The Legend of Sleepy Hollow

By WASHINGTON IRVING.

[FOUND AMONG THE PAPERS OF THE LATE DIEDRICH KNICKERBOCKER.]

In this way matters went on for some time, without producing any material effect on the relative situations of the contending powers. On a fine autumnal afternoon, Ichabod, in pensive mood, sat enthroned on the lofty stool from whence he usually watched all the concerns of his little literary realm. In his hand he swayed a ferule, that scepter of despotic power; the birch of justice reposed on three nails, behind the throne, a constant terror to evil doers; 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 trousers, 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 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 plow horse that had outlived almost every thing but his viciousness. He was gaunt and shaggy, 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 his name, which was 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 scepter, and as the 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 the 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 fullness 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 bluejay, that noisy coxcomb, in his gay light blue coat and white underclothes, screaming and chattering, nodding and bobbing, 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 bee hive, 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 Tappaan 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 gowns, homespun petticoats, with scissors and pin cushions and gay calico pockets hanging on the outside. Buxom lasses, almost as antiquated as their mothers, excepting where a straw hat, a fine riband, or perhaps a white frock, gave symptoms of city innovations. 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 eelskin 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, 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.

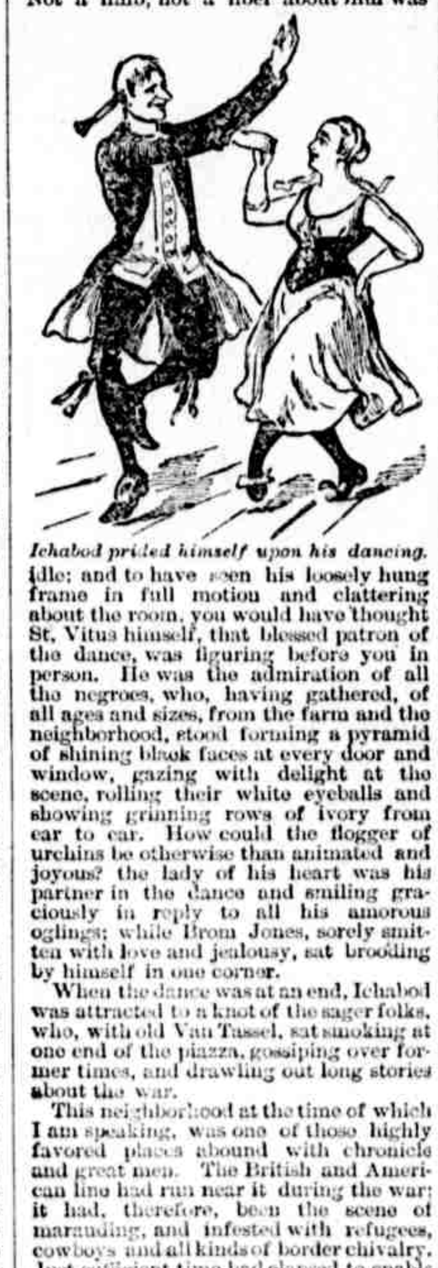
Fain would I pause to dwell upon the world of charms that burst upon the enraptured gaze of my hero as he entered the state parlor of Van Tassel's mansion. Not those of the bevy of buxom lasses, with their luxurious display of red and white; but the ample charms of a genuine Dutch country tea table in 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 tender olykoek 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 away 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.

Ichabod prided himself upon his dancing as much as upon his vocal powers. Not a limb, not a fiber about him was idle; and to have seen his loosely hung frame in full motion and clattering about the room, you would have thought St. 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 Jones, sorely smitten with love and jealousy, sat brooding by himself in one corner.



Ichabod prided himself upon his dancing.

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 drawling out long stories about the war.

This neighborhood at the time of which I am speaking, was one of those highly favored places 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, cowboys and all kinds of border chivalry. Just sufficient time had elapsed to enable each story teller 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 White Plains, being an excellent master of defense, 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 traveled 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 cause, 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 Maj. 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 specter of Sleepy Hollow, the headless horseman, who had been heard several times of late, patroling the country; and, it is 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 this 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 day time; 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 marvelous 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 overtaken by this midnight trooper; that he 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, sunk deep in the mind of Ichabod. He repaid them in kind with large extracts from his invaluable author, Cotton Mather, and added many marvelous 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 chapfallen—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 a 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 henroost, 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 Tappaan 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 watchdog 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 bullfrog 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 center 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 Maj. 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 a 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, snuffling 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 traveler.

