Week Eight: Reason and Revolution Part III / The Romantic, the Real and the American Indian

Washington Irving

(1783–1859)

With Cooper, Poe, and Hawthorne, Irving has survived all other American writers of fiction before Melville, and he still finds new readers with every passing generation. He was the first great prose stylist of American romanticism, and his familiar style was destined to outlive the formal prose of such contemporaries as Scott and Cooper, and to provide a model for the prevailing prose narrative of the future.

The apparent ease of his writing is not simply that of the gifted amateur; it results from his purposeful identification of his whole personality with what he wrote. He was urbane and worldly, yet humorous and gentle; a robust connoisseur, yet innately reserved; a patrician, yet sympathetic toward the people. His vast reading, following only the impulse of his own enthusiasms, resulted in a rich if random literary inheritance, revealed in all that he wrote. His response to the period of Addison, Swift, and Johnson, with its great and graceful style, and his enthusiasm for the current European romanticism, enabled him to combine these with his independent literary personality and American roots.

It is instructive to consider the number of his literary innovations. He was our first great belletrist, writing always for pleasure, and to produce pleasure; yet readers of all classes responded to him in a country in which the didactic and utilitarian had formerly prevailed. He gave an impetus both to the extravagant American humor of which Mark Twain became the classic, and to the urbane wit that has survived in writers ranging from Holmes and Lowell to the *New Yorker* wits of the past and present. In his *Sketch Book* appeared the first modern short stories and the first great American juvenile literature. He was among the first of the moderns to write good history and biography as literary entertainment. He introduced the familiar essay to America. On his own whimsical terms, Irving restored the waning Gothic romances which Poe soon infused with psychological subtleties. The scope of his life and his writing was international, and produced a certain breadth of view in his readers; yet his best-known stories awakened an interest in the life of American regions from the Hudson valley to the prairies of the West. His influence abroad, as writer, as visitor, and as diplomat, was that of a gifted cultural ambassador, at home on both continents, at a time when his young country badly needed such representation. He was the only American writer of his generation who could chide the British in an atmosphere of good humor.

The events of Irving's life are characterized by the same casual approach and distinguished results. Gently born and well educated, the youngest of eleven children of a prosperous New York merchant, he began a genteel reading for the law at sixteen, but preferred a literary Bohemianism. At nineteen he published, in his brother's newspaper, his "Jonathan Oldstyle" satires of New York life. By the age of twenty-three, when he was admitted to the New York bar, he had roamed the Hudson valley and been a literary vagabond in England, Holland, France, and Italy, reading and

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The standard edition of Irving's work has been *The Works of Washington Irving,* Author's Uniform Revised Edition, 21 vols., 1860–1861, reissued in 12 vols., 1881. *The Complete Works of Washington Irving,* ed. Henry A. Pochmann and others, was published in 30 volumes, 1969–1989. *The Journals of Washington Irving,* 3 vols., 1919, were edited by W. P. Trent and G. S. Hellman, and a number of volumes of the letters have been published. Several later editions, individual volumes, are easily available; note especially *Knickerbocker's History of New York,* edited by Stanley T. Williams and Tremaine McDowell, 1927; and Edwin T. Bowden, ed., *A History of New York,* 1964. *Washington Irving: Representative Selections,* edited by Henry A. Pochmann, American Writers Series, 1934, has a useful introduction and bibliography.

Pierre M. Irving published the first standard *Life and Letters,* 4 vols., 1862–1864; other good lives are those by Charles Dudley Warner, 1890, and G. S. Hellman, 1925. However, the definitive biographical and critical study is that by Stanley T. Williams: *The Life of Washington Irving,* 2 vols., 1935. See also Edward Wagenknecht, *Washington Irving: Moderation Displayed,* 1962; William L. Hedges, *Washington Irving, an American Study,* 1965; Haskell Springer, *Washington Irving: A Reference Guide,* 1976; Andrew B. Myers, *A Century of Commentary on the Works of Washington Irving,* 1976; Martin Roth, *Comedy and America: The Lost World of Washington Irving,* 1976; Mary W. Bowden, *Washington Irving,* 1981; and Jeffrey Rubin-Dorsky, *Adrift in the Old World: The Psychological Pilgrimage of Washington Irving,* 1988.

studying what pleased him, which was a great deal, and reveling in the lively world of the theater. Back in New York, he joined with his brother, William, and James Kirke Paulding, in 1807, in producing the *Salmagundi* papers, Addisonian commentaries on New York society and frivolities. *A History of New York, by Diedrich Knickerbocker* (1809), a rollicking burlesque of a current serious history of the early Dutch settlers, has become a classic of humor, and might have launched an immediate career for its author.

A personal tragedy, however, changed his course for a time; the death of his fiancée, Matilda Hoffman, coincided with the demands of the family cutlery firm, and in 1810 he went to Washington as representative of the business. In 1815 he again turned restlessly to his European roving, with headquarters in England during the next seventeen years, but his literary career was soon to catch up with him again. In 1818 the failure of the Irving firm, which had bountifully supported his leisure, threw family responsibilities upon him, and he loyally plunged into the authorship for which he had almost unconsciously prepared himself. The *Sketch Book* appeared serially in 1819–1820; in volume form shortly thereafter, it at once had an international success. *Bracebridge Hall* followed in 1822; then he first went to Germany in pursuit of an interest in German romanticism, which flavored the *Tales of a Traveller* (1824) and other later writings. Meanwhile in Paris he had met John Howard Payne, the American dramatist and actor, with whom he wrote the brilliant social comedy *Charles the Second, or The Merry Monarch*.

From 1826 to 1829 he was in Spain on diplomatic business, residing for a time in the Alhambra. His reading at that period, including the study of Spanish historical sources, resulted in a number of important works: *A History of the Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus* (1828), *A Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada* (1829), *Voyages and Discoveries of the Companions of Columbus* (1831), a famous volume of stories and sketches—*The Alhambra* (1832)—and "Legends of the Conquest of Spain" (in *The Crayon Miscellany,* 1835).

Before *The Alhambra* appeared, he was on his way back to the United States after two years as secretary of the American legation in London (1829–1831). American reviewers had commented, often with irritation, on his seeming preference for Europe, but the charges were exaggerated. After seventeen years abroad he returned with the desire to portray his own country again, and although such western adventures as *A Tour on the Prairies* (1835), *Astoria* (history of Astor's fur trade, 1836), and *The Adventures of Captain Bonneville* (explorations in the Rocky Mountains, 1837) are not among his best work, they broke new trails in our literature. In 1836 he made his home at Sunnyside, near Tarrytown, so lovingly described years before as "Sleepy Hollow." He had already declined a nomination to Congress; now he declined to run for mayor of New York, or to become Van Buren's secretary of the navy. Instead he wrote a good *Life of Oliver Goldsmith* (1840), and began the *Life of George Washington* (published 1855–1859), long a standard work. From 1842 to 1845 he served as minister to Spain, then settled at Sunnyside, which he remodeled and enlarged, while preparing the revised edition of his works, and completing his *Washington*. The fifth and last volume of the latter appeared just before his death in 1859.

WASHINGTON IRVING

Rip Van Winkle[1]

A POSTHUMOUS WRITING OF DIEDRICH KNICKERBOCKER

By Woden,[2] *God of Saxons,*
From whence comes Wensday, that is Wodensday.
Truth is a thing that ever I will keep
Unto thylke day in which I creep into
My sepulchre—

—CARTWRIGHT[3]

[The following Tale was found among the papers of the late Diedrich Knickerbocker, an old gentleman of New York, who was very curious in the Dutch history of the province, and the manners of the descendants from its primitive settlers. His historical researches, however, did not lie so much among books as among men; for the former are lamentably scanty on his favorite topics; whereas he found the old burghers, and still more their wives, rich in that legendary lore, so invaluable to true history. Whenever, therefore, he happened upon a genuine Dutch family, snugly shut up in its low-roofed farmhouse, under a spreading sycamore, he looked upon it as a little clasped volume of black-letter, and studied it with the zeal of a bookworm.[4]

The result of all these researches was a history of the province during the reign of the Dutch governors, which he published some years since. There have been various opinions as to the literary character of his work, and, to tell the truth, it is not a whit better than it should be. Its chief merit is its scrupulous accuracy, which indeed was a little questioned on its first appearance, but has since been completely established; and it is now admitted into all historical collections, as a book of unquestionable authority.

The old gentleman died shortly after the publication of his work, and now that he is dead and gone, it cannot do much harm to his memory to say that his time

1. This famous tale (ending the first installment of *The Sketch Book*) has been regarded as the first American short story. Within ten years (1829) it began in Philadelphia its long stage career. This involved adaptations and inheritance by many authors and actors, until it was stabilized in the version acted by the third Joseph Jefferson (1829–1905).
2. Sometimes Wodan or Odin; in Norse and Teutonic mythology, the god of war and wisdom—also "the Thunderer."
3. William Cartwright (1611–1643), short-lived prodigy of the "Tribe of Ben," of whom Jonson said, "My son Cartwright writes all like a man."
4. Thus, in *The Sketch Book,* Irving continued to use the fictitious Dutch historian, Knickerbocker, from his earlier *History of New York*. But in a footnote at the end of "Rip Van Winkle" he gave a clue to the German source of the folk tale by denying that Knickerbocker had based it on a "superstition about the Emperor Frederick *der Rothbart.*" This led to the identification of a probable source, "Peter Klaus the Goatherd," in a collection of German legends that Irving had read (see H. A. Pochmann, "Irving's German Sources in *The Sketch Book,*" *Studies in Philology,* XXVII, July 1930, 477–507).

might have been much better employed in weightier labors. He, however, was apt to ride his hobby his own way; and though it did now and then kick up the dust a little in the eyes of his neighbors, and grieve the spirit of some friends, for whom he felt the truest deference and affection; yet his errors and follies are remembered "more in sorrow than in anger,"[5] and it begins to be suspected, that he never intended to injure or offend. But however his memory may be appreciated by critics, it is still held dear by many folk, whose good opinion is well worth having; particularly by certain biscuit-bakers, who have gone so far as to imprint his likeness on their new-year cakes; and have thus given him a chance for immortality, almost equal to the being stamped on a Waterloo Medal,[6] or a Queen Anne's Farthing.[7]]

Whoever has made a voyage up the Hudson must remember the Kaatskill mountains. They are a dismembered branch of the great Appalachian family, and are seen away to the west of the river, swelling up to a noble height, and lording it over the surrounding country. Every change of season, every change of weather, indeed, every hour of the day, produces some change in the magical hues and shapes of these mountains, and they are regarded by all the good wives, far and near, as perfect barometers. When the weather is fair and settled, they are clothed in blue and purple, and print their bold outlines on the clear evening sky; but, sometimes, when the rest of the landscape is cloudless, they will gather a hood of gray vapors about their summits, which, in the last rays of the setting sun, will glow and light up like a crown of glory.

At the foot of these fairy mountains, the voyager may have descried the light smoke curling up from a village, whose shingle-roofs gleam among the trees, just where the blue tints of the upland melt away into the fresh green of the nearer landscape. It is a little village, of great antiquity, having been founded by some of the Dutch colonists, in the early times of the province, just about the beginning of the government of the good Peter Stuyvesant, (may he rest in peace!) and there were some of the houses of the original settlers standing within a few years, built of small yellow bricks brought from Holland, having latticed windows and gable fronts, surmounted with weathercocks.

In that same village, and in one of these very houses (which, to tell the precise truth, was sadly time-worn and weather-beaten), there lived many years since, while the country was yet a province of Great Britain, a simple good-natured fellow, of the name of Rip Van Winkle. He was a descendant of the Van Winkles who figured so gallantly in the chivalrous days of Peter Stuyvesant, and accompanied him to the siege of Fort Christina.[8] He inherited, however, but little of the martial character of his ancestors. I have observed that he was a simple good-natured man; he was, moreover, a kind neighbor, and an obedient hen-pecked husband. Indeed, to the

5. Shakespeare's Hamlet, I, ii, 231–232.
6. A silver medal presented by the British crown to all participants in the Battle of Waterloo (June 18, 1815) or in the engagements of the two previous days.
7. In the reign of Queen Anne (1702–1714) farthings (bronze coins worth a quarter of a penny) bearing her image were minted.
8. Referring to events treated in his *History of New York*. Stuyvesant was the autocratic governor of New Amsterdam (1647–1664); he seized Fort Christina on the Delaware from the Swedes in 1655.

latter circumstance might be owing that meekness of spirit which gained him such universal popularity; for those men are most apt to be obsequious and conciliating abroad, who are under the discipline of shrews at home. Their tempers, doubtless, are rendered pliant and malleable in the fiery furnace of domestic tribulation; and a curtain lecture is worth all the sermons in the world for teaching the virtues of patience and long-suffering. A termagant wife may, therefore, in some respects, be considered a tolerable blessing; and if so, Rip Van Winkle was thrice blessed.

Certain it is, that he was a great favorite among all the good wives of the village, who, as usual, with the amiable sex, took his part in all family squabbles; and never failed, whenever they talked those matters over in their evening gossipings, to lay all the blame on Dame Van Winkle. The children of the village, too, would shout with joy whenever he approached. He assisted at their sports, made their playthings, taught them to fly kites and shoot marbles, and told them long stories of ghosts, witches, and Indians. Whenever he went dodging about the village, he was surrounded by a troop of them, hanging on his skirts, clambering on his back, and playing a thousand tricks on him with impunity; and not a dog would bark at him throughout the neighborhood.

The great error in Rip's composition was an insuperable aversion to all kinds of profitable labor. It could not be from the want of assiduity or perseverance; for he would sit on a wet rock, with a rod as long and heavy as a Tartar's lance, and fish all day without a murmur, even though he should not be encouraged by a single nibble. He would carry a fowling-piece on his shoulder for hours together, trudging through woods and swamps, and up hill and down dale, to shoot a few squirrels or wild pigeons. He would never refuse to assist a neighbor even in the roughest toil, and was a foremost man at all country frolics for husking Indian corn, or building stone-fences; the women of the village, too, used to employ him to run their errands, and to do such little old jobs as their less obliging husbands would not do for them. In a word Rip was ready to attend to anybody's business but his own; but as to doing family duty, and keeping his farm in order, he found it impossible.

In fact, he declared it was of no use to work on his farm; it was the most pestilent little piece of ground in the whole country; every thing about it went wrong, and would go wrong, in spite of him. His fences were continually falling to pieces; his cow would either go astray, or get among the cabbages; weeds were sure to grow quicker in his fields than anywhere else; the rain always made a point of setting in just as he had some outdoor work to do; so that though his patrimonial estate had dwindled away under his management, acre by acre, until there was little more left than a mere patch of Indian corn and potatoes, yet it was the worst conditioned farm in the neighborhood.

His children, too, were as ragged and wild as if they belonged to nobody. His son Rip, an urchin begotten in his own likeness, promised to inherit the habits, with the old clothes of his father. He was generally seen trooping like a colt at his mother's heels, equipped in a pair of his father's cast-off galligaskins,[9] which he had much ado to hold up with one hand, as a fine lady does her train in bad weather.

9. Knee breeches.

Rip Van Winkle, however, was one of those happy mortals, of foolish, well-oiled dispositions, who take the world easy, eat white bread or brown, whichever can be got with least thought or trouble, and would rather starve on a penny than work for a pound. If left to himself, he would have whistled life away in perfect contentment; but his wife kept continually dinning in his ears about his idleness, his carelessness, and the ruin he was bringing on his family. Morning, noon, and night, her tongue was incessantly going, and every thing he said or did was sure to produce a torrent of household eloquence. Rip had but one way of replying to all lectures of the kind, and that, by frequent use, had grown into a habit. He shrugged his shoulders, shook his head, cast up his eyes, but said nothing. This, however, always provoked a fresh volley from his wife; so that he was fain to draw off his forces, and take to the outside of the house—the only side which, in truth, belongs to a hen-pecked husband.

Rip's sole domestic adherent was his dog Wolf, who was as much hen-pecked as his master; for Dame Van Winkle regarded them as companions in idleness, and even looked upon Wolf with an evil eye, as the cause of his master's going so often astray. True it is, in all points of spirit befitting an honorable dog, he was as courageous an animal as ever scoured the woods—but what courage can withstand the ever-during and all-besetting terrors of a woman's tongue? The moment Wolf entered the house his crest fell, his tail drooped to the ground, or curled between his legs, he sneaked about with a gallows air, casting many a side-long glance at Dame Van Winkle, and at the least flourish of a broomstick or ladle, he would fly to the door with yelping precipitation.

Times grew worse and worse with Rip Van Winkle as years of matrimony rolled on; a tart temper never mellows with age, and a sharp tongue is the only edged tool that grows keener with constant use. For a long while he used to console himself, when driven from home, by frequenting a kind of perpetual club of the sages, philosophers, and other idle personages of the village; which held its sessions on a bench before a small inn, designated by a rubicund portrait of His Majesty George the Third. Here they used to sit in the shade through a long lazy summer's day, talking listlessly over village gossip, or telling endless sleepy stories about nothing. But it would have been worth any statesman's money to have heard the profound discussions that sometimes took place, when by chance an old newspaper fell into their hands from some passing traveller. How solemnly they would listen to the contents, as drawled out by Derrick Van Bummel, the schoolmaster, a dapper learned little man, who was not to be daunted by the most gigantic word in the dictionary; and how sagely they would deliberate upon public events some months after they had taken place.

The opinions of this junto were completely controlled by Nicholas Vedder, a patriarch of the village, and landlord of the inn, at the door of which he took his seat from morning till night, just moving sufficiently to avoid the sun and keep in the shade of a large tree; so that the neighbors could tell the hour by his movements as accurately as by a sun-dial. It is true he was rarely heard to speak, but smoked his pipe incessantly. His adherents, however (for every great man has his adherents), perfectly understood him, and knew how to gather his opinions. When any thing that was read or related displeased him, he was observed to smoke his pipe vehemently, and to send forth short, frequent and angry puffs; but when pleased, he would inhale the smoke slowly and tranquilly, and emit it in light and placid clouds;

and sometimes, taking the pipe from his mouth, and letting the fragrant vapor curl about his nose, would gravely nod his head in token of perfect approbation.

