its limbs were gnarled and fantastic, large enough to form trunks for ordinary trees, twisting down almost to the earth and rising again into the air. It was connected with the tragical story of the unfortunate Andre, who had been taken prisoner hard by, and was universally known by the name of Major Andre's tree. The common people regarded it with a mixture of respect and superstition, partly out of sympathy for the fate of its ill-starred namesake, and partly from the tales of strange sights and doleful lamentations told concerning it.

As Ichabod approached this fearful tree he began to whistle: he thought his whistle was answered; it was but a blast sweeping sharply through the dry branches. As he approached a little nearer he thought he saw something white hanging in the midst of the tree: he paused and ceased whistling, but on looking more narrowly perceived that it was a place where the tree had been scathed by lightning and the white wood laid bare. Suddenly he heard a groan: his teeth chattered and his knees smote against the saddle; it was but the rubbing of one huge bough upon another as they were swayed about by the breeze. He passed the tree in safety, but new perils lay before him.

About two hundred yards from the tree a small brook crossed the road and ran into a marshy and thickly-wooded glen known by the name of Wiley's Swamp. A few rough logs, laid side by side, served for a bridge over this stream. On that side of the road where the brook entered the wood a group of oaks and chestnuts, matted thick with wild grape-vines, threw a cavernous gloom over it. To pass this bridge was the severest trial. It was at this identical spot that the unfortunate Andre was captured, and under the covert of those chestnuts and vines were the sturdy yeomen concealed who surprised him. This has ever since been considered a haunted stream, and fearful are the feelings of the schoolboy who has to pass it alone after dark.

As he approached the stream his heart began to thump; he summoned up, however, all his resolution, gave his horse half a score of kicks in the ribs, and

attempted to dash briskly across the bridge; but instead of starting forward, the perverse old animal made a lateral movement and ran broadside against the fence. Ichabod, whose fears increased with the delay, jerked the reins on the other side and kicked lustily with the contrary foot: it was all in vain; his steed started, it is true, but it was only to plunge to the opposite side of the road into a thicket of brambles and alder bushes. The schoolmaster now bestowed both whip and heel upon the starveling ribs of old Gunpowder, who dashed forward, snuffing and snorting, but came to a stand just by the bridge with a suddenness that had nearly sent his rider sprawling over his head. Just at this moment a plashy tramp by the side of the bridge caught the sensitive ear of Ichabod. In the dark shadow of the grove on the margin of the brook he beheld something huge, misshapen, black, and towering. It stirred not, but seemed gathered up in the gloom, like some gigantic monster ready to spring upon the traveller.

The hair of the affrighted pedagogue rose upon his head with terror. What was to be done? To turn and fly was now too late; and besides, what chance was there of escaping ghost or goblin, if such it was, which could ride upon the wings of the wind? Summoning up, therefore, a show of courage, he demanded in stammering accents, "Who are you?" He received no reply. He repeated his demand in a still more agitated voice. Still there was no answer. Once more he cudgelled the sides of the inflexible Gunpowder, and, shutting his eyes, broke forth with involuntary fervor into a psalm tune. Just then the shadowy object of alarm put itself in motion, and with a scramble and a bound stood at once in the middle of the road. Though the night was dark and dismal, yet the form of the unknown might now in some degree be ascertained. He appeared to be a horseman of large dimensions and mounted on a black horse of powerful frame. He made no offer of molestation or sociability, but kept aloof on one side of the road, jogging along on the blind side of old Gunpowder, who had now got over his fright and waywardness.

Ichabod, who had no relish for this strange midnight companion, and bethought himself of the adventure of Brom Bones with the Galloping Hessian, now quickened his steed in hopes of leaving him behind. The stranger, however, quickened his horse to an equal pace. Ichabod pulled up, and fell into a walk, thinking to lag behind; the other did the same. His heart began to sink within him; he endeavored to resume his psalm tune, but his parched tongue clove to the roof of his mouth and he could not utter a stave. There was something in the moody and dogged silence of this pertinacious companion that was mysterious and appalling. It was soon fearfully accounted for. On mounting a rising ground, which brought the figure of his fellow-traveller in relief against the sky, gigantic in height and muffled in a cloak, Ichabod was horror-struck on perceiving that he was headless! but his horror was still more increased on observing that the head, which should have rested on his shoulders, was carried before him on the pommel

of the saddle. His terror rose to desperation, he rained a shower of kicks and blows upon Gunpowder, hoping by a sudden movement to give his companion the slip; but the spectre started full jump with him. Away, then, they dashed through thick and thin, stones flying and sparks flashing at every bound. Ichabod's flimsy garments fluttered in the air as he stretched his long lank body away over his horse's head in the eagerness of his flight.

They had now reached the road which turns off to Sleepy Hollow; but Gunpowder, who seemed possessed with a demon, instead of keeping up it, made an opposite turn and plunged headlong down hill to the left. This road leads through a sandy hollow shaded by trees for about a quarter of a mile, where it crosses the bridge famous in goblin story, and just beyond swells the green knoll on which stands the whitewashed church.

As yet the panic of the steed had given his unskillful rider an apparent advantage in the chase; but just as he had got halfway through the hollow the girths of the saddle gave away and he felt it slipping from under him. He seized it by the pommel and endeavored to hold it firm, but in vain, and had just time to save himself by clasping old Gunpowder round the neck, when the saddle fell to the earth, and he heard it trampled under foot by his pursuer. For a moment the terror of Hans Van Ripper's wrath passed across his mind, for it was his Sunday saddle; but this was no time for petty fears; the goblin was hard on his haunches, and (unskilled rider that he was) he had much ado to maintain his seat, sometimes slipping on one side, sometimes on another, and sometimes jolted on the high ridge of his horse's back-bone with a violence that he verily feared would cleave him asunder.

An opening in the trees now cheered him with the hopes that the church bridge was at hand. The wavering reflection of a silver star in the bosom of the brook told him that he was not mistaken. He saw the walls of the church dimly glaring under the trees beyond. He recollected the place where Brom Bones' ghostly competitor had disappeared. "If I can but reach that bridge," thought Ichabod, "I am safe." Just then he heard the, black steed panting and blowing close behind him; he even fancied that he felt his hot breath. Another convulsive kick in the ribs, and old Gunpowder sprang upon the bridge; he thundered over the resounding planks; he gained the opposite side; and now Ichabod cast a look behind to see if his pursuer should vanish, according to rule, in a flash of fire and brimstone. Just then he saw the goblin rising in his stirrups, and in the very act of hurling his head at him. Ichabod endeavored to dodge the horrible missile, but too late. It encountered his cranium with a tremendous crash; he was tumbled headlong into the dust, and Gunpowder, the black steed, and the goblin rider passed by like a whirlwind.

The next morning the old horse was found, without his saddle and with he bridle under his feet, soberly cropping the grass at his master's gate. Ichabod did not make his appearance at breakfast; dinner-hour came, but no Ichabod. The boys assembled at the school-house and strolled idly about the banks of the brook but no schoolmaster. Hans Van Ripper now began to feel some uneasiness about the fate of poor Ichabod and his saddle. An inquiry was set on foot, and after diligent investigation they came upon his traces. In one part of the road leading to the church was found the saddle trampled in the dirt; the tracks of horses' hoofs, deeply dented in the road and evidently at furious speed, were traced to the bridge, beyond which, on the bank of a broad part of the brook, where the water ran deep and black, was found the hat of the unfortunate Ichabod, and close beside it a spattered pumpkin.

The brook was searched, but the body of the schoolmaster was not to be discovered. Hans Van Ripper, as executor of his estate, examined the bundle which contained all his worldly effects. They consisted of two shirts and a half, two stocks for the neck, a pair or two of worsted stockings, an old pair of corduroy small-clothes, a rusty razor, a book of psalm tunes full of dog's ears, and a broken pitch-pipe. As to the books and furniture of the school-house, they belonged to the community, excepting Cotton Mather's History of Witchcraft, a New England Almanac, and a book of dreams and fortune-telling; in which last was a sheet of foolscap much scribbled and blotted in several fruitless attempts to make a copy of verses in honor of the heiress of Van Tassel. These magic books and the poetic scrawl were forthwith consigned to the flames by Hans Van Ripper, who from that time forward determined to send his children no more to school, observing that he never knew any good come of this same reading and writing. Whatever money the schoolmaster possessed--and he had received his quarter's pay but a day or two before--he must have had about his person at the time of his disappearance.

The mysterious event caused much speculation at the church on the following Sunday. Knots of gazers and gossips were collected in the churchyard, at the bridge, and at the spot where the hat and pumpkin had been found. The stories of Brouwer, of Bones, and a whole budget of others were called to mind, and when they had diligently considered them all, and compared them with the symptoms of the present case, they shook their heads and came to the conclusion that Ichabod had been carried off by the galloping Hessian. As he was a bachelor and in nobody's debt, nobody troubled his head any more about him, the school was removed to a different quarter of the hollow and another pedagogue reigned in his stead.

It is true an old farmer, who had been down to New York on a visit several years after, and from whom this account of the ghostly adventure was received, brought home the intelligence that Ichabod Crane was still alive; that he had left the neighborhood, partly through fear of the gob in and Hans Van Ripper, and partly in mortification at having been suddenly dismissed by the heiress; that he had changed his quarters to a distant part of the country, had kept school and studied law at the same time, had been admitted to the bar, turned politician electioneered, written for the newspapers, and finally had been made a justice of the Ten Pound Court. Brom Bones too, who shortly after his rival's disappearance conducted the blooming Katrina in triumph to the altar, was observed to look exceedingly knowing whenever the story of Ichabod was related, and always burst into a hearty laugh at the mention of the pumpkin; which led some to suspect that he knew more about the matter than he chose to tell.

The old country wives, however, who are the best judges of these matters, maintain to this day that Ichabod was spirited away by supernatural means; and it is a favorite story often told about the neighborhood round the intereving fire. The bridge became more than ever an object of superstitious awe, and that may be the reason why the road has been altered of late years, so as to approach the church by the border of the mill-pond. The schoolhouse, being deserted, soon fell to decay, and was reported to be haunted by the ghost of the unfortunate pedagogue; and the plough-boy, loitering homeward of a still summer evening, has often fancied his voice at a distance chanting a melancholy psalm tune among the tranquil solitudes of Sleepy Hollow.

#### POSTSCRIPT

FOUND IN THE HANDWRITING OF MR. KNICKERBOCKER.

