

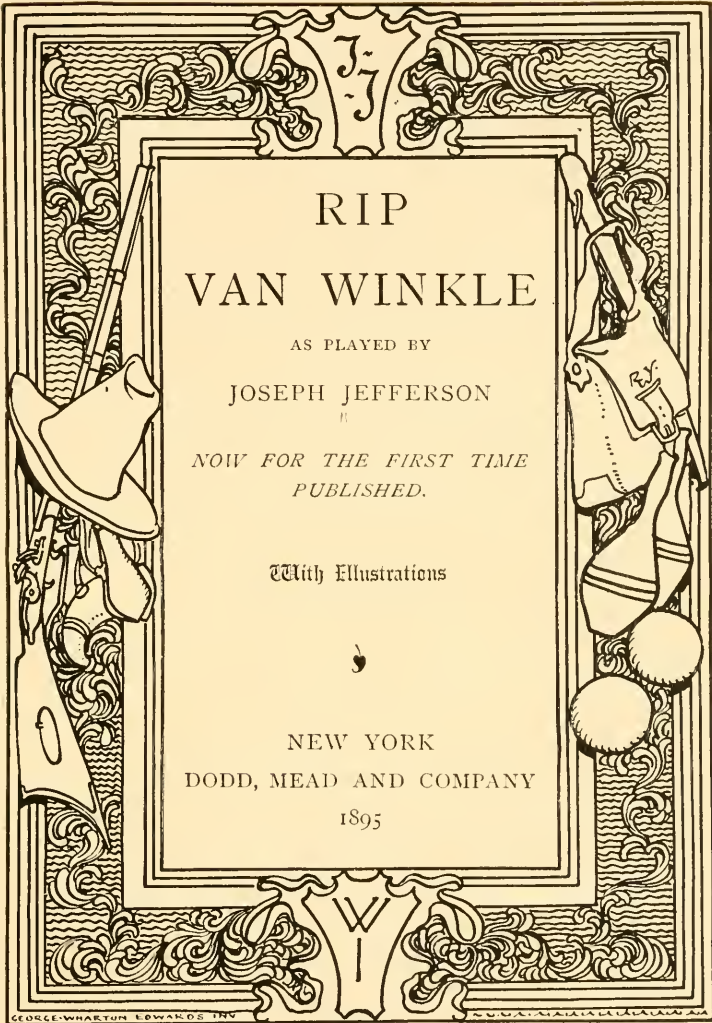


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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

THE text of RIP VAN WINKLE, as played by JOSEPH JEFFERSON, is here for the first time published. The aim has been to supply such illustrations and explanations as will best recall the play to those who have seen it.

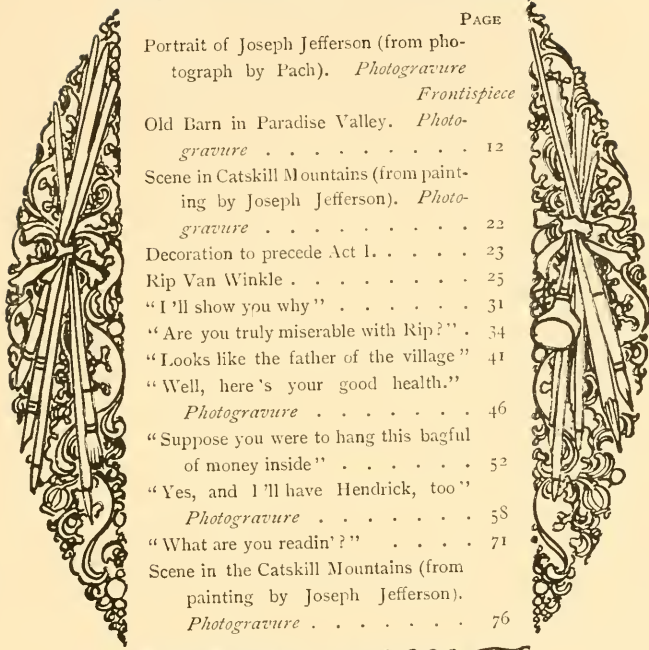
To this end, Mrs. CORA HAMILTON BELL has, with Mr. Jefferson's approval, amplified and supplemented the stage directions, and has supplied descriptive prefaces to each act. Many of the illustrations are direct reproductions from photographs of Mr. Jefferson in the character of "Rip." Those in the text are mostly from drawings by RICHARD CREIFELDS, made directly from scenes in the play.

The portrait is from a photograph of Mr. Jefferson recently taken, and is the one best liked by him.

Most interesting of all, perhaps, will be the reproductions of paintings by Mr. Jefferson himself of scenes in the Catskill Mountains, and the illustration facing page 120, wherein the figure is by F. EUGENE SMITH, and the background by Mr. Jefferson.

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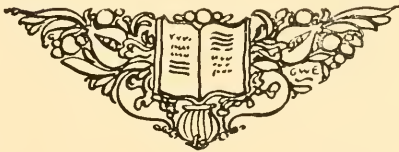
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INTRODUCTION.

RIP VAN WINKLE has been received by the American public for so many years that I feel emboldened to bespeak a little of your favour for his new appearance in another form. This version, now printed for the first time, may be regarded perhaps as a souvenir of a greater number of performances than I can possibly count, and as such I hope may be acceptable.

I have endeavoured to select from my Autobiography (with the kind consent of the Century Company) such passages relating to the history of the play and my performance of the part as may be of interest to the readers of this volume, and to give the desultory gossip of the Autobiography a rather more historical sequence.

