WASHINGTON IRVING

1783-1859

1 Washington Irving, the first American to achieve an international literary reputation,

2 was born in New York City on April 3, 1783, the last of eleven children of a Scottish-born

3 father and English-born mother. Well into his thirties his brothers routinely tried to make

4 plans for him, and his own devotion to his family was a dominant emotion throughout his

5 life. He read widely in English literature at home, modeling his early prose on the graceful

6 *Spectator* papers by Joseph Addison, but delighted by many other writers, including

7 Shakespeare, Oliver Goldsmith, and Laurence Sterne. His brothers enjoyed writing poems

8 and essays as pleasant, companionable recreation, and at nineteen Irving wrote a series of

9 satirical essays on the theater and New York society for his brother Peter’s newspaper, the

10 *Morning Courier*.

11 When Irving showed signs of tuberculosis in 1804, his brothers sent him abroad for

12 a two-year tour of Europe, where in his notebooks he steadily became an acute observer and

13 felicitous recorder of what he witnessed. On his return, he began studying law with Judge

14 Josiah Hoffman, but more important for his career, he and his brother William (along with

15 William’s brother-in-law, James Kirke Paulding) started an anonymous satirical magazine,

16 *Salmagundi* (the name of a spicy hash), which ran through 1807 with sketches and poems on

17 politics and drama as well as familiar essays on a great range of topics. Then in 1808 Irving

18 began work on *A History of New York*, at first conceiving it as a parody of Samuel Latham

19 Mitchell’s pompously titled *The Picture of New-York; or The Traveller’s Guide through the*

20 *Commercial Metropolis of the United States*, then taking on a variety of satiric targets, including

21 President Jefferson, whom he portrayed as an early Dutch governor of New Amsterdam,

22 William the Testy. Exuberant, broadly comic, the *History* spoofed historians’ pedantries but

23 was itself the result of many months of antiquarian reading in local libraries, where his

24 researches gave Irving refuge from grief over the sudden death of Judge Hoffman’s daughter

25 Matilda, to whom he had become engaged. Then the *History* was launched by a charming

26 publicity campaign. First a newspaper noted the disappearance of a “small elderly gentleman,

27 dressed in an old black coat and cocked hat, by the name of KNICKERBOCKER,” adding

28 that there were “some reasons for believing he is not entirely in his right mind.” After

29 further “news” items the old man’s fictitious landlord announced that he had found in

30 Knickerbocker’s room a *“very curious kind of a written book”* which he intended to dispose of to

31 pay the bill that was owed him, and the book at last appeared, ascribed to Diedrich

32 Knickerbocker. With its publication Irving became an American celebrity. Reprinted in

33 England, the *History* reached Sir Walter Scott, who declared that it made his sides hurt from

34 laughter. Like all but the rarest of topical satires, however, it has become increasingly

35 inaccessible to later generations of readers, who can hardly comprehend Irving’s strategies

36 and targets without precisely the sort of antiquarian footnotes he found delight in mocking.

37 During the War of 1812 Irving was editor of the *Analectic Magazine*, which he filled

38 mainly with essays from British periodicals but where he printed his own timely series of

39 patriotic biographical sketches of American naval heroes. Toward the end of the war he was

40 made a colonel in the New York State Militia. Then in May 1815, a major break occurred in

41 his life: he left for Europe and stayed away for seventeen years. At first he worked in

42 Liverpool with his brother Peter, an importer of English hardware. In 1818 Peter went

43 bankrupt, shortly after their mother died in New York; profoundly grieved and shamed,

44 Irving once again took refuge in writing. During his work on *The Sketch Book* he met Scott,

45 who buoyed him by admiration for the *History* and helpfully directed Irving’s attention to the

46 wealth of unused literary material in German folktales; there, as scholars have shown, Irving

47 found the source for *Rip Van Winkle*, some passages of which are close paraphrases of the

48 original. In 1819 Irving began sending *The Sketch Book* to the United States for publication in

49 installments. When the fill version was printed in England the next year, it made Irving

50 famous and brought him the friendship of many of the leading British writers of the time.

51 His new pseudonym, Geoffrey Crayon, became universally recognized, and over the next

52 years selections from *The Sketch Book* entered the classroom as models of English prose just

53 as selections from Addison had long been used. As Irving knew, part of his British success

54 derived from general astonishment that a man born in the United States could write in such

55 an English way about English scenes: Addison lay behind the sketches of English country

56 life, just as Oliver Goldsmith’s essay on the Boar’s-head Tavern in Eastcheap and on

57 Westminster Abbey lay behind Irving’s on the same topics. But in among the graceful, tame

58 tributes to English scenes and characters were two vigorous tales set in rural New York, *Rip*

59 *Van Winkle* and *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. Everyone who read them knew instantly that they

60 were among the literary treasures of the language, and it very soon became hard to

61 remember that they had not always been among the English classics.

62 Irving’s next book, *Bracebridge Hall* (1822), and worshipful tribute to old-fashioned

63 English country life, was, as the author realized, a feeble follow-up, and *Tales of a Traveller*

64 (1824) was widely taken as a sign that he had written himself out. At a loss to sustain his

65 career, Irving gambled on accepting an invitation from an acquaintance, the American

66 minister to Spain: he was to come to Spain as an attaché of the legation (a device for giving

67 him entrée into manuscript collections) and translate Martin Fernández de Navarrete’s new

68 compilation of accounts of the voyages of Columbus, including Columbus’s own lost

69 journals as copied by an earlier historian. Helped by the American consul in Madrid,

70 Obadiah Rich, who owned a magnificent collection of books and manuscripts on Spanish

71 and Latin American history, Irving worked intensely and in 1828 published *The Life and*

72 *Voyages of Christopher Columbus*, not a translation of Navarrete (though the Spaniard’s volume

73 supplied most of the facts) but a biography of Irving’s own, shaped by his skill at evocative

74 re-creation of history. Out of these Spanish years came also *The Conquest of Granada* (1829),

75 *Voyages and Discoveries of the Companions of Columbus* (1831), and *The Alhambra* (1832), which

76 became known as “the Spanish *Sketch Book*.”

77 In 1829 Irving was appointed secretary to the American legation in London, where

78 he became a competent, hardworking diplomat, aided by his access to the highest levels of

79 British society. No longer the latest rage, Irving by now was a solidly established author. On

80 his return to the United States in 1832 his reputation was in need of redemption from a

81 different charge—that of becoming too Europeanized. As if in an effort to make amends,

82 Irving turned to three studies of the American West: *A Tour on the Prairies* (1835), based on

83 his horseback journey into what is now Oklahoma; *Astoria* (1836), an account of John Jacob

84 Astor’s fur-trading colony in Oregon, written in Astor’s own library and based on published

85 accounts as well as research in Astor’s archives (in which task Irving was assisted by his

86 nephew Peter); and *The Adventures of Captain Bonneville, U.S.A.* (1837), an account of a

87 Frenchman’s explorations in the Rockies and the Far West.

88 In the late 1830s Irving bought and began refurbishing a house near Tarrytown,

89 along the Hudson north of New York City, just where he had dreamed of settling down in

90 *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. At Sunnyside he made a home for several members of his family,

91 including as many as five nieces at a time, but he wrote little. From this somewhat

92 purposeless stage of his life he was rescued by appointment as minister to Spain in 1842; he

93 served four years in Madrid with great success. After his return he arranged with G. P.

94 Putnam to publish a collected edition of his writing and took the occasion to revise some of

95 them. Using essays he had written years before, he also prepared for the edition a derivative

96 biography of Oliver Goldsmith (1849), after which critics more than ever compared him to

97 the Irish prince of hack writers. Irving’s main work after 1851 was his long-contemplated life

98 of George Washington. He worked in libraries, read old newspapers, studied government

99 records, and visited battlefields, but once again he drew very heavily on published

100 biographies, especially the recent one by Jared Sparks. He forced himself, in the most heroic

101 effort of his career, to complete the successive five volumes, the first of which was published

102 in 1855. Just after finishing the last he collapsed, and died a few months later, on November

103 28, 1859.

104 Decades before his death, Irving had achieved the status of a classic writer; in his

105 own country he had no rival as a stylist. As schoolboys, Hawthorne and Longfellow were

106 inspired by the success of *The Sketch Book*, and their prose, as well as that of a horde of now-

107 unread writers, owed much to Irving. Although Melville, in his essay on Hawthorne’s *Mosses*

108 *from an Old Manse*, declared his preference for creative geniuses over adept imitators like

109 Irving, he could not escape Irving’s influence, which emerges both in his short stories and in

110 a late poem, *Rip Van Winkle’s Lilacs*, which showed he saw Rip as an archetypal artist figure.

111 (Melville’s debt was even more tangible, for early in 1846 Irving had passed the word to

112 Putnam that *Typee* was worth reprinting in New York, but then Irving had been generous to

113 younger writers all his life, as in his supervision of the London publication of Bryant’s poems

114 in 1832.) The southwestern humorists of the 1840s, Irving read and enjoyed, were much

115 more robust than Irving in his mature years, yet they learned from him that realistic details

116 of rural life in America could be worked memorably into fiction. From the beginning,

117 Americans identified with Rip as a counterhero, an anti-Franklinian who made a success of

118 failure, and successive generations have responded profoundly to Irving’s pervasive theme of

119 mutability, especially as localized in his portrayal of the bewildering and destructive rapidity

120 of change in American life.