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 cudgeled 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 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 traveler 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 his 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 specter 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 it up, 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 half way through the hollow the girths of the saddle gave way, 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 (unskillful 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 the 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. In 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.

Ichabod endeavored to dodge the horrible missile.

The next morning the old horse was found without his saddle, and with the 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 shattered 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 by 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 goblin 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 winter evening 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 school house being deserted soon fell to decay, and was reported to be haunted by the ghost of the unfortunate pedagogue, and the plow boy, loitering homeward of a still summer evening 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 the Manhattoes (New York), 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 a-kimbo, 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."

Agricultural Notes.

The American Jersey Cattle club has issued volume 28 of its "Herd Register." The number of bulls is carried from 20,001 to 21,000, and that of cows from 49,001 to 51,000.

The department of agriculture reports the average condition of horses throughout the country as 98.4, a very high average.

According to Professor Henry, combinations of Indian corn and skim milk afford a most economical ration for young pigs, shoats and breeding stock where good bone and muscle are essential to the highest results.

Peach growing promises to become an important industry in Connecticut. The Connecticut Valley Orchard company has two immense orchards at Meriden and at Berlin, and this year is the first fruitage of the trees and it is expected that the yield will reach 40,000 baskets.

Red pepper may be fed to poultry in moderate quantities with good results, but do not make their food so strong with it that you could not swallow it yourself, advises Poultry Yard.

A LOT OF GOOD STORIES.

THEY ARE TOLD BY STATESMEN OF THE CAPITAL CITY.

There Is Also a Story Told by the Wife of Corporal Tanner, the New Pension Commissioner, and It Is About a Lady with a Fine Complexion.

[Special Correspondence.]

WASHINGTON, June 20.—Senator Wade Hampton is a good story teller. As far as is known he is up to this time the only man who has had the temerity to tell the president an impious tale, and Gen. Harrison was actually very much pleased with the narrative. "I always did like army stories," he says, "and you can't expect army stories to be good enough to tell a Sunday school class. I forgave the profanity of Senator Hampton's story out of consideration for its wit." The president is still rather fond of army reminiscences and military matters in general. You can see that in the soft side which he is ever ready to turn toward veterans of the field, in the correctly military salutes which he makes in the presence of officers passing before him in procession, in the old military slouch hat which he invariably wears while taking his constitutional strolls. The story Senator Hampton told was an army story—not particularly new and fresh, but new to the president.

"One day during the war," said the senator, "the colonel of a South Carolina regiment was making a round of inspection. Sitting lazily on a rail fence, whittling at a piece of shingle, he found a man whose face was not familiar to him. The colonel was indignant. Approaching the loafer he called out to him with all proper severity: 'Who the —— are you, sitting here in this fashion?' 'I, sir,' responded the man on the fence, continuing his whittling, 'am the chaplain of the ——st regiment. Now, who in —— are you?'"

That the president has a strong sense of humor, despite his habitual dignity and that poise of manner which by some is mistaken for coldness, is becoming rapidly apparent. During one of the many discussions which have been had at the White House about the status of the colored men of the south, a new story was told by Col. Parsons, of Alabama, and greatly enjoyed by the president. Col. Parsons was contending that the people of the south know the colored man better than the people of the north, and really like him better and treat him better. To illustrate his point he related a story which was first brought to Washington by Maj. Jones, of Pine Bluff, Ark. Maj. Jones is a colored man himself, but a rich one. He is, in fact, the richest man in Pine Bluff, where he owns the street car line and is interested in other large enterprises. Maj. Jones, like Col. Parsons, believes the south is the place for the negro, and that the people of the north, with all their sentiment about the freedman, are not one-half so ready to give him practical help as the men of the south.

"There was a nigger named Sam who used to drive a street car for me in Pine Bluff," said Maj. Jones. "Sam could read, and in the newspapers he had seen so much of the love the people of the north bear for the colored man that he concluded the north was the place for him. He talked to me about it, and said he was going up to Iowa and see if he couldn't do better. I advised against it, but he would go, and go he did. In Iowa he was pretty well treated. The folks up there called him 'Mr.' and shook hands with him, and talked politics with him as if he were an equal. But they didn't give him any work. Nobody seemed anxious to have Sam work for him.