I can lay no claim to having invented Rip. The Greeks knew him; the Germans made a

home for him in their Hartz Mountains, calling him Carl, the Shepherd; and the genius of Washington Irving transplanted him to our own Kaatskills. Yates, Hackett, and Burke had each made him the hero of separate dramas and representations before I tried my hand upon the legend.

The idea of acting Rip Van Winkle came to me in the summer of '59. I had arranged to board with my family at a queer old Dutch farm-house in Paradise Valley, at the foot of Pocono Mountain in Pennsylvania. A ridge of hills covered with tall hemlocks surrounds the vale, and numerous trout-streams wind through the meadows and tumble over the rocks. Stray farms are scattered through the valley, and the few old Dutchmen and their families who till the soil were born upon it; there and only there they have ever lived. The valley harmonised with me and our resources. The scene was wild, the air was fresh, and the board was cheap. What could the light heart and purse of a poor actor ask for more than this?

On one of those long rainy days that always render the country so dull, I had climbed to the loft of the barn, and, lying upon the hay,

was reading that delightful book, "The Life and Letters of Washington Irving." I had got well into the volume, and was much interested in it, when, to my surprise, I came upon a passage which said that he had seen me at Laura Keene's theatre, as *Goldfinch*, in Holcroft's comedy of "The Road to Ruin," and that I reminded him of my father "in look, gesture, size, and make." Till then, I was not aware that he had ever seen me. I was comparatively obscure, and to find myself remembered and written of by such a man gave me a thrill of pleasure I can never forget. I put down the book, and lay there thinking how proud I was, and ought to be, at the revelation of this compliment. What an incentive to a youngster like me to go on!

And so I thought to myself, "Washington Irving, the author of 'The Sketch-Book,' in which is the quaint story of Rip Van Winkle." Rip Van Winkle! There was to me magic in the sound of the name as I repeated it. Why, was not this the very character I wanted? An American story by an American author was surely just the theme suited to an American actor.

In ten minutes I had gone to the house and returned to the barn with "The Sketch-Book." I had not read the story since I was a boy. I was disappointed in it; not as a story, of course, but the tale was purely a narrative. The theme was interesting, but not dramatic. The silver Hudson stretches out before you as you read; the quaint red roofs and queer gables of the old Dutch cottages stand out against the the mist upon the mountains; but all this is descriptive. The character of Rip does not speak ten lines. What could be done dramatically with so simple a sketch? How could it be turned into an effective play?

Three or four bad dramatisations of the story had already been acted, but without marked success. Yates, of London, had given one in which the hero dies; one had been acted by my father, one by Hackett, and another by Burke. Some of these versions I had remembered when I was a boy, and I should say that Burke's play and the performance were the best; but nothing that I remembered gave me the slightest encouragement that I could get a good play out of any of the existing materials. Still, I was so bent upon acting the part that I started for the



city; and in less than a week, by industriously ransacking the theatrical wardrobe establishments for old leather and mildewed cloth, and by personally superintending the making of the wigs, each article of my costume was completed; and all this too before I had written a line of the play or studied a word of the part.

This is working in an opposite direction from all the conventional methods in the study and elaboration of a dramatic character, and certainly not following the course I would advise any one to pursue. I merely mention the out-of-the-way, upside-down manner of going to work as an illustration of the impatience and enthusiasm with which I entered upon the task. I can only account for my getting the dress ready before I studied the part to the vain desire I had of witnessing myself in the glass, decked out and equipped as the hero of the Kaatskills.

I got together three old printed versions of the drama and the story itself. The plays were all in two acts. I thought it would be an improvement in the drama to arrange it in three, making the scene with the spectre crew an act by itself. This would separate the poetical from

the domestic side of the story. But by far the most important alteration was in the interview with the spirits. In the old versions, they spoke and sang. I remember that the effect of this ghostly dialogue was dreadfully human, so I arranged that no voice but Rip's should be heard. This was entirely my own invention. I was quite sure that the silence of the crew would give a lonely and desolate character to the scene, and add to its supernatural weirdness. By this means, too, a strong contrast with the single voice of Rip was obtained by the death-like stillness of the "demons" as they glided about the stage in solemn silence. It required some thought to hit upon just the best questions that could be answered by a nod and shake of the head, and to arrange that at times even Rip should propound a query to himself, and answer it; but I availed myself of so much of the old material that in a few days after I had begun my work, it was finished.

In the seclusion of the barn, I studied and rehearsed the part; and by the end of the summer, I was prepared to transplant it from the rustic realms of an old farm-house to a cosmopolitan audience, in the city of Washing-

Scene in the Catskill Mountains.

From Painting by Joseph Jefferson.





ton, where I opened at Carusi's Hall, under the management of John T. Raymond. I had gone over the play so thoroughly that each situation was fairly engraved on my mind. The rehearsals were therefore not tedious to the actors; no one was delayed that I might consider how he or she should be disposed of in the scene. I had by repeated experiments so saturated myself with the action of the play that a few days served to perfect the rehearsals. I acted, on these occasions, with all the point and feeling that I could muster. This answered the double purpose of giving me freedom, and observing the effect of what I was doing on the actors. They seemed to be watching me closely, and I could tell by little nods of approval when the points hit.

To be brief, the play was acted with a result that was, to me, both satisfactory and disappointing. I was quite sure that the character was what I had been seeking, and I was equally satisfied that the play was not. The action had neither the body nor the strength to carry the hero; the spiritual quality was there, but the human interest was wanting.

This defect was not remedied until five years

later, when I met Dion Boucicault, in London. Then, he agreed to rewrite the drama for a consideration agreed upon between us. He never seemed to think much of his labour in this play; but I did, and do still, with good reason.