**The Legend of Sleepy Hollow**

*(Found among the papers of the Late Diedrich Knickerbocker)[[1]](#footnote-1)*

*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 pass,*

*Forever flushing round a summer sky.*

006 —*Castle of Indolence*[[2]](#footnote-2)

01 In the bosom of one of those spacious coves which indent the eastern shore of the

02 Hudson, at that broad expansion of the river denominated by the ancient Dutch navigators

03 the Tappan Zee,[[3]](#footnote-3) and where they always prudently shortened sail, and implored the

04 protection of St. Nicholas when they crossed, there lies a small market town or rural port,

05 which by some is called Greensburgh, but which is more universally and properly known by

06 the name of Tarry Town. This name was given it, we are told, in former days, by the good

07 housewives of the adjacent country, from the inveterate propensity of their husbands to

08 linger about the village tavern on market days. Be that as it may, I do not vouch for the fact,

09 but merely advert to it, for the sake of being precise and authentic. Not far from this village,

10 perhaps about three miles, there is a little valley, or rather lap of land among high hills, which

11 is one of the quietest places in the whole world. A small brook glides through it, with just

12 murmur enough to lull you to repose, and the occasional whistle of a quail, or tapping of a

13 woodpecker, is almost the only sound that ever breaks in upon the uniform tranquillity.

14 I recollect that when a stripling, my first exploit in squirrel shooting was in a grove of

15 tall walnut trees that shades one side of the valley. I had wandered into it at noon time, when

16 all nature is peculiarly quiet, and was startled by the roar of my own gun, as it broke the

17 sabbath stillness around, and was prolonged and reverberated by the angry echoes. If ever I

18 should wish for a retreat, whither I might steal from the world and its distractions, and

19 dream quietly away the remnant of a troubled life, I know of none more promising than this

20 little valley.

21 From the listless repose of the place, and the peculiar character of its inhabitants,

22 who are descendants from the original Dutch settlers, this sequestered glen has long been

23 known by the name of Sleepy Hollow, and its rustic lads are called the Sleepy Hollow

24 Boys throughout all the neighbouring country. A drowsy, dreamy influence seems to hang

25 over the land, and pervade the very atmosphere. Some say that the place was bewitched by a

26 high German[[4]](#footnote-4) doctor during the early days of the settlement; others, that an old Indian chief,

27 the prophet or wizard of his tribe, held his powwows there before the country was

28 discovered by Master Hendrick Hudson.[[5]](#footnote-5) Certain it is, the place still continues under the

29 sway of some witching power, that holds a spell over the minds of the good people, causing

30 them to walk in a continual reverie. They are given to all kinds of marvellous beliefs; have

31 trances and visions, and see strange sights, and hear music and voices in the air. The whole

32 neighbourhood abounds with local tales, haunted spots, and twilight superstitions; stars

33 shoot and meteors glare oftener across the valley than in any other part of the country, and

34 the night-mare, with her whole nine fold,[[6]](#footnote-6) seems to make it the favourite scene of her

35 gambols.

36 The dominant spirit, however, that haunts this enchanted region, and seems to be

37 commander of all the powers of the air, is the apparition of a figure on horseback without a

38 head. It is said by some to be the ghost of a Hessian[[7]](#footnote-7) trooper, whose head had been carried

39 away by a cannon-ball, in some nameless battle during the revolutionary war, and who is

40 ever and anon seen by various of the country people, hurrying along in the gloom of night,

41 as if on the wings of the wind. His haunts are not confined to the valley, but extend at times

42 to the adjacent roads, and especially to the vicinity of a church that is at no great distance.

43 Indeed, certain of the most authentic historians of those parts, who have been careful in

44 collecting and collating the floating facts concerning this spectre, allege, that the body of the

45 trooper having been buried in the church-yard, the ghost rides forth to the scene of battle in

46 nightly quest of his head, and the rushing speed with which he sometimes passes along the

47 hollow, like a midnight blast, is owing to his being belated, and in a hurry to get back to the

48 church-yard before day-break.

49 Such is the general purport of this legendary superstition, which has furnished

50 materials for many a wild story in that region of shadows; and the spectre is known, at all the

51 country firesides, by the name of The Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow.

52 It is remarkable, that the visionary turn I have mentioned is not confined to the

53 native inhabitants of the valley, but is imperceptibly acquired by every one who resides there

54 for a time. However wide awake they may have been before they entered that sleepy region,

55 they are sure, in a little time, to imbibe the witching influence of the air, and begin to grow

56 imaginative—to dream dreams, and see apparitions.

57 I mention this peaceful spot with all possible laud, for it is in such little retired Dutch

58 valleys, found here and there embosomed in the great state of New-York, that populations,

59 manners, and customs, remain fixed, while the great torrent of emigration and improvement,

60 which is making such incessant changes in other parts of this restless country, sweeps by

61 them unobserved. They are like those little nooks of still water, which border a rapid stream,

62 where we may see the straw and bubble riding quietly at anchor, or slowly revolving in their

63 mimic harbour, undisturbed by the rushing of the passing current. Though many years have

64 elapsed since I trod the drowsy shades of Sleepy Hollow, yet I question whether I should not

65 still find the same trees and the same families vegetating in its sheltered bosom.

66 In this by-place of nature there abode, in a remote period of American history, that is

67 to say, some thirty years since, a worthy wight of the name of Ichabod Crane, who

68 sojourned, or, as he expressed it, “tarried,” in Sleepy Hollow, for the purpose of instructing

69 the children of the vicinity. He was a native of Connecticut, a State which supplies the Union

70 with pioneers for the mind as well as for the forest, and sends forth yearly its legions of

71 frontier woodmen and country schoolmasters. The cognomen of Crane was not inapplicable

72 to his person. He was tall, but exceedingly lank, with narrow shoulders, long arms and legs,

73 hands that dangled a mile out of his sleeves, feet that might have served for shovels, and his

74 whole frame most loosely hung together. His head was small, and flat at top, with huge ears,

75 large green glassy eyes, and a long snipe nose, so that it might have been mistaken for a

76 weathercock perched upon his spindle neck, to tell which way the wind blew. To see him

77 striding along the profile of a hill on a windy day, with his clothes bagging and fluttering

78 about him, one might have mistaken him for the genius[[8]](#footnote-8) of famine descending upon the

79 earth, or some scarecrow eloped from a cornfield.

80 His school-house was a low building of one large room, rudely constructed of logs;

81 the windows partly glazed, and partly patched with leaves of old copy books. It was most

82 ingeniously secured at vacant hours, by a withe[[9]](#footnote-9) twisted in the handle of the door, and stakes

83 set against the window shutters; so that though a thief might get in with perfect ease, he

84 would find some embarrassment in getting out; an idea most probably borrowed by the

85 architect, Yost Van Houten, from the mystery of an eelpot.[[10]](#footnote-10) The school-house stood in

86 rather a lonely but pleasant situation, just at the foot of a woody hill, with a brook running

87 close by, and a formidable birch tree growing at one end of it. From hence the low murmur

88 of his pupils’ voices conning over their lessons, might be heard of a drowsy summer’s day,

89 like the hum of a bee-hive; interrupted now and then by the authoritative voice of the

90 master, giving menace or command, or, peradventure, the appalling sound of the birch, as he

91 urged some tardy loiterer along the flowery path of knowledge. Truth to say, he was a

92 conscientious man, and ever bore in mind the golden maxim, “spare the rod and spoil the

93 child.”[[11]](#footnote-11)—Ichabod Crane’s scholars certainly were not spoiled.

94 I would not have it imagined, however, that he was one of those cruel potentates of 95 the school, who joy in the smart[[12]](#footnote-12) of their subjects; on the contrary, he administered justice

96 with discrimination rather than severity; taking the burthen off the backs of the weak, and

97 laying it on those of the strong. Your mere puny stripling, that winced at the least flourish of

98 the rod, was passed by with indulgence; but the claims of justice were satisfied, by giving a

99 double portion to some little, tough, wrong-headed, broad-skirted Dutch urchin, who sulked

100 and swelled and grew dogged and sullen beneath the birch. All this he called “doing his duty

101 by their parents;” and he never inflicted a chastisement without following it by the assurance,

102 so consolatory to the smarting urchin, that he would remember it and thank him for it the

103 longest day he had to live.

104 When school hours were over, he was even the companion and playmate of his

105 larger boys; and would convoy some of the smaller ones home of a holyday, who happened

106 to have pretty sisters, or good housewives for mothers, noted for the comforts of the

107 cupboard. Indeed, it behooved him to keep on good terms with his pupils. The revenue

108 arising from his school was small, and would have been scarcely sufficient to furnish him

109 with daily bread, for he was a huge feeder,[[13]](#footnote-13) and though lank, had the dilating powers of an

110 Anaconda; but to help out his maintenance, he was, according to country custom in those

111 parts, boarded and lodged at the houses of the farmers, whose children he instructed. With

112 these he lived alternately a week at a time, thus going the rounds of the neighbourhood, with

113 all his worldly effects tied up in a cotton handkerchief.

114 That all this might not be too onerous on the purses of his rustic patrons, who are

115 apt to consider the costs of schooling a grievous burthen, and schoolmasters mere drones,

116 he had various ways of rendering himself both useful and agreeable. He assisted the farmers

117 occasionally in the light labours of their farms, helped to make hay, mended the fences, took

118 the horses to water, drove the cows from pasture, and cut wood for the winter fire. He laid

119 aside, too, all the dominant dignity and absolute sway, with which he lorded it in his little

120 empire, the school, and became wonderfully gentle and ingratiating. He found favour in the

121 eyes of the mothers, by petting the children, particularly the youngest, and like the lion bold,

122 which whilome[[14]](#footnote-14) so magnanimously the lamb did hold,[[15]](#footnote-15) he would sit with a child on one

123 knee, and rock a cradle with his foot, for whole hours together.