"This went on till the little money Sam had taken with him was all gone, and he then concluded the best thing he could do would be to go back to Arkansaw, where white men might call him hard names, but at the same time give him something to do and eat. So he started, on foot, hoping to pick up enough food on the way to keep him going. The first place he struck for grub was at a farm house where a man from New York lived. The farmer was very polite to him, but when the grub business was mentioned, said times were hard and he didn't believe he had anything to spare. Sam trudged along to another farm house, and another, and his experience at the first was repeated at each of the others. Everybody was polite, but nobody gave him any chuck. For two or three days Sam hadn't a mouthful to eat, and his belly was fairly hanging up against his backbone when he came to a place where a man was out in the front yard mowing grass. To him Sam told his now old, old story of leaving Arkansas, of his bad luck in Iowa, of his desire to get back to Pine Bluff, and of his great hunger. Before he had concluded his story the farmer interrupted him: 'You d—d black idiot,' he exclaimed, 'why didn't you have sense enough to stay in Arkansaw?' Sam's face brightened instantly. He almost fell on his knees for joy, and cried out: 'Boss, you dunno how glad I is to see you. When did you leave the souf youself? Oh, boss, but I is glad to git 'mong friends agin.' 'Go in the house there, you black fool, an' git some chuck. Perhaps you will know enough another time to stay where you belong.' And Sam did go in and he filled himself with chuck. And he staid all night, and started out in the morning with a bag full of bread and meat to keep his belly off his backbone while he journeyed on toward Pine Bluff."

Barnes, of Georgia, the 300 pound congressman, and the heaviest man who sits in the United States Capitol, is another good story teller. Indeed, story telling appears to be one of the accomplishments of southern statesmen. Barnes is not in Washington now, being at his Georgia home drinking buttermilk. Probably Congressman Barnes drinks more buttermilk than any other man in the United States. For twenty years or more Barnes has not seen his knees, except in a mirror, and the mountain of flesh which stands between his eyes and his legs he rubs about twenty times a day in summer, gulps down a glass of buttermilk, smacks his lips and exclaims: "There is nothing like buttermilk in summer." "But, Mr. Barnes," said a friend to him one day last summer in Washington, "doesn't the drinking of a score or more of glasses of buttermilk in a day have a tendency to increase your flesh?" "Of course it does," the congressman replied, "and that is why I like it. I am fat, and am glad of it. I like fat, and wouldn't be leaner if I could."

To see Barnes in his seat in the house you would think him too dignified to tell a story, but he isn't. A story which he started going here last winter is still going, and probably by this time has traveled all over the country. Stories are rapid travelers. This one was about a small boy, his mother and the bishop. The bishop was expected to dinner, and the mother was coaching the small boy in hopes of getting his performance, for this occasion only, up to an abnormally high standard. "Johnny," said the fond mother, "the bishop will be here to dinner. After he has removed his hat and coat, and greeted the other members of the family, he will call you to him, take your hand, ask your name, your age, who made you and then tell you to be a good boy, and run out and gambol on the green. You must tell him that your name is Johnny, that you are 9 years old and that God made you. Now, don't forget."

The bishop came and proceeded to prove that the mother was a prophet. He called Johnny to him, took his hand in a patronizing way, and in the presence of the proud and smiling mother and father began his foretold catechism. But Johnny was one of those smart youths who like to get ahead of people by anticipating their remarks, and so when the bishop asked him what his name was, the young terror struck an attitude, squinted his left eye, pointed his finger derisively at the good bishop and replied:

"Johnny. Nine years old. God. Y-a-a-a!"

Even the ladies tell stories, and right good yarns some of them are. Mrs. Tanner, wife of the pension commissioner, has a story of the experiences of a friend of hers which never fails to excite wild and undignified laughter. The friend was a Brooklyn lady, and her amusing experience occurred at Cooperstown, N. Y., in the summer resort hotel there, made somewhat famous by the Carter divorce trial in Chicago. The Brooklyn lady was the envy of all the other feminine guests of the house, for the reason that her complexion was always clear and bright. No matter how often she went boating in the hot sun, or played lawn tennis at high noon, she was sure to appear at dinner with a complexion white and clear as a rose in early morning. The other ladies, who tanned and burned and blistered, despite all their precautions, could not understand the secret of the Brooklyn woman's immunity. No cosmetics were ever seen on her face, and she exposed herself to the sun in a most reckless way. For two or three weeks the mystery remained unsolved, and probably would have continued to this day but for the interposition of a peculiar and amusing accident.