THE preceding tale is given almost in the precise words in which I heard it related at a Corporation meeting of the ancient city of Manhattoes, at which were present many of its sagest and most illustrious burghers. The narrator was a pleasant, shabby, gentlemanly old fellow in pepper-and-salt clothes, with a sadly humorous face, and one whom I strongly suspected of being poor, he made such efforts to be entertaining. When his story was concluded there was much laughter and approbation, particularly from two or three deputy aldermen who had been asleep the greater part of the time. There was, however, one tall, dry-looking old gentleman, with beetling eyebrows, who maintained a grave and rather severe face throughout, now and then folding his arms, inclining his head, and looking down upon the floor, as if turning a doubt over in his mind. He was one of your wary men, who never laugh but upon good grounds--when they have reason and the law on their side. When the mirth of the rest of the company had subsided and silence was restored, he leaned one arm on the elbow of his chair, and

sticking the other akimbo, demanded, with a slight but exceedingly sage motion of the head and contraction of the brow, what was the moral of the story and what it went to prove.

The story-teller, who was just putting a glass of wine to his lips as a refreshment after his toils, paused for a moment, looked at his inquirer with an air of infinite deference, and, lowering the glass slowly to the table, observed that the story was intended most logically to prove--

"That there is no situation in life but has its advantages and pleasures--provided we will but take a joke as we find it;

"That, therefore, he that runs races with goblin troopers is likely to have rough riding of it.

"Ergo, for a country schoolmaster to be refused the hand of a Dutch heiress is a certain step to high preferment in the state."

The cautious old gentleman knit his brows tenfold closer after this explanation, being sorely puzzled by the ratiocination of the syllogism, while methought the one in pepper-and-salt eyed him with something of a triumphant leer. At length he observed that all this was very well, but still he thought the story a little on the extravagant--there were one or two points on which he had his doubts.

"Faith, sir," replied the story-teller, "as to that matter, I don't believe one-half of it myself." D. K.

## **The Devil and Tom Walker**

*Illustration: [The Devil and Tom Walker](#), by John Quidor, 1856.*

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A few miles from Boston, in Massachusetts, there is a deep inlet winding several miles into the interior of the country from Charles Bay, and terminating in a thickly wooded swamp or morass. On one side of this inlet is a beautiful dark grove; on the opposite side the land rises abruptly from the water's edge into a high ridge, on which grow a few scattered oaks of great age and immense size. Under one of these gigantic trees, according to old stories, there was a great amount of treasure buried by Kidd the pirate. The inlet allowed a facility to bring the money in a boat secretly, and at night, to the very foot of the hill; the elevation of the place permitted a good lookout to be kept that no one was at hand; while the remarkable trees formed good landmarks by which the place

might easily be found again. The old stories add, moreover, that the devil presided at the hiding of the money, and took it under his guardianship; but this, it is well known, he always does with buried treasure, particularly when it has been ill-gotten. Be that as it may, Kidd never returned to recover his wealth; being shortly after seized at Boston, sent out to England, and there hanged for a pirate.

About the year 1727, just at the time that earthquakes were prevalent in New England, and shook many tall sinners down upon their knees, there lived near this place a meagre, miserly fellow, of the name of Tom Walker. He had a wife as miserly as himself; they were so miserly that they even conspired to cheat each other. Whatever the woman could lay hands on she hid away; a hen could not cackle but she was on the alert to secure the new-laid egg. Her husband was continually prying about to detect her secret hoards, and many and fierce were the conflicts that took place about what ought to have been common property. They lived in a forlorn-looking house that stood alone and had an air of starvation. A few straggling savin-trees, emblems of sterility, grew near it; no smoke ever curled from its chimney; no traveller stopped at its door. A miserable horse, whose ribs were as articulate as the bars of a gridiron, stalked about a field, where a thin carpet of moss, scarcely covering the ragged beds of pudding-stone, tantalized and balked his hunger; and sometimes he would lean his head over the fence, look piteously at the passer-by, and seem to petition deliverance from this land of famine.

The house and its inmates had altogether a bad name. Tom's wife was a tall termagant, fierce of temper, loud of tongue, and strong of arm. Her voice was often heard in wordy warfare with her husband; and his face sometimes showed signs that their conflicts were not confined to words. No one ventured, however, to interfere between them. The lonely wayfarer shrank within himself at the horrid clamor and clapper-clawing; eyed the den of discord askance; and hurried on his way, rejoicing, if a bachelor, in his celibacy.

One day that Tom Walker had been to a distant part of the neighborhood, he took what he considered a short-cut homeward, through the swamp. Like most short-cuts, it was an ill-chosen route. The swamp was thickly grown with great, gloomy pines and hemlocks, some of them ninety feet high, which made it dark at noonday and a retreat for all the owls of the neighborhood. It was full of pits and quagmires, partly covered with weeds and mosses, where the green surface often betrayed the traveller into a gulf of black, smothering mud; there were also dark and stagnant pools, the abodes of the tadpole, the bull-frog, and the water-snake, where the trunks of pines and hemlocks lay half-drowned, half-rotting, looking like alligators sleeping in the mire.



Tom had long been picking his way cautiously through this treacherous forest, stepping from tuft to tuft of rushes and roots, which afforded precarious footholds among deep sloughs, or pacing carefully, like a cat, along the prostrate trunks of trees, startled now and then by the sudden screaming of the bittern, or the quacking of a wild duck, rising on the wing from some solitary pool. At length he arrived at a firm piece of ground, which ran like a peninsula into the deep bosom of the swamp. It had been one of the strongholds of the Indians during their wars with the first colonists. Here they had thrown up a kind of fort, which they had looked upon as almost impregnable, and had used as a place of refuge for their squaws and children. Nothing remained of the old Indian fort but a few embankments, gradually sinking to the level of the surrounding earth, and already overgrown in part by oaks and other forest trees, the foliage of which formed a contrast to the dark pines and hemlocks of the swamps.

It was late in the dusk of evening when Tom Walker reached the old fort, and he paused there awhile to rest himself. Any one but he would have felt unwilling to linger in this lonely, melancholy place, for the common people had a bad opinion of it, from the stories handed down from the times of the Indian wars, when it was asserted that the savages held incantations here and made sacrifices to the Evil Spirit.

Tom Walker, however, was not a man to be troubled with any fears of the kind. He reposed himself for some time on the trunk of a fallen hemlock, listening to the boding cry of the tree-toad, and delving with his walking-staff into a mound of black mould at his feet. As he turned up the soil unconsciously, his staff struck against something hard. He raked it out of the vegetable mould, and lo! a cloven skull, with an Indian tomahawk buried deep in it, lay before him. The rust on the weapon showed the time that had elapsed since this death-blow had been given. It was a dreary memento of the fierce struggle that had taken place in this last foothold of the Indian warriors.

"Humph!" said Tom Walker, as he gave it a kick to shake the dirt from it.

"Let that skull alone!" said a gruff voice. Tom lifted up his eyes and beheld a great black man seated directly opposite him, on the stump of a tree. He was exceedingly surprised, having neither heard nor seen any one approach; and he was still more perplexed on observing, as well as the gathering gloom would permit, that the stranger was neither negro nor Indian. It is true he was dressed in a rude Indian garb, and had a red belt or sash swathed round his body; but his face was neither black nor copper-color, but swarthy and dingy, and begrimed with soot, as if he had been accustomed to toil among fires and forges. He had a

shock of coarse black hair, that stood out from his head in all directions, and bore an axe on his shoulder.

He scowled for a moment at Tom with a pair of great red eyes.

"What are you doing on my grounds?" said the black man, with a hoarse, growling voice.

"Your grounds!" said Tom, with a sneer; "no more your grounds than mine; they belong to Deacon Peabody."

"Deacon Peabody be damned," said the stranger, "as I flatter myself he will be, if he does not look more to his own sins and less to those of his neighbors. Look yonder, and see how Deacon Peabody is faring."

Tom looked in the direction that the stranger pointed, and beheld one of the great trees, fair and flourishing without, but rotten at the core, and saw that it had been nearly hewn through, so that the first high wind was likely to blow it down. On the bark of the tree was scored the name of Deacon Peabody, an eminent man who had waxed wealthy by driving shrewd bargains with the Indians. He now looked around, and found most of the tall trees marked with the name of some great man of the colony, and all more or less scored by the axe. The one on which he had been seated, and which had evidently just been hewn down, bore the name of Crowninshield; and he recollected a mighty rich man of that name, who made a vulgar display of wealth, which it was whispered he had acquired by buccaneering.

"He's just ready for burning!" said the black man, with a growl of triumph. "You see I am likely to have a good stock of firewood for winter."

"But what right have you," said Tom, "to cut down Deacon Peabody's timber?"

"The right of a prior claim," said the other. "This woodland belonged to me long before one of your white-faced race put foot upon the soil."

"And, pray, who are you, if I may be so bold?" said Tom.

"Oh, I go by various names. I am the wild huntsman in some countries; the black miner in others. In this neighborhood I am known by the name of the black woodsman. I am he to whom the red men consecrated this spot, and in honor of whom they now and then roasted a white man, by way of sweet-smelling sacrifice. Since the red men have been exterminated by you white savages, I amuse myself by presiding at the persecutions of Quakers and Anabaptists; I am

the great patron and prompter of slave-dealers and the grand-master of the Salem witches."

"The upshot of all which is, that, if I mistake not," said Tom, sturdily, "you are he commonly called Old Scratch."

"The same, at your service!" replied the black man, with a half-civil nod.

Such was the opening of this interview, according to the old story; though it has almost too familiar an air to be credited. One would think that to meet with such a singular personage in this wild, lonely place would have shaken any man's nerves; but Tom was a hard-minded fellow, not easily daunted, and he had lived so long with a termagant wife that he did not even fear the devil.

It is said that after this commencement they had a long and earnest conversation together, as Tom returned homeward. The black man told him of great sums of money buried by Kidd the pirate under the oak-trees on the high ridge, not far from the morass. All these were under his command, and protected by his power, so that none could find them but such as propitiated his favor. These he offered to place within Tom Walker's reach, having conceived an especial kindness for him; but they were to be had only on certain conditions. What these conditions were may be easily surmised, though Tom never disclosed them publicly. They must have been very hard, for he required time to think of them, and he was not a man to stick at trifles when money was in view. When they had reached the edge of the swamp, the stranger paused. "What proof have I that all you have been telling me is true?" said Tom. "There's my signature," said the black man, pressing his finger on Tom's forehead. So saying, he turned off among the thickets of the swamp, and seemed, as Tom said, to go down, down, down, into the earth, until nothing but his head and shoulders could be seen, and so on, until he totally disappeared.

When Tom reached home he found the black print of a finger burned, as it were, into his forehead, which nothing could obliterate.

The first news his wife had to tell him was the sudden death of Absalom Crowninshield, the rich buccaneer. It was announced in the papers, with the usual flourish, that "A great man had fallen in Israel." Tom recollected the tree which his black friend had just hewn down, and which was ready for burning. "Let the freebooter roast," said Tom; "who cares!" He now felt convinced that all he had heard and seen was no illusion.

He was not prone to let his wife into his confidence; but as this was an uneasy secret, he willingly shared it with her. All her avarice was awakened at the

mention of hidden gold, and she urged her husband to comply with the black man's terms, and secure what would make them wealthy for life. However Tom might have felt disposed to sell himself to the devil, he was determined not to do so to oblige his wife; so he flatly refused, out of the mere spirit of contradiction. Many and bitter were the quarrels they had on the subject; but the more she talked, the more resolute was Tom not to be damned to please her.