124 In addition to his other vocations, he was the singing-master of the neighbourhood,

125 and picked up many bright shillings by instructing the young folks in psalmody.[[16]](#footnote-16) It was a

126 matter of no little vanity to him on Sundays, to take his station in front of the church gallery,

127 with a band of chosen singers; where, in his own mind, he completely carried away the palm

128 from the parson. Certain it is, his voice resounded far above all the rest of the congregation,

129 and there are peculiar quavers still to be heard in that church, and which may even be heard

130 half-a-mile off, quite to the opposite side of the mill-pond, of a still Sunday morning, which

131 are said to be legitimately descended from the nose of Ichabod Crane. Thus, by diverse little

132 make shifts, in that ingenious way which is commonly denominated “by hook and by

133 crook,”[[17]](#footnote-17) the worthy pedagogue got on tolerably enough, and was thought, by all those who

134 understood nothing of the labour of headwork, to have a wonderful easy life of it.

135 The schoolmaster is generally a man of some importance in the female circle of a

136 rural neighbourhood, being considered a kind of idle gentlemanlike personage, of vastly

137 superior taste and accomplishments to the rough country swains, and, indeed, inferior in

138 learning only to the parson. His appearance, therefore, is apt to occasion some little stir at

139 the tea-table of a farm-house, and the addition of a supernumerary dish of cakes or

140 sweetmeats, or, peradventure, the parade of a silver tea-pot. Our man of letters, therefore,

141 was peculiarly happy in the smiles of all the country damsels. How he would figure among

142 them in the church-yard, between services on Sundays; gathering grapes for them from the

143 wild vines that overrun the surrounding trees; reciting for them all the epitaphs on the tomb-

144 stones, or sauntering, with a whole bevy of them, along the banks of the adjacent mill-pond;

145 while the more bashful country bumpkins hung sheepishly back, envying his superior

146 elegance and address.

147 From his half itinerant life, also, he was a kind of travelling gazette, carrying the

148 whole budget of local gossip from house to house; so that his appearance was always greeted

149 with satisfaction. He was, moreover, esteemed by the women as a man of great erudition, for

150 he had read several books quite through, and was a perfect master of Cotton Mather’s

151 History of New England Witchcraft,[[18]](#footnote-18) in which, by the way, he most firmly and potently

152 believed.

153 He was, in fact, an odd mixture of small shrewdness and simple credulity. His

154 appetite for the marvellous, and his powers of digesting it, were equally extraordinary; and

155 both had been increased by his residence in this spell-bound region. No tale was too gross or

156 monstrous for his capacious swallow. It was often his delight, after his school was dismissed

157 of an afternoon, to stretch himself on the rich bed of clover, bordering the little brook that

158 whimpered past his school-house, and there con over old Mather’s direful tales, until the

159 gathering dusk of evening made the printed page a mere mist before his eyes. Then, as he

160 wended his way, by swamp and stream and awful[[19]](#footnote-19) woodland, to the farm-house where he

161 happened to be quartered, every sound of nature, at that witching hour, fluttered his excited

162 imagination: the moan of the whippoor-will from the hill side; the boding cry of the tree-

163 toad, that harbinger of storm; the dreary hooting of the screech-owl; or the sudden rustling

164 in the thicket, of birds frightened from their roost. The fireflies, too, which sparkled most

165 vividly in the darkest places, now and then startled him, as one of uncommon brightness

166 would stream across his path; and if, by chance, a huge blockhead of a beetle came winging

167 his blundering flight against him, the poor varlet was ready to give up the ghost, with the

168 idea that he was struck with a witch’s token. His only resource on such occasions, either to

169 drown thought, or drive away evil spirits, was to sing psalm tunes;—and the good people of

170 Sleepy Hollow, as they sat by their doors of an evening, were often filled with awe, at hearing

171 his nasal melody, “in linked sweetness long drawn out,”[[20]](#footnote-20) floating from the distant hill, or

172 along the dusky road.

173 Another of his sources of fearful pleasure was, to pass long winter evenings with the

174 old Dutch wives, as they sat spinning by the fire, with a row of apples roasting and

175 spluttering along the hearth, and listen to their marvellous tales of ghosts and goblins, and

176 haunted fields and haunted brooks, and haunted bridges and haunted houses, and

177 particularly of the headless horseman, or galloping Hessian of the Hollow, as they sometimes

178 called him. He would delight them equally by his anecdotes of witchcraft, and of the direful

179 omens and portentous sights and sounds in the air, which prevailed in the earlier times of

180 Connecticut; and would frighten them wofully with speculations upon comets and shooting

181 stars, and with the alarming fact that the world did absolutely turn round, and that they were

182 half the time topsy-turvy!

183 But if there was a pleasure in all this, while snugly cuddling in the chimney corner of

184 a chamber that was all of a ruddy glow from the crackling wood fire, and where, of course,

185 no spectre dare to show its face, it was dearly purchased by the terrors of his subsequent

186 walk homewards. What fearful shapes and shadows beset his path, amidst the dim and

187 ghostly glare of a snowy night!—With what wistful look did he eye every trembling ray of

188 light streaming across the waste fields from some distant window!—How often was he

189 appalled by some shrub covered with snow, which like a sheeted spectre beset his very

190 path!—How often did he shrink with curdling awe at the sound of his own steps on the

191 frosty crust beneath his feet; and dread to look over his shoulder, lest he should behold

192 some uncouth being tramping close behind him!—and how often was he thrown into

193 complete dismay by some rushing blast, howling among the trees, in the idea that it was the

194 galloping Hessian on one of his nightly scourings.

195 All these, however, were mere terrors of the night, phantoms of the mind, that walk

196 in darkness; and though he had seen many spectres in his time, and been more than once

197 beset by Satan in diverse shapes, in his lonely perambulations, yet day-light put an end to all

198 these evils; and he would have passed a pleasant life of it, in despite of the Devil and all his

199 works, if his path had not been crossed by a being that causes more perplexity to mortal

200 man, than ghosts, goblins, and the whole race of witches put together, and that was—a

201 woman.

202 Among the musical disciples who assembled, one evening in each week, to receive

203 his instructions in psalmody, was Katrina Van Tassel, the daughter and only child of a

204 substantial Dutch farmer. She was a blooming lass of fresh eighteen; plump as a partridge;

205 ripe and melting and rosy-cheeked as one of her father’s peaches, and universally famed, not

206 merely for her beauty, but her vast expectations. She was withal a little of a coquette, as

207 might be perceived even in her dress, which was a mixture of ancient and modern fashions,

208 as most suited to set off her charms. She wore the ornaments of pure yellow gold, which her

209 great-great-grandmother had brought over from Saardam; the tempting stomacher[[21]](#footnote-21) of the

210 olden time, and withal a provokingly short petticoat, to display the prettiest foot and ankle in

211 the country round.

212 Ichabod Crane had a soft and foolish heart towards the sex; and it is not to be

213 wondered at, that so tempting a morsel soon found favour in his eyes, more especially after

214 he had visited her in her paternal mansion. Old Baltus Van Tassel was a perfect picture of a

215 thriving, contented, liberal-hearted farmer. He seldom, it is true, sent either his eyes or his

216 thoughts beyond the boundaries of his own farm; but within those every thing was snug,

217 happy, and well-conditioned. He was satisfied with his wealth, but not proud of it, and

218 piqued himself upon the hearty abundance, rather than the style in which he lived. His

219 strong hold was situated on the banks of the Hudson, in one of those green, sheltered, fertile

220 nooks, into which the Dutch farmers are so fond of nestling. A great elm tree spread its

221 broad branches over it, at the foot of which bubbled up a spring of the softest and sweetest

222 water, in a little kind of well, formed of a barrel, and then stole sparkling away through the

223 grass, to a neighbouring brook, that babbled along among elders and dwarf willows. Hard by

224 the farmhouse was a vast barn, that might have served for a church; every window and

225 crevice of which seemed bursting forth with the treasures of the farm; the flail was busily

226 resounding within it; swallows and martins skimmed twittering about the eaves, and rows of

227 pigeons, some with one eye turned up, as if watching the weather, some with their heads

228 under their wings, or buried in their bosoms, and others, swelling, and cooing, and bowing

229 about their dames, were enjoying the sunshine on the roof. Sleek unwieldy porkers were

230 grunting in the repose and abundance of their pens, from whence sallied forth, now and

231 then, troops of sucking pigs, as if to snuff the air. A stately squadron of snowy geese were

232 riding in an adjoining pond, convoying whole fleets of ducks; regiments of turkeys were

233 gobbling about the farm yard, and guinea fowls fretting like ill-tempered housewives, with

234 their peevish discontented cry. Before the barn door strutted the gallant cock, that pattern of

235 a husband, a warrior, and a fine gentleman, clapping his burnished wings, and crowing in the

236 pride and gladness of his heart—sometimes tearing up the earth with his feet, and then

237 generously calling his ever-hungry family of wives and children to enjoy the rich morsel he

238 had discovered.

239 The pedagogue’s mouth watered, as he looked upon this sumptuous promise of

240 luxurious winter fare. In his devouring mind’s eye, he pictured to himself every roasting pig

241 running about with a pudding in its belly,[[22]](#footnote-22) and an apple in its mouth; the pigeons were

242 snugly put to bed in a comfortable pie, and tucked in with a coverlet of crust; the geese were

243 swimming in their own gravy; and the ducks pairing cosily in dishes, like snug married

244 couples, with a decent competency of onion sauce; in the porkers he saw carved out the

245 future sleek side of bacon, and juicy relishing ham; not a turkey, but he beheld daintily

246 trussed up, with its gizzard under its wing, and, peradventure, a necklace of savoury sausages;

247 and even bright chanticleer[[23]](#footnote-23) himself lay sprawling on his back, in a side dish, with uplifted

248 claws, as if craving that quarter,[[24]](#footnote-24) which his chivalrous spirit disdained to ask while living.