From even this stronghold the unlucky Rip was at length routed by his termagant wife, who would suddenly break in upon the tranquillity of the assemblage and call the members all to naught; nor was that august personage, Nicholas Vedder himself, sacred from the daring tongue of this terrible virago, who charged him outright with encouraging her husband in habits of idleness.

Poor Rip was at last reduced almost to despair; and his only alternative, to escape from the labor of the farm and clamor of his wife, was to take gun in hand and stroll away into the woods. Here he would sometimes seat himself at the foot of a tree, and share the contents of his wallet with Wolf, with whom he sympathized as a fellow-sufferer in persecution. "Poor Wolf," he would say, "thy mistress leads thee a dog's life of it; but never mind, my lad, whilst I live thou shalt never want a friend to stand by thee!" Wolf would wag his tail, look wistfully in his master's face, and if dogs can feel pity I verily believe he reciprocated the sentiment with all his heart.

In a long ramble of the kind on a fine autumnal day, Rip had unconsciously scrambled to one of the highest parts of the Kaatskill mountains. He was after his favorite sport of squirrel shooting, and the still solitudes had echoed and re-echoed with the reports of his gun. Panting and fatigued, he threw himself, late in the afternoon, on a green knoll, covered with mountain herbage, that crowned the brow of a precipice. From an opening between the trees he could overlook all the lower country for many a mile of rich woodland. He saw at a distance the lordly Hudson, far, far below him, moving on its silent but majestic course, with the reflection of a purple cloud, or the sail of a lagging bark, here and there sleeping on its glassy bosom, and at last losing itself in the blue highlands.

On the other side he looked down into a deep mountain glen, wild, lonely, and shagged, the bottom filled with fragments from the impending cliffs, and scarcely lighted by the reflected rays of the setting sun. For some time Rip lay musing on this scene; evening was gradually advancing; the mountains began to throw their long blue shadows over the valleys; he saw that it would be dark long before he could reach the village, and he heaved a heavy sigh when he thought of encountering the terrors of Dame Van Winkle.

As he was about to descend, he heard a voice from a distance, hallooing, "Rip Van Winkle! Rip Van Winkle!" He looked round, but could see nothing but a crow winging its solitary flight across the mountain. He thought his fancy must have deceived him, and turned again to descend, when he heard the same cry through the still evening air; "Rip Van Winkle! Rip Van Winkle!"—at the same time Wolf bristled up his back, and giving a low growl, skulked to his master's side, looking fearfully down into the glen. Rip now felt a vague apprehension stealing over him; he looked anxiously in the same direction, and perceived a strange figure slowly toiling up the rocks, and bending under the weight of something he carried on his back. He was surprised to see any human being in this lonely and unfrequented place, but supposing it to be some one of the neighborhood in need of his assistance, he hastened down to yield it.

On nearer approach he was still more surprised at the singularity of the stranger's appearance. He was a short square-built old fellow, with thick bushy hair, and a grizzled beard. His dress was of the antique Dutch fashion—a cloth jerkin strapped round the waist—several pair of breeches, the outer one of ample volume,

decorated with rows of buttons down the sides, and bunches at the knees. He bore on his shoulder a stout keg, that seemed full of liquor, and made signs for Rip to approach and assist him with the load. Though rather shy and distrustful of this new acquaintance, Rip complied with his usual alacrity; and mutually relieving one another, they clambered up a narrow gully, apparently the dry bed of a mountain torrent. As they ascended, Rip every now and then heard long rolling peals, like distant thunder, that seemed to issue out of a deep ravine, or rather cleft, between lofty rocks, toward which their rugged path conducted. He paused for an instant, but supposing it to be the muttering of one of those transient thunder-showers which often take place in mountain heights, he proceeded. Passing through the ravine, they came to a hollow, like a small amphitheatre, surrounded by perpendicular precipices, over the brinks of which impending trees shot their branches, so that you only caught glimpses of the azure sky and the bright evening cloud. During the whole time Rip and his companion had labored on in silence; for though the former marvelled greatly what could be the object of carrying a keg of liquor up this wild mountain, yet there was something strange and incomprehensible about the unknown, that inspired awe and checked familiarity.

On entering the amphitheatre, new objects of wonder presented themselves. On a level spot in the centre was a company of odd-looking personages playing at nine-pins. They were dressed in a quaint outlandish fashion; some wore short doublets, others jerkins, with long knives in their belts, and most of them had enormous breeches, of similar style with that of the guide's. Their visages, too, were peculiar: one had a large head, broad face, and small piggish eyes: the face of another seemed to consist entirely of nose, and was surmounted by a white sugar-loaf hat, set off with a little red cock's tail. They all had beards, of various shapes and colors. There was one who seemed to be the commander. He was a stout old gentleman, with a weather-beaten countenance; he wore a laced doublet, broad belt and hanger,[1] high crowned hat and feather, red stockings, and high-heeled shoes, with roses[2] in them. The whole group reminded Rip of the figures in an old Flemish painting, in the parlor of Dominie Van Shaick, the village parson, and which had been brought over from Holland at the time of the settlement.

What seemed particularly odd to Rip was, that though these folks were evidently amusing themselves, yet they maintained the gravest faces, the most mysterious silence, and were, withal, the most melancholy party of pleasure he had ever witnessed. Nothing interrupted the stillness of the scene but the noise of the balls, which, whenever they were rolled, echoed along the mountains like rumbling peals of thunder.

As Rip and his companion approached them, they suddenly desisted from their play, and stared at him with such fixed statue-like gaze, and such strange, uncouth, lack-lustre countenances, that his heart turned within him, and his knees smote together. His companion now emptied the contents of the keg into large flagons, and made signs to him to wait upon the company. He obeyed with fear and trembling; they quaffed the liquor in profound silence, and then returned to their game.

By degrees Rip's awe and apprehension subsided. He even ventured, when no eye was fixed upon him, to taste the beverage, which he found had much of the

1. A short, curved sword worn at the side.
2. Rosettes.

flavor of excellent Hollands.[3] He was naturally a thirsty soul, and was soon tempted to repeat the draught. One taste provoked another; and he reiterated his visits to the flagon so often that at length his senses were overpowered, his eyes swam in his head, his head gradually declined, and he fell into a deep sleep.

On waking, he found himself on the green knoll whence he had first seen the old man of the glen. He rubbed his eyes—it was a bright sunny morning. The birds were hopping and twittering among the bushes, and the eagle was wheeling aloft, and breasting the pure mountain breeze. "Surely," thought Rip, "I have not slept here all night." He recalled the occurrences before he fell asleep. The strange man with a keg of liquor—the mountain ravine—the wild retreat among the rocks—the wobegone party at nine-pins—the flagon—"Oh! that flagon! that wicked flagon!" thought Rip—"what excuse shall I make to Dame Van Winkle!"

He looked round for his gun, but in place of the clean well-oiled fowling-piece, he found an old firelock lying by him, the barrel incrusted with rust, the lock falling off, and the stock worm-eaten. He now suspected that the grave roysters of the mountain had put a trick upon him, and, having dosed him with liquor, had robbed him of his gun. Wolf, too, had disappeared, but he might have strayed away after a squirrel or partridge. He whistled after him and shouted his name, but all in vain; the echoes repeated his whistle and shout, but no dog was to be seen.

He determined to revisit the scene of the last evening's gambol, and if he met with any of the party, to demand his dog and gun. As he rose to walk, he found himself stiff in the joints, and wanting in his usual activity. "These mountain beds do not agree with me," thought Rip, "and if this frolic should lay me up with a fit of the rheumatism, I shall have a blessed time with Dame Van Winkle." With some difficulty he got down into the glen: he found the gully up which he and his companion had ascended the preceding evening; but to his astonishment a mountain stream was now foaming down it, leaping from rock to rock, and filling the glen with babbling murmurs. He, however, made shift to scramble up its sides, working his toilsome way through thickets of birch, sassafras, and witch-hazel, and sometimes tripped up or entangled by the wild grapevines that twisted their coils or tendrils from tree to tree, and spread a kind of network in his path.

At length he reached to where the ravine had opened through the cliffs to the amphitheatre; but no traces of such opening remained. The rocks presented a high impenetrable wall over which the torrent came tumbling in a sheet of feathery foam, and fell into a broad deep basin, black from the shadows of the surrounding forest. Here, then, poor Rip was brought to a stand. He again called and whistled after his dog; he was only answered by the cawing of a flock of idle crows, sporting high in air about a dry tree that overhung a sunny precipice; and who, secure in their elevation, seemed to look down and scoff at the poor man's perplexities. What was to be done? the morning was passing away, and Rip felt famished for want of his breakfast. He grieved to give up his dog and gun; he dreaded to meet his wife; but it would not do to starve among the mountains. He shook his head, shouldered the rusty firelock, and, with a heart full of trouble and anxiety, turned his steps homeward.

3. A Dutch gin long famous for excellence.

As he approached the village he met a number of people, but none whom he knew, which somewhat surprised him, for he had thought himself acquainted with every one in the country round. Their dress, too, was of a different fashion from that to which he was accustomed. They all stared at him with equal marks of surprise, and whenever they cast their eyes upon him, invariably stroked their chins. The constant recurrence of this gesture induced Rip, involuntarily, to do the same, when, to his astonishment, he found his beard had grown a foot long!

He had now entered the skirts of the village. A troop of strange children ran at his heels, hooting after him, and pointing at his gray beard. The dogs, too, not one of which he recognized for an old acquaintance, barked at him as he passed. The very village was altered; it was larger and more populous. There were rows of houses which he had never seen before, and those which had been his familiar haunts had disappeared. Strange names were over the doors—strange faces at the windows—every thing was strange. His mind now misgave him; he began to doubt whether both he and the world around him were not bewitched. Surely this was his native village, which he had left but the day before. There stood the Kaatskill mountains—there ran the silver Hudson at a distance—there was every hill and dale precisely as it had always been—Rip was sorely perplexed—"That flagon last night," thought he, "has addled my poor head sadly!"

It was with some difficulty that he found the way to his own house, which he approached with silent awe, expecting every moment to hear the shrill voice of Dame Van Winkle. He found the house gone to decay—the roof fallen in, the windows shattered, and the doors off the hinges. A half-starved dog that looked like Wolf was skulking about it. Rip called him by name, but the cur snarled, showed his teeth, and passed on. This was an unkind cut indeed—"My very dog," sighed poor Rip, "has forgotten me!"

He entered the house, which, to tell the truth, Dame Van Winkle had always kept in neat order. It was empty, forlorn, and apparently abandoned. This desolateness overcame all his connubial fears—he called loudly for his wife and children—the lonely chambers rang for a moment with his voice, and then all again was silence.

He now hurried forth, and hastened to his old resort, the village inn—but it too was gone. A large rickety wooden building stood in its place, with great gaping windows, some of them broken and mended with old hats and petticoats, and over the door was painted, "the Union Hotel, by Jonathan Doolittle." Instead of the great tree that used to shelter the quiet little Dutch inn of yore, there now was reared a tall naked pole, with something on the top that looked like a red nightcap,[4] and from it was fluttering a flag, on which was a singular assemblage of stars and stripes—all this was strange and incomprehensible. He recognized on the sign, however, the ruby face of King George, under which he had smoked so many a peaceful pipe; but even this was singularly metamorphosed. The red coat was changed for one of blue and buff, a sword was held in the hand instead of a sceptre, the head was decorated with a cocked hat, and underneath was painted in large characters, GENERAL WASHINGTON.

4. The "liberty cap," familiar symbol of the French Revolution, was often displayed in the United States.

There was, as usual, a crowd of folk about the door, but none that Rip recollected. The very character of the people seemed changed. There was a busy, bustling, disputatious tone about it, instead of the accustomed phlegm and drowsy tranquillity. He looked in vain for the sage Nicholas Vedder, with his broad face, double chin, and fair long pipe, uttering clouds of tobacco-smoke instead of idle speeches; or Van Bummel, the schoolmaster, doling forth the contents of an ancient newspaper. In place of these, a lean, bilious-looking fellow, with his pockets full of hand-bills, was haranguing vehemently about rights of citizens—elections—members of congress—liberty—Bunker's Hill—heroes of seventy-six—and other words, which were a perfect Babylonish jargon[5] to the bewildered Van Winkle.

The appearance of Rip, with his long grizzled beard, his rusty fowling-piece, his uncouth dress, and an army of women and children at his heels, soon attracted the attention of the tavern politicians. They crowded round him, eyeing him from head to foot with great curiosity. The orator bustled up to him, and, drawing him partly aside, inquired "on which side he voted?" Rip stared in vacant stupidity. Another short but busy little fellow pulled him by the arm, and, rising on tiptoe, inquired in his ear, "Whether he was Federal or Democrat?"[6] Rip was equally at a loss to comprehend the question; when a knowing, self-important old gentleman, in a sharp cocked hat, made his way through the crowd, putting them to the right and left with his elbows as he passed, and planting himself before Van Winkle, with one arm akimbo, the other resting on his cane, his keen eyes and sharp hat penetrating, as it were, into his very soul, demanded in an austere tone, "what brought him to the election with a gun on his shoulder, and a mob at his heels, and whether he meant to breed a riot in the village?"—"Alas! gentlemen," cried Rip, somewhat dismayed, "I am a poor quiet man, a native of the place, and a loyal subject of the king, God bless him!"

Here a general shout burst from the by-standers—"A tory! a tory! a spy! a refugee! hustle him! away with him!" It was with great difficulty that the self-important man in the cocked hat restored order; and, having assumed a tenfold austerity of brow, demanded again of the unknown culprit, what he came there for, and whom he was seeking? The poor man humbly assured him that he meant no harm, but merely came there in search of some of his neighbors, who used to keep about the tavern.

"Well—who are they?—name them."

Rip bethought himself a moment, and inquired, "Where's Nicholas Vedder?"

There was a silence for a little while, when an old man replied, in a thin piping voice, "Nicholas Vedder! why, he is dead and gone these eighteen years! There was a wooden tombstone in the churchyard that used to tell all about him, but that's rotten and gone too."

"Where's Brom Dutcher?"

5. *Cf.* Genesis 11:1–9. The "confusion of tongues" occurred at Babel.
6. The earliest American political parties—Federalist (Hamiltonian) and Democratic Republican (Jeffersonian).

"Oh, he went off to the army in the beginning of the war; some say he was killed at the storming of Stony Point[7]—others say he was drowned in a squall at the foot of Antony's Nose.[8] I don't know—he never came back again."

"Where's Van Bummel, the schoolmaster?"

"He went off to the wars too, was a great militia general, and is now in congress."

Rip's heart died away at hearing of these sad changes in his home and friends, and finding himself thus alone in the world. Every answer puzzled him too, by treating of such enormous lapses of time, and of matters which he could not understand: war—congress—Stony Point;—he had no courage to ask after any more friends, but cried out in despair, "Does nobody here know Rip Van Winkle?"

"Oh, Rip Van Winkle!" exclaimed two or three, "Oh, to be sure! that's Rip Van Winkle yonder, leaning against the tree."

Rip looked, and beheld a precise counterpart of himself, as he went up the mountain: apparently as lazy, and certainly as ragged. The poor fellow was now completely confounded. He doubted his own identity, and whether he was himself or another man. In the midst of his bewilderment, the man in the cocked hat demanded who he was, and what was his name?

"God knows," exclaimed he, at his wit's end; "I'm not myself—I'm somebody else—that's me yonder—no—that's somebody else got into my shoes—I was myself last night, but I fell asleep on the mountain, and they've changed my gun, and every thing's changed, and I'm changed, and I can't tell what's my name, or who I am!"

The by-standers began now to look at each other, nod, wink significantly, and tap their fingers against their foreheads. There was a whisper, also, about securing the gun, and keeping the old fellow from doing mischief, at the very suggestion of which the self-important man in the cocked hat retired with some precipitation. At this critical moment a fresh comely woman passed through the throng to get a peep at the gray-bearded man. She had a chubby child in her arms, which, frightened at his looks, began to cry. "Hush, Rip," cried she, "hush, you little fool; the old man won't hurt you." The name of the child, the air of the mother, the tone of her voice, all awakened a train of recollections in his mind. "What is your name, my good woman?" asked he.

"Judith Gardenier."

"And your father's name?"

"Ah, poor man, Rip Van Winkle was his name, but it's twenty years since he went away from home with his gun, and never has been heard of since—his dog came home without him; but whether he shot himself, or was carried away by the Indians, nobody can tell. I was then but a little girl."

Rip had but one question more to ask; but he put it with a faltering voice:

"Where's your mother?"

"Oh, she too had died but a short time since; she broke a blood-vessel in a fit of passion at a New-England peddler."

7. A strategic headland on the Hudson below West Point, captured by Mad Anthony Wayne, July 18, 1779, in one of the most daring and brilliant exploits of the Revolution.
8. Another fortified promontory on the Hudson, scene of a bloody contest in 1777.

There was a drop of comfort, at least, in this intelligence. The honest man could contain himself no longer. He caught his daughter and her child in his arms. "I am your father!" cried he—"Young Rip Van Winkle once—old Rip Van Winkle now!—Does nobody know poor Rip Van Winkle?"

All stood amazed, until an old woman, tottering out from among the crowd, put her hand to her brow, and peering under it in his face for a moment, exclaimed, "Sure enough! it is Rip Van Winkle—it is himself! Welcome home again, old neighbor—Why, where have you been these twenty long years?"

Rip's story was soon told, for the whole twenty years had been to him but as one night. The neighbors stared when they heard it; some were seen to wink at each other, and put their tongues in their cheeks: and the self-important man in the cocked hat, who, when the alarm was over, had returned to the field, screwed down the corners of his mouth, and shook his head—upon which there was a general shaking of the head throughout the assemblage.