At length she determined to drive the bargain on her own account, and, if she succeeded, to keep all the gain to herself. Being of the same fearless temper as her husband, she set off for the old Indian fort toward the close of a summer's day. She was many hours absent. When she came back, she was reserved and sullen in her replies. She spoke something of a black man, whom she had met about twilight hewing at the root of a tall tree. He was sulky, however, and would not come to terms; she was to go again with a propitiatory offering, but what it was she forbore to say.

The next evening she set off again for the swamp, with her apron heavily laden. Tom waited and waited for her, but in vain; midnight came, but she did not make her appearance; morning, noon, night returned, but still she did not come. Tom now grew uneasy for her safety, especially as he found she had carried off in her apron the silver tea-pot and spoons, and every portable article of value. Another night elapsed, another morning came; but no wife. In a word, she was never heard of more.

What was her real fate nobody knows, in consequence of so many pretending to know. It is one of those facts which have become confounded by a variety of historians. Some asserted that she lost her way among the tangled mazes of the swamp, and sank into some pit or slough; others, more uncharitable, hinted that she had eloped with the household booty, and made off to some other province; while others surmised that the tempter had decoyed her into a dismal quagmire, on the top of which her hat was found lying. In confirmation of this, it was said a great black man, with an axe on his shoulder, was seen late that very evening coming out of the swamp, carrying a bundle tied in a check apron, with an air of surly triumph.

The most current and probable story, however, observes that Tom Walker grew so anxious about the fate of his wife and his property that he set out at length to seek them both at the Indian fort. During a long summer's afternoon he searched about the gloomy place, but no wife was to be seen. He called her name repeatedly, but she was nowhere to be heard. The bittern alone responded to his voice, as he flew screaming by; or the bull-frog croaked dolefully from a neighboring pool. At length, it is said, just in the brown hour of twilight, when the owls began to hoot and the bats to flit about, his attention was attracted by the

clamor of carrion crows hovering about a cypress-tree. He looked up and beheld a bundle tied in a check apron and hanging in the branches of the tree, with a great vulture perched hard by, as if keeping watch upon it. He leaped with joy, for he recognized his wife's apron, and supposed it to contain the household valuables.

"Let us get hold of the property," said he, consolingly, to himself, "and we will endeavor to do without the woman."

As he scrambled up the tree, the vulture spread its wide wings and sailed off, screaming, into the deep shadows of the forest. Tom seized the checked apron, but, woful sight! found nothing but a heart and liver tied up in it!

Such, according to this most authentic old story, was all that was to be found of Tom's wife. She had probably attempted to deal with the black man as she had been accustomed to deal with her husband; but though a female scold is generally considered a match for the devil, yet in this instance she appears to have had the worst of it. She must have died game, however; for it is said Tom noticed many prints of cloven feet deeply stamped about the tree, and found handfuls of hair, that looked as if they had been plucked from the coarse black shock of the woodsman. Tom knew his wife's prowess by experience. He shrugged his shoulders as he looked at the signs of fierce clapper-clawing. "Egad," said he to himself, "Old Scratch must have had a tough time of it!"

Tom consoled himself for the loss of his property, with the loss of his wife, for he was a man of fortitude. He even felt something like gratitude toward the black woodsman, who, he considered, had done him a kindness. He sought, therefore, to cultivate a further acquaintance with him, but for some time without success; the old black-legs played shy, for, whatever people may think, he is not always to be had for the calling; he knows how to play his cards when pretty sure of his game.

At length, it is said, when delay had whetted Tom's eagerness to the quick and prepared him to agree to anything rather than not gain the promised treasure, he met the black man one evening in his usual woodsman's dress, with his axe on his shoulder, sauntering along the swamp and humming a tune. He affected to receive Tom's advances with great indifference, made brief replies, and went on humming his tune.

By degrees, however, Tom brought him to business, and they began to haggle about the terms on which the former was to have the pirate's treasure. There was one condition which need not be mentioned, being generally understood in all cases where the devil grants favors; but there were others about which, though of less importance, he was inflexibly obstinate. He insisted that the money found

through his means should be employed in his service. He proposed, therefore, that Tom should employ it in the black traffic; that is to say, that he should fit out a slave-ship. This, however, Tom resolutely refused; he was bad enough in all conscience, but the devil himself could not tempt him to turn slave-trader.

Finding Tom so squeamish on this point, he did not insist upon it, but proposed, instead, that he should turn usurer; the devil being extremely anxious for the increase of usurers, looking upon them as his peculiar people.

To this no objections were made, for it was just to Tom's taste.

"You shall open a broker's shop in Boston next month," said the black man.

"I'll do it to-morrow, if you wish," said Tom Walker.

"You shall lend money at two per cent. a month."

"Egad, I'll charge four!" replied Tom Walker.

"You shall extort bonds, foreclose mortgages, drive the merchants to bankruptcy—"

"I'll drive them to the devil," cried Tom Walker.

"You are the usurer for my money!" said black-legs with delight. "When will you want the rhino?"

"This very night."

"Done!" said the devil.

"Done!" said Tom Walker. So they shook hands and struck a bargain.

A few days' time saw Tom Walker seated behind his desk in a counting-house in Boston.

His reputation for a ready-moneyed man, who would lend money out for a good consideration, soon spread abroad. Everybody remembers the time of Governor Belcher, when money was particularly scarce. It was a time of paper credit. The country had been deluged with government bills; the famous Land Bank had been established; there had been a rage for speculating; the people had run mad with schemes for new settlements, for building cities in the wilderness; land-jobbers went about with maps of grants and townships and Eldorados, lying nobody knew where, but which everybody was ready to purchase. In a word, the great speculating fever which breaks out every now and then in the country had raged

to an alarming degree, and everybody was dreaming of making sudden fortunes from nothing. As usual, the fever had subsided, the dream had gone off, and the imaginary fortunes with it; the patients were left in doleful plight, and the whole country resounded with the consequent cry of "hard times."

At this propitious time of public distress did Tom Walker set up as usurer in Boston. His door was soon thronged by customers. The needy and adventurous, the gambling speculator, the dreaming land-jobber, the thriftless tradesman, the merchant with cracked credit—in short, everyone driven to raise money by desperate means and desperate sacrifices hurried to Tom Walker.

Thus Tom was the universal friend to the needy, and acted like "a friend in need"; that is to say, he always exacted good pay and security. In proportion to the distress of the applicant was the hardness of his terms. He accumulated bonds and mortgages, gradually squeezed his customers closer and closer, and sent them at length, dry as a sponge, from his door.

In this way he made money hand over hand, became a rich and mighty man, and exalted his cocked hat upon "Change." He built himself, as usual, a vast house, out of ostentation, but left the greater part of it unfinished and unfurnished, out of parsimony. He even set up a carriage in the fulness of his vain-glory, though he nearly starved the horses which drew it; and, as the ungreased wheels groaned and screeched on the axle-trees, you would have thought you heard the souls of the poor debtors he was squeezing.

As Tom waxed old, however, he grew thoughtful. Having secured the good things of this world, he began to feel anxious about those of the next. He thought with regret of the bargain he had made with his black friend, and set his wits to work to cheat him out of the conditions. He became, therefore, all of a sudden, a violent church-goer. He prayed loudly and strenuously, as if heaven were to be taken by force of lungs. Indeed, one might always tell when he had sinned most during the week by the clamor of his Sunday devotion. The quiet Christians who had been modestly and steadfastly travelling Zionward were struck with self-reproach at seeing themselves so suddenly outstripped in their career by this new-made convert. Tom was as rigid in religious as in money matters; he was a stern supervisor and censurer of his neighbors, and seemed to think every sin entered up to their account became a credit on his own side of the page. He even talked of the expediency of reviving the persecution of Quakers and Anabaptists. In a word, Tom's zeal became as notorious as his riches.

Still, in spite of all this strenuous attention to forms, Tom had a lurking dread that the devil, after all, would have his due. That he might not be taken unawares, therefore, it is said he always carried a small Bible in his coat-pocket. He had also

a great folio Bible on his counting-house desk, and would frequently be found reading it when people called on business; on such occasions he would lay his green spectacles in the book, to mark the place, while he turned round to drive some usurious bargain.

Some say that Tom grew a little crack-brained in his old days, and that, fancying his end approaching, he had his horse new shod, saddled, and bridled, and buried with his feet uppermost; because he supposed that at the last day the world would be turned upside-down; in which case he should find his horse standing ready for mounting, and he was determined at the worst to give his old friend a run for it. This, however, is probably a mere old wives' fable. If he really did take such a precaution, it was totally superfluous; at least so says the authentic old legend, which closes his story in the following manner:

One hot summer afternoon in the dog-days, just as a terrible black thunder-gust was coming up, Tom sat in his counting-house, in his white linen cap and India silk morning-gown. He was on the point of foreclosing a mortgage, by which he would complete the ruin of an unlucky land-speculator for whom he had professed the greatest friendship. The poor land-jobber begged him to grant a few months' indulgence. Tom had grown testy and irritated, and refused another delay.

"My family will be ruined, and brought upon the parish," said the land-jobber.

"Charity begins at home," replied Tom; "I must take care of myself in these hard times."

"You have made so much money out of me," said the speculator.

Tom lost his patience and his piety. "The devil take me," said he, "if I have made a farthing!"

Just then there were three loud knocks at the street door. He stepped out to see who was there. A black man was holding a black horse, which neighed and stamped with impatience.

"Tom, you're come for," said the black fellow, gruffly. Tom shrank back, but too late. He had left his little Bible at the bottom of his coat-pocket and his big Bible on the desk buried under the mortgage he was about to foreclose: never was sinner taken more unawares. The black man whisked him like a child into the saddle, gave the horse the lash, and away he galloped, with Tom on his back, in the midst of the thunder-storm. The clerks stuck their pens behind their ears, and stared after him from the windows. Away went Tom Walker, dashing down the streets, his white cap bobbing up and down, his morning-gown fluttering in the



wind, and his steed striking fire out of the pavement at every bound. When the clerks turned to look for the black man, he had disappeared.

Tom Walker never returned to foreclose the mortgage. A countryman, who lived on the border of the swamp, reported that in the height of the thunder-gust he had heard a great clattering of hoofs and a howling along the road, and running to the window caught sight of a figure, such as I have described, on a horse that galloped like mad across the fields, over the hills, and down into the black hemlock swamp toward the old Indian fort, and that shortly after a thunder-bolt falling in that direction seemed to set the whole forest in a blaze.