249 As the enraptured Ichabod fancied all this, and as he rolled his great green eyes over

250 the fat meadow lands, the rich fields of wheat, of rye, of buckwheat, and Indian corn, and

251 the orchards burthened with ruddy fruit, which surrounded the warm tenement[[25]](#footnote-25) of Van

252 Tassel, his heart yearned after the damsel who was to inherit these domains, and his

253 imagination expanded with the idea, how they might be readily turned into cash, and the

254 money invested in immense tracts of wild land, and shingle palaces in the wilderness. Nay,

255 his busy fancy already put him in possession of his hopes, and presented to him the

256 blooming Katrina, with a whole family of children, mounted on the top of a waggon loaded

257 with household trumpery, with pots and kettles dangling beneath; and he beheld himself

258 bestriding a pacing mare, with a colt at her heels, setting out for Kentucky, Tennessee, or the

259 Lord knows where!

260 When he entered the house, the conquest of his heart was complete. It was one of

261 those spacious farm-houses, with high-ridged, but lowly-sloping roofs, built in the style

262 handed down from the first Dutch settlers. The low, projecting eaves formed a piazza along

263 the front, capable of being closed up in bad weather. Under this were hung flails, harness,

264 various utensils of husbandry, and nets for fishing in the neighbouring river. Benches were

265 built along the sides for summer use; and a great spinning-wheel at one end, and a churn at

266 the other, showed the various uses to which this important porch might be devoted. From

267 this piazza the wondering Ichabod entered the hall, which formed the centre of the mansion,

268 and the place of usual residence. Here, rows of resplendent pewter, ranged on a long dresser,

269 dazzled his eyes. In one corner stood a huge bag of wool ready to be spun; in another a

270 quantity of linsey-woolsey just from the loom; ears of Indian corn, and strings of dried

271 apples and peaches, hung in gay festoons along the walls, mingled with the gaud of red

272 peppers; and a door left ajar, gave him a peep into the best parlour, where the claw-footed

273 chairs, and dark mahogany tables, shone like mirrors; andirons, with their accompanying

274 shovel and tongs, glistened from their covert of asparagus tops; mock oranges[[26]](#footnote-26) and conch

275 shells decorated the mantlepiece; strings of various coloured birds’ eggs were suspended

276 above it; a great ostrich egg was hung from the centre of the room, and a corner cupboard,

277 knowingly left open, displayed immense treasures of old silver and well-mended china.

278 From the moment Ichabod laid his eyes upon these regions of delight, the peace of

279 his mind was at an end, and his only study was how to gain the affections of the peerless

280 daughter of Van Tassel. In this enterprize, however, he had more real difficulties than

281 generally fell to the lot of a knight-errant of yore, who seldom had any thing but giants,

282 enchanters, fiery dragons, and such like easily conquered adversaries, to contend with; and

283 had to make his way merely through gates of iron and brass, and walls of adamant,[[27]](#footnote-27) to the

284 castle keep, where the lady of his heart was confined; all which he achieved as easily as a man

285 would carve his way to the centre of a Christmas pie, and then the lady gave him her hand as

286 a matter of course. Ichabod, on the contrary, had to win his way to the heart of a country

287 coquette, beset with a labyrinth of whims and caprices, which were for ever presenting new

288 difficulties and impediments, and he had to encounter a host of fearful adversaries of real

289 flesh and blood, the numerous rustic admirers, who beset every portal to her heart, keeping a

290 watchful and angry eye upon each other, but ready to fly out in the common cause against

291 any new competitor.

292 Among these, the most formidable, was a burley, roaring, roystering blade, of the

293 name of Abraham, or, according to the Dutch abbreviation, Brom Van Brunt, the hero of

294 the country round, which rung with his feats of strength and hardihood. He was broad

295 shouldered and double jointed, with short curly black hair, and a bluff, but not unpleasant

296 countenance, having a mingled air of fun and arrogance. From his Herculean frame and

297 great powers of limb, he had received the nick-name of Brom Bones, by which he was

298 universally known. He was famed for great knowledge and skill in horsemanship, being as

299 dexterous on horseback as a Tartar. He was foremost at all races and cock-fights, and with

300 the ascendancy which bodily strength always acquires in rustic life, was the umpire in all

301 disputes, setting his hat on one side, and giving his decisions with an air and tone that

302 admitted of no gainsay or appeal. He was always ready for either a fight or a frolick; had

303 more mischief than ill-will in his composition; and with all his overbearing roughness, there

304 was a strong dash of waggish good humour at bottom. He had three or four boon

305 companions of his own stamp, who regarded him as their model, and at the head of whom

306 he scoured the country, attending every scene of feud or merriment for miles round. In cold

307 weather he was distinguished by a fur cap, surmounted with a flaunting fox’s tail, and when

308 the folks at a country gathering descried this well-known crest at a distance, whisking about

309 among a squad of hard riders, they always stood by for a squall. Sometimes his crew would

310 be heard dashing along past the farm-houses at midnight, with whoop and halloo, like a

311 troop of Don Cossacks,[[28]](#footnote-28) and the old dames, startled out of their sleep, would listen for a

312 moment till the hurry scurry had clattered by, and then exclaim, “aye, there goes Brom

313 Bones and his gang!” The neighbours looked upon him with a mixture of awe, admiration,

314 and good-will; and when any mad-cap prank, or rustic brawl, occurred in the vicinity, always

315 shook their heads, and warranted Brom Bones was at the bottom of it.

316 This rantipole[[29]](#footnote-29) hero had for some time singled out the blooming Katrina for the

317 object of his uncouth gallantries, and though his amorous toyings were something like the

318 gentle caresses and endearments of a bear, yet it was whispered that she did not altogether

319 discourage his hopes. Certain it is, his advances were signals for rival candidates to retire,

320 who felt no inclination to cross a lion in his amours; insomuch, that when his horse was seen

321 tied to Van Tassel’s paling,[[30]](#footnote-30) on a Sunday night, (a sure sign that his master was courting, or,

322 as it is termed, “sparking,” within,) all other suitors passed by in despair, and carried the war

323 into other quarters.

324 Such was the formidable rival with whom Ichabod Crane had to contend, and,

325 considering all things, a stouter man than he would have shrunk from the competition, and a

326 wiser man would have despaired. He had, however, a happy mixture of pliability and

327 perseverance in his nature; he was in form and spirit like a supple jack[[31]](#footnote-31)—yielding, but tough;

328 though he bent, he never broke; and though he bowed beneath the slightest pressure, yet,

329 the moment it was away—jerk!—he was as erect, and carried his head as high as ever.

330 To have taken the field openly against his rival, would have been madness; for he

331 was not a man to be thwarted in his amours, any more than that stormy lover, Achilles.[[32]](#footnote-32)

332 Ichabod, therefore, made his advances in a quiet and gently-insinuating manner. Under cover

333 of his character of singing master, he made frequent visits at the farm-house; not that he had

334 anything to apprehend from the meddlesome interference of parents, which is so often a

335 stumbling block in the path of lovers. Balt Van Tassel was an easy indulgent soul; he loved

336 his daughter better even than his pipe, and, like a reasonable man, and an excellent father, let

337 her have her way in every thing. His notable little wife too, had enough to do to attend to

338 her housekeeping and manage the poultry, for, as she sagely observed, ducks and geese are

339 foolish things, and must be looked after, but girls can take care of themselves. Thus while

340 the busy dame bustled about the house, or plied her spinning wheel at one end of the piazza,

341 honest Balt would sit smoking his evening pipe at the other, watching the achievements of a

342 little wooden warrior, who, armed with a sword in each hand, was most valiantly fighting the

343 wind on the pinnacle of the barn. In the mean time, Ichabod would carry on his suit with the

344 daughter by the side of the spring under the great elm, or sauntering along in the twilight,

345 that hour so favourable to the lover’s eloquence.

346 I profess not to know how women’s hearts are wooed and won. To me they have

347 always been matters of riddle and admiration. Some seem to have but one vulnerable point,

348 or door of access; while others have a thousand avenues, and may be captured a thousand

349 different ways. It is a great triumph of skill to gain the former, but a still greater proof of

350 generalship to maintain possession of the latter, for man must battle for his fortress at every

351 door and window. He that wins a thousand common hearts, is therefore entitled to some

352 renown; but he who keeps undisputed sway over the heart of a coquette, is indeed a hero.

353 Certain it is, this was not the case with the redoubtable Brom Bones; and from the moment

354 Ichabod Crane made his advances, the interests of the former evidently declined; his horse

355 was no longer seen tied at the palings on Sunday nights, and a deadly feud gradually arose

356 between him and the preceptor of Sleepy Hollow.

357 Brom, who had a degree of rough chivalry in his nature, would fain have carried

358 matters to open warfare, and settled their pretensions to the lady, according to the mode of

359 those most concise and simple reasoners, the knights-errant of yore— by single combat: but

360 Ichabod was too conscious of the superior might of his adversary to enter the lists against

361 him; he had overheard the boast of Bones, that he would “double the schoolmaster up, and

362 put him on a shelf;” and he was too wary to give him an opportunity. There was something

363 extremely provoking in this obstinately pacific system; it left Brom no alternative but to draw

364 upon the funds of rustic waggery in his disposition, and to play off boorish practical jokes

365 upon his rival. Ichabod became the object of whimsical persecution to Bones, and his gang

366 of rough riders. They harried his hitherto peaceful domains; smoked out his singing school,

367 by stopping up the chimney; broke into the school-house at night, in spite of its formidable

368 fastenings of withe and window stakes, and turned every thing topsy-turvy, so that the poor

369 schoolmaster began to think all the witches in the country held their meetings there. But

370 what was still more annoying, Brom took all opportunities of turning him into ridicule in

371 presence of his mistress, and had a scoundrel dog, whom he taught to whine in the most

372 ludicrous manner, and introduced as a rival of Ichabod’s, to instruct her in psalmody.