It was determined, however, to take the opinion of old Peter Vanderdonk, who was seen slowly advancing up the road. He was a descendant of the historian[9] of that name, who wrote one of the earliest accounts of the province. Peter was the most ancient inhabitant of the village, and well versed in all the wonderful events and traditions of the neighborhood. He recollected Rip at once, and corroborated his story in the most satisfactory manner. He assured the company that it was a fact, handed down from his ancestor the historian, that the Kaatskill mountains had always been haunted by strange beings. That it was affirmed that the great Hendrick Hudson, the first discoverer of the river and country, kept a kind of vigil there every twenty years, with his crew of the Halfmoon; being permitted in this way to revisit the scenes of his enterprise, and keep a guardian eye upon the river, and the great city called by his name.[1] That his father had once seen them in their old Dutch dresses playing at nine-pins in a hollow of the mountain; and that he himself had heard, one summer afternoon, the sound of their balls, like distant peals of thunder.

To make a long story short, the company broke up, and returned to the more important concerns of the election. Rip's daughter took him home to live with her; she had a snug, well-furnished house, and a stout cheery farmer for a husband, whom Rip recollected for one of the urchins that used to climb upon his back. As to Rip's son and heir, who was the ditto of himself, seen leaning against the tree, he was employed to work on the farm; but evinced an hereditary disposition to attend to any thing else but his business.

Rip now resumed his old walks and habits; he soon found many of his former cronies, though all rather the worse for the wear and tear of time; and preferred making friends among the rising generation, with whom he soon grew into great favor.

Having nothing to do at home, and being arrived at that happy age when a man can be idle with impunity, he took his place once more on the bench at the

9. Adriaen Van der Donck (c. 1620–1655), Dutch lawyer and founder of Yonkers, wrote a description of New Netherland, published in Dutch (Amsterdam, 1655).

1. The town of Hudson handled considerable shipping in Irving's youth. Henry (not Hendrick) Hudson, an English adventurer, discovered and explored the river for the East Indian Company in 1609; abandoned on Hudson Bay by mutineers in 1611, he passed from history into legend.

inn door, and was reverenced as one of the patriarchs of the village, and a chronicle of the old times "before the war." It was some time before he could get into the regular track of gossip, or could be made to comprehend the strange events that had taken place during his torpor. How that there had been a revolutionary war—that the country had thrown off the yoke of old England—and that, instead of being a subject of His Majesty George the Third, he was now a free citizen of the United States. Rip, in fact, was no politician; the changes of states and empires made but little impression on him; but there was one species of despotism under which he had long groaned, and that was—petticoat government. Happily that was at an end; he had got his neck out of the yoke of matrimony, and could go in and out whenever he pleased, without dreading the tyranny of Dame Van Winkle. Whenever her name was mentioned, however, he shook his head, shrugged his shoulders, and cast up his eyes; which might pass either for an expression of resignation to his fate, or joy at his deliverance.

He used to tell his story to every stranger that arrived at Mr. Doolittle's Hotel. He was observed, at first, to vary on some points every time he told it, which was, doubtless, owing to his having so recently awaked. It at last settled down precisely to the tale I have related, and not a man, woman, or child in the neighborhood, but knew it by heart. Some always pretended to doubt the reality of it, and insisted that Rip had been out of his head, and that this was one point on which he always remained flighty. The old Dutch inhabitants, however, almost universally gave it full credit. Even to this day they never hear a thunderstorm of a summer afternoon about the Kaatskill, but they say Hendrick Hudson and his crew are at their game of nine-pins; and it is a common wish of all hen-pecked husbands in the neighborhood, when life hangs heavy on their hands, that they might have a quieting draught out of Rip Van Winkle's flagon.

NOTE.—The foregoing tale, one would suspect, had been suggested to Mr. Knickerbocker by a little German superstition about the Emperor Frederick der *Rothbart*[2] and the Kypphauser mountain; the subjoined note, however, which he had appended to the tale, shows that it is an absolute fact, narrated with his usual fidelity.

"The story of Rip Van Winkle may seem incredible to many, but nevertheless I give it my full belief, for I know the vicinity of our old Dutch settlements to have been very subject to marvelous events and appearances. Indeed, I have heard many stranger stories than this, in the villages along the Hudson, all of which were too well authenticated to admit of a doubt. I have even talked with Rip Van Winkle myself, who, when last I saw him, was a very venerable old man, and so perfectly rational and consistent on every other point that I think no conscientious person could refuse to take this into the bargain; nay, I have seen a certificate on the subject taken before a country justice, and signed with a cross, in the justice's own handwriting. The story, therefore, is beyond the possibility of doubt."

1819

2. Frederick I, Holy Roman Emperor (1152–1190), called "Rothbart" or "Barbarossa" for his red beard. According to legend he did not die, but slept in a cave in the mountain.

CROSSCURRENTS
The Romantic, the Real, and the American Indian

In pursuing an ideal reality that they believed embodied a higher truth than the evidence provided by substantial things, romantic writers risked failures of representation concerning the world that most people lived and worked in. Distinctions between the *novel,* for everyday reality, and the *romance,* for the uncommon and marvelous, proved useful, but critics continued to deplore romantic excesses of sentimentality and pathos that they considered just as false to a presumed standard of ideal truth as it was to the demonstrably real. After the Civil War, the controversy was submerged in the new vogue for the literature called *realism.*

The selections that follow include samples of early and later criticism. Sir Walter Scott succinctly establishes the ground for generic distinctions between the novel and the romance; William Gilmore Simms makes a case for romantic literature generally, and for the American romance in particular; and Henry James looks back from the beginning of the twentieth century to consider and refine the differences. Between these discussions we have placed selections of verse and poetry by Lydia Maria Child and Lydia Howard Huntley Sigourney, popular writers of the romantic era. Students interested in the literary treatment of Indians in this period and in the distinctions between romance and realism may want to consider these examples beside the more familiar writings of Cooper, Sedgwick, Parkman, and Longfellow.

SIR WALTER SCOTT
(1771–1832)

Nineteenth-century novelists in Europe and America owed much to the immensely popular Sir Walter Scott. Cooper, sometimes called "the American Scott," accepted the comparison but claimed his own powers of "invention" were greater than Scott's. Hawthorne read Scott's Waverly novels in college, imitated plot and character elements in his writing, and in the prefaces to The House of the Seven Gables *and* The Blithedale Romance *insisted on the romance qualities of those works. Twain later claimed that chivalric ideals drawn by southerners from Scott's works contributed to the Civil War. The following selection is taken from Scott's "Essay on Romance" (1824).*

[The Novel and the Romance]

* * * We would be rather inclined to describe a *Romance* as "a fictitious narrative in prose or verse; the interest of which turns upon marvellous and uncommon incidents;" thus being opposed to the kindred term *Novel,* which Johnson[1] has described as "a smooth tale, generally of love"; but which we would rather define as "a fictitious narrative, differing from the Romance, because the events are accommodated to the ordinary train of human events, and the modern state of society." Assuming these definitions, it is evident, from the nature of the distinction adopted, that there may exist compositions which it is difficult to assign precisely or exclusively to the one class or the other; and which, in fact, partake of the nature of both. But, generally speaking, the distinction will be found broad enough to answer all general and useful purposes.

WILLIAM GILMORE SIMMS
(1806–1870)

William Gilmore Simms was a southern rival to the achievement of Cooper. In The Yemassee *(1835), his most famous of over thirty novels, he presented sympathetic portrayals of the Indians in their struggles with South Carolina settlers in 1715. In the following selection, taken from the preface to* The Yemassee, *he argues for the romance as a lofty form, open to "invention," allied to the epic poem, and free to depart from "what is known, or even what is probable."*

[The American Romance]

* * * When I wrote, there was little understood, by readers generally, in respect to the character of the red men; and, of the opinions entertained on the subject, many, according to my own experience, I knew to be incorrect. I had seen the red men of the south in their own homes, on frequent occasions, and had arrived at conclusions in respect to them, and their habits and moral nature, which seemed to me to remove much of that air of mystery which was supposed to disguise most of their ordinary actions. These corrections of the vulgar opinions will be found unobtrusively given in the body of the work, and need not be repeated here. It needs only that I should say that the rude portraits of the red man, as given by those who see him in degrading attitudes only, and in humiliating relation with the whites, must not be taken as a just delineation of the same being in his native woods, unsubdued, a fearless hunter, and without any degrading consciousness of inferiority, and still more degrading habits, to make him wretched and ashamed. My portraits, I contend, are true to the Indian as our ancestors knew him at early periods, and as our people, in certain situations, may know him still. What liberties I have taken with the subject, are wholly with his mythology. That portion of the story, which the reverend critics, with one exception, recognised as sober history, must be admitted to be a pure invention. * * *

1. Samuel Johnson (1709–1784), English writer and critic.

You will note that I call "The Yemassee" a romance, and not a novel. You will permit me to insist upon the distinction. I am unwilling that the story shall be examined by any other than those standards which have governed me in its composition; and unless the critic is prepared to adopt with me those leading principles, in accordance with which the book has been written, the sooner we part company the better.

* * * The Romance is of loftier origin than the Novel. It approximates the poem. It may be described as an amalgam of the two. It is only with those who are apt to insist upon poetry as verse, and to confound rhyme with poetry, that the resemblance is unapparent. The standards of the Romance * * * are very much those of the epic. It invests individuals with an absorbing interest—it hurries them rapidly through crowding and exacting events, in a narrow space of time—it requires the same unities of plan, of purpose, and harmony of parts, and it seeks for its adventures among the wild and wonderful. It does not confine itself to what is known, or even what is probable. It grasps at the possible; and, placing a human agent in hitherto untried situations, it exercises its ingenuity in extricating him from them, while describing his feelings and his fortunes in his progress. The task has been well or ill done, in proportion to the degree of ingenuity and knowledge which the romancer exhibits in carrying out the details, according to such proprieties as are called for by the circumstances of the story. These proprieties are the standards set up at his starting, and to which he is required religiously to confine himself.

"The Yemassee" is proposed as an *American* romance. It is so styled as much of the material could have been furnished by no other country. Something too much of extravagance—so some may think,—even beyond the usual license of fiction—may enter into certain parts of the narrative. On this subject, it is enough for me to say, that the popular faith yields abundant authority for the wildest of its incidents. The natural romance of our country has been my object, and I have not dared beyond it. For the rest—for the general peculiarities of the Indians, in their undegraded condition—my authorities are numerous in all the writers who have written from their own experience. * * *

Yours Faithfully,

W. Gilmore Simms.

Charleston, June, 1853.

LYDIA MARIA CHILD
(1802–1880)

As a child of twelve or thirteen, living with a married sister and her husband in Norridgewock, Maine, Lydia Maria Child came to know the Abenaki Indians of that town, who were then less than two generations removed from the power they wielded from ancient times through the French and Indian Wars and into the American Revolution. Ten years later, her Maine experience blossomed in her novel Hobomok *(1824), one of the first American historical romances. Set in Puritan times, it tells of a marriage between a white woman and an Indian.*

In the following story, she used the materials and techniques of romance to deplore the fate of the Eastern Woodland Indians.

The Lone Indian

A white man, gazing on the scene,
Would say a lovely spot was here,
And praise the lawns so fresh and green
Between the hills so sheer.
I like it not—I would the plain
Lay in its tall old groves again.

—BRYANT

Powontonamo was the son of a mighty chief. He looked on his tribe with such a fiery glance, that they called him the Eagle of the Mohawks. His eye never blinked in the sunbeam, and he leaped along the chase like the untiring waves of Niagara. Even when a little boy, his tiny arrow would hit the frisking squirrel in the ear, and bring down the humming bird on her rapid wing. He was his father's pride and joy. He loved to toss him high in his sinewy arms, and shout, "Look, Eagle-eye, look! and see the big hunting-grounds of the Mohawks! Powontonamo will be their chief. The winds will tell his brave deeds. When men speak of him, they will not speak loud; but as if the Great Spirit had breathed in thunder."

The prophecy was fulfilled. When Powontonamo became a man, the fame of his beauty and courage reached the tribes of Illinois; and even the distant Osage showed his white teeth with delight, when he heard the wild deeds of the Mohawk Eagle. Yet was his spirit frank, chivalrous, and kind. When the white men came to buy land, he met them with an open palm, and spread his buffalo for the traveller. The old chiefs loved the bold youth, and offered their daughters in marriage. The eyes of the young Indian girls sparkled when he looked on them. But he treated them all with the stern indifference of a warrior, until he saw Soonseetah raise her long dark eye-lash. Then his heart melted beneath the beaming glance of beauty. Soonseetah was the fairest of the Oneidas. The young men of her tribe called her the Sunny-eye. She was smaller than her nation usually are; and her slight, graceful figure was so elastic in its motions, that the tall grass would rise up and shake off its dew drops, after her pretty moccasins had pressed it. Many a famous chief had sought her love; but when they brought the choicest furs, she would smile disdainfully, and say, 'Soonseetah's foot is warm. Has not her father an arrow?' When they offered her food, according to the Indian custom, her answer was, 'Soonseetah has not seen all the warriors. She will eat with the bravest.' The hunters told the young Eagle that Sunny-eye of Oneida was beautiful as the bright birds in the hunting-land beyond the sky; but that her heart was proud, and she said the great chiefs were not good enough to dress venison for her. When Powontonamo listened to these accounts, his lip would curl slightly, as he threw back his fur-edged mantle, and placed his firm, springy foot forward, so that the beads and shells of his rich moccasin might be seen to vibrate at every sound of his tremendous war song. If there was vanity in the act, there was likewise becoming pride. Soonseetah heard of his haughty smile, and resolved in her own heart that no Oneida should sit beside her, till she had seen the chieftain of the Mohawks. Before many moons had passed away, he sought her father's wigwam, to carry delicate furs and shining shells to the young coquette of the wilderness. She did not raise her bright melting eyes to his, when he came near her; but when he said, "Will the Sunny-eye look on the gift of a Mohawk? his barbed arrow is swift; his foot never turned from the foe;' the colour of her brown cheek was glowing as an autumnal twi-

light. Her voice was like the troubled note of the wren, as she answered, 'The furs of Powontonamo are soft and warm to the foot of Soonseetah. She will weave the shells in the wampum belt of the Mohawk Eagle.' The exulting lover sat by her side, and offered her venison and parched corn. She raised her timid eye, as she tasted the food; and then the young Eagle knew that Sunny-eye would be his wife.

There was feasting and dancing, and the marriage song rang merrily in Mohawk cabins, when the Oneida came among them. Powontonamo loved her as his own heart's blood. He delighted to bring her the fattest deers of the forest, and load her with ribbons and beads of the English. The prophets of his people liked it not that the strangers grew so numerous in the land. They shook their heads mournfully, and said, 'The moose and the beaver will not live within sound of the white man's gun. They will go beyond the lakes, and the Indians must follow their trail.' But the young chief laughed them to scorn. He said, 'The land is very big. The mountain eagle could not fly over it in many days. Surely the wigwams of the English will never cover it.' Yet when he held his son in his arms, as his father had done before him, he sighed to hear the strokes of the axe levelling the old trees of his forests. Sometimes he looked sorrowfully on his baby boy, and thought he had perchance done him much wrong, when he smoked a pipe in the wigwam of the stranger.

One day, he left his home before the grey mist of morning had gone from the hills, to seek food for his wife and child. The polar-star was bright in the heavens ere he returned; yet his hands were empty. The white man's gun had scared the beasts of the forest, and the arrow of the Indian was sharpened in vain. Powontonamo entered his wigwam with a cloudy brow. He did not look at Soonseetah; he did not speak to her boy; but, silent and sullen, he sat leaning on the head of his arrow. He wept not, for an Indian may not weep; but the muscles of his face betrayed the struggle within his soul. The Sunny-eye approached fearfully, and laid her little hand upon his brawny shoulder, as she asked, 'Why is the Eagle's eye on the earth? What has Soonseetah done, that her child dare not look in the face of his father?' Slowly the warrior turned his gaze upon her. The expression of sadness deepened, as he answered, 'The Eagle has taken a snake to his nest: how can his young sleep in it?' The Indian boy, all unconscious of the forebodings which stirred his father's spirit, moved to his side, and peeped up in his face with a mingled expression of love and fear.

The heart of the generous savage was full, even to bursting. His hand trembled, as he placed it on the sleek black hair of his only son. 'The Great Spirit bless thee! the Great Spirit bless thee, and give thee back the hunting ground of the Mohawk!' he exclaimed. Then folding him, for an instant, in an almost crushing embrace, he gave him to his mother, and darted from the wigwam.

Two hours he remained in the open air; but the clear breath of heaven brought no relief to his noble and suffering soul. Wherever he looked abroad, the ravages of the civilized destroyer met his eye. Where were the trees, under which he had frolicked in infancy, sported in boyhood, and rested after the fatigues of battle? They formed the English boat, or lined the English dwelling. Where were the holy sacrifice-heaps of his people? The stones were taken to fence in the land, which the intruder dared to call his own. Where was his father's grave? The stranger's road passed over it, and his cattle trampled on the ground where the mighty Mohawk slumbered. Where were his once powerful tribe? Alas, in the white man's wars they had joined with the British, in the vain hope of recovering their lost privileges. Hun-

dreds had gone to their last home; others had joined distant tribes; and some pitiful wretches, whom he scorned to call brethren, consented to live on the white man's bounty. These were corroding reflections; and well might fierce thoughts of vengeance pass through the mind of the deserted prince; but he was powerless now; and the English swarmed, like vultures around the dying. 'It is the work of the Great Spirit,' said he. 'The Englishman's God made the Indian's heart afraid; and now he is like a wounded buffalo, when hungry wolves are on his trail.'