The good people of Boston shook their heads and shrugged their shoulders, but had been so much accustomed to witches and goblins, and tricks of the devil, in all kinds of shapes, from the first settlement of the colony, that they were not so much horror-struck as might have been expected. Trustees were appointed to take charge of Tom's effects. There was nothing, however, to administer upon. On searching his coffers, all his bonds and mortgages were reduced to cinders. In place of gold and silver, his iron chest was filled with chips and shavings; two skeletons lay in his stable instead of his half-starved horses, and the very next day his great house took fire and was burned to the ground.

Such was the end of Tom Walker and his ill-gotten wealth. Let all gripping money-brokers lay this story to heart. The truth of it is not to be doubted. The very hole under the oak-trees, whence he dug Kidd's money, is to be seen to this day; and the neighboring swamp and old Indian fort are often haunted in stormy nights by a figure on horseback, in morning-gown and white cap, which is doubtless the troubled spirit of the usurer. In fact, the story has resolved itself into a proverb, and is the origin of that popular saying, so prevalent throughout New England, of "The devil and Tom Walker."

## **James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851)**

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[[image](#)] James Fenimore Cooper was born on September 15, 1789 in Burlington, New Jersey to Judge William and Elizabeth Cooper, who came from respected Quaker stock. The family moved to Ostego Lake in central New York, where William founded the frontier settlement, Cooperstown. Cooper attended Yale College in 1803 but was expelled for a prank on a fellow student two years later.

Next, Cooper became a sailor and then a midshipman in the U. S. Navy. The death of his father caused him to return home, where his inheritance left him financially stable for a time. He married Susan Augusta DeLancey in 1811. His older brother's death eight years later burdened Cooper with a debt-ridden family estate. Anecdotally, Cooper's writing career began with a bet with his wife that he could write a book better than the one they were reading together. The result was *Precaution* in 1820, a domestic novel of manners that shows the influence of Jane Austen. He next wrote *The Spy: A Tale of Neutral Ground*, in 1821, one of the first historical romances set during the American Revolution. With this novel, Cooper saw writing as a potential method of procuring money to address declining fortunes. The family moved to New York City, where Cooper would begin penning a series of five books called the "The Leatherstocking Tales," all featuring the frontiersman, Natty Bumppo and his loyal, native companion, Chingachgook. These novels, including *The Pioneers* (1823), *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), *The Prairie* (1827), *The Pathfinder* (1840), and *The Deerslayer* (1841), would be his greatest legacy. As his writing career flourished and his fame increased, Cooper sailed for Europe and remained for several years. In 1833, he returned to the States, continuing to write and often becoming embroiled in complaints with critics and engaged in lawsuits, mostly related to his politics. In all, Cooper would write 32 novels and eight non-fiction books during his life. Cooper died on September 14, 1851 in Cooperstown. He is often regarded as America's first internationally renowned novelist who was able to live off the royalties from his many works. Collections of critical responses and essays on Cooper include Dekker and McWilliams' *Fenimore Cooper: The Critical Heritage* (1973), Clark's *James Fenimore Cooper: New Critical Essays* (1985), Verhoeven's *James Fenimore Cooper: New Historical and Literary Contexts* (1993), and Person's *Historical Guide to James Fenimore Cooper* (2006). Biographies include Wayne Franklin's *James Fenimore Cooper: The Early Years* (2007), along with biographies by James Grossman (1949) and Robert Emmet Long (1990).

## **The Pioneers, Chapter XXI**

Cooper, James Fenimore. "Chapter XXI." *The Pioneers*. New York: Charles Wiley, 1823.

source of electronic text: <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/2275>

*Editor's note: In this part of the novel, on a crisp, late-winter day, our band of characters have decided to journey on horseback into the wild countryside, sightseeing in the area surrounding Lake Otsego, New York, on the edges of the newly settled American frontier. In the party are Marmaduke, or Judge Temple, owner of all these lands and founder of Templeton, and his daughter Elizabeth*

*(Bess). They are accompanied by Oliver Edwards, a young handsome hunter and friend to Natty Bumppo (Leather-Stocking), the pragmatic Richard (Dick) Jones, the Judge's cousin and the county Sherriff, Monsieur Le Quoi, a French refuge and shopowner, and the young Louisa Grant, daughter of Reverend Grant and Elizabeth's young friend and companion.*

"Speed! Malise, speed! such cause of haste

Thine active sinews never braced." -- Scott.

The roads of Otsego, if we except the principal high ways, were, at the early day of our tale, but little better than wood-paths. The high trees that were growing on the very verge of the wheel-tracks excluded the sun's rays, unless at meridian; and the slowness of the evaporation, united with the rich mould of vegetable decomposition that covered the whole country to the depth of several inches, occasioned but an indifferent foundation for the footing of travellers. Added to these were the inequalities of a natural surface, and the constant recurrence of enormous and slippery roots that were laid bare by the removal of the light soil, together with stumps of trees, to make a passage not only difficult but dangerous. Yet the riders among these numerous obstructions, which were such as would terrify an unpracticed eye, gave no demonstrations of uneasiness as their horses toiled through the sloughs or trotted with uncertain paces along the dark route. In many places the marks on the trees were the only indications of a road, with perhaps an occasional remnant of a pine that, by being cut close to the earth, so as to leave nothing visible but its base of roots, spreading for twenty feet in every direction, was apparently placed there as a beacon to warn the traveller that it was the centre of a highway.

Into one of these roads the active sheriff led the way, first striking out of the foot-path, by which they had descended from the sugar-bush, across a little bridge, formed of round logs laid loosely on sleepers of pine, in which large openings of a formidable width were frequent. The nag of Richard, when it reached one of these gaps, laid its nose along the logs and stepped across the difficult passage with the sagacity of a man; but the blooded filly which Miss Temple rode disdained so humble a movement. She made a step or two with an unusual caution, and then, on reaching the broadest opening, obedient to the curt and whip of her fearless mistress, she bounded across the dangerous pass with the activity of a squirrel.

"Gently, gently, my child," said Marmaduke, who was following in the manner of Richard; "this is not a country for equestrian feats. Much prudence is requisite to journey through our rough paths with safety. Thou mayst practise thy skill in

horsemanship on the plains of New Jersey with safety; but in the hills of Otsego they may be suspended for a time."

"I may as well then relinquish my saddle at once, dear sir," returned his daughter; "for if it is to be laid aside until this wild country be improved, old age will overtake me, and put an end to what you term my equestrian feats." "Say not so, my child," returned her father; "but if thou venturkest again as in crossing this bridge, old age will never overtake thee, but I shall be left to mourn thee, cut off in thy pride, my Elizabeth. If thou hadst seen this district of country, as I did, when it lay in the sleep of nature, and had witnessed its rapid changes as it awoke to supply the wants of man, thou wouldst curb thy impatience for a little time, though thou shouldst not check thy steed."

"I recollect hearing you speak of your first visit to these woods, but the impression is faint, and blended with the confused images of childhood. Wild and unsettled as it may yet seem, it must have been a thousand times more dreary then. Will you repeat, dear sir, what you then thought of your enterprise, and what you felt?"

During this speech of Elizabeth, which was uttered with the fervor of affection, young Edwards rode more closely to the side of the Judge, and bent his dark eyes on his countenance with an expression that seemed to read his thoughts.

"Thou wast then young, my child, but must remember when I left thee and thy mother, to take my first survey of these uninhabited mountains," said Marmaduke. "But thou dost not feel all the secret motives that can urge a man to endure privations in order to accumulate wealth. In my case they have not been trifling, and God has been pleased to smile on my efforts. If I have encountered pain, famine, and disease in accomplishing the settlement of this rough territory, I have not the misery of failure to add to the grievances."

"Famine!" echoed Elizabeth; "I thought this was the land of abundance!

Had you famine to contend with?"

"Even so, my child," said her father. "Those who look around them now, and see the loads of produce that issue out of every wild path in these mountains during the season of travelling, will hardly credit that no more than five years have elapsed since the tenants of these woods were compelled to eat the scanty fruits of the forest to sustain life, and, with their unpracticed skill, to hunt the beasts as food for their starving families."

"Ay!" cried Richard, who happened to overhear the last of this speech between the notes of the wood-chopper's song, which he was endeavoring to breathe aloud; "that was the starving-time,\* Cousin Bess. I grew as lank as a weasel that fall, and my face was as pale as one of your fever-and-ague visages. Monsieur Le Quoi, there, fell away like a pumpkin in drying; nor do I think you have got fairly over it yet, monsieur. Benjamin, I thought, bore it with a worse grace than any of the family; for he swore it was harder to endure than a short allowance in the calm latitudes. Benjamin is a sad fellow to swear if you starve him ever so little. I had half a mind to quit you then, 'Duke, and to go into Pennsylvania to fatten; but, damn it, thinks I, we are sisters' children, and I will live or die with him, after all."

\* The author has no better apology for interrupting the interest of a work of fiction by these desultory dialogues than that they have reference to facts. In reviewing his work, after so many years, he is compelled to confess it is injured by too many allusions to incidents that are not at all suited to satisfy the just expectations of the general reader. One of these events is slightly touched on in the commencement of this chapter.

More than thirty years since a very near and dear relative of the writer, an elder sister and a second mother, was killed by a fall from a horse in a ride among the very mountains mentioned in this tale. Few of her sex and years were more extensively known or more universally beloved than the admirable woman who thus fell a victim to the chances of the wilderness. "I do not forget thy kindness," said Marmaduke, "nor that we are of one blood."

"But, my dear father," cried the wondering Elizabeth, "was there actual suffering? Where were the beautiful and fertile vales of the Mohawk? Could they not furnish food for your wants?"

"It was a season of scarcity; the necessities of life commanded a high price in Europe, and were greedily sought after by the speculators. The emigrants from the East to the West invariably passed along the valley of the Mohawk, and swept away the means of subsistence like a swarm of locusts, Nor were the people on the Flats in a much better condition. They were in want themselves, but they spared the little excess of provisions that nature did not absolutely require, with the justice of the German character. There was no grinding of the poor. The word speculator was then unknown to them. I have seen many a stout man, bending under the load of the bag of meal which he was carrying from the mills of the Mohawk, through the rugged passes of these mountains, to feed his half-famished children, with a heart so light, as he approached his hut, that the thirty miles he had passed seemed nothing. Remember, my child, it was in our very infancy; we

had neither mills, nor grain, nor roads, nor often clearings; we had nothing of increase but the mouths that were to be fed: for even at that inauspicious moment the restless spirit of emigration was not idle; nay, the general scarcity which extended to the East tended to increase the number of adventurers."

"And how, dearest father, didst thou encounter this dreadful evil?" said Elizabeth, unconsciously adopting the dialect of her parent in the warmth of her sympathy. "Upon thee must have fallen the responsibility, if not the suffering."