373 In this way, matters went on for some time, without producing any material effect on

374 the relative situations of the contending powers. On a fine autumnal afternoon, Ichabod, in

375 pensive mood, sat enthroned on the lofty stool from whence he usually watched all the

376 concerns of his little literary realm. In his hand he swayed a ferule, that sceptre of despotic

377 power; the birch of justice reposed on three nails, behind the throne, a constant terror to evil

378 doers; while on the desk before him might be seen sundry contraband articles and prohibited

379 weapons, detected upon the persons of idle urchins, such as half-munched apples, popguns,

380 whirligigs,[[33]](#footnote-33) fly-cages, and whole legions of rampant little paper game cocks. Apparently there

381 had been some appalling act of justice recently inflicted, for his scholars were all busily intent

382 upon their books, or slyly whispering behind them with one eye kept upon the master; and a

383 kind of buzzing stillness reigned throughout the school-room. It was suddenly interrupted by

384 the appearance of a negro in tow-cloth jacket and trowsers, a round crowned fragment of a

385 hat, like the cap of Mercury,[[34]](#footnote-34) and mounted on the back of a ragged, wild, half-broken colt,

386 which he managed with a rope by way of halter. He came clattering up to the school door

387 with an invitation to Ichabod to attend a merry-making, or “quilting frolick,” to be held that

388 evening at Mynheer Van Tassel’s, and having delivered his message with that air of

389 importance, and effort at fine language, which a negro is apt to display on petty embassies of

390 the kind, he dashed over the brook, and was seen scampering away up the hollow, full of the

391 importance and hurry of his mission.

392 All was now bustle and hubbub in the late quiet school room. The scholars were

393 hurried through their lessons, without stopping at trifles; those who were nimble, skipped

394 over half with impunity, and those who were tardy, had a smart application now and then in

395 the rear, to quicken their speed, or help them over a tall word. Books were flung aside,

396 without being put away on the shelves; inkstands were overturned, benches thrown down,

397 and the whole school turned loose an hour before the usual time; bursting forth like a legion

398 of young imps, yelping and racketing about the green, in joy at their early emancipation.

399 The gallant Ichabod now spent at least an extra half hour at his toilet, brushing and

400 furbishing up his best, and indeed only suit of rusty black, and arranging his looks by a bit of

401 broken looking glass, that hung up in the school house. That he might make his appearance

402 before his mistress in the true style of a cavalier, he borrowed a horse from the farmer with

403 whom he was domiciliated, a choleric old Dutchman, of the name of Hans Van Ripper, and

404 thus gallantly mounted, issued forth like a knight-errant in quest of adventures. But it is

405 meet[[35]](#footnote-35) I should, in the true spirit of romantic story, give some account of the looks and

406 equipments of my hero and his steed.[[36]](#footnote-36) The animal he bestrode was a broken-down plough

407 horse, that had outlived almost every thing but his viciousness. He was gaunt and shagged,

408 with a ewe neck and hammer head; his rusty mane and tail were tangled and knotted with

409 burs; one eye had lost its pupil, and was glaring and spectral, but the other had the gleam of

410 a genuine devil in it. Still he must have had fire and mettle in his day, if we may judge from

411 his name, which was Gunpowder. He had, in fact, been a favourite steed of his master’s, the

412 cholerick Van Ripper, who was a furious rider, and had infused, very probably, some of his

413 own spirit into the animal, for, old and broken-down as he looked, there was more lurking

414 deviltry in him than in any young filly in the country.

415 Ichabod was a suitable figure for such a steed. He rode with short stirrups, which

416 brought his knees nearly up to the pommel of the saddle; his sharp elbows stuck out like

417 grasshoppers’; he carried his whip perpendicularly in his hand, like a sceptre, and as his horse

418 jogged on, the motion of his arms was not unlike the flapping of a pair of wings. A small

419 wool hat rested on the top of his nose, for so his scanty strip of forehead might be called,

420 and the skirts of his black coat fluttered out almost to the horse’s tail. Such was the

421 appearance of Ichabod and his steed, as they shambled out of the gate of Hans Van Ripper,

422 and it was altogether such an apparition as is seldom to be met with in broad day light.

423 It was, as I have said, a fine autumnal day, the sky was clear and serene, and nature

424 wore that rich and golden livery which we always associate with the idea of abundance. The

425 forests had put on their sober brown and yellow, while some trees of the tenderer kind had

426 been nipped by the frosts into brilliant dyes of orange, purple, and scarlet. Streaming files of

427 wild ducks began to make their appearance high in the air; the bark of the squirrel might be

428 heard from the groves of beech and hickory nuts, and the pensive whistle of the quail at

429 intervals from the neighbouring stubble field.

430 The small birds were taking their farewell banquets. In the fullness of their revelry,

431 they fluttered, chirping and frolicking, from bush to bush, and tree to tree, capricious from

432 the very profusion and variety around them. There was the honest cock-robin, the favourite

433 game of stripling sportsmen, with its loud querulous note; and the twittering blackbirds

434 flying in sable clouds; and the golden winged woodpecker, with his crimson crest, his broad

435 black gorget,[[37]](#footnote-37) and splendid plumage; and the cedar bird, with its red tipt wings and yellow

436 tipt tail, and its little monteiro cap[[38]](#footnote-38) of feathers; and the blue jay, that noisy coxcomb, in his

437 gay light blue coat and white under clothes, screaming and chattering, nodding, and bobbing,

438 and bowing, and pretending to be on good terms with every songster of the grove.

439 As Ichabod jogged slowly on his way, his eye, ever open to every symptom of

440 culinary abundance, ranged with delight over the treasures of jolly autumn. On all sides he

441 beheld vast store of apples, some hanging in oppressive opulence on the trees, some

442 gathered into baskets and barrels for the market, others heaped up in rich piles for the cider-

443 press. Further on he beheld great fields of Indian corn, with its golden ears peeping from

444 their leafy coverts, and holding out the promise of cakes and hasty pudding; and the yellow

445 pumpkins lying beneath them, turning up their fair round bellies[[39]](#footnote-39) to the sun, and giving

446 ample prospects of the most luxurious of pies; and anon he passed the fragrant buckwheat

447 fields, breathing the odour of the bee-hive, and as he beheld them, soft anticipations stole

448 over his mind of dainty slap-jacks, well buttered, and garnished with honey or treacle,[[40]](#footnote-40) by the

449 delicate little dimpled hand of Katrina Van Tassel.

450 Thus feeding his mind with many sweet thoughts and “sugared suppositions,” he

451 journeyed along the sides of a range of hills which look out upon some of the goodliest

452 scenes of the mighty Hudson. The sun gradually wheeled his broad disk down into the west.

453 The wide bosom of the Tappaan Zee lay motionless and glassy, excepting that here and

454 there a gentle undulation waved and prolonged the blue shadow of the distant mountain: a

455 few amber clouds floated in the sky, without a breath of air to move them. The horizon was

456 of a fine golden tint, changing gradually into a pure apple green, and from that into a deep

457 blue of the mid-heaven. A slanting ray lingered on the woody crests of the precipices that

458 overhung some parts of the river, giving greater depth to the dark gray and purple of their

459 rocky sides. A sloop was loitering in the distance, dropping slowly down with the tide, her

460 sail hanging uselessly against the mast, and as the reflection of the sky gleamed along the still

461 water, it seemed as if the vessel was suspended in the air.

462 It was toward evening that Ichabod arrived at the castle of the Heer Van Tassel,

463 which he found thronged with the pride and flower of the adjacent country. Old farmers, a

464 spare leathern- faced race, in homespun coats and small clothes, blue stockings, huge shoes

465 and magnificent pewter buckles. Their brisk, withered little dames in close crimped caps,

466 long waisted short gowns, homespun petticoats, with scissors and pincushions, and gay

467 calico pockets, hanging on the outside. Buxom lasses, almost as antiquated as their mothers,

468 excepting where a straw hat, a fine ribband, or perhaps a white frock, gave symptoms of city

469 innovations. The sons, in short square-skirted coats with rows of stupendous brass buttons,

470 and their hair generally queued in the fashion of the times, especially if they could procure an

471 eel-skin for the purpose, it being esteemed throughout the country as a potent nourisher and

472 strengthener of the hair.

473 Brom Bones, however, was the hero of the scene, having come to the gathering on

474 his favourite steed Daredevil, a creature, like himself, full of mettle and mischief, and which

475 no one but himself could manage. He was in fact noted for preferring vicious animals, given

476 to all kinds of tricks, which kept the rider in constant risk of his neck, and held a tractable

477 well-broken horse as unworthy a lad of spirit.

478 Fain would I pause to dwell upon the world of charms that burst upon the

479 enraptured gaze of my hero, as he entered the state parlour of Van Tassel’s mansion. Not

480 those of the bevy of buxom lasses, with their luxurious display of red and white: but the

481 ample charms of a genuine Dutch country tea-table, in the sumptuous time of autumn. Such

482 heaped up platters of cakes of various and almost indescribable kinds, known only to

483 experienced Dutch housewives. There was the doughty dough-nut, the tender oly koek,[[41]](#footnote-41) and

484 the crisp and crumbling cruller; sweet cakes and short cakes, ginger cakes and honey cakes,

485 and the whole family of cakes. And then there were apple pies and peach pies and pumpkin

486 pies; not to mention slices of ham and smoked beef, together with broiled shad and roasted

487 chickens; besides delectable dishes of preserved plums, and peaches, and pears, and quinces;

488 with bowls of milk and cream, all mingled higgledy-piggledy, pretty much as I have

489 enumerated them, with the motherly tea-pot sending up its clouds of vapour from the

490 midst— Heaven bless the mark! I want[[42]](#footnote-42) breath and time to discuss this banquet as it

491 deserves, and am too eager to get on with my story. Happily, Ichabod Crane was not in so

492 great a hurry as his historian, but did ample justice to every dainty.