His version was still cast in three acts. Later, I divided the first act into two, making the end of the dance the end of an act, rather than the end of a scene, and enlarged and strengthened it in various ways suggested by my experience. It will thus be seen that the play is by no means the work of one mind, but both as to its narrative and dramatic form, has been often moulded, and by many hands.

In acting the part of Rip, I have always found that what to do was simple enough, but what not to do was the important and difficult point to determine. The earlier scenes of the play being of a natural and domestic character, I had only to draw upon my experience for their effect. But from the moment Rip meets the spirits of Hendrick Hudson and his crew, I felt that the colloquial speech and lazy and commonplace actions of Rip should cease. After he meets the elves, in the third act, the

play drifts from realism into idealism, and becomes poetical. After this, it is a fairy tale, and the prosaic elements of the character should be eliminated.

Rip's sympathy with nature is always very keen, and he talks to the trees and his dog as if they were human. The fairy element in the play seems to be attached to it as the fairy element in a "Midsummer Night's Dream." And because Rip is a fairy, he neither laughs nor eats in the fourth act. For this reason, also, when they wanted me to reform at the end of the play, I said, "No. Should Rip refuse the cup, the drama would become a temperance play; and I should as soon expect to hear of Cinderella striking for higher wages, or of a speech on Woman's Rights from Old Mother Hubbard, as to listen to a temperance lecture from Rip Van Winkle. It would take all the poetry completely out of it." So one might suppose that when Rip wakes up, he would yawn; but a yawn, being expressive of a night's sleep, would destroy the harmony of the twenty years' sleep. If the sleep of twenty years were merely incongruous, there would be room for argument pro and con; but being an impossi-

bility, the mind accepts it, not because it is an impossibility, but from curiosity to know the psychological result if such an event could happen. And it is this strange and original attitude of the characters that has kept my interest in it alive for so many years.

I have never "staged" Rip with the realism in fashion of late years, though I have had various suggestions made to me for elaborating the spectacular and scenic effects of the play, among which were the introduction of several fat old Knickerbockers smoking their long pipes and quarrelling in Dutch; a large wind-mill, with sails to work; dairy-maids, with real cows; mechanical effects for the sudden and mysterious appearance and disappearance of Hendrick Hudson's crew; and, in the last act, the Continental army with drums and fifes; a militia training; and the further introduction of patriotic speeches about American independence.

So unreal a theme could not have been interwoven with all this realism without marring the play.

For this reason, when a lady once asked me, "Why don't you have a dog in the play?" I replied that I disliked realism in art; and

realism alive, with a tail to wag at the wrong time, would be abominable.

“But don't you think that the public would like to see Schneider?”

“The public could not pay him a higher compliment, for it shows how great an interest they take in an animal that has never been exhibited. No, no; ‘hold the mirror up to nature,’ if you like, but don't hold nature up,— a reflection of the thing, but not the thing itself. How badly would a drunken man give an exhibition of intoxication on the stage? Who shall act as a madman but one who is perfectly sane? We must not be natural, but appear to be so.”

So, too, I have never felt that the dialect was an important element in the presentation of the character. I do not make it so prominent or so consistent as they would do in a variety show. If I were to do that, I would destroy the larger element. I am a Pennsylvanian myself, and I lived very much among the Pennsylvania Dutch in the mountains, when I was studying the part, and I got the flavour of it; but I regard it only as an accompaniment.

I would like to repeat here a curious incident

connected with "Rip Van Winkle," and I have done.

There is in the village of Catskill a Rip Van Winkle Club. This society did me the honour to invite me to act the character in their town. I accepted, and when I arrived was met by the worthy president and other members of the club, among whom was young Nicholas Vedder, who claimed to be a lineal descendant of the original "Old Nick." Emulating the spirit of evolution, the citizens had turned the skating-rink into a theatre, and a very respectable-looking establishment it made, though in its transition state the mark of rollers did "cling to it still." I was taking a cup of tea at the table in the hotel, when I was attracted to the coloured waiter, who was giving a graphic and detailed account of this legend of the Kaatskill Mountains to one of the boarders who sat nearly opposite to me.

"Yes, sah," he continued; "Rip went up into de mountain, slep' for twenty years, and when he came back hyar, in dis berry town, his own folks didn'y know him."

"Why," said his listener, "you don't believe the story's true?"

"True? Ob course it is; why," pointing at me, "dat's de man."

The town was filled with farmers and their wives, who had come from far and near to see the opening of the new theatre, and also, I think I may say, to see for the first time on the stage the story which Washington Irving had laid almost at their very doors.

As I drove to the theatre, the rain came down in torrents, the thunder rolled, and the lightning played around the peaks of the distant mountains under the very shadow of which I was to act the play. It gave me a very strange sensation. When I got to the theatre, I could scarcely get in, the crowd was so great about the door, — countrymen trying to get into the ticket-office instead of the proper entrance, and anxious and incredulous old ladies endeavouring to squeeze past the doorkeeper, but refusing to give up their tickets. The rush over, the play began. The audience was intent on the scene as it progressed, and seemed anxious not to lose a word. During the scene in the last act where Rip inquires of the innkeeper, "Is this the village of Falling Waters?" I altered the text, and substituted the correct name, "Is this the village of Catskill?" The crowded house almost held its breath. The name of the village seemed to bring the scene

home to every man, woman, and child that was looking at it. From this time on the interest was at its full tension. Surely, I had never seen an audience so struck with the play before.