When Powontonamo returned to his hut, his countenance, though severe, was composed. He spoke to the Sunny-eye with more kindness than the savage generally addresses the wife of his youth; but his look told her that she must not ask the grief which had put a woman's heart within the breast of the far-famed Mohawk Eagle.

The next day, when the young chieftain went out on a hunting expedition, he was accosted by a rough, square-built farmer. 'Powow,' said he, 'your squaw has been stripping a dozen of my trees, and I don't like it over much.' It was a moment when the Indian could ill brook a white man's insolence. 'Listen, Buffalo-head!' shouted he; and as he spoke he seized the shaggy pate of the unconscious offender, and eyed him with the concentrated venom of an ambushed rattlesnake—'Listen to the chief of the Mohawks! These broad lands are all his own. When the white man first left his cursed foot-print in the forest, the Great Bear looked down upon the big tribes of Iroquois and Abnaquis. The wigwams of the noble Delawares were thick, where the soft winds dwell. The rising sun glanced on the fierce Pequods; and the Illinois, the Miamies, and warlike tribes like the hairs of your head, marked his going down. Had the red man struck you then, your tribes would have been as dry grass to the lightning! Go—shall the Sunny-eye of Oneida ask the pale face for a basket?' He breathed out a quick, convulsive laugh, and his white teeth showed through his parted lips, as he shook the farmer from him, with the strength and fury of a raging panther.

After that, his path was unmolested, for no one dared to awaken his wrath; but a smile never again visited the dark countenance of the degraded chief. The wild beasts had fled so far from the settlements, that he would hunt days and days without success. Soonseetah sometimes begged him to join the remnant of the Oneidas, and persuade them to go far off, toward the setting sun. Powontonamo replied, 'This is the burial place of my fathers;' and the Sunny-eye dared say no more.

At last, their boy sickened and died, of a fever he had taken among the English. They buried him beneath a spreading oak, on the banks of the Mohawk, and heaped stones upon his grave, without a tear. 'He must lie near the water,' said the desolate chief, 'else the white man's horses will tread on him.'

The young mother did not weep; but her heart had received its death-wound. The fever seized her, and she grew paler and weaker every day. One morning, Powontonamo returned with some delicate food he had been seeking for her. 'Will Soonseetah eat?' said he. He spoke in a tone of subdued tenderness; but she answered not. The foot which was wont to bound forward to meet him, lay motionless and cold. He raised the blanket which partly concealed her face, and saw that the Sunny-eye was closed in death. One hand was pressed hard against her heart, as if her last moments had been painful. The other grasped the beads which the young Eagle had given her in the happy days of courtship. One heart-rending shriek was rung from the bosom of the agonized savage. He tossed his arms wildly above his head, and threw himself beside the body of her he had loved as fondly,

deeply, and passionately, as ever a white man loved. After the first burst of grief had subsided, he carefully untied the necklace from her full, beautiful bosom, crossed her hands over the sacred relic, and put back the shining black hair from her smooth forehead. For hours he watched the corpse in silence. Then he arose and carried it from the wigwam. He dug a grave by the side of his lost boy; laid the head of Soonseetah toward the rising sun; heaped the earth upon it, and covered it with stones, according to the custom of his people.

Night was closing in, and still the bereaved Mohawk stood at the grave of Sunny-eye, as motionless as its cold inmate. A white man, as he passed, paused, and looked in pity on him. 'Are you sick?' asked he. 'Yes; me sick. Me very sick here,' answered Powontonamo, laying his hand upon his swelling heart. 'Will you go home?' '*Home*!' exclaimed the heart broken chief, in tones so thrilling, that the white man started. Then slowly, and with a half vacant look, he added, 'Yes; me go home. By and by me go home.' Not another word would he speak; and the white man left him, and went his way. A little while longer he stood watching the changing heavens; and then, with reluctant step, retired to his solitary wigwam.

The next day, a tree, which Soonseetah had often said was just as old as their boy, was placed near the mother and child. A wild vine was straggling among the loose stones, and Powontonamo carefully twined it around the tree. 'The young oak is the Eagle of the Mohawks,' he said; 'and now the Sunny-eye has her arms around him.' He spoke in the wild music of his native tongue; but there was none to answer. 'Yes; Powontonamo will go home,' sighed he. 'He will go where the sun sets in the ocean, and the white man's eyes have never looked upon it.' One long, one lingering glance at the graves of his kindred, and the Eagle of the Mohawks bade farewell to the land of his fathers.

For many a returning autumn, a lone Indian was seen standing at the consecrated spot we have mentioned; but, just thirty years after the death of Soonseetah, he was noticed for the last time. His step was then firm, and his figure erect, though he seemed old and way-worn. Age had not dimmed the fire of his eye, but an expression of deep melancholy had settled on his wrinkled brow. It was Powontonamo—he who had once been the Eagle of the Mohawks! He came to lie down and die beneath the broad oak, which shadowed the grave of Sunny-eye. Alas! the white man's axe had been there! The tree he had planted was dead; and the vine, which had leaped so vigorously from branch to branch, now, yellow and withering, was falling to the ground. A deep groan burst from the soul of the savage. For thirty wearisome years, he had watched that oak, with its twining tendrils. They were the only things left in the wide world for him to love, and they were gone! He looked abroad. The hunting land of his tribe was changed, like its chieftain. No light canoe now shot down the river, like a bird upon the wing. The laden boat of the white man alone broke its smooth surface. The Englishman's road wound like a serpent around the banks of the Mohawk; and iron hoofs had so beaten down the war-path, that a hawk's eye could not discover an Indian track. The last wigwam was destroyed; and the sun looked boldly down upon spots he had visited only by stealth, during thousands and thousands of moons. The few remaining trees, clothed in the fantastic mourning of autumn; the long line of heavy clouds, melting away before the coming sun; and the distant mountain, seen through the blue mist of departing twilight, alone remained as he had seen them in his boyhood. All

things spoke a sad language to the heart of the desolate Indian. 'Yes,' said he, 'the young oak and the vine are like the Eagle and the Sunny-eye. They are cut down, torn, and trampled on. The leaves are falling, and the clouds are scattering, like my people. I wish I could once more see the trees standing thick, as they did when my mother held me to her bosom, and sung the warlike deeds of the Mohawks.'

A mingled expression of grief and anger passed over his face, as he watched a loaded boat in its passage across the stream. 'The white man carries food to his wife and children, and he finds them in his home,' said he. 'Where is the squaw and the papoose of the red man? They are here!' As he spoke, he fixed his eye thoughtfully upon the grave. After a gloomy silence, he again looked round upon the fair scene, with a wandering and troubled gaze. 'The pale face may like it,' murmured he; 'but an Indian cannot die here in peace.' So saying, he broke his bow string, snapped his arrows, threw them on the burial place of his fathers, and departed for ever.

None ever knew where Powontonamo laid his dying head. The hunters from the west said a red man had been among them, whose tracks were far off toward the rising sun; that he seemed like one who had lost his way, and was sick to go home to the Great Spirit. Perchance, he slept his last sleep where the distant Mississippi receives its hundred streams. Alone, and unfriended, he may have laid him down to die, where no man called him brother; and the wolves of the desert, long ere this, may have howled the death-song of the Mohawk Eagle.

1828

LYDIA HOWARD HUNTLEY SIGOURNEY
(1791–1865)

Born and educated in Connecticut, Lydia Sigourney became a prolific writer of popular newspaper verse, much of it elegiac. Her collected works, including novels, a memoir of her son, and an autobiography, amounted to some sixty volumes. In the poems reprinted below, she employs a romantic and sentimental style to convey a genuine concern, common to many writers and thinkers of the time, for the displacement and potential disappearance of the American Indian.

The Indian's Welcome to the Pilgrim Fathers

"On Friday, March 16th, 1622, while the colonists were busied in their usual labors, they were much surprised to see a savage walk boldly towards them, and salute them with, 'much welcome, English, much welcome, Englishmen.'"

Above them spread a stranger sky
  Around, the sterile plain,
The rock-bound coast rose frowning nigh,
  Beyond,—the wrathful main:
Chill remnants of the wintry snow
  Still chok'd the encumber'd soil,
Yet forth these Pilgrim Fathers go,
  To mark their future toil.

'Mid yonder vale their corn must rise
  In Summer's ripening pride,
And there the church-spire woo the skies
  Its sister-school beside.
Perchance 'mid England's velvet green
  Some tender thought repos'd,—
Though nought upon their stoic mien.
  Such soft regret disclos'd.

When sudden from the forest wide
  A red-brow'd chieftain came,
With towering form, and haughty stride,
  And eye like kindling flame:
No wrath he breath'd, no conflict sought,
  To no dark ambush drew,
But simply *to the Old World brought,*
  The welcome of the New.

That *welcome* was a blast and ban
  Upon thy race unborn.
Was there no seer, thou fated Man!
  Thy lavish zeal to warn?
Thou in thy fearless faith didst hail
  A weak, invading band,
But who shall heed thy children's wail,
  Swept from their native land?

Thou gav'st the riches of thy streams,
  The lordship o'er thy waves,
The region of thine infant dreams,
  And of thy fathers' graves,
But who to yon proud mansions pil'd
  With wealth of earth and sea,
Poor outcast from thy forest wild,
  Say, who shall welcome thee?

1835

Indian Names

"How can the Red men be forgotten, while so many of our states and territories, bays, lakes and rivers, are indelibly stamped by names of their giving?"

Ye say, they all have passed away,
  That noble race and brave,
That their light canoes have vanished
  From off the crested wave;
That 'mid the forests where they roamed

There rings no hunter's shout;
But their name is on your waters,
Ye may not wash it out.

'Tis where Ontario's billow
Like Ocean's surge is curl'd,
Where strong Niagara's thunders wake
The echo of the world,
Where red Missouri bringeth
Rich tributes from the west,
And Rappahannock sweetly sleeps
On green Virginia's breast.

Ye say, their cone-like cabins,
That clustered o'er the vale,
Have fled away like withered leaves
Before the autumn gale:
But their memory liveth on your hills,
Their baptism on your shore,
Your everlasting rivers speak
Their dialect of yore.

Old Massachusetts wears it
Within her lordly crown,
And broad Ohio bears it
Amid her young renown;
Connecticut hath wreathed it
Where her quiet foliage waves,
And bold Kentucky breathes it hoarse
Through all her ancient caves.

Wachuset hides its lingering voice
Within his rocky heart,
And Alleghany graves its tone
Throughout his lofty chart;
Monadnock on his forehead hoar
Doth seal the sacred trust,
Your mountains build their monument,
Though ye destroy their dust.

1838

HENRY JAMES
(1843–1916)

Born in New York City, Henry James lived most of his adult life in England. Alongside William Dean Howells and Mark Twain, he played a key role in the fundamental shift from romanticism to realism that marked American literature in the second half of the nineteenth century. Yet, like Howells, while deploring the

excesses of "romanticism," he remained enthusiastic about the romances of Nathaniel Hawthorne, praising that writer for his fundamental faithfulness to an ideal reality and his focus on the psychology of character. In his preface to The American, *composed thirty years after that novel's original publication, he wrote that, although he had intended to write a realistic novel, he had unwittingly turned his story into a romance. His discussion of the qualities that distinguish the two forms of fiction remains a landmark of genre criticism.*

Preface to The American

* * * If in "The American" I invoked the romantic association without malice prepense,[1] yet with a production of the romantic effect that is for myself unmistakeable, the occasion is of the best perhaps for penetrating a little the obscurity of that principle. By what art or mystery, what craft of selection, omission or commission, does a given picture of life appear to us to surround its theme, its figures and images, with the air of romance while another picture close beside it may affect us as steeping the whole matter in the element of reality? * * *

The real represents to my perception the things we cannot possibly *not* know, sooner or later, in one way or another; it being but one of the accidents of our hampered state, and one of the incidents of their quantity and number, that particular instances have not yet come our way. The romantic stands, on the other hand, for the things that, with all the facilities in the world, all the wealth and all the courage and all the wit and all the adventure, we never *can* directly know; the things that can reach us only through the beautiful circuit and subterfuge of our thought and our desire. There have been, I gather, many definitions of romance, as a matter indispensably of boats, or of caravans, or of tigers, or of "historical characters," or of ghosts, or of forgers, or of detectives, or of beautiful wicked women, or of pistols and knives, but they appear for the most part reducible to the idea of the facing of danger, the acceptance of great risks for the fascination, the very love, of their uncertainty, the joy of success if possible and of battle in any case. This would be a fine formula if it bore examination; but it strikes me as weak and inadequate, as by no means covering the true ground and yet as landing us in strange confusions. * * *

The only *general* attribute of projected romance that I can see, the only one that fits all its cases, is the fact of the kind of experience with which it deals—experience liberated, so to speak; experience disengaged, disembroiled, disencumbered, exempt from the conditions that we usually know to attach to it and, if we wish so to put the matter, drag upon it, and operating in a medium which relieves it, in a particular interest, of the inconvenience of a *related,* a measurable state, a state subject to all our vulgar communities. The greatest intensity may so be arrived at evidently—when the sacrifice of community, of the "related" sides of situations, has not been too rash. It must to this end not flagrantly betray itself; we must even be kept if possible, for our illusion, from suspecting any sacrifice at all. The balloon of experience is in fact of course tied to the earth, and under that necessity we swing, thanks to a rope of remarkable length, in the more or less commodious car

1. Premeditated.

of the imagination; but it is by the rope we know where we are, and from the moment that cable is cut we are at large and unrelated: we only swing apart from the globe—though remaining as exhilarated, naturally, as we like, especially when all goes well. The art of the romancer is, "for the fun of it," insidiously to cut the cable, to cut it without our detecting him. What I have recognised then in "The American," much to my surprise and after long years, is that the experience here represented is the disconnected and uncontrolled experience—uncontrolled by our general sense of "the way things happen"—which romance alone more or less successfully palms off on us. * * * There is our general sense of the way things happen—it abides with us indefeasibly, as readers of fiction, from the moment we demand that our fiction shall be intelligible; and there is our particular sense of the way they don't happen, which is liable to wake up unless reflexion and criticism, in us, have been skilfully and successfully drugged. There are drugs enough, clearly—it is all a question of applying them with tact; in which case the way things don't happen may be artfully made to pass for the way things do.

Amusing and even touching to me, I profess, at this time of day, the ingenuity (worthy, with whatever lapses, of a better cause) with which, on behalf of Newman's adventure, this hocus-pocus is attempted: the value of the instance not being diminished either, surely, by its having been attempted in such evident good faith. Yes, all is romantic to my actual vision here, and not least so, I hasten to add, the fabulous felicity of my candour. The way things happen is frankly not the way in which they are represented as having happened, in Paris, to my hero. * * *

1907

JAMES FENIMORE COOPER
(1789–1851)

The novels of Cooper, appearing immediately after the great success of the early novels of Sir Walter Scott, at first attained phenomenal popularity, then survived partially because of their appeal for younger readers. Occasionally undervalued in the United States, in Europe Cooper has been perhaps the most popular American author of his century. Although his stilted rhetoric and many of his idealized situations and characters, especially his women, sometimes forbid close analysis, he is respectfully remembered as a master of adventurous narrative and, even more, as the creator of an American hero-myth. For the serious reader of today, Cooper has gained stature as a critic of American society, not only in his novels of American history, but also in the comparative judgments of Europe and the United States to be found in his excellent volumes of travels and in the critical commentaries which, as a patrician democrat, he addressed to his countrymen during the Jacksonian age of egalitarian excess.

The son of Judge William Cooper and Susan Fenimore, Cooper was born at Burlington, New Jersey, September 15, 1789. The next year his father settled on the family estate, now Cooperstown, at the foot of Otsego Lake, in New York. There the family was dominant; Judge Cooper was by nature the landed proprietor. Young Cooper was privately tutored; then he attended Yale about three years, without achieving a degree. After a year at sea before the mast, he was commissioned a midshipman in the United States Navy in 1808. Three years later he married Susan Augusta DeLancey, daughter of a wealthy family in Mamaroneck, Westchester County, New York; he then resigned his commission and became the country gentleman, devoting himself to his family and to agricultural, political, financial, and social interests in Cooperstown and in Westchester County.

According to a charming legend, Cooper's first novel (*Precaution,* 1820) was a response to his wife's challenge to improve on the current British society fiction, and the failure of this work turned him to historical novels. *The Spy* (1821), a novel of the Revolution, foreshadowed his typical hero in Harvey Birch and launched his career as the American rival of Sir Walter Scott in the popular field of historical romance. In the remaining thirty years of his life, he poured out a staggering total of thirty-three novels, numerous volumes of social comment, a *History of the Navy,* and five volumes of travels.

In the *Leather-Stocking Tales* the American frontier hero first materialized, to run his limitless course to the present day, through the romance, dime novel, drama, movies, and television. Fearless and miraculously resourceful, he survives the rigors of nature and human villainy by superior strength and skill and by the help of heaven, for he is always quaintly moral. In short, he is the knight of the Christian romances transplanted to the soil of democracy and the American forest and frontier. Cooper's Natty Bumppo appears in the five novels under various names which, like a knight of old, he has gained by his exploits. Deerslayer merges into Hawk-eye, Pathfinder, and Leather-stocking.

Cooper did not plan these novels as a series, nor did he publish them in the chronological order of the events in their hero's life. In *The Pioneers* (1823), the

author's third novel, Natty Bumppo first appeared, as a seasoned scout in advancing years, accompanied by the dying Chingachgook, the old Indian chief who has been his faithful comrade in adventure. The *Leather-Stocking Tales* are named below in the order of events in the life of Natty Bumppo: *The Deerslayer* (1841), early adventures with the hostile Hurons, on Lake Otsego, New York, in 1740–1745; *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), an adventure of the French and Indian Wars, in the Lake George country in 1757; *The Pathfinder* (1840), continuing the same border warfare in 1760, in the St. Lawrence and Lake Ontario country; *The Pioneers* (1823), described above, taking place in 1793, as the eastern forest frontier begins to disappear and old Chingachgook dies; and *The Prairie* (1827), set in the new frontier of the western plains in 1804, where the aged Leather-stocking, having assisted some white pioneers and the Pawnees against the Sioux, takes leave of life amid people who can still value his devotion to a dying chivalry. In 1850 Cooper published a new edition of these novels, arranged in the chronological sequence of Natty Bumppo's life (as above) and wrote a general "Preface" for the edition.