493 He was a kind and thankful toad, whose heart dilated in proportion as his skin was

494 filled with good cheer, and whose spirits rose with eating, as some men’s do with drink. He

495 could not help, too, rolling his large eyes round him as he eat, and chuckling with the

496 possibility that he might one day be lord of all this scene of almost unimaginable luxury and

497 splendour. Then, he thought, how soon he’d turn his back upon the old school house; snap

498 his fingers in the face of Hans Van Ripper, and every other niggardly[[43]](#footnote-43) patron, and kick any

499 itinerant pedagogue out of doors that dared to call him comrade!

500 Old Baltus Van Tassel moved about among his guests with a face dilated with

501 content and good humour, round and jolly as the harvest moon. His hospitable attentions

502 were brief, but expressive, being confined to a shake of the hand, a slap on the shoulder, a

503 loud laugh, and a pressing invitation to “reach to, and help themselves.”

504 And now the sound of the music from the common room or hall, summoned to the

505 dance. The musician was an old gray-headed negro, who had been the itinerant orchestra of

506 the neighbourhood for more than half a century. His instrument was as old and battered as

507 himself. The greater part of the time he scraped away on two or three strings, accompanying

508 every movement of the bow with a motion of the head; bowing almost to the ground, and

509 stamping with his foot whenever a fresh couple were to start.

510 Ichabod prided himself upon his dancing as much as upon his vocal powers. Not a

511 limb, not a fibre about him was idle, and to have seen his loosely hung frame in full motion,

512 and clattering about the room, you would have thought Saint Vitus[[44]](#footnote-44) himself, that blessed

513 patron of the dance, was figuring before you in person. He was the admiration of all the

514 negroes, who, having gathered, of all ages and sizes, from the farm and the neighbourhood,

515 stood forming a pyramid of shining black faces at every door and window, gazing with

516 delight at the scene, rolling their white eye-balls, and showing grinning rows of ivory from

517 ear to ear. How could the flogger of urchins be otherwise than animated and joyous; the lady

518 of his heart was his partner in the dance; she smiled graciously in reply to all his amorous

519 oglings, while Brom Bones, sorely smitten with love and jealousy, sat brooding by himself in

520 one corner.

521 When the dance was at an end, Ichabod was attracted to a knot of the sager folks,

522 who, with old Van Tassel, sat smoking at one end of the piazza, gossiping over former times,

523 and drawing out long stories about the war.

524 This neighbourhood, at the time of which I am speaking, was one of those highly

525 favoured places which abound with chronicle and great men. The British and American line

526 had run near it during the war; it had, therefore, been the scene of marauding, and been

527 infested with refugees, cow boys,[[45]](#footnote-45) and all kind of border chivalry. Just sufficient time had

528 elapsed to enable each story teller to dress up his tale with a little becoming fiction, and in

529 the indistinctness of his recollection, to make himself the hero of every exploit.

530 There was the story of Doffue Martling, a large, blue-bearded Dutchman, who had

531 nearly taken a British frigate with an old iron nine-pounder from a mud breastwork,[[46]](#footnote-46) only

532 that his gun burst at the sixth discharge. And there was an old gentleman who shall be

533 nameless, being too rich a mynheer to be lightly mentioned, who, in the battle of

534 Whiteplains,[[47]](#footnote-47) being an excellent master of defence, parried a musket ball with a small sword,

535 insomuch that he absolutely felt it whiz round the blade, and glance off at the hilt: in proof

536 of which, he was ready at any time to show the sword, with the hilt a little bent. There were

537 several more who had been equally great in the field, not one of whom but was persuaded

538 that he had a considerable hand in bringing the war to a happy termination.

539 But all these were nothing to the tales of ghosts and apparitions that succeeded. The

540 neighbourhood is rich in legendary treasures of the kind. Local tales and superstitions thrive

541 best in these sheltered, long settled retreats; but they are trampled under foot, by the shifting

542 throng that forms the population of most of our country places. Besides, there is no

543 encouragement for ghosts in the generality of our villages, for they have scarce had time to

544 take their first nap, and turn themselves in their graves, before their surviving friends have

545 travelled away from the neighbourhood; so that when they turn out of a night to walk their

546 rounds, they have no acquaintance left to call upon. This is perhaps the reason why we so

547 seldom hear of ghosts excepting in our long-established Dutch communities.

548 The immediate cause, however, of the prevalence of supernatural stories in these

549 parts, was doubtless owing to the vicinity of Sleepy Hollow. There was a contagion in the

550 very air that blew from that haunted region; it breathed forth an atmosphere of dreams and

551 fancies infecting all the land. Several of the Sleepy Hollow people were present at Van

552 Tassel’s, and, as usual, were doling out their wild and wonderful legends. Many dismal tales

553 were told about funeral trains, and mournful cries and wailings heard and seen about the

554 great tree where the unfortunate Major André[[48]](#footnote-48) was taken, and which stood in the

555 neighbourhood. Some mention was made also of the woman in white, that haunted the dark

556 glen at Raven Rock, and was often heard to shriek on winter nights before a storm, having

557 perished there in the snow. The chief part of the stories, however, turned upon the favourite

558 spectre of Sleepy Hollow, the headless horseman, who had been heard several times of late,

559 patroling the country; and it was said, tethered his horse nightly among the graves in the

560 church-yard.

561 The sequestered situation of this church seems always to have made it a favourite

562 haunt of troubled spirits. It stands on a knoll, surrounded by locust trees and lofty elms,

563 from among which its decent, whitewashed walls shine modestly forth, like Christian purity,

564 beaming through the shades of retirement. A gentle slope descends from it to a silver sheet

565 of water, bordered by high trees, between which, peeps may be caught at the blue hills of the

566 Hudson. To look upon its grass-grown yard, where the sunbeams seem to sleep so quietly,

567 one would think that here at least the dead might rest in peace. On one side of the church

568 extends a wide woody dell, along which raves a large brook among broken rocks and trunks

569 of fallen trees. Over a deep black part of the stream, not far from the church, was formerly

570 thrown a wooden bridge; the road that led to it, and the bridge itself, were thickly shaded by

571 overhanging trees, which cast a gloom about it, even in the day time; but occasioned a fearful

572 darkness at night. Such was one of the favourite haunts of the headless horseman, and the

573 place where he was most frequently encountered. The tale was told of old Brouwer, a most

574 heretical disbeliever in ghosts, how he met the horseman returning from his foray into

575 Sleepy Hollow, and was obliged to get up behind him; that they gallopped over bush and

576 brake, over hill and swamp, until they reached the bridge, when the horseman suddenly

577 turned into a skeleton, threw old Brouwer into the brook, and sprang away over the tree-

578 tops with a clap of thunder.

579 This story was immediately matched by a thrice marvellous adventure of Brom

580 Bones, who made light of the gallopping Hessian as an errant jockey.[[49]](#footnote-49) He affirmed, that on

581 returning one night from the neighbouring village of Sing-Sing,[[50]](#footnote-50) he had been overtaken by

582 this midnight trooper; that he had offered to race with him for a bowl of punch, and should

583 have won it too, for Daredevil beat the goblin horse all hollow, but just as they came to the

584 church bridge, the Hessian bolted, and vanished in a flash of fire.

585 All these tales, told in that drowsy undertone with which men talk in the dark, the

586 countenances of the listeners only now and then receiving a casual gleam from the glare of a

587 pipe, sunk deep in the mind of Ichabod. He repaid them in kind with large extracts from his

588 invaluable author, Cotton Mather, and added many very marvellous events that had taken

589 place in his native state of Connecticut, and fearful sights which he had seen in his nightly

590 walks about Sleepy Hollow.

591 The revel now gradually broke up. The old farmers gathered together their families

592 in their wagons, and were heard for some time rattling along the hollow roads, and over the

593 distant hills. Some of the damsels, mounted on pillions[[51]](#footnote-51) behind their favourite swains, and

594 their light-hearted laughter mingling with the clatter of hoofs, echoed along the silent

595 woodlands, sounding fainter and fainter until they gradually died away—and the late scene of

596 noise and frolick was all silent and deserted. Ichabod only lingered behind, according to the

597 custom of country lovers, to have a tête-a tête[[52]](#footnote-52) with the heiress; fully convinced that he was

598 now on the high road to success. What passed at this interview I will not pretend to say, for

599 in fact I do not know. Something, however, I fear me, must have gone wrong, for he

600 certainly sallied forth, after no very great interval, with an air quite desolate and chopfallen—

601 Oh these women! these women! Could that girl have been playing off any of her coquettish

602 tricks?—Was her encouragement of the poor pedagogue all a mere sham to secure her

603 conquest of his rival?—Heaven only knows, not I!—Let it suffice to say, Ichabod stole forth

604 with the air of one who had been sacking a hen roost, rather than a fair lady’s heart. Without

605 looking to the right or left to notice the scene of rural wealth, on which he had so often

606 gloated, he went straight to the stable, and with several hearty cuffs and kicks, roused his

607 steed most uncourteously from the comfortable quarters in which he was soundly sleeping,

608 dreaming of mountains of corn and oats, and whole valleys of timothy and clover.

609 It was the very witching time of night[[53]](#footnote-53) that Ichabod, heavyhearted and bedrooped,

610 pursued his travel homewards, along the sides of the lofty hills which rise above Tarry Town,

611 and which he had traversed so cheerily in the afternoon. The hour was as dismal as himself.