There was a reception held at the club after the play, and the worthy president, in introducing me to the company, was so nervous that he announced me as "Mr. Washington Irving."

JOSEPH JEFFERSON.

NEW YORK,
October, 1895.









RIP VAN WINKLE.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

The village of Falling Waters, set amid familiar and unmistakable Hudson River scenery, with the shining river itself and the noble heights of the Kaatskills visible in the distance. In the foreground, to the left of the stage, is a country inn bearing the sign of George III. In the wall of the inn, a window closed by a solid wooden shutter. To the right of the stage, an old cottage with a door opening into the interior; before the cottage stands a bench holding a wash-tub, with washboard, soap, and clothes in the tub. In the centre of the stage, a table and chairs, and on the table a stone pitcher and two tin cups.

As the curtain rises, Gretchen is discovered washing, and little Meenie sitting near by on a low stool. The sound of a chorus and laughter comes from the inn.

GRETCHEN.

Shouting and drinking day and night.

Laughter is heard from the inn.

Hark how they crow over their cups while their wives are working at home, and their children are starving.

Enter Derrick from the inn with a green bag, followed by Nick Vedder. Derrick places his green bag on the table.

DERRICK.

Not a day, not an hour. If the last two quarters' rent be not paid by this time to-morrow, out you go!

NICK.

Oh, come, Derrick, you won't do it. Let us have a glass, and talk the matter over; good liquor opens the heart. Here, Hendrick! Hendrick!

Enter Hendrick.

HENDRICK.

Yes, father.

DERRICK.

So that is your brat?

NICK.

Yes, that is my boy.

DERRICK.

Then the best I can wish him is that he won't take after his father, and become a vagabond and a penniless outcast.

NICK.

Those are hard words to hear in the presence of my child.

HENDRICK.

Then why don't you knock him down, father?

GRETCHEN.

I'll tell you why —

DERRICK.

Gretchen!

GRETCHEN.

Wiping her arms and coming to front of tub.

It is because your father is in that man's power. And what's the use of getting a man down, if you don't trample on him?

NICK.

Oh, that is the way of the world.

GRETCHEN.

To Hendrick.

Go in, boy. I want to speak to your father, and my words may not be fit for you to hear. Yonder is my little girl; go and play with her.

Hendrick and Meenie exeunt into the cottage.

GRETCHEN.

Now, Derrick, Vedder is right: you won't turn him out of his house yonder.

DERRICK.

And why not? Don't he owe me a year's rent?

GRETCHEN.

And what do you owe him? Shall I sum up your accounts for you? Ten years ago, this was a quiet village, and belonged mostly to my husband, Rip Van Winkle, a foolish, idle fellow. That house yonder has since been his ruin. Yes; bit by bit, he has parted with all he had, to fill the mouths of sots and boon companions, gathered around him in yonder house. And you, Derrick,—you supplied him with the money to waste in riot and drink. Acre by acre, you've sucked in his land to swell your store. Yonder miserable cabin is the only shelter we have left; but that is mine. Had it been his, he would have sold it to you, Derrick, long ago, and wasted its price in riot.

Vedder, who has been enjoying Derrick's discomfiture during this speech, is unable to control himself, and at the end of speech bursts into a loud laugh.

GRETCHEN.

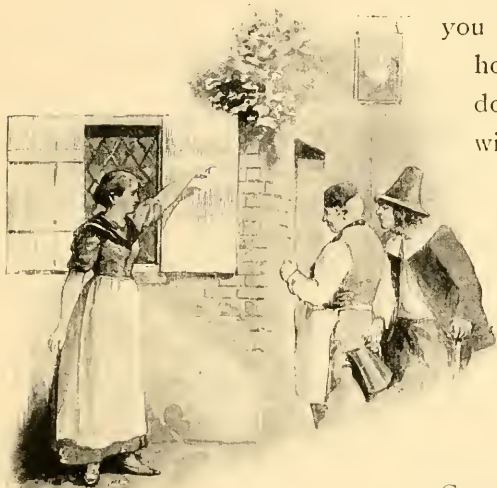
Aye, and you too, Nick Vedder; you have ruined my husband between you.

NICK.

Oh, come, Mrs. Van Winkle, you 're too hard. I could n't refuse Rip's money in the way of business; I had my rent to pay.

GRETCHEN.

And shall I tell you why you can't pay it? it is because you have given Rip credit, and he has ended by drinking you out of house and home. Your window-shutter is not wide enough to hold the score against him; it is full of chalk. Deny it if you can.



NICK.

I do deny it.
There now!

GRETCHEN.

Then why do you keep that shutter closed?
I'll show you why.

Goes to inn, opens shutter, holds it open,
pointing at Rip's score.

That's why.

Nick Vedder, you're a good man in the main,
if there is such a thing.

Derrick laughs.

Aye, and I doubt it

Turning on him.

But you are the pest of this village; and the
hand of every woman in it ought to help to
pull down that drunkard's nest of yours, stone
by stone.

NICK.

Come, Dame Van Winkle, you're too hard
entire; now a man must have his odd time, and
he's none the worse for being a jolly dog.

GRETCHEN.

No, none the worse. He sings a good song; he
tells a good story, — oh, he's a glorious fellow!
Did you ever see the wife of a jolly dog? Well,
she lives in a kennel. Did you ever see the
children of a jolly dog? They are the street
curs, and their home is the gutter.

Goes up to wash-tub, and takes revenge on
the clothing she scrubs.

NICK.

Getting up and approaching Gretchen timidly.

