

spent in rambles about the surrounding country. I made myself familiar with all its places famous in history or fable. I knew every spot where a murder or a robbery had been committed, or a ghost seen. I visited the neighboring villages, and added greatly to my stock of knowledge, by noting their habits and customs, and conversing with their sages and great men. I even journeyed one long summer's day to the summit of the most distant hill, whence I stretched my eye over many a mile of *terra incognita*, and was astonished to find how vast a globe I inhabited."

"This travelling propensity strengthened with my years. Books of voyages and travels became my passion, and in devouring their contents, I neglected the regular exercises of the school. How wistfully would I wander about the pier-heads in fine weather, and watch the parting ships, bound to distant climes — with what longing eyes would I gaze after their lessening sails and waft myself in imagination to the ends of the earth."

At one time he entertained the idea of running away from home and engaging as a sailor, but finally gave it up on account of an unconquerable dislike to salt pork.

He began to show a literary tendency as early as the age of thirteen by writing a play, which was given at a friend's house, before a well-known actress of the day. Irving's talent for writing, however, did not develop along dramatic lines. The evolution of "Rip Van Winkle" as a play from Irving's sketch was a slow development. Two of his brothers — Peter and John — were sent to Columbia College; but he was not given this advantage, a fact which he never ceased to regret. At the age of sixteen his school-days were over, and he entered the law-office of Henry Masterton, where he spent two years, but made little advancement in the study of law. It was at this period that he made his voyage up the Hudson, the recol-

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