Almost as popular in their own day as the *Leather-Stocking Tales* were Cooper's romances of seafaring and naval combat; of these *The Pilot* (1823) set the pattern and provided the typical heroes in Long Tom Coffin and the mysterious "Pilot," generally taken to represent the gallant John Paul Jones. Later novels of the sea included, notably, *The Red Rover* (1828), *The Water-Witch* (1830), *The Two Admirals* (1842), and *The Wing-and-Wing* (1842).

Cooper's earnestness as a social critic was strongly evident in his novels based on European history. *The Bravo* (1831), *The Heidenmauer* (1832), and *The Headsman* (1833) are satires of European feudalism but follow the conventional pattern which Scott had established for historical romance. From 1826 to 1833 Cooper lived observantly abroad, ostensibly as American consul at Lyon, but actually as a persistent traveler. His novels of foreign locale, as well as his travel books and volumes of social comment, reflect his continuous awareness of contrasts in society, behavior, and government between the United States and Europe, particularly Great Britain. Abroad he was regarded as a champion of American life, but at home, his comments ironically gained him a reputation as a defender of the aristocracy. His *Sketches of Switzerland* and *Gleanings in Europe,* published in five volumes between 1836 and 1838, genuine contributions to our literature of travel, antagonized egalitarian democrats, and the breach was widened by such commentaries and novels as *A Letter to His Countrymen* (1834), *Homeward Bound, Home as Found,* and *The American Democrat* (all 1838).

He had returned to Cooperstown in 1834. Soon unbalanced reviews led him to institute a number of lawsuits for slander. Litigation over the trespass of the community on his lands confirmed his reputation as an aristocratic reactionary. Curiously enough, his popularity as a novelist was affected but little.

Among the best contributions of his prolific later years is a trilogy of novels, *Satanstoe* (1845), *The Chainbearer* (1845), and *The Redskins* (1846), in which the author employs the fiction of certain "Littlepage Manuscripts," purported to contain records of three generations of a great family of upstate New York landholders. The novels form a consecutive social history of three generations of Dutch patroon society in the Hudson valley, ending with the Anti-Rent Wars of the 1840s, when the tenants successfully opposed the feudal leases and perpetual sovereignty of the lords of the manor. Thus was founded the family novel of several volumes. Uneven in quality, the *Littlepage Manuscripts* succeed by their fine sense of history and their narrative intensity, and they are the last of Cooper's works to do so.

A modern edition of Cooper's writings, begun by James Franklin Beard in 1980, has been continued by others at the State University of New York Press. The Author's Revised Edition appeared in 12 vols. in 1851, followed by an edition illustrated by F. O. C. Darley, 32 vols., 1859– 1861. The Household Edition, 32 vols., 1876–1884, contains valuable introductory essays by Susan Fenimore Cooper, the novelist's daughter. The *Works,* 33 vols., 1895–1900, is another edition. An excellent collection of the nonfiction is *Cooper: Representative Selections,* edited by Robert E. Spiller, American Writers Series, 1936. James F. Beard's *Letters and Journals of James Fenimore Cooper* comprises 6 vols., 1960–1968. An earlier compilation of *The Correspondence,* 2 vols., by J. F. Cooper, 1922, is useful.

There is no definitive biography, but *Fenimore Cooper, Critic of His Times,* by Robert E. Spiller, 1931, is authoritative and may be supplemented by the same author's Introduction to the *Representative Selections.* The comments by Susan Fenimore Cooper in *The Cooper Gallery,* 1865, and T. R. Lounsbury's biography, 1882, are useful, as is Donald A. Ringe, *James Fenimore Cooper,* 1962. Critical studies include Thomas L. Philbrick, *James Fenimore Cooper and the Development of American Sea Fiction,* 1961; George Dekker, *James Fenimore Cooper: The American Scott,* 1967; George Dekker and John P. McWilliams, *Fenimore Cooper: The Critical Heritage,* 1973; Daniel Peck, *A World by Itself: The Pastoral Moment in Cooper's Fiction,* 1977; Stephen Railton, *Fenimore Cooper: A Study of His Life and Imagination,* 1979; Wayne Franklin, *The New World of James Fenimore Cooper,* 1982; William P. Kelly, *Plotting America's Past: Fenimore Cooper and the Leatherstocking Tales,* 1984; James D. Wallace, *Early Cooper and His Audience,* 1986; Warren Motley, *The American Abraham: James Fenimore Cooper and the Frontier Patriarch,* 1987; Geoffrey Rans, *Cooper's Leather-Stocking Series: A Secular Reading,* 1991; and Donald G. Darnell, *James Fenimore Cooper, Novelist of Manners,* 1993.

JAMES FENIMORE COOPER

From The Pioneers,[1] or The Sources of the Susquehanna

A DESCRIPTIVE TALE

Chapter I

See, Winter comes, to rule the varied year,
Sullen and sad, with all his rising train;
Vapors, and clouds, and storms—
—THOMSON[2]

Near the centre of the State of New York lies an extensive district of country, whose surface is a succession of hills and dales, or, to speak with greater deference to geographical definitions, of mountains and valleys. It is among these hills that the Delaware takes its rise; and flowing from the limpid lakes and thousand springs of this region, the numerous sources of the Susquehanna meander through the valleys, until, uniting their streams, they form one of the proudest rivers of the United States. The mountains are generally arable to the tops, although instances are not wanting where the sides are jutted with rocks, that aid greatly in giving to the country that romantic and picturesque character which it so eminently possesses. The vales are narrow, rich, and cultivated; with a stream uniformly winding through each. Beautiful and thriving villages are found interspersed along the margins of the small lakes, or situated at those points of the streams which are favorable to manufacturing; and neat and comfortable farms, with every indication of wealth about them, are scattered profusely through the vales, and even to the mountain tops. Roads diverge in every direction, from the even and graceful bottoms of the valleys, to the most rugged and intricate passes of the hills. Academies, and minor edifices of learning, meet the eye of the stranger at every few miles, as he winds his way through this uneven territory; and places for the worship of God abound with that frequency which characterizes a moral and reflecting people, and with that variety of exterior and canonical government which

1. The present text is that of the edition illustrated by F. O. C. Darley and published in New York by W. A. Townsend and Company in 1859. A few printer's errors have been silently corrected. *The Pioneers* was first published by Charles Wiley in New York in 1823, but the first printing was poorly proofread. Cooper corrected that edition in three subsequent printings that year and revised the book in 1831 and again in 1850. The Townsend text preserved the 1850 revisions.

In *The Pioneers,* his third novel, Cooper found his true life's work and laid the foundation for his enduring fame. Here he introduced the characters of Natty Bumppo and Chingachgook. Here also he gave memorable expression to themes that were to acquire mythic dimension in his own later work and in American literature to this day, masterfully weaving together questions of dispossessed inheritance, of the ownership of the land, of the conservation of natural resources, of natural law versus human law, of individual freedoms versus the ideal of equal opportunities protected by the institutions of a justly ordered society.

2. James Thomson (1700–1748), *The Seasons,* "Winter," 1–3.

flows from unfettered liberty of conscience. In short, the whole district is hourly exhibiting how much can be done, in even a rugged country, and with a severe climate, under the dominion of mild laws, and where every man feels a direct interest in the prosperity of a commonwealth, of which he knows himself to form a part. The expedients of the pioneers who first broke ground in the settlement of this country, are succeeded by the permanent improvements of the yeoman, who intends to leave his remains to moulder under the sod which he tills, or, perhaps, of the son, who, born in the land, piously wishes to linger around the grave of his father. Only forty years[3] have passed since this territory was a wilderness.

Very soon after the establishment of the independence of the States, by the peace of 1783, the enterprise of their citizens was directed to a development of the natural advantages of their widely extended dominions. Before the war of the revolution the inhabited parts of the colony of New York were limited to less than a tenth of its possessions. A narrow belt of country, extending for a short distance on either side of the Hudson, with a similar occupation of fifty miles on the banks of the Mohawk, together with the islands of Nassau and Staten, and a few insulated settlements on chosen land along the margins of streams, composed the country, which was then inhabited by less than two hundred thousand souls. Within the short period we have mentioned, the population has spread itself over five degrees of latitude and seven of longitude, and has swelled to a million and a half of inhabitants,[4] who are maintained in abundance, and can look forward to ages before the evil day must arrive, when their possessions shall become unequal to their wants.

Our tale begins in 1793, about seven years after the commencement of one of the earliest of those settlements, which have conduced to effect that magical change in the power and condition of the state, to which we have alluded.

It was near the setting of the sun, on a clear, cold day in December, when a sleigh was moving slowly up one of the mountains, in the district we have described. The day had been fine for the season, and but two or three large clouds, whose color seemed brightened by the light reflected from the mass of snow that covered the earth, floated in a sky of the purest blue. The road wound along the brow of a precipice, and on one side was upheld by a foundation of logs, piled one upon the other, while a narrow excavation in the mountain, in the opposite direction, had made a passage of sufficient width for the ordinary travelling of that day. But logs, excavation, and everything that did not reach several feet above the earth, lay alike buried beneath the snow. A single track, barely wide enough to receive the sleigh,[5] denoted the route of the highway, and this was sunk nearly two feet below the surrounding surface. In the vale, which lay at a distance of sev-

3. "The book was written in 1823" [Cooper's note].
4. "The population of New York is now (1831) quite 2,000,000" [Cooper's note].
5. "Sleigh is the word used in every part of the United States to denote a traineau. It is of local use in the west of England, whence it is most probably derived by the Americans. The latter draw a distinction between a sled, or sledge, and a sleigh; the sleigh being shod with metal. Sleighs are also subdivided into two-horse and one-horse sleighs. Of the latter, there are the cutter, with thills so arranged as to permit the horse to travel in the side track; the 'pung,' or 'tow-pung,' which is driven with a pole; and the 'gumper,' a rude construction used for temporary purposes, in the new countries.

"Many of the American sleighs are elegant, though the use of this mode of conveyance is much lessened with the melioration of the climate, consequent on the clearing of the forests" [Cooper's note].

eral hundred feet lower, there was what in the language of the country was called a *clearing,* and all the usual improvements of a new settlement; these even extended up the hill to the point where the road turned short and ran across the level land, which lay on the summit of the mountain; but the summit itself remained in forest. There was a glittering in the atmosphere, as if it were filled with innumerable shining particles; and the noble bay horses that drew the sleigh were covered, in many parts, with a coat of hoar frost. The vapor from their nostrils was seen to issue like smoke; and every object in the view, as well as every arrangement of the travellers, denoted the depth of a winter in the mountains. The harness, which was of a deep dull black, differing from the glossy varnishing of the present day, was ornamented with enormous plates and buckles of brass, that shone like gold in those transient beams of the sun, which found their way obliquely through the tops of the trees. Huge saddles, studded with nails, and fitted with cloth that served as blankets to the shoulders of the cattle, supported four high, square-topped turrets, through which the stout reins led from the mouths of the horses to the hands of the driver, who was a negro, of apparently twenty years of age. His face, which nature had colored with a glistening black, was now mottled with the cold, and his large shining eyes filled with tears; a tribute to its power, that the keen frosts of those regions always extracted from one of his African origin. Still there was a smiling expression of good humor in his happy countenance, that was created by the thoughts of home, and a Christmas fire-side, with its Christmas frolics. The sleigh was one of those large, comfortable, old-fashioned conveyances, which would admit a whole family within its bosom, but which now contained only two passengers besides the driver. The color of its outside was a modest green, and that of its inside a fiery red. The latter was intended to convey the idea of heat in that cold climate. Large buffalo skins, trimmed around the edges with red cloth, cut into festoons, covered the back of the sleigh, and were spread over its bottom, and drawn up around the feet of the travellers—one of whom was a man of middle age, and the other a female, just entering upon womanhood. The former was of a large stature; but the precautions he had taken to guard against the cold left but little of his person exposed to view. A greatcoat, that was abundantly ornamented by a profusion of furs, enveloped the whole of his figure, excepting the head, which was covered with a cap of marten skins, lined with morocco, the sides of which were made to fall, if necessary, and were now drawn close over the ears, and fastened beneath his chin with a black riband. The top of the cap was surmounted with the tail of the animal whose skin had furnished the rest of the materials, which fell back, not ungracefully, a few inches behind the head. From beneath this mask were to be seen part of a fine manly face, and particularly a pair of expressive, large blue eyes, that promised extraordinary intellect, covert humor, and great benevolence. The form of his companion was literally hid beneath the garments she wore. There were furs and silks peeping from under a large camlet cloak, with a thick flannel lining, that, by its cut and size, was evidently intended for a masculine wearer. A huge hood of black silk, that was quilted with down, concealed the whole of her head, except at a small opening in front for breath, through which occasionally sparkled a pair of animated jet-black eyes.

Both the father and daughter (for such was the connexion between the two travellers) were too much occupied with their reflections to break a stillness, that received little or no interruption from the easy gliding of the sleigh, by the sound

of their voices. The former was thinking of the wife that had held this their only child to her bosom, when, four years before, she had reluctantly consented to relinquish the society of her daughter, in order that the latter might enjoy the advantages of an education, which the city of New York could only offer at that period. A few months afterwards death had deprived him of the remaining companion of his solitude; but still he had enough of real regard for his child, not to bring her into the comparative wilderness in which he dwelt, until the full period had expired, to which he had limited her juvenile labors. The reflections of the daughter were less melancholy, and mingled with a pleased astonishment at the novel scenery she met at every turn in the road.

The mountain on which they were journeying was covered with pines, that rose without a branch some seventy or eighty feet, and which frequently doubled that height, by the addition of the tops. Through the innumerable vistas that opened beneath the lofty trees, the eye could penetrate, until it was met by a distant inequality in the ground, or was stopped by a view of the summit of the mountain, which lay on the opposite side of the valley to which they were hastening. The dark trunks of the trees rose from the pure white of the snow, in regularly formed shafts, until, at a great height, their branches shot forth horizontal limbs, that were covered with the meagre foliage of an evergreen, affording a melancholy contrast to the torpor of nature below. To the travellers, there seemed to be no wind; but these pines waved majestically at their topmost boughs, sending forth a dull, plaintive sound, that was quite in consonance with the rest of the melancholy scene.

The sleigh had glided for some distance along the even surface, and the gaze of the female was bent in inquisitive, and, perhaps, timid glances, into the recesses of the forest, when a loud and continued howling was heard, pealing under the long arches of the woods, like the cry of a numerous pack of hounds. The instant the sound reached the ears of the gentleman, he cried aloud to the black—

"Hold up, Aggy; there is old Hector; I should know his bay among ten thousand! The Leather-stocking has put his hounds into the hills, this clear day, and they have started their game. There is a deer-track a few rods ahead;—and now, Bess, if thou canst muster courage enough to stand fire, I will give thee a saddle for thy Christmas dinner."

The black drew up, with a cheerful grin upon his chilled features, and began thrashing his arms together, in order to restore the circulation to his fingers, while the speaker stood erect, and, throwing aside his outer covering, stepped from the sleigh upon a bank of snow, which sustained his weight without yielding.

In a few moments the speaker succeeded in extricating a double-barrelled fowling-piece from among a multitude of trunks and bandboxes. After throwing aside the thick mittens which had encased his hands, that now appeared in a pair of leather gloves tipped with fur, he examined his priming, and was about to move forward, when the light bounding noise of an animal plunging through the woods was heard, and a fine buck darted into the path, a short distance ahead of him. The appearance of the animal was sudden, and his flight inconceivably rapid; but the traveller appeared to be too keen a sportsman to be disconcerted by either. As it came first into view he raised the fowling-piece to his shoulder, and, with a practised eye and steady hand, drew a trigger. The deer dashed forward undaunted, and apparently unhurt. Without lowering his piece, the traveller turned its muzzle towards his victim, and fired again. Neither discharge, however, seemed to have taken effect.

The whole scene had passed with a rapidity that confused the female, who was unconsciously rejoicing in the escape of the buck, as he rather darted like a meteor, then ran across the road, when a sharp quick sound struck her ear, quite different from the full, round reports of her father's gun, but still sufficiently distinct to be known as the concussion produced by fire-arms. At the same instant that she heard this unexpected report, the buck sprang from the snow to a great height in the air, and directly a second discharge, similar in sound to the first, followed, when the animal came to the earth, falling headlong, and rolling over on the crust with its own velocity. A loud shout was given by the unseen marksman, and a couple of men instantly appeared from behind the trunks of two of the pines, where they had evidently placed themselves in expectation of the passage of the deer.

"Ha! Natty, had I known you were in ambush, I should not have fired," cried the traveller, moving towards the spot where the deer lay—near to which he was followed by the delighted black, with his sleigh; "but the sound of old Hector was too exhilarating to be quiet; though I hardly think I struck him either."

"No—no—Judge," returned the hunter, with an inward chuckle, and with that look of exultation that indicates a consciousness of superior skill; "you burnt your powder only to warm your nose this cold evening. Did ye think to stop a full grown buck, with Hector and the slut open upon him within sound, with that pop-gun in your hand? There's plenty of pheasants among the swamps; and the snow-birds are flying round your own door, where you may feed them with crumbs, and shoot them at pleasure, any day; but if you're for a buck, or a little bear's meat, Judge, you'll have to take the long rifle, with a greased wadding, or you'll waste more powder than you'll fill stomachs, I'm thinking."

As the speaker concluded, he drew his bare hand across the bottom of his nose, and again opened his enormous mouth with a kind of inward laugh.