I tell you what it is, Dame Van Winkle, I
don't know what your home may be, but judg-

ing from the rows I hear over there, and the damaged appearance of Rip's face after having escaped your clutches —

Gretchen looks up angrily; Nick retreats a few paces hastily —

I should say that a gutter was a luxurious abode compared with it, and a kennel a peaceful retreat.

Exit hurriedly, laughing, into the inn. Gretchen looks up angrily, and throws the cloth she has been wringing after him, then resumes washing. Derrick laughs at Vedder's exit, walks up to Gretchen, and puts one foot on bench.

DERRICK.

Is it true, Gretchen? Are you truly miserable with Rip?

GRETCHEN.

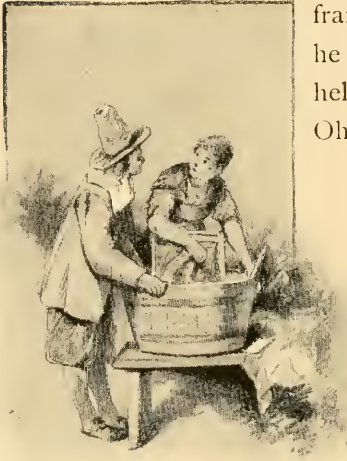
Ain't you pleased to hear it? Come then and warm your heart at my sorrow. Ten years ago I might have had you, Derrick. But I despised you for your miserly ways, and threw myself away on a vagabond.

DERRICK.

You and I shared him between us. I took his estate, and you took his person. Now, I've improved my half. What have you done with yours?

GRETCHEN.

I can't say that I've prospered with it. I've tried every means to reclaim him, but he is as obstinate and perverse as a Dutch pig. But the worst in him—and what I can't stand—is his good-humour. It drives me frantic when, night after night, he comes home drunk and helplessly good-humoured! Oh, I can't stand that!



DERRICK.

Where is he now?

GRETCHEN.

We had a tiff yesterday, and he started. He has been out all night. Only wait until he comes back! The longer he stops out, the worse it will be for him.

DERRICK.

Gretchen, you've made a great mistake, but there is time enough to repair it. You are

comely still, thrifty, and that hard sort of grain that I most admire in woman.

Looks cautiously around. Leans on tub.
Why not start Rip for ever, and share my fortune?

GRETCHEN.

Oh, no, Derrick; you've got my husband in your clutches, but you can't get them around me. If Rip would only mend his ways, he would see how much I love him; but no woman could love you, Derrick; for woman is not a domestic animal, glad to serve and fawn upon a man for the food and shelter she can get; and that is all she would ever get from you, Derrick.

Piling the clothes on the washboard, and shouldering it.

DERRICK.

The time may come when you'll change your tune.

GRETCHEN.

Not while Rip lives, bad as he is.

Exit into cottage.

DERRICK.

Then I'll wait until you've killed him. Her spirit is not broken yet. But patience, Derrick,

patience; in another month I'll have my claws on all that remains of Rip's property, — yonder cottage and grounds; then I'll try you again, my lady.

Enter Cockles, with papers in his hand, running towards the inn.

DERRICK.

How now, you imp? What brings you here so full of a hurry? Some mischief's in your head, or your heels would not be so busy.

COCKLES.

I've brought a letter for you from my employer. There it is.

DERRICK.

Examining letter.

Why, the seal is broken!

COCKLES.

Yes; I read it as I came along.

DERRICK.

Now I apprenticed this vagabond to my lawyer, and this is his gratitude.

COCKLES.

Don't waste your breath, Nunky, for you'll want it; for when you read that, if it don't take you short in the wind I'll admire you.

DERRICK.

Reads.

“ You must obtain from Rip Van Winkle a proper conveyance of the lands he has sold to you. The papers he has signed are in fact nothing but mortgages on his estate. If you foreclose, you must sell the property, which has lately much advanced in value; and it would sell for enough to pay off your loan, and all your improvements would enure to the benefit of Rip Van Winkle.”

COCKLES.

There, now, see what you've been doing of! — wasting your money and my expectations on another chap's property. Do you want to leave me a beggar?

DERRICK.

Reads.

“ I enclose a deed for him to sign that will make him safe.”

COCKLES.

Of course he'll sign it; he won't wait to be asked — he'll be in such a hurry.

DERRICK.

All my savings — all my money — sunk in improving this village!

COCKLES.

Yes, instead of physicking Rip, as you thought, you've been coddling him all the while.

DERRICK.

All these houses I've built are on another man's land. What shall I do?

COCKLES.

Pull them down again; pull them down.

DERRICK.

Ass! — dolt that I have been!

COCKLES.

Calling yourself names won't mend it, Nunky.

DERRICK.

The imp is right. Rip must be made to sign this paper. But how — how?

COCKLES.

How? How? How's a big word sometimes, ain't it, Nunky?

DERRICK.

Rip would not do it if he knew what he was about. But he can't read — nor write, for the

matter of that. But he can make his cross, and I can cajole him.

COCKLES.

Look sharp, Nunky. The man that's looking round for a fool, and picks up Rip Van Winkle, will let him drop again very quick.

DERRICK.

He is poor: I'll show him a handful of money. He's a drunkard: I'll give him a stomachful of liquor. Go in, boy, and leave me to work this; and let this be a lesson to you hereafter: beware of the fatal effects of poverty and drink.

COCKLES.

Yes,—and parting with my money on bad security.

Exit. Laughter outside.

DERRICK.

Here he comes now, surrounded by all the dogs and children in the district. They cling around him like flies around a lump of sugar.