"It did, Elizabeth," returned the Judge, pausing for a single moment, as if musing on his former feelings. "I had hundreds at that dreadful time daily looking up to me for bread. The sufferings of their families and the gloomy prospect before them had paralyzed the enterprise and efforts of my settlers; hunger drove them to the woods for food, but despair sent them at night, enfeebled and wan, to a sleepless pillow. It was not a moment for inaction. I purchased cargoes of wheat from the granaries of Pennsylvania; they were landed at Albany and brought up the Mohawk in boats; from thence it was transported on pack-horses into the wilderness and distributed among my people. Seines were made, and the lakes and rivers were dragged for fish. Something like a miracle was wrought in our favor, for enormous shoals of herrings were discovered to have wandered five hundred miles through the windings of the impetuous Susquehanna, and the lake was alive with their numbers. These were at length caught and dealt out to the people, with proper portions of salt, and from that moment we again began to prosper." \*

\* All this was literally true.

"Yes," cried Richard, "and I was the man who served out the fish and salt. When the poor devils came to receive their rations, Benjamin, who was my deputy, was obliged to keep them off by stretching ropes around me, for they smelt so of garlic, from eating nothing but the wild onion, that the fumes put me out often in my measurement. You were a child then, Bess, and knew nothing of the matter, for great care was observed to keep both you and your mother from suffering. That year put me back dreadfully, both in the breed of my hogs and of my turkeys."

"No, Bess," cried the Judge, in a more cheerful tone, disregarding the interruption of his cousin, "he who hears of the settlement of a country knows but little of the toil and suffering by which it is accomplished. Unimproved and wild as this district now seems to your eyes, what was it when I first entered the hills? I left my party, the morning of my arrival, near the farms of the Cherry Valley, and, following a deer-path, rode to the summit of the mountain that I have since called Mount Vision; for the sight that there met my eyes seemed to me as the

deceptions of a dream. The fire had run over the pinnacle, and in a great measure laid open the view. The leaves were fallen, and I mounted a tree and sat for an hour looking on the silent wilderness. Not an opening was to be seen in the boundless forest except where the lake lay, like a mirror of glass. The water was covered by myriads of the wild-fowl that migrate with the changes in the season; and while in my situation on the branch of the beech, I saw a bear, with her cubs, descend to the shore to drink. I had met many deer, gliding through the woods, in my journey ; but not the vestige of a man could I trace during my progress, nor from my elevated observatory. No clearing, no hut, none of the winding roads that are now to be seen, were there; nothing but mountains rising behind mountains; and the valley, with its surface of branches enlivened here and there with the faded foliage of some tree that parted from its leaves with more than ordinary reluctance. Even the Susquehanna was then hid by the height and density of the forest."

"And were you alone?" asked Elizabeth: "passed you the night in that solitary state?"

"Not so, my child," returned the father. "After musing on the scene for an hour, with a mingled feeling of pleasure and desolation, I left my perch and descended the mountain. My horse was left to browse on the twigs that grew within his reach, while I explored the shores of the lake and the spot where Templeton stands. A pine of more than ordinary growth stood where my dwelling is now placed! A wind—row had been opened through the trees from thence to the lake, and my view was but little impeded. Under the branches of that tree I made my solitary dinner. I had just finished my repast as I saw smoke curling from under the mountain, near the eastern bank of the lake. It was the only indication of the vicinity of man that I had then seen. After much toil I made my way to the spot, and found a rough cabin of logs, built against the foot of a rock, and bearing the marks of a tenant, though I found no one within it—"

"It was the hut of Leather-Stocking," said Edwards quickly.

"It was; though I at first supposed it to be a habitation of the Indians. But while I was lingering around the spot Natty made his appearance, staggering under the carcass of a buck that he had slain. Our acquaintance commenced at that time; before, I had never heard that such a being tenanted the woods. He launched his bark canoe and set me across the foot of the lake to the place where I had fastened my horse, and pointed out a spot where he might get a scanty browsing until the morning; when I returned and passed the night in the cabin of the hunter."

Miss Temple was so much struck by the deep attention of young Edwards during this speech that she forgot to resume her interrogations; but the youth himself continued the discourse by asking:

"And how did the Leather-Stocking discharge the duties of a host sir?"

"Why, simply but kindly, until late in the evening, when he discovered my name and object, and the cordiality of his manner very sensibly diminished, or, I might better say, disappeared. He considered the introduction of the settlers as an innovation on his rights, I believe for he expressed much dissatisfaction at the measure, though it was in his confused and ambiguous manner. I hardly understood his objections myself, but supposed they referred chiefly to an interruption of the hunting."

"Had you then purchased the estate, or were you examining it with an intent to buy?" asked Edwards, a little abruptly.

"It had been mine for several years. It was with a view to People the land that I visited the lake. Natty treated me hospitably, but coldly, I thought, after he learned the nature of my journey. I slept on his own bear—skin, however, and in the morning joined my surveyors again."

"Said he nothing of the Indian rights, sir? The Leather-Stocking is much given to impeach the justice of the tenure by which the whites hold the country."

"I remember that he spoke of them, but I did not nearly comprehend him, and may have forgotten what he said; for the Indian title was extinguished so far back as the close of the old war, and if it had not been at all, I hold under the patents of the Royal Governors, confirmed by an act of our own State Legislature, and no court in the country can affect my title." "Doubtless, sir, your title is both legal and equitable," returned the youth coldly, reining his horse back and remaining silent till the subject was changed.

It was seldom Mr. Jones suffered any conversation to continue for a great length of time without his participation. It seems that he was of the party that Judge Temple had designated as his surveyors; and he embraced the opportunity of the pause that succeeded the retreat of young Edwards to take up the discourse, and with a narration of their further proceedings, after his own manner. As it wanted, however, the interest that had accompanied the description of the Judge, we must decline the task of committing his sentences to paper.

They soon reached the point where the promised view was to be seen. It was one of those picturesque and peculiar scenes that belong to the Otsego, but which



required the absence of the ice and the softness of a summer's landscape to be enjoyed in all its beauty. Marmaduke had early forewarned his daughter of the season, and of its effect on the prospect; and after casting a cursory glance at its capabilities, the party returned homeward, perfectly satisfied that its beauties would repay them for the toil of a second ride at a more propitious season.

"The spring is the gloomy time of the American year," said the Judge, "and it is more peculiarly the case in these mountains. The winter seems to retreat to the fastnesses of the hills, as to the citadel of its dominion, and is only expelled after a tedious siege, in which either party, at times, would seem to be gaining the victory."

"A very just and apposite figure, Judge Temple," observed the sheriff; "and the garrison under the command of Jack Frost make formidable sorties—you understand what I mean by sorties, monsieur; sallies, in English— and sometimes drive General Spring and his troops back again into the low countries."

"Yes sair," returned the Frenchman, whose prominent eyes were watching the precarious footsteps of the beast he rode, as it picked its dangerous way among the roots of trees, holes, log bridges, and sloughs that formed the aggregate of the highway. "Je vous entends; de low countrie is freeze up for half de year."

The error of Mr. Le Quoi was not noticed by the sheriff; and the rest of the party were yielding to the influence of the changeful season, which was already teaching the equestrians that a continuance of its mildness was not to be expected for any length of time. Silence and thoughtfulness succeeded the gayety and conversation that had prevailed during the commencement of the ride, as clouds began to gather about the heavens, apparently collecting from every quarter, in quick motion, without the agency of a breath of air.

While riding over one of the cleared eminencies that occurred in their route, the watchful eye of Judge Temple pointed out to his daughter the approach of a tempest. Flurries of snow already obscured the mountain that formed the northern boundary of the lake, and the genial sensation which had quickened the blood through their veins was already succeeded by the deadening influence of an approaching northwester.

All of the party were now busily engaged in making the best of their way to the village, though the badness of the roads frequently compelled them to check the impatience of their animals, which often carried them over places that would not admit of any gait faster than a walk.

Richard continued in advance, followed by Mr. Le Quoi; next to whom rode Elizabeth, who seemed to have imbibed the distance which pervaded the manner of young Edwards since the termination of the discourse between the latter and her father. Marmaduke followed his daughter, giving her frequent and tender warnings as to the management of her horse. It was, possibly, the evident dependence that Louisa Grant placed on his assistance which induced the youth to continue by her side, as they pursued their way through a dreary and dark wood, where the rays of the sun could but rarely penetrate, and where even the daylight was obscured and rendered gloomy by the deep forests that surrounded them. No wind had yet reached the spot where the equestrians were in motion, but that dead silence that often precedes a storm contributed to render their situation more irksome than if they were already subject to the fury of the tempest. Suddenly the voice of young Edwards was heard shouting in those appalling tones that carry alarm to the very soul, and which curdle the blood of those that hear them.

"A tree! a tree! Whip—spur for your lives! a tree! a tree. "

"A tree! a tree!" echoed Richard, giving his horse a blow that caused the alarmed beast to jump nearly a rod, throwing the mud and water into the air like a hurricane.

"Von tree! von tree!" shouted the Frenchman, bending his body on the neck of his charger, shutting his eyes, and playing on the ribs of his beast with his heels at a rate that caused him to be conveyed on the crupper of the sheriff with a marvellous speed.

Elizabeth checked her filly and looked up, with an unconscious but alarmed air, at the very cause of their danger, while she listened to the crackling sounds that awoke the stillness of the forest; but the next instant her bridlet was seized by her father, who cried, "God protect my child!" and she felt herself hurried onward, impelled by the vigor of his nervous arm.

Each one of the party bowed to his saddle-bows as the tearing of branches was succeeded by a sound like the rushing of the winds, which was followed by a thundering report, and a shock that caused the very earth to tremble as one of the noblest ruins of the forest fell directly across their path.

One glance was enough to assure Judge Temple that his daughter and those in front of him were safe, and he turned his eyes, in dreadful anxiety, to learn the fate of the others. Young Edwards was on the opposite side of the tree, his form thrown back in his saddle to its utmost distance, his left hand drawing up his bridle with its greatest force, while the right grasped that of Miss Grant so as to

draw the head of her horse under its body. Both the animals stood shaking in every joint with terror, and snorting fearfully. Louisa herself had relinquished her reins, and, with her hands pressed on her face, sat bending forward in her saddle, in an attitude of despair, mingled strangely with resignation.

"Are you safe?" cried the Judge, first breaking the awful silence of the moment.

"By God's blessing," returned the youth; "but if there had been branches to the tree we must have been lost—"

He was interrupted by the figure of Louisa slowly yielding in her saddle, and but for his arm she would have sunk to the earth. Terror, however, was the only injury that the clergyman's daughter had sustained, and, with the aid of Elizabeth, she was soon restored to her senses. After some little time was lost in recovering her strength, the young lady was replaced in her saddle, and supported on either side by Judge Temple and Mr. Edwards she was enabled to follow the party in their slow progress.

"The sudden fallings of the trees," said Marmaduke, "are the most dangerous accidents in the forest, for they are not to be foreseen, being impelled by no winds, nor any extraneous or visible cause against which we can guard."