"The gun scatters well, Natty, and it has killed a deer before now," said the traveller, smiling good-humoredly. "One barrel was charged with buck-shot; but the other was loaded for birds only. Here are two hurts; one through the neck, and the other directly through the heart. It is by no means certain, Natty, but I gave him one of the two."

"Let who will kill him," said the hunter, rather surlily, "I suppose the creature is to be eaten." So saying, he drew a large knife from a leathern sheath, which was stuck through his girdle or sash, and cut the throat of the animal. "If there are two balls through the deer, I would ask if there wer'n't two rifles fired—besides, who ever saw such a ragged hole from a smooth-bore, as this through the neck?—and you will own yourself, Judge, that the buck fell at the last shot, which was sent from a truer and a younger hand, than your'n or mine either; but for my part, although I am a poor man, I can live without the venison, but I don't love to give up my lawful dues in a free country. Though, for the matter of that, might often makes right here, as well as in the old country, for what I can see."

An air of sullen dissatisfaction pervaded the manner of the hunter during the whole of this speech; yet he thought it prudent to utter the close of the sentence in such an under tone, as to leave nothing audible but the grumbling sounds of his voice.

"Nay, Natty," rejoined the traveller, with undisturbed good humor, "it is for the honor that I contend. A few dollars will pay for the venison; but what will requite me for the lost honor of a buck's tail in my cap? Think, Natty, how I should

triumph over that quizzing dog, Dick Jones, who has failed seven times already this season, and has only brought in one woodchuck and a few grey squirrels."

"Ah! the game is becoming hard to find, indeed. Judge, with your clearings and betterments," said the old hunter, with a kind of compelled resignation. "The time has been, when I have shot thirteen deer, without counting the fa'ns, standing in the door of my own hut!—and for bear's meat, if one wanted a ham or so, he had only to watch a-nights, and he could shoot one by moonlight, through the cracks of the logs; no fear of his over-sleeping himself neither, for the howling of the wolves was sartin to keep his eyes open. There's old Hector,"—patting with affection a tall hound, of black and yellow spots, with white belly and legs, that just then came in on the scent, accompanied by the slut he had mentioned; "see where the wolves bit his throat, the night I druv them from the venison that was smoking on the chimbly top;—that dog is more to be trusted than many a Christian man; for he never forgets a friend, and loves the hand that gives him bread."

There was a peculiarity in the manner of the hunter that attracted the notice of the young female, who had been a close and interested observer of his appearance and equipments, from the moment he came into view. He was tall, and so meagre as to make him seem above even the six feet that he actually stood in his stockings. On his head, which was thinly covered with lank, sandy hair, he wore a cap made of fox-skin, resembling in shape the one we have already described, although much inferior in finish and ornaments. His face was skinny, and thin almost to emaciation; but yet it bore no signs of disease;—on the contrary, it had every indication of the most robust and enduring health. The cold and the exposure had, together, given it a color of uniform red. His grey eyes were glancing under a pair of shaggy brows, that overhung them in long hairs of grey mingled with their natural hue; his scraggy neck was bare, and burnt to the same tint with his face; though a small part of a shirt collar, made of the country check, was to be seen above the overdress he wore. A kind of coat, made of dressed deerskin, with the hair on, was belted close to his lank body, by a girdle of colored worsted. On his feet were deerskin moccasins, ornamented with porcupines' quills, after the manner of the Indians, and his limbs were guarded with long leggings of the same material as the moccasins, which, gartering over the knees of his tarnished buckskin breeches, had obtained for him, among the settlers, the nickname of Leather-stocking. Over his left shoulder was slung a belt of deerskin, from which depended an enormous ox horn, so thinly scraped, as to discover the powder it contained. The larger end was fitted ingeniously and securely with a wooden bottom, and the other was stopped tight by a little plug. A leathern pouch hung before him, from which, as he concluded his last speech, he took a small measure, and, filling it accurately with powder, he commenced reloading the rifle, which, as its butt rested on the snow before him, reached nearly to the top of his foxskin cap.

The traveller had been closely examining the wounds during these movements, and now, without heeding the ill-humor of the hunter's manner, he exclaimed—

"I would fain establish a right, Natty, to the honor of this death; and surely if the hit in the neck be mine, it is enough; for the shot in the heart was unnecessary—what we call an act of supererogation, Leather-stocking."

"You may call it by what larned name you please, Judge," said the hunter, throwing his rifle across his left arm, and knocking up a brass lid in the breech, from which he took a small piece of greased leather, and wrapping a ball in it,

forced them down by main strength on the powder, where he continued to pound them while speaking. "It's far easier to call names than to shoot a buck on the spring; but the cretur came by his end from a younger hand than either your'n or mine, as I said before."

"What say you, my friend," cried the traveller, turning pleasantly to Natty's companion; "shall we toss up this dollar for the honor, and you keep the silver if you lose; what say you, friend?"

"That I killed the deer," answered the young man with a little haughtiness, as he leaned on another long rifle, similar to that of Natty.

"Here are two to one, indeed," replied the Judge, with a smile; "I am outvoted—over-ruled, as we say on the bench. There is Aggy, he can't vote, being a slave; and Bess is a minor—so I must even make the best of it. But you'll sell me the venison; and the deuce is in it, but I make a good story about its death."

"The meat is none of mine to sell," said Leather-stocking, adopting a little of his companion's hauteur; "for my part I have known animals travel days with shots in the neck, and I'm none of them who'll rob a man of his rightful dues."

"You are tenacious of your rights, this cold evening, Natty," returned the Judge, with unconquerable good nature; "but what say you, young man; will three dollars pay you for the buck?"

"First let us determine the question of right to the satisfaction of us both," said the youth, firmly but respectfully, and with a pronunciation and language vastly superior to his appearance; "with how many shot did you load your gun?"

"With five, sir," said the Judge, a little struck with the other's manner; "are they not enough to slay a buck like this?"

"One would do it; but," moving to the tree from behind which he had appeared, "you know, sir, you fired in this direction—here are four of the bullets in the tree."

The Judge examined the fresh marks in the bark of the pine, and shaking his head, said, with a laugh—

"You are making out the case against yourself, my young advocate—where is the fifth?"

"Here," said the youth, throwing aside the rough overcoat that he wore, and exhibiting a hole in his under garment, through which large drops of blood were oozing.

"Good God!" exclaimed the Judge with horror; "have I been trifling here about an empty distinction, and a fellow-creature suffering from my hands without a murmur? But hasten—quick—get into my sleigh—it is but a mile to the village, where surgical aid can be obtained;—all shall be done at my expense, and thou shalt live with me until thy wound is healed, aye, and for ever afterwards."

"I thank you for your good intention, but I must decline your offer. I have a friend who would be uneasy were he to hear that I am hurt and away from him. The injury is but slight, and the bullet has missed the bones; but I believe, sir, you will now admit my title to the venison."

"Admit it!" repeated the agitated Judge: "I here give thee a right to shoot deer, or bears, or anything thou pleasest in my woods, for ever. Leather-stocking is the only other man that I have granted the same privilege to; and the time is coming when it will be of value. But I buy your deer—here, this bill will pay thee, both for thy shot and my own."

The old hunter gathered his tall person up into an air of pride, during this dialogue, but he waited until the other had done speaking.

"There's them living who say, that Nathaniel Bumppo's right to shoot on these hills is of older date than Marmaduke Temple's right to forbid him," he said. "But if there's a law about it at all, though who ever heard of a law that a man shouldn't kill deer where he pleased!—but if there is a law at all, it should be to keep people from the use of smooth bores. A body never knows where his lead will fly, when he pulls the trigger of one of them uncertain fire-arms."

Without attending to the soliloquy of Natty, the youth bowed his head silently to the offer of the bank note, and replied—

"Excuse me; I have need of the venison."

"But this will buy you many deer," said the Judge; "take it, I entreat you," and lowering his voice to a whisper, he added—"it is for a hundred dollars."

For an instant only, the youth seemed to hesitate, and then, blushing even through the high color that the cold had given to his cheeks, as if with inward shame at his own weakness, he again declined the offer.

During this scene the female arose, and, regardless of the cold air, she threw back the hood which concealed her features, and now spoke, with great earnestness.

"Surely, surely—young man,—sir—you would not pain my father so much, as to have him think that he leaves a fellow-creature in this wilderness, whom his own hand has injured. I entreat you will go with us, and receive medical aid."

Whether his wound became more painful, or there was something irresistible in the voice and manner of the fair pleader for her father's feelings, we know not; but the distance of the young man's manner was sensibly softened by this appeal, and he stood in apparent doubt, as if reluctant to comply with, and yet unwilling to refuse her request. The Judge, for such being his office, must in future be his title, watched, with no little interest, the display of this singular contention in the feelings of the youth; and advancing, kindly took his hand, and as he pulled him gently towards the sleigh, urged him to enter it.

"There is no human aid nearer than Templeton," he said, "and the hut of Natty is full three miles from this;—come—come, my young friend, go with us, and let the new doctor look to this shoulder of thine. Here is Natty will take the tidings of thy welfare to thy friend; and should'st thou require it, thou shalt return home in the morning."

The young man succeeded in extricating his hand from the warm grasp of the Judge, but he continued to gaze on the face of the female, who, regardless of the cold, was still standing with her fine features exposed, which expressed feelings that eloquently seconded the request of her father. Leather-stocking stood, in the meantime, leaning upon his long rifle, with his head turned a little to one side, as if engaged in sagacious musing; when, having apparently satisfied his doubts, by revolving the subject in his mind, he broke silence.

"It may be best to go, lad, after all; for if the shot hangs under the skin, my hand is getting too old to be cutting into human flesh, as I once used to. Though some thirty years agone, in the old war, when I was out under Sir William,[6] I trav-

6. Sir William Johnson (1715–1774), British leader in the French and Indian Wars. In Chapter XIII Natty says he was with Sir William when he captured Fort Niagara (1759).

elled seventy miles alone in the howling wilderness, with a rifle bullet in my thigh, and then cut it out with my own jack-knife. Old Indian John knows the time well. I met him with a party of the Delawares, on the trail of the Iroquois, who had been down and taken five scalps on the Schoharie.[7] But I made a mark on the redskin that I'll warrant he carried to his grave! I took him on his posteerum, saving the lady's presence, as he got up from the ambushment, and rattled three buck shot into his naked hide, so close, that you might have laid a broad joe[8] upon them all—" here Natty stretched out his long neck, and straightened his body, as he opened his mouth, which exposed a single tusk of yellow bone, while his eyes, his face, even his whole frame seemed to laugh, although no sound was emitted, except a kind of thick hissing, as he inhaled his breath in quavers. "I had lost my bullet mould in crossing the Oneida outlet, and had to make shift with the buckshot; but the rifle was true, and didn't scatter like your two-legged thing there, Judge, which don't do, I find, to hunt in company with."

Natty's apology to the delicacy of the young lady was unnecessary, for, while he was speaking, she was too much employed in helping her father to remove certain articles of baggage to hear him. Unable to resist the kind urgency of the travellers any longer, the youth, though still with an unaccountable reluctance, suffered himself to be persuaded to enter the sleigh. The black, with the aid of his master, threw the buck across the baggage, and entering the vehicle themselves, the Judge invited the hunter to do so likewise.

"No, no," said the old man, shaking his head; "I have work to do at home this Christmas eve—drive on with the boy, and let your doctor look to the shoulder; though if he will only cut out the shot, I have yarbs that will heal the wound quicker than all his foreign 'intments."[9] He turned, and was about to move off, when, suddenly recollecting himself, he again faced the party, and added—"If you see anything of Indian John, about the foot of the lake, you had better take him with you, and let him lend the doctor a hand; for old as he is, he is curious at cuts and bruises, and it's likelier than not he'll be in with brooms to sweep your Christmas ha'arths."

"Stop, stop," cried the youth, catching the arm of the black as he prepared to urge his horses forward; "Natty—you need say nothing of the shot, nor of where I am going—remember, Natty, as you love me."

"Trust old Leather-stocking," returned the hunter, significantly; "he hasn't lived fifty years in the wilderness, and not larnt from the savages how to hold his tongue—trust to me, lad; and remember old Indian John."

"And, Natty," said the youth eagerly, still holding the black by the arm, "I will just get the shot extracted, and bring you up to-night, a quarter of the buck, for the Christmas dinner."

He was interrupted by the hunter, who held up his finger with an expressive gesture for silence. He then moved softly along the margin of the road, keeping his eyes steadfastly fixed on the branches of a pine. When he had obtained such a po-

7. Schoharie Creek, west of Albany.
8. A Portuguese gold coin, worth about sixteen dollars.
9. Herbs and ointments.

sition as he wished, he stopped, and cocking his rifle, threw one leg far behind him, and stretching his left arm to its utmost extent along the barrel of his piece, he began slowly to raise its muzzle in a line with the straight trunk of the tree. The eyes of the group in the sleigh naturally preceded the movement of the rifle, and they soon discovered the object of Natty's aim. On a small dead branch of the pine, which, at the distance of seventy feet from the ground, shot out horizontally, immediately beneath the living members of the tree, sat a bird, that in the vulgar language of the country was indiscriminately called a pheasant or a partridge. In size, it was but little smaller than a common barn-yard fowl. The baying of the dogs, and the conversation that had passed near the root of the tree on which it was perched, had alarmed the bird, which was now drawn up near the body of the pine, with a head and neck so erect, as to form nearly a straight line with its legs. As soon as the rifle bore on the victim, Natty drew his trigger, and the partridge fell from its height with a force that buried it in the snow.

"Lie down, you old villain," exclaimed Leather-stocking, shaking his ramrod at Hector as he bounded towards the foot of the tree, "lie down, I say." The dog obeyed, and Natty proceeded with great rapidity, though with the nicest accuracy, to reload his piece. When this was ended, he took up his game, and showing it to the party without a head, he cried—"Here is a titbit for an old man's Christmas—never mind the venison, boy, and remember Indian John; his yarbs are better than all the foreign 'intments. Here, Judge," holding up the bird again, "do you think a smooth-bore would pick game off their roost, and not ruffle a feather?" The old man gave another of his remarkable laughs, which partook so largely of exultation, mirth, and irony, and shaking his head, he turned, with his rifle at a trail, and moved into the forest with steps that were between a walk and a trot. At each movement he made, his body lowered several inches, his knees yielding with an inclination inwards; but as the sleigh turned at a bend in the road, the youth cast his eyes in quest of his old companion, and he saw that he was already nearly concealed by the trunks of the trees, while his dogs were following quietly in his footsteps, occasionally scenting the deer track, that they seemed to know instinctively was now of no further use to them. Another jerk was given to the sleigh, and Leather-stocking was hid from view.

1823

JAMES FENIMORE COOPER

From The Pioneers,[1] or The Sources of the Susquehanna

A DESCRIPTIVE TALE

Chapter III[2]

All that thou see'st, is nature's handiwork;
Those rocks that upward throw their mossy brows
Like castled pinnacles of elder times!
These venerable stems, that slowly rock
Their towering branches in the wintry gale!
That field of frost, which glitters in the sun,
Mocking the whiteness of a marble breast!—
Yet man can mar such works with his rude taste,
Like some sad spoiler of a virgin's fame.

—DUO

Some little while elapsed ere Marmaduke Temple was sufficiently recovered from his agitation to scan the person of his new companion. He now observed that he was a youth of some two or three and twenty years of age, and rather above the middle height. Further observation was prevented by the rough overcoat which was belted close to his form by a worsted sash, much like the one worn by the old hunter. The eyes of the Judge, after resting a moment on the figure of the stranger, were raised to a scrutiny of his countenance. There had been a look of care, visible in the features of the youth, when he first entered the sleigh, that had not only attracted the notice of Elizabeth, but which she had been much puzzled to interpret. His anxiety seemed the strongest when he was enjoining his old companion to secrecy; and even when he had decided, and was rather passively suffering himself to be conveyed to the village, the expression of his eyes by no means indicated any great degree of self-satisfaction at the step. But the lines of an uncommonly pre-

1. The present text is that of the edition illustrated by F. O. C. Darley and published in New York by W. A. Townsend and Company in 1859. A few printer's errors have been silently corrected. *The Pioneers* was first published by Charles Wiley in New York in 1823, but the first printing was poorly proofread. Cooper corrected that edition in three subsequent printings that year and revised the book in 1831 and again in 1850. The Townsend text preserved the 1850 revisions.

In *The Pioneers,* his third novel, Cooper found his true life's work and laid the foundation for his enduring fame. Here he introduced the characters of Natty Bumppo and Chingachgook. Here also he gave memorable expression to themes that were to acquire mythic dimension in his own later work and in American literature to this day, masterfully weaving together questions of dispossessed inheritance, of the ownership of the land, of the conservation of natural resources, of natural law versus human law, of individual freedoms versus the ideal of equal opportunities protected by the institutions of a justly ordered society.

2. Chapter II contains an account of how Marmaduke Temple, a Pennsylvania Quaker, made his money by a joint venture with Colonel Effingham, a Loyalist. They were estranged by the Revolution, and the Effingham lands were confiscated along with those of other Loyalists. Temple bought the land surrounding the town of Templeton, which had belonged to Effingham, at auction.

possessing countenance were gradually becoming composed; and he now sat silent, and apparently musing. The Judge gazed at him for some time with earnestness, and then smiling, as if at his own forgetfulness, he said—

"I believe, my young friend, that terror has driven you from my recollection; your face is very familiar, and yet for the honor of a score of bucks' tails in my cap, I could not tell your name."

"I came into the country but three weeks since," returned the youth coldly, "and I understand you have been absent twice that time."

"It will be five to-morrow. Yet your face is one that I have seen; though it would not be strange, such has been my affright, should I see thee in thy winding-sheet walking by my bedside to night. What say'st thou, Bess? Am I compos mentis or not?—Fit to charge a grand jury, or, what is just now of more pressing necessity, able to do the honors of a Christmas-eve in the hall of Templeton?"

