

While Irving was writing his History of New York, he met with a loss which saddened his whole life. This stroke was the early death of Matilda Hoffman, a young woman to whom Irving was deeply attached, and of whom he wrote in a private diary: "She died in the beauty of her youth, and in my memory she will ever be young and beautiful." A solemn passage in Bracebridge Hall, "St. Mark's Eve," refers to this period of his life. "There are departed beings that I have loved as I never shall love again in this world that have loved me as I never again shall be loved."

The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, which appeared soon after Irving took up his abode in London, made him famous. Byron said to an American: "God bless him! he is a genius; and he has something better than genius—a heart. Irving himself never wrote the "Broken Heart" without weeping; nor can I hear it without tears. God don't send many such spirits into this world."

Seventeen years elapsed ere Irving returned to America. He had made a name for himself in England. During his stay he had made the acquaintance of Moore the poet, who was sporting in exile in France. They met at Moore's cottage in the Champs Elysees, and scarcely a day passed without their seeing each other. Another writer in exile in France at this time was John Howard Payne, the author of "Home, Sweet Home." Irving breakfasted with him in Paris. Bracebridge Hall, The Tales of a Traveller, and The Life and Voyages of Columbus, belong to this period. While in Spain Irving sent to London his first volume of his Conquest of Granada, which Colridge regarded as a master-piece of romantic narrative. It was while there he gathered materials for his Alhambra, which seemed to take well with the public.

How warmly Irving was welcomed back to his home in America after his seventeen years' exile. The public dinner given in his honor was well merited.

No wonder the roof rang with the cheers when, in reply to a question, he said, "I am asked how long I mean to remain here? They know but little of my heart or my feelings who can ask me this question. I answer, as long as I live."

A noble trait of his character is revealed soon after his return home. He had commenced collecting materials for a History of the Spanish Conquest of Mexico, when he learned Prescott was already engaged on the same subject. He immediately sent word to Prescott that he had abandoned his plans as he considered Prescott had a prior right.

Oliver Goldsmith and Mahomet and His Successors were written after he had become enstalled in his beloved Sunny Side. Mention must be made of that delightful collection of stories which he called Wolfert's Roost, a name he contemplated calling his home before he decided on Sunny Side. That his life was spared to complete the greatest work of his pen, the life of Washington, is cause for thankfulness. The last and fifth volume appeared a few months before his death.

Bryant, in his oration in memory of Irving, a few months after his death, said: "Farewell! thou, who hast entered into the rest prepared from the foundation of the world for serene and gentle spirits like thine. Farewell! happy in thy life, happy in thy death, happier in the reward to which that death was the assured passage; fortunate in attracting the admiration of the world to thy beautiful writings, still more fortunate in having written nothing which did not tend to promote the range of magnanimous forbearance and generous sympathies among thy fellow-men; the lightness of that enduring fame which thou hast won on earth is but a shadowy symbol of the glory to which thou art admitted in the world beyond the grave. Thy errand upon earth was an errand of peace and good will to men, and thou art in a region where hate and strife