One afternoon the Brooklyn lady left the veranda of the hotel, saying to her friends that she was going to lie down in her room and take her daily "beauty nap." Five minutes later, with her door carefully locked, she was sitting in her rocking chair with a complexion mask on her face. This, then, was the secret of the clear skin and defiance of sun and wind. The "beauty nap" ruse had been played with great success, and as yet no one had suspected the true state of affairs. On this occasion, however, a bell boy rapped at the lady's door with a package in his hand. Hitherto all such knocks had gone unheeded, but for once the belle from Brooklyn forgot herself and went to the door with the hideous complexion mask on her face. As soon as the bell boy had set eyes upon the uncanny apparition he took to his heels and ran down the hall screaming at the top of his lungs.

He had had no experience with complexion masks, and naturally supposed he had seen a ghost. Not thinking that the boy's strange conduct was caused by her own appearance the lady stepped out into the hall to see what the matter was. She thought the hotel must be on fire, and so did the other guests of the house, for, alarmed by the boy's cries, they came rushing into the hall by scores. In a twinkling the corridor was filled with men, women and children, all excited, shouting inquiries at one another, and running up and down to ascertain where the fire was or what the trouble might be. In the midst of them was the lady with the fine complexion, entirely unmindful of herself and thinking only of the danger which threatened the hotel and its guests.

As one after another of the people discovered the secret of the uproar the fair disturber was surrounded by a curious and mirthful crowd, and among the very last to understand the situation was the wearer of the hideous mask. Chancing to put her hand to her face, the horrible reality was instantly revealed to her. With a scream that rose high above the laughter of the crowd in the corridor, she made a wild plunge for her room, locked the door after her and relapsed into hysterics. She did not go down to dinner that evening, and for once there were no whispered inquiries at table: "How in the world does she keep her face so clear?" Early next morning a closed carriage conveyed to the train a lady who concealed beneath a heavy veil the finest complexion in Cooperstown.

By the way, there is no more interesting woman in Washington than Mrs. Tanner. She and her husband live in two small rooms in the Ebbitt house. Every day Mrs. Tanner goes to the pension office for two or three hours to help her husband at his work, and to make sure that he eats some luncheon and in other ways takes at least a little care of his health. She has learned the routine of his work, and if necessary could take his desk and keep the machine a-running.

WALTER WELLMAN.

Muskmelons.

The varieties of the muskmelon are readily divisible into two classes, namely, the green fleshed and orange fleshed. The former have softer, sweeter and more juicy flesh, while the latter are firmer and more highly flavored. Each class has its advocates, but the latter are generally preferred. As a rule, the smaller the fruits produced by a variety the higher the quality, and when the seed of any variety is pure its quality can be fairly judged by the color of the flesh and the size of the fruit, without much regard to the particular name the seedsman has seen fit to give it. And yet we cannot get along without the name.

Emerald Gem, Miller's Cream Nutmeg, Casaba, Surprise and Christiana rank very high in quality among the orange fleshed muskmelons. Among the green fleshed the New Orange Cream, Queen and Baltimore Nutmeg have proved very good. Livingston's Perfection is a happy combination of the orange and green fleshed muskmelon, a union seldom met with. The rich, yellow flesh unites to a very considerable extent the juiciness and sweetness of the one class with the high flavor of the other, and in quality it is very difficult to surpass.

A Crop of Four Leaved Clovers.

Here is a curious circumstance in natural history: Last spring, in the time when daisies blow, a lady living on Mount Bowdoin went out to gather a bunch of the golden hearted flowers. Seeing some exceptionally large and deeply colored clover blossoms, she stooped to pick them, and discovered a four leaved clover, and another, and another, until she had found seventeen four and one six leaved one on the one plant, not larger than her own hand. The plant was in a rocky spot, and its roots readily detached themselves from the scant soil and came up in her hands. She took it home, set it out in her garden, and it produced its kind through all the summer long. The plant never increased in size, its roots refusing to spread themselves, but she rarely visited it without being rewarded by from one to eight four leaved specimens. In the autumn the lady transplanted the root to a small salt box, which it does not nearly fill, but since that time it has borne thirty-seven four and a dozen five leaved clovers.