612 Far below him the Tappaan Zee spread its dusky and indistinct waste of waters, with here

613 and there the tall mast of a sloop, riding quietly at anchor under the land. In the dead hush

614 of midnight, he could even hear the barking of the watch-dog from the opposite shore of

615 the Hudson; but it was so vague and faint as only to give an idea of his distance from this

616 faithful companion of man. Now and then, too, the long-drawn crowing of a cock,

617 accidentally awakened, would sound far, far off, from some farm house away among the

618 hills—but it was like a dreaming sound in his ear. No signs of life occurred near him, but

619 occasionally the melancholy chirp of a cricket, or perhaps the guttural twang of a bull frog,

620 from a neighbouring marsh, as if sleeping uncomfortably, and turning suddenly in his bed.

621 All the stories of ghosts and goblins that Ichabod had heard in the afternoon, now

622 came crowding upon his recollection. The night grew darker and darker; the stars seemed to

623 sink deeper in the sky, and driving clouds occasionally hid them from his sight. He had never

624 felt so lonely and dismal. He was, moreover, approaching the very place where many of the

625 scenes of the ghost stories had been laid. In the centre of the road stood an enormous tulip

626 tree, which towered like a giant above all the other trees of the neighbourhood, and formed a

627 kind of land-mark. Its limbs were vast, gnarled, and fantastic, twisting down almost to the

628 earth, and rising again into the air, and they would have formed trunks for ordinary trees. It

629 was connected with the tragical story of the unfortunate André, who had been taken

630 prisoner hard by, and it was universally known by the name of Major André’s tree. The

631 common people regarded it with a mixture of respect and superstition, partly out of

632 sympathy for the memory of its ill-starred namesake, and partly from the tales, strange

633 sights, and doleful lamentations, told concerning it.

634 As Ichabod approached this fearful tree, he began to whistle; he thought his whistle

635 was answered: it was but a blast sweeping sharply through the dry branches. As he

636 approached a little nearer, he thought he saw something white, hanging in the midst of the

637 tree: he paused and ceased whistling; but on looking more narrowly, perceived that it was a

638 place where the tree had been scathed by lightning, and the white wood laid bare. Suddenly

639 he heard a groan—his teeth chattered, and his knees smote against the saddle: it was but the

640 rubbing of one huge bough upon another, as they were swayed about by the breeze. He

641 passed the tree in safety, but new perils lay before him.

642 About two hundred yards from the tree, a small brook crossed the road, and ran into

643 a marshy and thickly wooded glen, known by the name of Wiley’s Swamp. A few rough logs,

644 laid side by side, served for a bridge over this stream. On that side of the road where the

645 brook entered the wood, a group of oaks and chestnuts, matted thick with wild grape vines,

646 threw a cavernous gloom over it. To pass this bridge, was the severest trial. It was at this

647 identical spot that the unfortunate André was captured, and under the covert of those

648 chestnuts and vines were the sturdy yeomen concealed who surprised him. This has ever

649 since been considered a haunted stream, and fearful are the feelings of the schoolboy who

650 has to pass it alone after dark.

651 As he approached the stream, his heart began to thump; he, however, summoned up

652 all his resolution, gave his horse half a score of kicks in the ribs, and attempted to dash

653 briskly across the bridge; but instead of starting forward, the perverse old animal made a

654 lateral movement, and ran broadside against the fence. Ichabod, whose fears increased with

655 the delay, jerked the reins on the other side, and kicked lustily with the contrary foot: it was

656 all in vain; his steed started, it is true, but it was only to plunge to the opposite side of the

657 road into a thicket of brambles and alder bushes. The schoolmaster now bestowed both

658 whip and heel upon the starvelling ribs of old Gunpowder, who dashed forward, snuffling

659 and snorting, but came to a stand just by the bridge with a suddenness that had nearly sent

660 his rider sprawling over his head. Just at this moment a plashy tramp by the side of the

661 bridge caught the sensitive ear of Ichabod. In the dark shadow of the grove, on the margin

662 of the brook, he beheld something huge, misshapen, black and towering. It stirred not, but

663 seemed gathered up in the gloom, like some gigantic monster ready to spring upon the

664 traveller.

665 The hair of the affrighted pedagogue rose upon his head with terror. What was to be

666 done? To turn and fly was now too late; and besides, what chance was there of escaping

667 ghost or goblin, if such it was, which can ride upon the wings of the wind? Summoning up,

668 therefore, a show of courage, he demanded in stammering accents—“who are you?” He

669 received no reply. He repeated his demand in a still more agitated voice.—Still there was no

670 answer. Once more he cudgelled the sides of the inflexible Gunpowder, and shutting his

671 eyes, broke forth with involuntary fervour into a psalm tune. Just then the shadowy object of

672 alarm put itself in motion, and with a scramble and a bound, stood at once in the middle of

673 the road. Though the night was dark and dismal, yet the form of the unknown might now in

674 some degree be ascertained. He appeared to be a horseman of large dimensions, and

675 mounted on a black horse of powerful frame. He made no offer of molestation or

676 sociability, but kept aloof on one side of the road, jogging along on the blind side of old

677 Gunpowder, who had now got over his fright and waywardness.

678 Ichabod, who had no relish for this strange midnight companion, and bethought

679 himself of the adventure of Brom Bones with the gallopping Hessian, now quickened his

680 steed, in hopes of leaving him behind. The stranger, however, quickened his horse to an

681 equal pace; Ichabod pulled up, and fell into a walk, thinking to lag behind—the other did the

682 same. His heart began to sink within him; he endeavoured to resume his psalm tune, but his

683 parched tongue clove to the roof of his mouth, and he could not utter a stave.[[54]](#footnote-54) There was

684 something in the moody and dogged silence of this pertinacious companion, that was

685 mysterious and appalling. It was soon fearfully accounted for. On mounting a rising ground,

686 which brought the figure of his fellow traveller in relief against the sky, gigantic in height,

687 and muffled in a cloak, Ichabod was horror-struck, on perceiving that he was headless! but

688 his horror was still more increased, on observing, that the head, which should have rested on

689 his shoulders, was carried before him on the pommel of the saddle! His terror rose to

690 desperation; he rained a shower of kicks and blows upon Gunpowder, hoping, by a sudden

691 movement, to give his companion the slip—but the spectre started full jump with him.

692 Away, then, they dashed, through thick and thin; stones flying, and sparks flashing, at every

693 bound. Ichabod’s flimsy garments fluttered in the air, as he stretched his long lank body

694 away over his horse’s head, in the eagerness of his flight.

695 They had now reached the road which turns off to Sleepy Hollow; but Gunpowder,

696 who seemed possessed with a demon, instead of keeping up it, made an opposite turn, and

697 plunged headlong down hill to the left. This road leads through a sandy hollow shaded by

698 trees for about a quarter of a mile, where it crosses the bridge famous in goblin story, and

699 just beyond swells the green knoll on which stands the whitewashed church.

700 As yet the panic of the steed had given his unskilful rider an apparent advantage in

701 the chace, but just as he had got half way through the hollow, the girths of the saddle gave

702 way, and he felt it slipping from under him; he seized it by the pommel, and endeavoured to

703 hold it firm, but in vain; and had just time to save himself by clasping old Gunpowder round

704 the neck, when the saddle fell to the earth, and he heard it trampled under foot by his

705 pursuer. For a moment the terror of Hans Van Ripper’s wrath passed across his mind—for

706 it was his Sunday saddle; but this was no time for petty fears: the goblin was hard on his

707 haunches; and, unskilful rider that he was! he had much-ado to maintain his seat; sometimes

708 slipping on one side, sometimes on another, and sometimes jolted on the high ridge of his

709 horse’s back bone, with a violence that he verily feared would cleave him asunder.

710 An opening in the trees now cheered him with the hopes that the Church Bridge was

711 at hand. The wavering reflection of a silver star in the bosom of the brook told him that he

712 was not mistaken. He saw the walls of the church dimly glaring under the trees beyond. He

713 recollected the place where Brom Bones’ ghostly competitor had disappeared. “If I can but

714 reach that bridge,” thought Ichabod, “I am safe.”[[55]](#footnote-55) Just then he heard the black steed panting

715 and blowing close behind him; he even fancied he felt his hot breath. Another convulsive

716 kick in the ribs, and old Gunpowder sprung upon the bridge; he thundered over the

717 resounding planks; he gained the opposite side, and now Ichabod cast a look behind to see if

718 his pursuer should vanish, according to rule, in a flash of fire and brimstone. Just then he

719 saw the goblin rising in his stirrups, and in the very act of hurling his head at him. Ichabod

720 endeavoured to dodge the horrible missile, but too late. It encountered his cranium with a

721 tremendous crash—he was tumbled headlong into the dust, and Gunpowder, the black

722 steed, and the goblin rider, passed by like a whirlwind.——

723 The next morning the old horse was found without his saddle, and the bridle under

724 his feet, soberly cropping the grass at his master’s gate. Ichabod did not make his appearance

725 at breakfast—dinner-hour came, but no Ichabod. The boys assembled at the schoolhouse,

726 and strolled idly about the banks of the brook; but no schoolmaster. Hans Van Ripper now

727 began to feel some uneasiness about the fate of poor Ichabod, and his saddle. An inquiry

728 was set on foot, and after diligent investigation they came upon his traces. In one part of the

729 road leading to the church, was found the saddle trampled in the dirt; the tracks of horses’

730 hoofs deeply dented in the road, and evidently at furious speed, were traced to the bridge,

731 beyond which, on the bank of a broad part of the brook, where the water ran deep and

732 black, was found the hat of the unfortunate Ichabod, and close beside it a shattered

733 pumpkin.