Rip enters, running and skipping, carrying one small child pickaback, and surrounded by a swarm of others hanging on the skirts of his coat. He is laughing like a child himself, and his merry blue eyes twinkle

with delight. He is dressed in an old deer-skin coat, a pair of breeches which had once been red, now tattered, patched, and frayed, leather gaiters and shoes equally dilapidated, a shapeless felt hat with a bit of the brim hanging loose,—the whole stained and weatherworn to an almost uniform clay-colour, except for the bright blue of his jean shirt and the scarlet of his long wisp of a necktie. One of the boys carries his gun.

RIP.

Taking his gun from the boy.
There, run along mit you; run along.

DERRICK.

The children scamper off.
The vagabond looks like the father of the village.

RIP.

Who has stood laughing, and watching the children, suddenly calls after them.
Hey! You let my dog Schneider alone there; you hear that Sock der Jacob der bist eine for donner spits poo —yah —

DERRICK.

Why, what's the matter, Rip?

RIP.

Coming down, and shaking hands with Derrick.
Oh, how you was, Derrick? how you was?



DERRICK.

You seem in trouble.

RIP.

Oh, yah; you know them fellers. Vell, I tole you such a funny thing.

Laughing.

Just now, as me and Schneider was comin' along through the willage, — Schneider's my dawg; I don't know whether you know him?

Rip always speaks of Schneider as if he were a person, and one in whom his hearer took as profound an interest as he does himself.

Well, them fellers went an' tied a tin kettle mit Schneider's tail, and how he did run then, mit the kettle hanging about. Well, I did n't hi him comin'. He run betwixt me an' my legs, an' spilt me an' all them children in the mud; — yah, that's a fact.

Rip leans his gun against the cottage

DERRICK.

Now's my time.

Aside.

Aloud.

Vedder! Vedder!

Vedder appears at the door of the inn.

Bring us a bottle of liquor. Bring us your best, and be quick.

NICK.

What's in the wind now? The devil's to pay
when Derrick stands treat!

Exit. Re-enters, with bottle and cups in left
hand. Hands bottle to Derrick.

Rip lounges forward, and perches on the cor-
ner of the table.

DERRICK.

Rising and approaching Rip.

Come, Rip, what do you say to a glass?

RIP.

Takes a cup, and holds it to be filled.

Oh, yah; now what do I generally say to a
glass? I say it's a fine thing—when there's
plenty in it. (Ve gates! Ve gates!)

Shakes hands with Nick.

An' then I says more to what's in it than I do to
the glass. Now you would n't believe it, — that's
the first one I've had to-day.

DERRICK.

How so?

RIP.

Dryly.

* Because I could n't get it before, I suppose.

DERRICK.

Then let me fill him up for you.

RIP.

No, that is enough for the first one.

NICK.

Come, Rip, a bumper for the first one.

RIP.

That is enough for the first one.

DERRICK.

Come, Rip, let me fill him up for you.

RIP.

With ludicrous decision and dignity.

I believe I know how much to drink. When I says a thing, I mean it.

DERRICK.

Oh, well—

Turns aside, and starts to fill his own cup.

RIP.

All right; come along.

Holding out his glass, and laughing at his own inconsistency.

Here's your good health and your families', and may they live long and prosper!

They all drink. At the end, Nick smacks his lips and exclaims "Ah!" Derrick repeats same, and Rip repeats after Derrick.

RIP.

To Nick, sadly.

Ah, you may well go "Ah!" and smack your chops over that. You don't give me such schnapps when I come. Derrick, my score is too big now.

Jerking his head towards the shutter, he notices for the first time that it is open.

What you go and open that window for? — That's fine schnapps, Nick. Where you got that?

NICK.

That's high Dutch, Rip,—high Dutch, and ten years in bottle. Why, I had that in the very day of your wedding. We broached the keg under yonder shed. Don't you recollect?

RIP.

Is that the same?

NICK.

Yes.

RIP.

I thought I knowed that licker. You had it ten years ago?

Laughing suddenly

I would not have kept it so long. But stop, mein freund; that's more than ten years ago.

NICK.

No, it ain't.

RIP.

It's the same day I got married?

NICK.

Yes.

RIP.

Well, I know by that. You think I forgot the day I got married? Oh, no, my friend; I remember that day long as I live.

Serious for a moment. Takes off his hat, and puts it on the table.

DERRICK.

Ah! Rip, I remember Gretchen then, ten years ago.—Zounds, how I envied you!

RIP.

Looking up, surprised.

Did you?

Winks at Nick. Then, suddenly remembering.

So did I. You didn't know what was comin', Derrick.

DERRICK.

She was a beauty.



RIP.

What, Gretchen? — Yes, she was. She was a pretty girl. My! My! Yah, we was a fine couple altogether. Well, come along.

Holding out his cup to Derrick, who fills it from the bottle.

NICK.

Yes, come along.

Takes water pitcher from table, and starts to fill up Rip's cup. Rip stops him.

RIP.

Who has been lounging against the table, sits on it. and puts his feet on the chair.

Stop! I come along mitout that, Nick Vedder.

Sententiously.

Good licker and water is like man and wife.

DERRICK AND NICK.

How's that, Rip?

RIP.

Laughing.

They don't agree together. I always like my licker single. Well, here's your good health, and your families', and may they live long and prosper!

They all drink.

NICK.

That's right, Rip; drink away, and drown your sorrow.

RIP.

Drolly.

Yes; but she won't drown. My wife is my sorrow, and you cannick drown her. She tried it once, but could n't do it.

DERRICK AND NICK.

Why, how so?

RIP.

Puts down his cup and clasps his knee, still perched on the corner of the table.