"The reason of their falling, Judge Temple, is very obvious," said the sheriff. "The tree is old and decayed, and it is gradually weakened by the frosts, until a line drawn from the centre of gravity falls without its base, and then the tree comes of a certainty; and I should like to know what greater compulsion there can be for any thing than a mathematical certainty. I studied math—"

"Very true, Richard," interrupted Marmaduke; "thy reasoning is true, and, if my memory be not over-treacherous, was furnished by myself on a former occasion, But how is one to guard against the danger? Canst thou go through the forests measuring the bases and calculating the centres of the oaks? Answer me that, friend Jones, and I will say thou wilt do the country a service."

"Answer thee that, friend Temple!" returned Richard; "a well-educated man can answer thee anything, sir. Do any trees fall in this manner but such as are decayed? Take care not to approach the roots of a rotten tree, and you will be safe enough."

"That would be excluding us entirely from the forests," said Marmaduke. "But, happily, the winds usually force down most of these dangerous ruins, as their currents are admitted into the woods by the surrounding clearings, and such a fall as this has been is very rare."

Louisa by this time had recovered so much strength as to allow the party to proceed at a quicker pace, but long before they were safely housed they were overtaken by the storm; and when they dismounted at the door of the mansion-house, the black plumes of Miss Temple's hat were drooping with the weight of a load of damp snow, and the coats of the gentlemen were powdered with the same material.

While Edwards was assisting Louisa from her horse, the warm-hearted girl caught his hand with fervor and whispered:

"Now, Mr. Edwards, both father and daughter owe their lives to you."

A driving northwesterly storm succeeded, and before the sun was set every vestige of spring had vanished; the lake, the mountains, the village, and the fields being again hidden under one dazzling coat of snow.

## **The Pioneers, Chapter XXII**

"Men, boys, and girls

Desert the unpeopled village; and wild crowds

Spread o'er the plain, by the sweet phrensy driven."-Somerville.

From this time to the close of April the weather continued to be a succession of neat and rapid changes. One day the soft airs of spring seemed to be stealing along the valley, and, in unison with an invigorating sun, attempting covertly to rouse the dormant powers of the vegetable world, while, on the next, the surly blasts from the north would sweep across the lake and erase every impression left by their gentle adversaries. The snow, however, finally disappeared, and the green wheat fields were seen in every direction, spotted with the dark and charred stumps that had, the preceding season, supported some of the proudest trees of the forest. Ploughs were in motion, wherever those useful implements could be used, and the smokes of the sugar-camps were no longer seen issuing from the woods of maple. The lake had lost the beauty of a field of ice, but still a dark and gloomy covering concealed its waters, for the absence of currents left them yet hidden under a porous crust, which, saturated with the fluid, barely retained enough strength to preserve the continuity of its parts. Large flocks of wild geese were seen passing over the country, which hovered, for a time, around the hidden sheet of water, apparently searching for a resting-place; and then, on finding them selves excluded by the chill covering, would soar away to the north,

filling the air with discordant screams, as if venting their complaints at the tardy operations of Nature.

For a week, the dark covering of the Otsego was left to the undisturbed possession of two eagles, who alighted on the centre of its field, and sat eyeing their undisputed territory. During the presence of these monarchs of the air, the flocks of migrating birds avoided crossing the plain of ice by turning into the hills, apparently seeking the protection of the forests, while the white and bald heads of the tenants of the lake were turned upward, with a look of contempt. But the time had come when even these kings of birds were to be dispossessed. An opening had been gradually increasing at the lower extremity of the lake, and around the dark spot where the current of the river prevented the formation of ice during even the coldest weather; and the fresh southerly winds, that now breathed freely upon the valley, made an impression on the waters. Mimic waves began to curl over the margin of the frozen field, which exhibited an outline of crystallizations that slowly receded toward the north. At each step the power of the winds and the waves increased, until, after a struggle of a few hours, the turbulent little billows succeeded in setting the whole field in motion, when it was driven beyond the reach of the eye, with a rapidity that was as magical as the change produced in the scene by this expulsion of the lingering remnant of winter. Just as the last sheet of agitated ice was disappearing in the distance, the eagles rose, and soared with a wide sweep above the clouds, while the waves tossed their little caps of snow in the air, as if rioting in their release from a thralldom of five minutes' duration.

The following morning Elizabeth was awakened by the exhilarating sounds of the martens, who were quarrelling and chattering around the little boxes suspended above her windows, and the cries of Richard, who was calling in tones animating as signs of the season itself:

"Awake! awake! my fair lady! the gulls are hovering over the lake already, and the heavens are alive with pigeons. You may look an hour before you can find a hole through which to get a peep at the sun. Awake! awake! lazy ones! Benjamin is overhauling the ammunition, and we only wait for our breakfasts, and away for the mountains and pigeon-shooting."

There was no resisting this animated appeal, and in a few minutes Miss Temple and her friend descended to the parlor. The doors of the hall were thrown open, and the mild, balmy air of a clear spring morning was ventilating the apartment, where the vigilance of the ex-steward had been so long maintaining an artificial heat with such unremitting diligence. The gentlemen were impatiently waiting for

their morning's repast, each equipped in the garb of a sportsman. Mr. Jones made many visits to the southern door, and would cry:

"See, Cousin Bess! see, 'Duke, the pigeon-roosts of the south have broken up! They are growing more thick every instant, Here is a flock that the eye cannot see the end of. There is food enough in it to keep the army of Xerxes for a month, and feathers enough to make beds for the whole country. Xerxes, Mr. Edwards, was a Grecian king, who— no, he was a Turk, or a Persian, who wanted to conquer Greece, just the same as these rascals will overrun our wheat fields, when they come back in the fall. Away! away! Bess; I long to pepper them."

In this wish both Marmaduke and young Edwards seemed equally to participate, for the sight was exhilarating to a sportsman; and the ladies soon dismissed the party after a hasty breakfast.

If the heavens were alive with pigeons, the whole village seemed equally in motion with men, women, and children. Every species of firearm, from the French ducking gun, with a barrel near six feet in length, to the common horseman's pistol, was to be seen in the hands of the men and boys; while bows and arrows, some made of the simple stick of walnut sapling and others in a rude imitation of the ancient cross-bows, were carried by many of the latter.

The houses and the signs of life apparent in the village drove the alarmed birds from the direct line of their flight, toward the mountains, along the sides and near the bases of which they were glancing in dense masses, equally wonderful by the rapidity of their motion and their incredible numbers.

We have already said that, across the inclined plane which fell from the steep ascent of the mountain to the banks of the Susquehanna, ran the highway on either side of which a clearing of many acres had been made at a very early day. Over those clearings, and up the eastern mountain, and along the dangerous path that was cut into its side, the different individuals posted themselves, and in a few moments the attack commenced.

Among the sportsmen was the tall, gaunt form of Leather-Stocking, walking over the field, with his rifle hanging on his arm, his dogs at his heels; the latter now scenting the dead or wounded birds that were beginning to tumble from the flocks, and then crouching under the legs of their master, as if they participated in his feelings at this wasteful and unsportsmanlike execution.

The reports of the firearms became rapid, whole volleys rising from the plain, as flocks of more than ordinary numbers darted over the opening, shadowing the field like a cloud; and then the light smoke of a single piece would issue from

among the leafless bushes on the mountain, as death was hurled on the retreat of the affrighted birds, who were rising from a volley, in a vain effort to escape. Arrows and missiles of every kind were in the midst of the flocks; and so numerous were the birds, and so low did they take their flight, that even long poles in the hands of those on the sides of the mountain were used to strike them to the earth.

During all this time Mr. Jones, who disdained the humble and ordinary means of destruction used by his companions, was busily occupied, aided by Benjamin, in making arrangements for an assault of more than ordinarily fatal character. Among the relics of the old military excursions, that occasionally are discovered throughout the different districts of the western part of New York, there had been found in Templeton, at its settlement, a small swivel, which would carry a ball of a pound weight. It was thought to have been deserted by a war-party of the whites in one of their inroads into the Indian settlements, when, perhaps, convenience or their necessity induced them to leave such an incumbrance behind them in the woods. This miniature cannon had been released from the rust, and being mounted on little wheels was now in a state for actual service. For several years it was the sole organ for extraordinary rejoicings used in those mountains. On the mornings of the Fourth of July it would be heard ringing among the hills; and even Captain Hollister, who was the highest authority in that part of the country on all such occasions, affirmed that, considering its dimensions, it was no despicable gun for a salute. It was somewhat the worse for the service it had performed, it is true, there being but a trifling difference in size between the touch-hole and the muzzle Still, the grand conceptions of Richard had suggested the importance of such an instrument in hurling death at his nimble enemies. The swivel was dragged by a horse into a part of the open space that the sheriff thought most eligible for planning a battery of the kind, and Mr. Pump proceeded to load it. Several handfuls of duck-shot were placed on top of the powder, and the major-domo announced that his piece was ready for service.

The sight of such an implement collected all the idle spectators to the spot, who, being mostly boys, filled the air with cries of exultation and delight The gun was pointed high, and Richard, holding a coal of fire in a pair of tongs, patiently took his seat on a stump, awaiting the appearance of a flock worthy of his notice.

So prodigious was the number of the birds that the scattering fire of the guns, with the hurling of missiles and the cries of the boys, had no other effect than to break off small flocks from the immense masses that continued to dart along the valley, as if the whole of the feathered tribe were pouring through that one pass. None pretended to collect the game, which lay scattered over the fields in such profusion as to cover the very ground with fluttering victims.

Leather-Stocking was a silent but uneasy spectator of all these proceedings, but was able to keep his sentiments to himself until he saw the introduction of the swivel into the sports.

"This comes of settling a country!" he said. "Here have I known the pigeon to fly for forty long years, and, till you made your clearings, there was nobody to skeart or to hurt them, I loved to see them come into the woods, for they were company to a body, hurting nothing —being, as it was, as harmless as a garter-snake. But now it gives me sore thoughts when I hear the frighty things whizzing through the air, for I know it's only a motion to bring out all the brats of the village. Well, the Lord won't see the waste of his creatures for nothing, and right will be done to the pigeons, as well as others, by and by. There's Mr. Oliver as bad as the rest of them, firing into the flocks as if he was shooting down nothing but Mingo warriors." Among the sportsmen was Billy Kirby, who, armed with an old musket, was loading, and, without even looking into the air, was firing and shouting as his victims fell even on his own person. He heard the speech of Natty, and took upon himself to reply:

"What! old Leather-Stocking," he cried, "grumbling at the loss of a few pigeons! If you had to sow your wheat twice, and three times, as I have done, you wouldn't be so massyfully feeling toward the divils. Hurrah, boys! scatter the feathers! This is better than shooting at a turkey's head and neck, old fellow."

"It's better for you, maybe, Billy Kirby," replied the indignant old hunter, "and all them that don't know how to put a ball down a rifle- barrel, or how to bring it up again with a true aim; but it's wicked to be shooting into flocks in this wasty manner, and none to do it who know how to knock over a single bird. If a body has a craving for pigeon's flesh, why, it's made the same as all other creatures, for man's eating; but not to kill twenty and eat one. When I want such a thing I go into the woods till I find one to my liking, and then I shoot him off the branches, without touching the feather of another, though there might be a hundred on the same tree. You couldn't do such a thing, Billy Kirby—you couldn't do it if you tried."

