

pleasure was Hoole's translation of "Orlando Furioso," which fired him to emulate the feats of its heroes, by combating his playmates with a wooden sword in the yard of his father's house. His next literary favorites were "Robinson Crusoe" and "Sindbad the Sailor," and a collection of voyages and travels, entitled "The World Displayed," which he used to read at night by the glimmer of secreted candles after he had retired to bed, and which begot in him a desire to go to sea—a strong desire that by the time he left school almost ripened into a determination to run away from home and be a sailor. It led him, at any rate, to try to eat salt pork, which he abominated, and to lie on the hard floor, which, of course, was distasteful to him. These preliminary hardships proved too much for his heroism, so the notion of becoming a gallant tar was reluctantly abandoned.

Irving's first known attempt at original composition was a couplet leveled against a larger schoolfellow, who was attentive to the servant girl of his master, and who was so enraged at the fun it occasioned that he gave the writer a severe thrashing. The young poet was discouraged in his personalities, but not his art; for he contributed metrical effusions to the "Weekly Museum," a little periodical of four pages, published in Peck Slip, to which he also contributed moral essays. At the age of thirteen he wrote a play, which was represented at the house of a friend, and stimulated his boyish fondness for the stage. He was abetted in his dramatic passion by James K. Paulding, who was between four and five years his senior, and was residing with his brother William Irving, who had married his sister. The theater was situated in John Street, between Broadway and Nassau, not far from his father's house, from which he used to steal to see the play, returning in time for the evening prayer, after which he would pretend to retire for the night to his own room in the second story, whence he would climb out of the window on a woodshed, and so get back to the theater, and the enjoyment of the after-piece. These youthful escapades, if detected, would no doubt have subjected him to