Did n't you know that Gretchen like to got drown?

DERRICK AND NICK.

No.

RIP.

Puts hat on.

That's the funniest thing of the whole of it. It's the same day I got married; she was comin' across the river there in the ferry-boat to get married mit me —

DERRICK AND NICK.

Yes.

RIP.

Well, the boat she was comin' in got upsetted.

DERRICK AND NICK.

Ah!

RIP.

Well, but she was n't in it.

DERRICK AND NICK.

Oh!

RIP.

Explaining quite seriously.

No, that's what I say: if she had been in the boat what got upsetted, maybe she might have got drowned.

More and more reflective.

I don't know how it was she got left somehow or other. Women is always behind that way — always.

DERRICK.

But surely, Rip, you would have risked your life to save such a glorious creature as she was.

RIP.

Incredulously.

You mean I would yump in and pull Gretchen out?

DERRICK.

Yes.

RIP.

Oh, would I?

Suddenly remembering.

Oh, you mean then—yes, I believe I would then.

With simple conviction.

But it would be more my duty now than it was then.

DERRICK.

How so?

RIP.

Quite seriously.

Why, you see when a feller gets married a good many years mit his wife, he gets very much attached to her

NICK.

Pompously.

Ah, he does indeed.

RIP.

Winks at Derrick, and points at Nick with his thumb.

But if Mrs. Van Winkle was a-drowning in the water now, an' she says to me, "Rip, come an' save your wife!" I would say, "Mrs. Van Winkle, I will yust go home and think about it." Oh, no, Derrick, if ever Gretchen tumbles in the water, she's got to swim now, you mind that.

DERRICK.

She was here just now, anxiously expecting you home.

RIP.

I know she's keeping it hot for me.

NICK.

What, your dinner, Rip?

RIP.

No, the broomstick.

Exit Nick into house, laughing.

RIP.

Confidentially.

Derrick, whenever I come back from the mountains, I always stick the game-bag in the window and creep in behind.

DERRICK.

Seating himself on the table by the side of Rip.

Have you anything now?

RIP.

Dropping into the chair Derrick has just left. Leaning back, and putting hands behind his head.

What for game? No, not a tail, I believe, not a feather.

With humorous indifference.

DERRICK.

Touching Rip on the shoulder and shaking
a bag of money.

Rip, suppose you were to hang this bagful of
money inside, don't you think it would soothe
her down, eh?



RIP.

Sitting up.
For me, is that?

DERRICK.

Yes.

RIP.

With a shrewd
glance.

Ain't you yokin'
mit me?

DERRICK.

No, Rip, I've prospered with the lands you've
sold me, and I'll let you have a loan on easy
terms. I'll take no interest.

RIP.

Getting up and walking forward, with decision.

No, I'm afraid I might pay you again some
day, Derrick.

DERRICK.

And so you shall, Rip, pay me when you please.

Puts the bag in Rip's hands, and forces his fingers over it, turns, and goes to table, speaking as he goes.

Say, in twenty years, — twenty years from this day. Ah, where shall we be then?

RIP.

Quizzically, and half to himself.

I don't know about myself; but I think I can guess where you'll be about that time.

Takes chair and sits down.

DERRICK.

Well, Rip, I'll just step into the inn and draw out a little acknowledgment.

RIP.

Who has been sitting, leaning forward with his elbows on his knees, softly chinking the bag of money in his hand, looks up suddenly.

Knowledge — for what is that?

DERRICK.

Yes, for you to put your cross to.

RIP.

All right; bring it along.

Indifferently.

DERRICK.

No fear of Gretchen now, eh, Rip?

RIP.

Plunged in thought.

Oh, no.

DERRICK.

You feel quite comfortable now, don't you, Rip?

Exit into inn.

RIP.

Oh, yah!

Suddenly becoming serious and much mystified at Derrick's conduct.

Well, I don't know about that, Derrick!
Derrick!

Holding up the bag and chinking it.

It don't chink like good money neither. It rattles like a snake in a hole.

Grimly.

GRETCHEN.

Inside the cottage.

Out with that lazy, idle cur! I won't have him here. Out, I say!

RIP.

I'm glad I'm not in there now. I believe that's Schneider what she's lickin'; he won't have any backbone left in him.

Sadly.

I would rather she would lick me than the dog; I'm more used to it than he is.

Gets up, and looks in at the window.

There she is at the wash-tub.

Admiring her energy, almost envying it.

What a hard-workin' woman that is! Well, somebody must do it, I suppose.

With the air of a profound moral reflection.

She's comin' here now; she's got some broomstick mit her, too.

Rip snatches up his gun and slinks off around the corner of the house.

Enter Gretchen with broomstick, followed by Hendrick and Meenie, carrying clothes-basket.

GRETCHEN.

Come along, children. Now, you take the washing down to Dame Van Sloe's, then call at the butcher's and tell him that my husband has not got back yet, so I will have to go down myself to the marsh, and drive up the bull we

have sold to him. Tell him the beast shall be in his stable in half an hour; so let him have the money ready to pay me for it.

During this Rip has crept in and sat on the bench by the side of the tub behind Gretchen.

Ah, it is the last head of cattle we have left. Houses, lands, beasts, everything gone, — everything except a drunken beast who nobody would buy or accept as a gift.

Rip! Rip! wait until I get you home!

Threatening an imaginary Rip with broomstick.

With a comical grimace, Rip tiptoes back behind the house.

Come, children, to work, to work!

Exit.

Re-enter Rip cautiously.

RIP.

Laughing to himself.

She gone to look after the bull. She better not try the broomstick on him; he won't stand it.