"What's that, old corn-stalk! you sapless stub!" cried the wood- chopper. "You have grown wordy, since the affair of the turkey; but if you are for a single shot, here goes at that bird which comes on by himself."

The fire from the distant part of the field had driven a single pigeon below the flock to which it belonged, and, frightened with the constant reports of the muskets, it was approaching the spot where the disputants stood, darting first from one side and then to the other, cutting the air with the swiftness of lightning, and making a noise with its wings not unlike the rushing of a bullet. Unfortunately



for the wood-chopper, notwithstanding his vaunt, he did not see this bird until it was too late to fire as it approached, and he pulled the trigger at the unlucky moment when it was darting immediately over his head. The bird continued its course with the usual velocity.

Natty lowered his rifle from his arm when the challenge was made, and waiting a moment, until the terrified victim had got in a line with his eye, and had dropped near the bank of the lake, he raised it again with uncommon rapidity, and fired. It might have been chance, or it might have been skill, that produced the result; it was probably a union of both; but the pigeon whirled over in the air, and fell into the lake with a broken wing. At the sound of his rifle, both his dogs started from his feet, and in a few minutes the "slut" brought out the bird, still alive.

The wonderful exploit of Leather-Stocking was noised through the field with great rapidity, and the sportsmen gathered in, to learn the truth of the report.

"What" said young Edwards, "have you really killed a pigeon on the wing, Natty, with a single ball?"

"Haven't I killed loons before now, lad, that dive at the flash?" returned the hunter. "It's much better to kill only such as you want, without wasting your powder and lead, than to be firing into God's creatures in this wicked manner. But I came out for a bird, and you know the reason why I like small game, Mr. Oliver, and now I have got one. I will go home, for I don't relish to see these wasteful ways that you are all practising, as if the least thing wasn't made for use, and not to destroy."

"Thou sayest well, Leather-Stocking," cried Marmaduke, "and I begin to think it time to put an end to this work of destruction."

"Put an end, Judge, to your clearings. Ain't the woods His work as well as the pigeons? Use, but don't waste. Wasn't the woods made for the beasts and birds to harbor in? and when man wanted their flesh, their skins, or their feathers, there's the place to seek them. But I'll go to the hut with my own game, for I wouldn't touch one of the harmless things that cover the ground here, looking up with their eyes on me, as if they only wanted tongues to say their thoughts." With this sentiment in his mouth, Leather-Stocking threw his rifle over his arm, and, followed by his dogs, stepped across the clearing with great caution, taking care not to tread on one of the wounded birds in his path. He soon entered the bushes on the margin of the lake and was hid from view.

Whatever impression the morality of Natty made on the Judge, it was utterly lost on Richard. He availed himself of the gathering of the sportsmen, to lay a plan for

one "fell swoop" of destruction. The musket-men were drawn up in battle array, in a line extending on each side of his artillery, with orders to await the signal of firing from himself.

"Stand by, my lads," said Benjamin, who acted as an aid de-camp on this occasion, "stand by, my hearties, and when Squire Dickens heaves out the signal to begin firing, d'ye see, you may open upon them in a broadside. Take care and fire low, boys, and you'll be sure to hull the flock."

"Fire low!" shouted Kirby; "hear the old fool! If we fire low, we may hit the stumps, but not ruffle a pigeon."

"How should you know, you lubber?" cried Benjamin, with a very unbecoming heat for an officer on the eve of battle—"how should you know, you grampus? Haven't I sailed aboard of the Boadishy for five years? and wasn't it a standing order to fire low, and to hull your enemy! Keep silence at your guns, boys and mind the order that is passed."

The loud laughs of the musket-men were silenced by the more authoritative voice of Richard, who called for attention and obedience to his signals.

Some millions of pigeons were supposed to have already passed, that morning, over the valley of Templeton; but nothing like the flock that was now approaching had been seen before. It extended from mountain to mountain in one solid blue mass, and the eye looked in vain, over the southern hills, to find its termination. The front of this living column was distinctly marked by a line but very slightly indented, so regular and even was the flight. Even Marmaduke forgot the morality of Leather-Stocking as it approached, and, in common with the rest, brought his musket to a poise.

"Fire!" cried the sheriff, clapping a coal to the priming of the cannon. As half of Benjamin's charge escaped through the touch-hole, the whole volley of the musketry preceded the report of the swivel. On receiving this united discharge of small-arms, the front of the flock darted upward, while, at the same instant, myriads of those in the rear rushed with amazing rapidity into their places, so that, when the column of white smoke gushed from the mouth of the little cannon, an accumulated mass of objects was gliding over its point of direction. The roar of the gun echoed along the mountains, and died away to the north, like distant thunder, while the whole flock of alarmed birds seemed, for a moment, thrown into one disorderly and agitated mass. The air was filled with their irregular flight, layer rising above layer, far above the tops of the highest pines, none daring to advance beyond the dangerous pass; when, suddenly, some of the headers of the feathered tribes shot across the valley, taking their flight directly

over the village, and hundreds of thousands in their rear followed the example, deserting the eastern side of the plain to their persecutors and the slain.

"Victory!" shouted Richard, "victory! we have driven the enemy from the field."

"Not so, Dickon," said Marmaduke; "the field is covered with them; and, like the Leather-Stocking, I see nothing but eyes, in every direction, as the innocent sufferers turn their heads in terror. Full one-half of those that have fallen are yet alive; and I think it is time to end the sport, if sport it be."

"Sport!" cried the sheriff; "it is princely sport! There are some thousands of the blue-coated boys on the ground, so that every old woman in the village may have a pot-pie for the asking."

"Well, we have happily frightened the birds from this side of the valley," said Marmaduke, "and the carnage must of necessity end for the present. Boys, I will give you sixpence a hundred for the pigeons' heads only; so go to work, and bring them into the village."

This expedient produced the desired effect, for every urchin on the ground went industriously to work to wring the necks of the wounded birds. Judge Temple retired toward his dwelling with that kind of feeling that many a man has experienced before him, who discovers, after the excitement of the moment has passed, that he has purchased pleasure at the price of misery to others. Horses were loaded with the dead; and, after this first burst of sporting, the shooting of pigeons became a business, with a few idlers, for the remainder of the season, Richard, however, boasted for many a year of his shot with the "cricket;" and Benjamin gravely asserted that he thought they had killed nearly as many pigeons on that day as there were Frenchmen destroyed on the memorable occasion of Rodney's victory.

### **The Last of the Mohicans, Chapter III**

Cooper, James Fenimore. "Chapter III." *The Last of the Mohicans*. A Narrative of 1757. Philadelphia: H.C. Carey & I. Lea, 1826.

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"Before these fields were shorn and tilled,

Full to the brim our rivers flowed;

The melody of waters filled

The fresh and boundless wood;  
And torrents dashed, and rivulets played,  
And fountains spouted in the shade."

-- Bryant.

Leaving the unsuspecting Heyward and his confiding companions to penetrate still deeper into a forest that contained such treacherous inmates, we must use an author's privilege, and shift the scene a few miles to the westward of the place where we have last seen them.

On that day, two men were lingering on the banks of a small but rapid stream, within an hour's journey of the encampment of Webb, like those who awaited the appearance of an absent person, or the approach of some expected event. The vast canopy of woods spread itself to the margin of the river overhanging the water, and shadowing its dark current with a deeper hue. The rays of the sun were beginning to grow less fierce, and the intense heat of the day was lessened, as the cooler vapors of the springs and fountains rose above their leafy beds, and rested in the atmosphere. Still that breathing silence, which marks the drowsy sultriness of an American landscape in July, pervaded the secluded spot, interrupted only by the low voices of the men, the occasional and lazy tap of a woodpecker, the discordant cry of some gaudy jay, or a swelling on the ear, from the dull roar of a distant waterfall.

These feeble and broken sounds were, however, too familiar to the foresters, to draw their attention from the more interesting matter of their dialogue. While one of these loiterers showed the red skin and wild accoutrements of a native of the woods, the other exhibited, through the mask of his rude and nearly savage equipments, the brighter, though sunburnt and long-faded complexion of one who might claim descent from a European parentage. The former was seated on the end of a mossy log, in a posture that permitted him to heighten the effect of his earnest language, by the calm but expressive gestures of an Indian engaged in debate. His body, which was nearly naked, presented a terrific emblem of death, drawn in intermingled colors of white and black. His closely shaved head, on which no other hair than the well known and chivalrous scalping tuft [5] was preserved, was without ornament of any kind, with the exception of a solitary eagle's plume, that crossed his crown, and depended over the left shoulder. A tomahawk and scalping-knife, of English manufacture, were in his girdle; while a short military rifle, of that sort with which the policy of the whites armed their savage allies, lay carelessly across his bare and sinewy knee. The expanded chest, full formed limbs, and grave countenance of this warrior, would denote that

he had reached the vigor of his days, though no symptoms of decay appeared to have yet weakened his manhood.

The frame of the white man, judging by such parts as were not concealed by his clothes, was like that of one who had known hardships and exertion from his earliest youth. His person, though muscular, was rather attenuated than full; but every nerve and muscle appeared strung and indurated by unremitted exposure and toil. He wore a hunting-shirt of forest green, fringed with faded yellow [6], and a summer cap of skins which had been shorn of their fur. He also bore a knife in a girdle of wampum, like that which confined the scanty garments of the Indian, but no tomahawk. His moccasins were ornamented after the gay fashion of the natives, while the only part of his under-dress which appeared below the hunting-frock, was a pair of buckskin leggings, that laced at the sides, and which were gartered above the knees with the sinews of a deer. A pouch and horn completed his personal accoutrements, though a rifle of great length [7], which the theory of the more ingenious whites had taught them was the most dangerous of all fire-arms, leaned against a neighboring sapling. The eye of the hunter, or scout, whichever he might be, was small, quick, keen, and restless, roving while he spoke, on every side of him, as if in quest of game, or distrusting the sudden approach of some lurking enemy. Notwithstanding the symptoms of habitual suspicion, his countenance was not only without guile, but at the moment at which he is introduced, it was charged with an expression of sturdy honesty.

"Even your traditions make the case in my favor, Chingachgook," he said, speaking in the tongue which was known to all the natives who formerly inhabited the country between the Hudson and the Potomac, and of which we shall give a free translation for the benefit of the reader; endeavoring, at the same time, to preserve some of the peculiarities, both of the individual and of the language. "Your fathers came from the setting sun, crossed the big river, [8] fought the people of the country, and took the land; and mine came from the red sky of the morning, over the salt lake, and did their work much after the fashion that had been set them by yours; then let God judge the matter between us, and friends spare their words!"