"More able to do either, my dear Father," said a playful voice from under the ample inclosures of the hood, "than to kill deer with a smooth-bore." A short pause followed, and the same voice, but in a different accent, continued—"We shall have good reasons for our thanksgiving to night, on more accounts than one."

The horses soon reached a point where they seemed to know by instinct that the journey was nearly ended, and bearing on the bits as they tossed their heads, they rapidly drew the sleigh over the level land which lay on the top of the mountain, and soon came to the point where the road descended suddenly, but circuitously, into the valley.

The Judge was roused from his reflections, when he saw the four columns of smoke which floated above his own chimneys. As house, village, and valley burst on his sight, he exclaimed cheerfully to his daughter—

"See, Bess, there is thy resting-place for life!—And thine, too, young man, if thou wilt consent to dwell with us."

The eyes of his auditors involuntarily met; and if the color that gathered over the face of Elizabeth was contradicted by the cold expression of her eye, the ambiguous smile that again played about the lips of the stranger, seemed equally to deny the probability of his consenting to form one of this family group. The scene was one, however, which might easily warm a heart less given to philanthropy than that of Marmaduke Temple.

The side of the mountain on which our travellers were journeying, though not absolutely perpendicular, was so steep as to render great care necessary in descending the rude and narrow path, which, in that early day, wound along the precipices. The negro reined in his impatient steeds, and time was given Elizabeth to dwell on a scene which was so rapidly altering under the hands of man, that it only resembled, in its outlines, the picture she had so often studied with delight, in childhood. Immediately beneath them lay a seeming plain, glittering without inequality, and buried in mountains. The latter were precipitous, especially on the side of the plain, and chiefly in forest. Here and there the hills fell away in long, low points, and broke the sameness of the outline; or setting to the long and wide field of snow, which, without house, tree, fence, or any other fixture, resembled so much spotless cloud settled to the earth. A few dark and moving spots were, however, visible on the even surface, which the eye of Elizabeth knew to be so many sleighs going their several ways, to or from the village. On the western border of the plain, the mountains, though equally high, were less precipitous, and as they receded, opened into

irregular valleys and glens, or were formed into terraces and hollows that admitted of cultivation. Although the evergreens still held dominion over many of the hills that rose on this side of the valley, yet the undulating outlines of the distant mountains, covered with forests of beech and maple, gave a relief to the eye, and the promise of a kinder soil. Occasionally spots of white were discoverable amidst the forests of the opposite hills, which announced by the smoke that curled over the tops of the trees, the habitations of man, and the commencement of agriculture. These spots were sometimes, by the aid of united labor, enlarged into what were called settlements, but more frequently were small and insulated; though so rapid were the changes, and so persevering the labors of those who had cast their fortunes on the success of the enterprise, that it was not difficult for the imagination of Elizabeth to conceive they were enlarging under her eye, while she was gazing, in mute wonder, at the alterations that a few short years had made in the aspect of the country. The points on the western side of this remarkable plain, on which no plant had taken root, were both larger and more numerous than those on its eastern, and one in particular thrust itself forward in such a manner as to form beautifully curved bays of snow on either side. On its extreme end an oak stretched forward, as if to overshadow, with its branches, a spot which its roots were forbidden to enter. It had released itself from the thraldom that a growth of centuries had imposed on the branches of the surrounding forest trees, and threw its gnarled and fantastic arms abroad, in the wildness of liberty. A dark spot of a few acres in extent at the southern extremity of this beautiful flat, and immediately under the feet of our travellers, alone showed by its rippling surface, and the vapors which exhaled from it, that what at first might seem a plain, was one of the mountain lakes, locked in the frosts of winter. A narrow current rushed impetuously from its bosom at the open place we have mentioned, and was to be traced, for miles, as it wound its way towards the south through the real valley, by its borders of hemlock and pine, and by the vapor which arose from its warmer surface into the chill atmosphere of the hills. The banks of this lovely basin, at its outlet, or southern end, were steep but not high; and in that direction the land continued, far as the eye could reach, a narrow but graceful valley, along which the settlers had scattered their humble habitations, with a profusion that bespoke the quality of the soil, and the comparative facilities of intercourse.

Immediately on the bank of the lake and at its foot, stood the village of Templeton. It consisted of some fifty buildings, including those of every description, chiefly built of wood, and which, in their architecture, bore no great marks of taste, but which also, by the unfinished appearance of most of the dwellings, indicated the hasty manner of their construction. To the eye, they presented a variety of colors. A few were white in both front and rear, but more bore that expensive color on their fronts only, while their economical but ambitious owners had covered the remaining sides of the edifices with a dingy red. One or two were slowly assuming the russet of age; while the uncovered beams that were to be seen through the broken windows of their second stories, showed that either the taste or the vanity of their proprietors had led them to undertake a task which they were unable to accomplish. The whole were grouped in a manner that aped the streets of a city, and were evidently so arranged by the directions of one who looked to the wants of posterity rather than to the convenience of the present incumbents. Some three or four of the better sort of buildings, in addition to the

uniformity of their color, were fitted with green blinds, which, at that season at least, were rather strangely contrasted to the chill aspect of the lake, the mountains, the forests, and the wide fields of snow. Before the doors of these pretending dwellings were placed a few saplings, either without branches, or possessing only the feeble shoots of one or two summers' growth, that looked not unlike tall grenadiers on post near the threshold of princes. In truth, the occupants of these favored habitations were the nobles of Templeton, as Marmaduke was its king. They were the dwellings of two young men who were cunning in the law; an equal number of that class who chaffered to the wants of the community under the title of storekeepers; and a disciple of Æsculapius,[3] who, for a novelty, brought more subjects into the world than he sent out of it. In the midst of this incongruous group of dwellings, rose the mansion of the Judge, towering above all its neighbors. It stood in the centre of an inclosure of several acres, which were covered with fruit trees. Some of the latter had been left by the Indians, and began already to assume the moss and inclination of age, therein forming a very marked contrast to the infant plantations that peered over most of the picketed fences of the village. In addition to this show of cultivation, were two rows of young Lombardy poplars, a tree but lately introduced into America, formally lining either side of a pathway, which led from a gate that opened on the principal street to the front door of the building. The house itself had been built entirely under the superintendence of a certain Mr. Richard Jones, whom we have already mentioned, and who, from his cleverness in small matters, and an entire willingness to exert his talents, added to the circumstance of their being sisters' children, ordinarily superintended all the minor concerns of Marmaduke Temple. Richard was fond of saying, that this child of his invention consisted of nothing more nor less than what should form the ground-work of every clergyman's discourse; viz. a firstly, and a lastly. He had commenced his labors, in the first year of their residence, by erecting a tall, gaunt edifice of wood, with its gable towards the highway. In this shelter, for it was little more, the family resided three years. By the end of that period, Richard had completed his design. He had availed himself, in this heavy undertaking, of the experience of a certain wandering eastern mechanic, who, by exhibiting a few soiled plates of English architecture, and talking learnedly of friezes, entablatures, and particularly of the composite order, had obtained a very undue influence over Richard's taste, in everything that pertained to that branch of the fine arts. Not that Mr. Jones did not affect to consider Hiram Doolittle a perfect empiric in his profession, being in the constant habit of listening to his treatises on architecture with a kind of indulgent smile; yet, either from an inability to oppose them by anything plausible from his own stores of learning, or from secret admiration, Richard generally submitted to the arguments of his coadjutor. Together, they had not only erected a dwelling for Marmaduke, but they had given a fashion to the architecture of the whole county. The composite order, Mr. Doolittle would contend, was an order composed of many others, and was intended to be the most useful of all, for it admitted into its construction such alterations as convenience or circumstances might require. To this proposition Richard usually assented; and

3. Roman god of medicine.

when rival geniuses, who monopolize not only all the reputation, but most of the money of a neighborhood, are of a mind, it is not uncommon to see them lead the fashion, even in graver matters. In the present instance, as we have already hinted, the castle, as Judge Templeton's dwelling was termed in common parlance, came to be the model, in some one or other of its numerous excellences, for every aspiring edifice within twenty miles of it.

The house itself, or the "lastly," was of stone; large, square, and far from uncomfortable. These were four requisites, on which Marmaduke had insisted with a little more than his ordinary pertinacity. But everything else was peaceably assigned to Richard and his associate. These worthies found the material a little too solid for the tools of their workmen, which, in general, were employed on a substance no harder than the white pine of the adjacent mountains, a wood so proverbially soft, that it is commonly chosen by the hunters for pillows. But for this awkward dilemma, it is probable that the ambitious tastes of our two architects would have left as much more to do in the way of description. Driven from the faces of the house by the obduracy of the material, they took refuge in the porch and on the roof. The former, it was decided, should be severely classical, and the latter a rare specimen of the merits of the composite order.

A roof, Richard contended, was a part of the edifice that the ancients always endeavored to conceal, it being an excrescence in architecture that was only to be tolerated on account of its usefulness. Besides, as he wittily added, a chief merit in a dwelling was to present a front, on whichever side it might happen to be seen; for as it was exposed to all eyes in all weathers, there should be no weak flank for envy or unneighborly criticism to assail. It was therefore decided that the roof should be flat, and with four faces. To this arrangement, Marmaduke objected the heavy snows that lay for months, frequently covering the earth to a depth of three or four feet. Happily, the facilities of the composite order presented themselves to effect a compromise, and the rafters were lengthened, so as to give a descent that should carry off the frozen element. But unluckily, some mistake was made in the admeasurement of these material parts of the fabric: and as one of the greatest recommendations of Hiram was his ability to work by the "square rule," no opportunity was found of discovering the effect until the massive timbers were raised, on the four walls of the building. Then, indeed, it was soon seen, that, in defiance of all rule, the roof was by far the most conspicuous part of the whole edifice. Richard and his associate consoled themselves with the belief, that the covering would aid in concealing this unnatural elevation; but every shingle that was laid only multiplied objects to look at. Richard essayed to remedy the evil with paint, and four different colors were laid on by his own hands. The first was a sky-blue, in the vain expectation that the eye might be cheated into the belief it was the heavens themselves that hung so imposingly over Marmaduke's dwelling; the second was what he called a "cloud-color," being nothing more nor less than an imitation of smoke; the third was what Richard termed an invisible green, an experiment that did not succeed against a back-ground of sky. Abandoning the attempt to conceal, our architects drew upon their invention for means to ornament the offensive shingles. After much deliberation and two or three essays by moonlight, Richard ended the affair by boldly covering the whole beneath a color that he christened "sunshine," a cheap way, as he assured his cousin, the Judge, of always keeping fair weather over his head. The platform, as well as the eaves of the

house, were surmounted by gaudily painted railings, and the genius of Hiram was exerted in the fabrication of divers urns and mouldings, that were scattered profusely around this part of their labors. Richard had originally a cunning expedient, by which the chimneys were intended to be so low, and so situated, as to resemble ornaments on the balustrades: but comfort required that the chimneys should rise with the roof, in order that the smoke might be carried off, and they thus became four extremely conspicuous objects in the view.

As this roof was much the most important architectural undertaking in which Mr. Jones was ever engaged, his failure produced a correspondent degree of mortification. At first, he whispered among his acquaintances, that it proceeded from ignorance of the square rule on the part of Hiram; but as his eye became gradually accustomed to the object, he grew better satisfied with his labors, and instead of apologizing for the defects, he commenced praising the beauties of the mansion-house. He soon found hearers; and, as wealth and comfort are at all times attractive, it was, as has been said, made a model for imitation on a small scale. In less than two years from its erection, he had the pleasure of standing on the elevated platform, and of looking down on three humble imitators of its beauty. Thus it is ever with fashion, which even renders the faults of the great subjects of admiration.

Marmaduke bore this deformity in his dwelling with great good nature, and soon contrived, by his own improvements, to give an air of respectability and comfort to his place of residence. Still there was much of incongruity, even immediately about the mansion-house. Although poplars had been brought from Europe to ornament the grounds, and willows and other trees were gradually springing up nigh the dwelling, yet many a pile of snow betrayed the presence of the stump of a pine; and even in one or two instances, unsightly remnants of trees that had been partly destroyed by fire were seen rearing their black, glistening columns twenty or thirty feet above the pure white of the snow. These, which in the language of the country are termed stubs, abounded in the open fields adjacent to the village, and were accompanied, occasionally, by the ruin of a pine or a hemlock that had been stripped of its bark, and which waved in melancholy grandeur its naked limbs to the blast, a skeleton of its former glory. But these and many other unpleasant additions to the view were unseen by the delighted Elizabeth, who, as the horses moved down the side of the mountain, saw only in gross the cluster of houses that lay like a map at her feet; the fifty smokes that were curling from the valley to the clouds; the frozen lake as it lay imbedded in mountains of evergreen, with the long shadows of the pines on its white surface, lengthening in the setting sun; the dark riband of water, that gushed from the outlet, and was winding its way towards the distant Chesapeake—the altered, though still remembered, scenes of her childhood.

Five years had wrought greater changes than a century would produce in countries where time and labor have given permanency to the works of man. To the young hunter and the Judge the scene had less novelty; though none ever emerge from the dark forests of that mountain, and witness the glorious scenery of that beauteous valley, as it bursts unexpectedly upon them, without a feeling of delight. The former cast one admiring glance from north to south, and sank his face again beneath the folds of his coat; while the latter contemplated, with philanthropic pleasure, the prospect of affluence and comfort that was expanding around him; the result of his own enterprise, and much of it the fruits of his own industry.

The cheerful sound of sleigh-bells, however, attracted the attention of the whole party, as they came jingling up the sides of the mountain, at a rate that announced a powerful team and a hard driver. The bushes which lined the highway interrupted the view, and the two sleighs were close upon each other before either was seen.

1823

JAMES FENIMORE COOPER

From The Pioneers,[1] or The Sources of the Susquehanna

A DESCRIPTIVE TALE

Chapter IV

How now? whose mare's dead? what's the matter?
—*FALSTAFF*[2]

A large lumber-sleigh, drawn by four horses, was soon seen dashing through the leafless bushes which fringed the road. The leaders were of grey, and the pole horses of a jet black. Bells innumerable were suspended from every part of the harness where one of the tinkling balls could be placed; while the rapid movement of the equipage, in defiance of the steep ascent, announced the desire of the driver to ring them to the utmost. The first glance at this singular arrangement acquainted the Judge with the character of those in the sleigh. It contained four male figures. On one of those stools that are used at writing-desks, lashed firmly to the sides of the vehicle, was seated a little man, enveloped in a greatcoat fringed with fur, in such a manner that no part of him was visible excepting a face of an unvarying red color. There was a habitual upward look about the head of this gentleman, as if dissatisfied with its natural proximity to the earth; and the expression of his countenance was that of busy care. He was the charioteer, and he guided the mettled animals along the precipice with a fearless eye and a steady hand. Immediately behind him, with his face towards the other two, was a tall figure, to whose appearance not even the duplicate overcoats which he wore, aided by the corner of a horse-blanket, could give the appearance of strength. His face was protruding from beneath a woollen night-cap; and when he turned to the vehicle of Marmaduke as the sleighs approached each other, it seemed formed by nature to cut the atmosphere with the least possible resistance. The eyes alone appeared to create any obstacle, for from either side of his forehead their light, blue, glassy balls

1. The present text is that of the edition illustrated by F. O. C. Darley and published in New York by W. A. Townsend and Company in 1859. A few printer's errors have been silently corrected. *The Pioneers* was first published by Charles Wiley in New York in 1823, but the first printing was poorly proofread. Cooper corrected that edition in three subsequent printings that year and revised the book in 1831 and again in 1850. The Townsend text preserved the 1850 revisions.

In *The Pioneers,* his third novel, Cooper found his true life's work and laid the foundation for his enduring fame. Here he introduced the characters of Natty Bumppo and Chingachgook. Here also he gave memorable expression to themes that were to acquire mythic dimension in his own later work and in American literature to this day, masterfully weaving together questions of dispossessed inheritance, of the ownership of the land, of the conservation of natural resources, of natural law versus human law, of individual freedoms versus the ideal of equal opportunities protected by the institutions of a justly ordered society.

2. In *Henry IV, Part II,* II, i, 43–44.

projected. The sallow of his countenance was too permanent to be affected even by the intense cold of the evening. Opposite to this personage sat a solid, short, and square figure. No part of his form was to be discovered through his overdress, but a face that was illuminated by a pair of black eyes, that gave the lie to every demur feature in his countenance. A fair, jolly wig furnished a neat and rounded outline to his visage, and he, as well as the other two, wore marten-skin caps. The fourth was a meek-looking, long-visaged man, without any other protection from the cold than that which was furnished by a black surtout, made with some little formality, but which was rather thread-bare and rusty. He wore a hat of extremely decent proportions, though frequent brushing had quite destroyed its nap. His face was pale, and withal a little melancholy, or what might be termed of a studious complexion. The air had given it, just now, a slight and somewhat feverish flush. The character of his whole appearance, especially contrasted to the air of humor in his next companion, was that of habitual mental care. No sooner had the two sleighs approached within speaking distance, than the driver of this fantastic equipage shouted aloud—

"Draw up in the quarry—draw up, thou king of the Greeks; draw into the quarry, Agamemnon, or I shall never be able to pass you. Welcome home, cousin 'duke—welcome, welcome, black-eyed Bess. Thou seest, Marmaduke, that I have taken the field with an assorted cargo, to do thee honor. Monsieur Le Quoi has come out with only one cap; Old Fritz would not stay to finish the bottle; and Mr. Grant has got to put the 'lastly' to his sermon, yet. Even all the horses would come—by the by, Judge, I must sell the blacks for you immediately; they interfere, and the nigh one is a bad goer in double harness. I can get rid of them to—"

"Sell what thou wilt, Dickon," interrupted the cheerful voice of the Judge, "so that thou leavest me my daughter and my lands. Ah! Fritz, my old friend, this is a kind compliment, indeed, for seventy to pay to five-and-forty. Monsieur Le Quoi, I am your servant. Mr. Grant," lifting his cap, "I feel indebted to your attention. Gentlemen, I make you acquainted with my child. Yours are names with which she is very familiar."

