

Presbyterian, but even she could not help exclaiming with a half-mournful admiration: "Oh, Washington! if you were only good." He says of himself: "I was always fond of visiting new scenes, and observing strange characters and manners. Even when a mere child I began my travels, and made many tours of discovery into foreign parts and unknown regions of my native city, to the frequent alarm of my parents and the emolument of the town crier. As I grew into boyhood I made myself familiar with all the places famous in history or fable, and every spot where a murder or robbery had been committed or a ghost seen." This rambling propensity increased with his years. He visited various parts of his own country, and was charmed with the grandeur of its natural scenery, but Europe held forth charms of storied and poetical association which he could not resist. He says: "My native country was full of youthful promise; Europe was rich in the accumulated treasures of age. Her very ruins told the history of times gone by, and every mouldering stone was a chronicle." Added to this allurements was a desire to see the great men of the earth, of whom America had her share, although few in comparison with the later time. "The dry study of law which he had undertaken after leaving college proved not congenial to him, and, when not employed, he turned his attention to reading on more interesting subjects. A series of essays was attempted over the signature of Jonathan Oldstyle. His health failing about this time gave him the coveted excuse for foreign travels. Many were the mournful predictions as to the result of his cough, but travel in France, Italy, the Netherlands and England brought back again health and vigor. The study of the law was resumed and he became admitted to the bar. While waiting for clients, who never came, he found abundant opportunity for the study of the literature of England and such also as America possessed. There seemed

to have been a dearth of home literature and the time was ripe to accept his literary ventures when he launched them upon the world.

The History of New York was a success in more ways than one. Its whim and satire was said to have amused the lovers of wit and humor, but its irreverence towards the early Dutch settlers somewhat angered their descendants. Scott owned that he had never read anything so closely resembling the style of Dean Swift as the annals of Diedrick Knickerbocker Bryant, who was a youth at college when it came out, committed a portion of it to memory to repeat as a declamation before his class, but was so overcome with laughter when he appeared on the floor, that he was unable to proceed, thus incurring the displeasure of his tutor. Fifty years later when he delivered a discourse on the life, character and genius of Irving, his admiration of it had not abated. "When I compare it with other works of wit and humor of a similar length," he said, "I find that, unlike most of them, it carries the reader to the conclusion without weariness or satiety, so unsought, spontaneous, self-suggested are the wit and humor. The author makes us laugh, because he can no more help it than we can help laughing." In this work are found traces of his old masters, Chaucer and Spencer. "We are conscious of a flavor of the olden time, as of a racy wine of some rich vintage—
'Cooled a long age in the deep-delved earth.'"

In the summer of 1817 Irving visited London and Edinburg, and had the delightful pleasure of passing two long days with Scott at Abbotsford. He wandered with the glorious old minstrel about the hills rendered classic by border tales and song in a kind of dream. He draws a perfect picture of Scott and his family assembled on an evening. Sir Walter thanked Campbell, who brought about the interview, "for making me known," he said, "to one of the best and pleasantest acquaintances I had made this many a day."