"My fathers fought with the naked redmen!" returned the Indian sternly, in the same language. "Is there no difference, Hawkeye, between the stone-headed arrow of the warrior, and the leaden bullet with which you kill?"

"There is reason in an Indian, though nature has made him with a red skin!" said the white man, shaking his head like one on whom such an appeal to his justice was not thrown away. For a moment he appeared to be conscious of having the worst of the argument, then, rallying again, he answered the objection of his

antagonist in the best manner his limited information would allow: "I am no scholar, and I care not who knows it; but judging from what I have seen, at deer chases and squirrel hunts, of the sparks below, I should think a rifle in the hands of their grandfathers was not so dangerous as a hickory bow and a good flint-head might be, if drawn with Indian judgment, and sent by an Indian eye."

"You have the story told by your fathers," returned the other, coldly waving his hand. "What say your old men? do they tell the young warriors, that the pale-faces met the redmen, painted for war and armed with the stone hatchet and wooden gun?"

"I am not a prejudiced man, nor one who vaunts himself on his natural privileges, though the worst enemy I have on earth, and he is an Iroquois, daren't deny that I am genuine white," the scout replied, surveying, with secret satisfaction, the faded color of his bony and sinewy hand; "and I am willing to own that my people have many ways, of which, as an honest man, I can't approve. It is one of their customs to write in books what they have done and seen, instead of telling them in their villages, where the lie can be given to the face of a cowardly boaster, and the brave soldier can call on his comrades to witness for the truth of his words. In consequence of this bad fashion, a man who is too conscientious to mispend his days among the women, in learning the names of black marks, may never hear of the deeds of his fathers, nor feel a pride in striving to outdo them. For myself, I conclude the Bumppos could shoot, for I have a natural turn with a rifle, which must have been handed down from generation to generation, as, our holy commandments tell us, all good and evil gifts are bestowed; though I should be loth to answer for other people in such a matter. But every story has its two sides; so I ask you, Chingachgook, what passed, according to the traditions of the redmen, when our fathers first met?"

A silence of a minute succeeded, during which the Indian sat mute; then, full of the dignity of his office, he commenced his brief tale, with a solemnity that served to heighten its appearance of truth.

"Listen, Hawkeye, and your ear shall drink no lie. 'Tis what my fathers have said, and what the Mohicans have done." He hesitated a single instant, and bending a cautious glance toward his companion, he continued, in a manner that was divided between interrogation and assertion, "Does not this stream at our feet run towards the summer, until its waters grow salt, and the current flows upward?"

"It can't be denied that your traditions tell you true in both these matters," said the white man; "for I have been there, and have seen them; though, why water,

which is so sweet in the shade, should become bitter in the sun, is an alteration for which I have never been able to account."

"And the current!" demanded the Indian, who expected his reply with that sort of interest that a man feels in the confirmation of testimony, at which he marvels even while he respects it; "the fathers of Chingachgook have not lied!"

"The Holy Bible is not more true, and that is the truest thing in nature. They call this up-stream current the tide, which is a thing soon explained, and clear enough. Six hours the waters run in, and six hours they run out, and the reason is this: when there is higher water in the sea than in the river, they run in, until the river gets to be highest, and then it runs out again."

"The waters in the woods, and on the great lakes, run downward until they lie like my hand," said the Indian, stretching the limb horizontally before him, "and then they run no more."

"No honest man will deny it," said the scout, a little nettled at the implied distrust of his explanation of the mystery of the tides; "and I grant that it is true on the small scale, and where the land is level. But everything depends on what scale you look at things. Now, on the small scale, the 'arth is level; but on the large scale it is round. In this manner, pools and ponds, and even the great fresh-water lake, may be stagnant, as you and I both know they are, having seen them; but when you come to spread water over a great tract, like the sea, where the earth is round, how in reason can the water be quiet? You might as well expect the river to lie still on the brink of those black rocks a mile above us, though your own ears tell you that it is tumbling over them at this very moment!"

If unsatisfied by the philosophy of his companion, the Indian was far too dignified to betray his unbelief. He listened like one who was convinced, and resumed his narrative in his former solemn manner.

"We came from the place where the sun is hid at night, over great plains where the buffaloes live, until we reached the big river. There we fought the Alligewi, till the ground was red with their blood. From the banks of the big river to the shores of the salt lake, there was none to meet us. The Maquas followed at a distance. We said the country should be ours from the place where the water runs up no longer on this stream, to a river twenty suns' journey toward the summer. The land we had taken like warriors, we kept like men. We drove the Maquas into the woods with the bears. They only tasted salt at the licks; they drew no fish from the great lake; we threw them the bones."

"All this I have heard and believe," said the white man, observing that the Indian paused: "but it was long before the English came into the country."

"A pine grew then where this chestnut now stands. The first pale-faces who came among us spoke no English. They came in a large canoe, when my fathers had buried the tomahawk with the redmen around them. Then, Hawkeye," he continued, betraying his deep emotion only by permitting his voice to fall to those low, guttural tones, which rendered his language, as spoken at times, so very musical; "then, Hawkeye, we were one people, and we were happy. The salt lake gave us its fish, the wood its deer, and the air its birds. We took wives who bore us children; we worshipped the Great Spirit; and we kept the Maquas beyond the sound of our songs of triumph!"

"Know you anything of your own family at that time?" demanded the white. "But you are a just man, for an Indian! and, as I suppose you hold their gifts, your fathers must have been brave warriors, and wise men at the council fire."

"My tribe is the grandfather of nations, but I am an unmixed man. The blood of chiefs is in my veins, where it must stay forever. The Dutch landed, and gave my people the fire-water; they drank until the heavens and the earth seemed to meet, and they foolishly thought they had found the Great Spirit. Then they parted with their land. Foot by foot, they were driven back from the shores, until I, that am a chief and a sagamore, have never seen the sun shine but through the trees, and have never visited the graves of, my fathers!"

"Graves bring solemn feelings over the mind," returned the scout, a good deal touched at the calm suffering of his companion; "and they often aid a man in his good intentions; though, for myself, I expect to leave my own bones unburied, to bleach in the woods, or to be torn asunder by the wolves. But where are to be found those of your race who came to their kin in the Delaware country, so many summers since?"

"Where are the blossoms of those summers!—fallen, one by one: so all of my family departed, each in his turn, to the land of spirits. I am on the hill-top, and must go down into the valley; and when Uncas follows in my footsteps, there will no longer be any of the blood of the sagamores, for my boy is the last of the Mohicans."

"Uncas is here!" said another voice, in the same soft, guttural tones, near his elbow; "who speaks to Uncas?"



The white man loosened his knife in his leathern sheath, and made an involuntary movement of the hand towards his rifle, at this sudden interruption; but the Indian sat composed, and without turning his head at the unexpected sounds.

At the next instant, a youthful warrior passed between them, with a noiseless step, and seated himself on the bank of the rapid stream. No exclamation of surprise escaped the father, nor was any question asked, or reply given, for several minutes; each appearing to await the moment when he might speak, without betraying womanish curiosity or childish impatience. The white man seemed to take counsel from their customs, and, relinquishing his grasp of the rifle, he also remained silent and reserved. At length Chingachgook turned his eyes slowly towards his son, and demanded,—

"Do the Maquas dare to leave the print of their moccasins in these woods?"

"I have been on their trail," replied the young Indian, "and know that they number as many as the fingers of my two hands; but they lie hid, like cowards."

"The thieves are outlying for scalps and plunder!" said the white man, whom we shall call Hawkeye, after the manner of his companions. "That bushy Frenchman, Montcalm, will send his spies into our very camp, but he will know what road we travel!"

"Tis enough!" returned the father, glancing his eye towards the setting sun; "they shall be driven like deer from their bushes. Hawkeye, let us eat to-night, and show the Maquas that we are men to-morrow."

"I am as ready to do the one as the other; but to fight the Iroquois 'tis necessary to find the skulkers; and to eat, 'tis necessary to get the game—talk of the devil and he will come; there is a pair of the biggest antlers I have seen this season, moving the bushes below the hill! Now, Uncas," he continued in a half whisper, and laughing with a kind of inward sound, like one who had learnt to be watchful, "I will bet my charger three times full of powder, against a foot of wampum, that I take him atwixt the eyes, and nearer to the right than to the left."

"It cannot be!" said the young Indian, springing to his feet with youthful eagerness; "all but the tips of his horns are hid!"

"He's a boy!" said the white man, shaking his head while he spoke, and addressing the father. "Does he think when a hunter sees a part of the creatur', he can't tell where the rest of him should be!"

Adjusting his rifle, he was about to make an exhibition of that skill, on which he so much valued himself, when the warrior struck up the piece with his hand, saying—

"Hawkeye! will you fight the Maquas?"

"These Indians know the nature of the woods, as it might be by instinct!" returned the scout, dropping his rifle, and turning away like a man who was convinced of his error. "I must leave the buck to your arrow, Uncas, or we may kill a deer for them thieves, the Iroquois, to eat."

The instant the father seconded this intimation by an expressive gesture of the hand, Uncas threw himself on the ground, and approached the animal with wary movements. When within a few yards of the cover, he fitted an arrow to his bow with the utmost care, while the antlers moved, as if their owner snuffed an enemy in the tainted air. In another moment the twang of the cord was heard, a white streak was seen glancing into the bushes, and the wounded buck plunged from the cover, to the very feet of his hidden enemy. Avoiding the horns of the infuriated animal, Uncas darted to his side, and passed his knife across the throat, when bounding to the edge of the river it fell, dyeing the waters with its blood.

"'Twas done with Indian skill," said the scout, laughing inwardly, but with vast satisfaction; "and 'twas a pretty sight to behold! Though an arrow is a near shot, and needs a knife to finish the work."

"Hugh!" ejaculated his companion, turning quickly, like a hound who scented game.

"By the Lord, there is a drove of them!" exclaimed the scout, whose eyes began to glisten with the ardor of his usual occupation; "if they come within range of a bullet I will drop one, though the whole Six Nations should be lurking within sound! What do you hear, Chingachgook? for to my ears the woods are dumb."

"There is but one deer, and he is dead," said the Indian, bending his body till his ear nearly touched the earth. "I hear the sounds of feet!"

"Perhaps the wolves have driven the buck to shelter, and are following on his trail."

"No. The horses of white men are coming!" returned the other, raising himself with dignity, and resuming his seat on the log with his former composure.

"Hawkeye, they are your brothers; speak to them."

"That will I, and in English that the king needn't be ashamed to answer," returned the hunter, speaking in the language of which he boasted; "but I see nothing, nor do I hear the sounds of man or beast; 'tis strange that an Indian should understand white sounds better than a man who, his very enemies will own, has no cross in his blood, although he may have lived with the redskins long enough to be suspected! Ha! there goes something like the cracking of a dry stick, too—now I hear the bushes move—yes, yes, there is a trampling that I mistook for the falls—and—but here they come themselves; God keep them from the Iroquois!"

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