"Velcome, velcome, Tchooge," said the elder of the party, with a strong German accent. "Miss Petsy vill owe me a kiss."

"And cheerfully will I pay it, my good sir," cried the soft voice of Elizabeth; which sounded, in the clear air of the hills, like tones of silver, amid the loud cries of Richard. "I have always a kiss for my old friend, Major Hartmann."

By this time the gentleman in the front seat, who had been addressed as Monsieur Le Quoi, had arisen with some difficulty, owing to the impediment of his overcoats, and steadying himself by placing one hand on the stool of the charioteer, with the other he removed his cap, and bowing politely to the Judge, and profoundly to Elizabeth, he paid his compliments.

"Cover thy poll, Gaul, cover thy poll," cried the driver, who was Mr. Richard Jones; "cover thy poll, or the frost will pluck out the remnant of thy locks. Had the hairs on the head of Absalom[3] been as scarce as thine, he might have been liv-

3. Absalom's head was caught in the "boughs of a great oak" and he was left hanging, as his mule went on without him, for his enemies to kill. II Samuel 18:9–14.

ing to this day." The jokes of Richard never failed of exciting risibility, for he uniformly did honor to his own wit; and he enjoyed a hearty laugh on the present occasion, while Mr. Le Quoi resumed his seat with a polite reciprocation in his mirth. The clergyman, for such was the office of Mr. Grant, modestly, though quite affectionately, exchanged his greetings with the travellers also, when Richard prepared to turn the heads of his horses homeward.

It was in the quarry alone that he could effect this object, without ascending to the summit of the mountain. A very considerable excavation had been made in the side of the hill, at the point where Richard had succeeded in stopping the sleighs, from which the stones used for building in the village were ordinarily quarried, and in which he now attempted to turn his team. Passing itself was a task of difficulty, and frequently of danger, in that narrow road; but Richard had to meet the additional risk of turning his four-in-hand. The black civilly volunteered his services to take off the leaders, and the Judge very earnestly seconded the measure with his advice. Richard treated both proposals with great disdain:

"Why, and wherefore, cousin 'duke?" he exclaimed, a little angrily: "the horses are gentle as lambs. You know that I broke the leaders myself, and the pole-horses are too near my whip to be restive. Here is Mr. Le Quoi, now, who must know something about driving, because he has rode out so often with me; I will leave it to Mr. Le Quoi whether there is any danger."

It was not in the nature of the Frenchman to disappoint expectations so confidently formed; although he sat looking down the precipice which fronted him, as Richard turned his leaders into the quarry, with a pair of eyes that stood out like those of lobsters. The German's muscles were unmoved, but his quick sight scanned each movement. Mr. Grant placed his hands on the side of the sleigh, in preparation for a spring, but moral timidity deterred him from taking the leap that bodily apprehension strongly urged him to attempt.

Richard, by a sudden application of the whip, succeeded in forcing the leaders into the snow-bank that covered the quarry; but the instant that the impatient animals suffered by the crust, through which they broke at each step, they positively refused to move an inch further in that direction. On the contrary, finding that the cries and blows of their driver were redoubled at this juncture, the leaders backed upon the pole-horses, who, in their turn, backed the sleigh. Only a single log lay above the pile which upheld the road, on the side towards the valley, and this was now buried in the snow. The sleigh was easily forced across so slight an impediment; and before Richard became conscious of his danger, one half of the vehicle was projected over a precipice, which fell, perpendicularly, more than a hundred feet. The Frenchman, who, by his position, had a full view of their threatened flight, instinctively threw his body as far forward as possible, and cried, "Ah! Mon cher monsieur Deeck! mon Dieu! que faites vous!"

"Donner and blitzen, Richart," exclaimed the veteran German, looking over the side of the sleigh with unusual emotion, "put you will preak ter sleigh and kilt ter horses."

"Good Mr. Jones," said the clergyman, "be prudent, good sir—be careful."

"Get up, obstinate devils!" cried Richard, catching a bird's-eye view of his situation, and, in his eagerness to move forward, kicking the stool on which he sat,—"Get up, I say—Cousin 'duke, I shall have to sell the greys too; they are the worst broken horses—Mr. Le Quaw!" Richard was too much agitated to regard his pro-

nunciation, of which he was commonly a little vain; "Monsieur Le Quaw, pray get off my leg; you hold my leg so tight, that it's no wonder the horses back."

"Merciful Providence!" exclaimed the Judge, "they will be all killed!"

Elizabeth gave a piercing shriek, and the black of Agamemnon's face changed to a muddy white.

At this critical moment, the young hunter, who, during the salutations of the parties, had sat in rather sullen silence, sprang from the sleigh of Marmaduke to the heads of the refractory leaders. The horses, who were yet suffering under the injudicious and somewhat random blows of Richard, were dancing up and down with that ominous movement that threatens a sudden and uncontrollable start, still pressing backwards. The youth gave the leaders a powerful jerk, and they plunged aside, and re-entered the road in the position in which they were first halted. The sleigh was whirled from its dangerous position, and upset with the runners outwards. The German and the divine were thrown, rather unceremoniously, into the highway, but without danger to their bones. Richard appeared in the air, describing the segment of a circle of which the reins were the radii, and landed at the distance of some fifteen feet, in that snow-bank which the horses had dreaded, right end uppermost. Here, as he instinctively grasped the reins, as drowning men seize at straws, he admirably served the purpose of an anchor. The Frenchman, who was on his legs in the act of springing from the sleigh, took an aerial flight also, much in the attitude which boys assume when they play leap-frog, and flying off in a tangent to the curvature of his course, came into the snow-bank head foremost, where he remained, exhibiting two lathy legs on high, like scarecrows waving in a corn field. Major Hartmann, whose self-possession had been admirably preserved during the whole evolution, was the first of the party that gained his feet and his voice.

"Ter deyvel, Richart!" he exclaimed, in a voice half serious, half comical, "put you unloat your sleigh very hantily."

It may be doubtful whether the attitude in which Mr. Grant continued for an instant after his overthrow was the one into which he had been thrown, or was assumed, in humbling himself before the power that he reverenced, in thanksgiving at his escape. When he rose from his knees, he began to gaze about him, with anxious looks, after the welfare of his companions, while every joint in his body trembled with nervous agitation. There was some confusion in the faculties of Mr. Jones also; but as the mist gradually cleared from before his eyes, he saw that all was safe, and, with an air of great self-satisfaction, he cried, "Well—that was neatly saved, any how!—it was a lucky thought in me to hold on the reins, or the fiery devils would have been over the mountain by this time. How well I recovered myself, 'duke! Another moment would have been too late; but I knew just the spot where to touch the off-leader; that blow under his right flank, and the sudden jerk I gave the rein, brought them round quite in rule, I must own myself."[4]

"Thou jerk! thou recover thyself, Dickon!" he said, "but for that brave lad yonder, thou and thy horses, or rather mine, would have been dashed to pieces;—but where is Monsieur Le Quoi?"

4. "The spectators, from immemorial usage, have a right to laugh at the casualties of a sleigh-ride; and the Judge was no sooner certain that no harm was done, than he made full use of the privilege" [Cooper's note].

"Oh! mon cher Juge! Mon ami!" cried a smothered voice, "praise be God, I live; vill you, Mister Agamemnon, be pleas come down ici, and help me on my leg?"

The divine and the negro seized the incarcerated Gaul by his legs, and extricated him from a snow-bank of three feet in depth, whence his voice had sounded as from the tombs. The thoughts of Mr. Le Quoi, immediately on his liberation, were not extremely collected; and when he reached the light, he threw his eyes upwards, in order to examine the distance he had fallen. His good humor returned, however, with a knowledge of his safety, though it was some little time before he clearly comprehended the case.

"What, monsieur," said Richard, who was busily assisting the black in taking off the leaders; "are you there? I thought I saw you flying towards the top of the mountain just now."

"Praise be God, I no fly down into the lake," returned the Frenchman, with a visage that was divided between pain, occasioned by a few large scratches that he had received in forcing his head through the crust, and the look of complaisance that seemed natural to his pliable features: "ah! mon cher Mister Deeck, vat you do next?—dere be noting you no try."

"The next thing, I trust, will be to learn to drive," said the Judge, who had busied himself in throwing the buck, together with several other articles of baggage, from his own sleigh into the snow; "here are seats for you all, gentlemen; the evening grows piercingly cold, and the hour approaches for the service of Mr. Grant: we will leave friend Jones to repair the damages, with the assistance of Agamemnon, and hasten to a warm fire. Here, Dickon, are a few articles of Bess's trumpery, that you can throw into your sleigh when ready; and there is also a deer of my taking, that I will thank you to bring. Aggy! remember that there will be a visit from Santaclaus[5] to-night."

The black grinned, conscious of the bribe that was offered him for silence on the subject of the deer, while Richard, without in the least waiting for the termination of his cousin's speech, began his reply—

"Learn to drive, sayest thou, cousin 'duke? Is there a man in the county who knows more of horse-flesh than myself? Who broke in the filly, that no one else dare mount; though your coachman did pretend that he had tamed her before I took her in hand; but anybody could see that he lied—he was a great liar, that John—what's that, a buck?"—Richard abandoned the horses, and ran to the spot where Marmaduke had thrown the deer: "It is a buck! I am amazed! Yes, here are two holes in him, he has fired both barrels, and hit him each time. Ecod! how Marmaduke will brag! he is a prodigious bragger about any small matter like this now; well, to think that 'duke has killed a buck before Christmas! There will be no such thing as living with him—they are both bad shots though, mere chance—mere chance;—now, I never fired twice at a cloven foot in my life;—it is hit or miss with me—dead or run away:—had it been a bear, or a wild cat, a man might have wanted both barrels. Here! you Aggy! how far off was the Judge when this buck was shot?"

5. "The periodical visits of St. Nicholas, or Santaclaus as he is termed, were never forgotten among the inhabitants of New York, until the emigration from New England brought in the opinions and usages of the puritans. Like the 'bon homme de Noël,' he arrives at each Christmas" [Cooper's note].

"Eh! Massa Richard, may be a ten rod,"[6] cried the black, bending under one of the horses, with the pretence of fastening a buckle, but in reality to conceal the grin that opened a mouth from ear to ear.

"Ten rod!" echoed the other; "why, Aggy, the deer I killed last winter was at twenty—yes! if anything it was nearer thirty than twenty. I wouldn't shoot at a deer at ten rod: besides, you may remember, Aggy, I only fired once."

"Yes, Massa Richard, I 'member 'em! Natty Bumppo fire t'oder gun. You know, sir, all 'e folk say Natty kill him."

"The folks lie, you black devil!" exclaimed Richard in great heat. "I have not shot even a grey squirrel these four years, to which that old rascal has not laid claim, or some one else for him. This is a damned envious world that we live in—people are always for dividing the credit of a thing, in order to bring down merit to their own level. Now they have a story about the Patent,[7] that Hiram Doolittle helped to plan the steeple to St. Paul's; when Hiram knows that it is entirely mine; a little taken from a print of its namesake in London, I own; but essentially, as to all points of genius, my own."

"I don't know where he come from," said the black, losing every mark of humor in an expression of admiration, "but eb'ry body say, he wonnerful hansome."

"And well they may say so, Aggy," cried Richard, leaving the buck and walking up to the negro with the air of a man who has new interest awakened within him. "I think I may say, without bragging, that it is the handsomest and the most scientific country church in America. I know that the Connecticut settlers talk about their Westherfield meeting-house; but I never believe more than half what they say, they are such unconscionable braggers. Just as you have got a thing done, if they see it likely to be successful, they are always for interfering; and then it's ten to one but they lay claim to half, or even all of the credit. You may remember, Aggy, when I painted the sign of the bold dragoon for Captain Hollister, there was that fellow, who was about town laying brick dust on the houses, came one day and offered to mix what I call the streaky black, for the tail and mane, and then, because it looks like horse hair, he tells everybody that the sign was painted by himself and Squire Jones. If Marmaduke don't send that fellow off the Patent, he may ornament his village with his own hands for me." Here Richard paused a moment, and cleared his throat by a loud hem, while the negro, who was all this time busily engaged in preparing the sleigh, proceeded with his work in respectful silence. Owing to the religious scruples of the Judge, Aggy was the servant of Richard, who had his services for a *time*,[8] and who, of course, commanded a legal

6. One rod equals 16.5 feet, or 5.5 yards.

7. "The grants of land, made either by the crown or the state, were by letters patent under the great seal, and the term 'patent' is usually applied to any district of extent, thus conceded; though under the crown, manorial rights being often granted with the soil, in the older counties, the word 'manor' is frequently used. There are many 'manors' in New York, though all political and judicial rights have ceased" [Cooper's note].

8. "The manumission of the slaves in New York has been gradual. When public opinion became strong in their favor, then grew up a custom of buying the services of a slave, for six or eight years, with a condition to liberate him at the end of the period. Then the law provided that all born after a certain day should be free, the males at twenty-eight, and the females at twenty-five. After this the owner was obliged to cause his servants to be taught to read and write before they reached the age of eighteen, and, finally, the few that remained were all unconditionally liberated in 1826, or after the publication of this tale. It was quite usual for men more or less connected with the quakers, who never held slaves, to adopt the first expedient" [Cooper's note].

claim to the respect of the young negro. But when any dispute between his lawful and his real master occurred, the black felt too much deference for both to express any opinion. In the meanwhile, Richard continued watching the negro as he fastened buckle after buckle, until, stealing a look of consciousness towards the other, he continued, "Now, if that young man who was in your sleigh, is a real Connecticut settler, he will be telling everybody how he saved my horses, when, if he had let them alone for half a minute longer, I would have brought them in much better, without upsetting, with the whip and rein—it spoils a horse to give him his head. I should not wonder if I had to sell the whole team, just for that one jerk he gave them." Richard paused, and hemmed; for his conscience smote him a little, for censuring a man who had just saved his life:—"Who is the lad, Aggy—I don't remember to have seen him before?"

The black recollected the hint about Santaclaus; and while he briefly explained how they had taken up the person in question on the top of the mountain, he forbore to add anything concerning the accident of the wound, only saying that he believed the youth was a stranger. It was so usual for men of the first rank to take into their sleighs any one they found toiling through the snow, that Richard was perfectly satisfied with this explanation. He heard Aggy with great attention, and then remarked, "Well, if the lad has not been spoiled by the people in Templeton, he may be a modest young man, and as he certainly meant well, I shall take some notice of him—perhaps he is land-hunting—I say, Aggy, may be he is out hunting?"

"Eh! yes, massa Richard," said the black, a little confused; for as Richard did all the flogging, he stood in great terror of his master, in the main:—"Yes, sir, I b'lieve he be."

"Had he a pack and an axe?"

"No, sir, only he rifle."

"Rifle!" exclaimed Richard, observing the confusion of the negro, which now amounted to terror. "By Jove, he killed the deer! I knew that Marmaduke couldn't kill a buck on the jump—how was it, Aggy? tell me all about it, and I'll roast 'duke quicker than he can roast his saddle—How was it, Aggy? the lad shot the buck, and the Judge bought it, ha! and he is taking the youth down to get the pay?"

The pleasure of this discovery had put Richard in such a good humor, that the negro's fears in some measure vanished, and he remembered the stocking of Santaclaus. After a gulp or two, he made out to reply—

"You forgit a two shot, sir?"

"Don't lie, you black rascal!" cried Richard, stepping on the snow-bank to measure the distance from his lash to the negro's back; "speak truth, or I trounce you." While speaking, the stock was slowly rising in Richard's right hand, and the lash drawing through his left, in the scientific manner with which drummers apply the cat; and Agamemnon, after turning each side of himself towards his master, and finding both equally unwilling to remain there, fairly gave in. In a very few words he made his master acquainted with the truth, at the same time earnestly conjuring Richard to protect him from the displeasure of the Judge.

"I'll do it, boy, I'll do it," cried the other, rubbing his hands with delight; "say nothing, but leave me to manage 'duke:—I have a great mind to leave the deer on the hill, and to make the fellow send for his own carcase: but no, I will let Mar-

maduke tell a few bounces about it before I come out upon him. Come, hurry in, Aggy, I must help to dress the lad's wound: this Yankee[9] doctor knows nothing of surgery—I had to hold old Milligan's leg for him, while he cut it off."—Richard was now seated on the stool again, and the black taking the hind seat, the steeds were put in motion towards home. As they dashed down the hill, on a fast trot, the driver occasionally turned his face to Aggy, and continued speaking; for notwithstanding their recent rupture, the most perfect cordiality was again existing between them. "This goes to prove that I turned the horses with the reins, for no man who is shot in the right shoulder can have strength enough to bring round such obstinate devils. I knew I did it from the first; but I did not want to multiply words with Marmaduke about it.—Will you bite, you villain?—hip, boys, hip! Old Natty too, that is the best of it!—Well, well—'duke will say no more about my deer—and the Judge fired both barrels, and hit nothing but a poor lad, who was behind a pine tree. I must help that quack to take out the buck shot for the poor fellow." In this manner Richard descended the mountain; the bells ringing, and his tongue going, until they entered the village, when the whole attention of the driver was devoted to a display of his horsemanship, to the admiration of all the gaping women and children who thronged the windows to witness the arrival of their landlord and his daughter.

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9. "In America the term Yankee is of local meaning. It is thought to be derived from the manner in which the Indians of New England pronounced the word 'English' or 'Yengeese.' New York being originally a Dutch province, the term of course was not known there, and further south different dialects among the natives themselves, probably produced a different pronunciation. Marmaduke and his cousin being Pennsylvanians by birth, were not Yankees in the American sense of the word" [Cooper's note]. More recent authorities have suggested that "Yankee" derives from the Dutch "Jan Kees" ("John Cheese"), a nickname given by Dutch settlers in New York to the English in Connecticut.