734 The brook was searched, but the body of the schoolmaster was not to be discovered.

735 Hans Van Ripper, as executor of his estate, examined the bundle which contained all his

736 worldly effects. They consisted of two old shirts and a half; two stocks[[56]](#footnote-56) for the neck; a pair

737 of worsted stockings with holes in them; an old pair of corduroy small-clothes; a book of

738 psalm tunes full of dog’s ears; a pitch pipe out of order; a rusty razor; a small pot of bear’s

739 grease for the hair, and a cast-iron comb. As to the books and furniture of the schoolhouse,

740 they belonged to the community, excepting Cotton Mather’s History of Witchcraft, a New-

741 England Almanack, and a book of dreams and fortune telling, in which last was a sheet of

742 foolscap much scribbled and blotted, by several fruitless attempts to make a copy of verses

743 in honour of the heiress of Van Tassel. These magic books and the poetic scrawl were

744 forthwith consigned to the flames by Hans Van Ripper, who from that time forward

745 determined to send his children no more to school, observing, that he never knew any good

746 come of this same reading and writing. Whatever money the schoolmaster possessed, and he

747 had received his quarter’s pay but a day or two before, he must have had about his person at

748 the time of his disappearance.

749 The mysterious event caused much speculation at the Church on the following

750 Sunday. Knots of gazers and gossips were collected in the church-yard, at the bridge, and at

751 the spot where the hat and pumpkin had been found. The stories of Brouwer, of Bones, and

752 a whole budget of others, were called to mind; and when they had diligently considered them

753 all, and compared them with the symptoms of the present case, they shook their heads, and

754 came to the conclusion, that Ichabod had been carried off by the galloping Hessian. As he

755 was a bachelor, and in nobody’s debt, nobody troubled his head any more about him, the

756 school was removed to a different quarter of the hollow, and another pedagogue reigned in

757 his stead.

758 It is true, an old farmer, who had been down to New-York on a visit several years

759 after, and from whom this account of the ghostly adventure was received, brought home the

760 intelligence that Ichabod Crane was still alive; that he had left the neighbourhood partly

761 through fear of the goblin and Hans Van Ripper, and partly in mortification at having been

762 suddenly dismissed by the heiress; that he had changed his quarters to a distant part of the

763 country; had kept school and studied law at the same time; had been admitted to the bar,

764 turned politician, electioneered, written for the newspapers, and finally had been made a

765 Justice of the Ten Pound Court.[[57]](#footnote-57) Brom Bones too, who, shortly after his rival’s

766 disappearance, conducted the blooming Katrina in triumph to the altar, was observed to

767 look exceedingly knowing whenever the story of Ichabod was related, and always burst into

768 a hearty laugh at the mention of the pumpkin; which led some to suspect that he knew more

769 about the matter than he chose to tell.

770 The old country wives, however, who are the best judges of these matters, maintain

771 to this day, that Ichabod was spirited away by supernatural means; and it is a favourite story

772 often told about the neighbourhood round the winter evening fire. The bridge became more

773 than ever an object of superstitious awe, and that may be the reason why the road has been

774 altered of late years, so as to approach the church by the border of the millpond. The

775 schoolhouse being deserted, soon fell to decay, and was reported to be haunted by the ghost

776 of the unfortunate pedagogue; and the plough boy, loitering homeward of a still summer

777 evening, has often fancied his voice at a distance, chanting a melancholy psalm tune among

778 the tranquil solitudes of Sleepy Hollow.

799 POSTSCRIPT, FOUND IN THE HANDWRITING OF MR. KNICKERBOCKER

800 The preceding Tale is given, almost in the precise words in which I heard it related at

801 the corporation meeting of the ancient city of the Manhattoes, at which were present many

802 of its sagest and most illustrious burghers. The narrator was a pleasant, shabby, gentlemanly

803 old fellow, in pepper and salt clothes, with a sadly humourous face, and one whom I strongly

804 suspected of being poor, he made such efforts to be entertaining. When his story was

805 concluded, there was much laughter and approbation, particularly from two or three deputy

806 aldermen, who had been asleep the greater part of the time. There was, however, one tall,

807 dry-looking old gentleman, with beetling eyebrows, who maintained a grave and rather

808 severe face throughout; now and then folding his arms, inclining his head, and looking down

809 upon the floor, as if turning a doubt over in his mind. He was one of your wary men, who

810 never laugh but upon good grounds—when they have reason and the law on their side.

811 When the mirth of the rest of the company had subsided, and silence was restored, he leaned

812 one arm on the elbow of his chair, and sticking the other a-kimbo, demanded, with a slight,

813 but exceedingly sage motion of the head, and contraction of the brow, what was the moral

814 of the story, and what it went to prove.

815 The story-teller, who was just putting a glass of wine to his lips, as a refreshment

816 after his toils, paused for a moment, looked at his inquirer with an air of infinite deference,

817 and lowering the glass slowly to the table, observed, that the story was intended most

818 logically to prove,

819 “That there is no situation in life but has its advantages and pleasures, provided we

820 will but take a joke as we find it:

821 “That, therefore, he that runs races with goblin troopers, is likely to have rough

822 riding of it:

823 “Ergo, for a country schoolmaster to be refused the hand of a Dutch heiress, is a

824 certain step to high preferment in the state.”

825 The cautious old gentleman knit his brows tenfold closer after this explanation, being

826 sorely puzzled by the ratiocination of the syllogism; while methought the one in pepper and

827 salt eyed him with something of a triumphant leer. At length he observed, that all this was

828 very well, but still he thought the story a little on the extravagant—there were one or two

829 points on which he had his doubts.

830 “Faith, sir,” replied the story-teller, “as to that matter, I don’t believe one half of it

831 myself.”

D.K.

1820

1. *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* was the last of three pieces printed in February 1820 as the sixth installment of *The Sketch Book*, the source of the present text. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. By the Scottish poet James Thomson (1700-1748). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Wide “sea” in the Hudson near Tarrytown. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. I.e., from southern Germany. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Henry Hudson (d. 1611), English navigator in the service of the Dutch. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. I.e., the nine foals of the demonic night mare who “rides” her sleeping victims. C.f. Shakespeare’s *King Lear* 3.4.128. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. German mercenaries from Hesse were hired by the British to fight against the colonists in the American Revolution. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. I.e., image; an echo of Shakespeare’s *2 Henry IV* 3.2, Falstaff’s description of the youthful Justice Shallow. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Slender, flexible branch (usually from a willow), used in place of rope. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Eel trap. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. *Hudibras* 2. 843 (1664), by the English poet Samuel Butler (1612-1680); ultimately from Proverbs 13.24. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Pain. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. C.f. Shylock’s description of Launcelot Gobbo in Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice* 2.5.46. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Formerly. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. In the *New England Primer*, a long-lived double-duty text that taught the Bible along with the alphabet, the letter *L* consists of an illustration depicting Isaiah 11.6-9 and the rhyme “The lion bold / The lamb doth hold.” [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Singing of rhymed versions of the Psalms. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. From *Colin Clout* (1523) by the English poet John Skelton (1460?-1529). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Cotton Mather (1663-1728) wrote *Memorable Providences, Relating to Witchcrafts and Possessions* (1689) and *The Wonders of the Invisible World* (1693). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Terrifying [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. *L’Allegro*, line 140, by the English poet John Milton (1608-1674). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Wide, ornamental waistband worn over a dress. “Saardam”: now Zaandam, near Amsterdam [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. C.f. “that roasted Manningtree ox with the pudding in his belly” (Shakespeare’s *1 Henry IV* 2.4). [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Rooster. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. I.e., clemency. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. I.e., residence. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Probably, gourds in the size and shape of oranges. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Fabled stone of impenetrable hardness. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Russian cavalry ranging the area around the Don River. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Wild, unruly. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Fence. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Cane made from a climbing plant with tough, pliant stems. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. In book 1 of Homer’s *Iliad* King Agamemnon takes the captive maiden Briseis from the warrior Achilles, who thereupon sulks in his tent during the Trojan War until he is roused to avenge his favorite, Patroclus. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Child’s toy, spun like a top. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. A winged cap symbolized the speed of Mercury, messenger of the gods. Slavery was legal in New York into the first years of the 19th century. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Fitting. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. The description recalls Cervantes’s portrayal of Don Quixote and his horse Rosinante. Part of Irving’s anti-Yankee fun comes from his playing off Cotton Mather’s solemn books, which confuse the schoolmaster’s brains, against the romances of chivalry, which are the source of Don Quixote’s delusions. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Throat. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Hunting cap with a flap at the front. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. C.f. Shakespeare’s *As You Like It* 2.7.154. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Molasses. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Kind of cruller or doughnut. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Lack. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Stingy or miserly. Taken from the Middle English “nigon” which carries similar meaning or from the Old Norse “nigla” which means to fuss about small matters. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Early Christian martyr prayed to by Catholics suffering from chorea, epilepsy, or other nervous disorders. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Tory guerrillas (i.e., British partisans) who raided the Tarrytown area during the Revolution. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Hastily erected fortification. “Nine-pounder”: small cannon firing nine-pound weights. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. The British general William Howe defeated George Washington at the battle of White Plains, near New York City, in 1776. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. John André (1751-1780), brave British spy arrested at Tarrytown and executed at Tappan, across the Hudson; he carried documents proving that Benedict Arnold had betrayed the colonial army. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Fraud. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Ossining. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Pad behind a saddle for a second rider. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Head to head (French, literal trans.); i.e., a confidential conversation. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. C.f. Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* 3.2.406. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Verse. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Superstition held that spirits could not cross water. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Wide bands or cravats. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Small claims court. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)