Drops into the chair with his back to the audience.

HENDRICK.

Oh, Meenic, there's your father.

RIP.

Holds out his arms, and Meenie runs into them.

Taking her in his arms, and embracing her with great tenderness.

Ah, little girl, was you glad to see your father come home?

MEENIE.

Oh, yes!

RIP.

Holding her close.

I don't believe it, was you? Come here.

Getting up and leading her to the chair by the side of the table.

Let me look at you; I don't see you for such a long time; come here. I don't deserve to have a thing like that belong to me.

Takes his hat off as if in reverence.

You're too good for a drunken, lazy feller like me, that's a fact.

Bites his underlip, looks up, and brushes away a tear.

MEENIE.

Kneeling by him.

Oh, no, you are a good papa!

RIP.

No, I was n't: no good father would go and rob his child; that's what I've done. Why, don't you know, Meenie, all the houses and lands in the village was mine—they would all have been yours when you grew up? Where they gone now? I gone drunk 'em up, that's where they gone. Hendrick, you just take warnin' by that; that's what lickin' do; see that?

Hold's up the skirt of coat.

Bring a man to hunger and rags. Is there any more in that cup over there? Give it to me.

Drinks.

Rip makes this confession with a childlike simplicity. The tears come, and he brushes them away once or twice. When he asks for the cup, at the end, it seems but the natural conclusion of his speech.

HENDRICK.

Hands him cup.

Don't cry, Rip; Meenie does not want your money, for when I'm a big man I shall work for her, and she shall have all I get.

MEENIE.

Yes, and I'll have Hendrick, too.

"Yes, and I'll have Hendrick, too."



RIP.

Greatly amused.

You'll have Hendrick, too.

With mock gravity.

Well, is this all settled?

HENDRICK.

Yes, Meenie and me have made it all up.

RIP.

I didn't know, I only thought you might speak to me about it; but if it's all settled, Meenie, then git married mit him.

Laughing silently, and suddenly.

You goin' to marry my daughter? well, now that's very kind of you. Marry one another?

The children nod.

Rip, with immense seriousness.

Well, here's your good health, and your family, may they live long and prosper.

To Hendrick.

What you goin' to do when you get married, and grow up and so?

Leans forward.

HENDRICK.

I'm not going to stop here with father; oh, no, that won't do. I'm going with Uncle Hans in his big ship to the North Pole, to catch whales.

RIP.

Goin' to catch wahales mit the North Pole?
That's a long while away from here.

HENDRICK.

Yes, but uncle will give me ten shillings a month, and I will tell him to pay it all to Meenie.

RIP.

There! He's goin' to pay it all to you;
that's a good boy, that's a good boy.

MEENIE.

Yes, and I'll give it all to you to keep for us.

RIP.

With one of his little explosive silent laughs.

I would n't do that, my darlin'; maybe if you
give it to me, you don't get it back again.
Hendrick!

Suddenly earnest.

You shall marry Meenie when you grow up,
but you must n't drink.

HENDRICK.

Slapping Rip on the knee.

I'll never touch a drop.

RIP.

Quite seriously.

You won't, nor me neither; shake hands upon it. Now we swore off together.

With a change of tone.

I said so so many times, and never kept my word once, never.

Drinks.

HENDRICK.

I've said so once, and I'll keep mine.

DERRICK.

Outside.

Well, bring it along with you.

RIP.

Here comes Derrick: he don't like some children; run along mit you.

Exit children with basket.

Enter Derrick from inn with document.

DERRICK.

There, Rip, is the little acknowledgment.

Handing it to him.

RIP.

Knowledgegment.

Putting on hat.

For what is that?

DERRICK.

That is to say I loaned you the money.

RIP.

 Lounging back in his chair.

I don't want that; I would lose it if I had it.

 Fills his cup from the bottle.

I don't want it.

 Blandly.

DERRICK.

Don't you? But I do.

RIP.

 With simple surprise.

For what?

DERRICK.

Why, for you to put your cross to. Why,
bless me, I've forgotten my pen and ink.

 Enter Cockles.

But luckily here comes my nephew with it.

 Aside.

And in time to witness the signature.

RIP.

Say, Derrick, have you been writing all that
paper full in the little time you been in the
house there?

 Turns the paper about curiously.

 Pours out more schnapps.

DERRICK.

Yes, every word of it.

RIP.

Have you? Well, just read it out loud to me.
With an air of great simplicity.

DERRICK.

Does he suspect?

Aside.

Aloud.

Why, Rip, this is the first time you ever
wanted anything more than the money.

RIP.

Clasping his hands behind his head with an
air of lordly indifference.

Yes, I know; but I got nothing to do now.
I'm a little curious about that, somehow.

COCKLES.

Aside to Derrick.

The fish has taken the ground bait, but he's
curious about the hook.

DERRICK.

Aside.

I dare not read a word of it.

COCKLES.

Aside.

Nunkey's stuck.

DERRICK.

Well, Rip, I suppose you don't want to hear the formalities.

RIP.

The what?

DERRICK.

The preliminaries.

RIP.

Indolently.

I'll take it all, — Bill, Claws, and Feathers.

Leans forward and rests his head on his hand, and looks at the ground.

DERRICK.

“Know all men by these presents that I, Rip Van Winkle, in consideration of the sum of sixteen pounds received by me from Derrick Von Beekman” —

Looks around at Cockles: they wink knowingly at each other. Continues as if reading. Watching Rip —

Do promise and undertake to pay the same in twenty years from date.

Rip looks up: as he does so, Derrick drops his eyes on document, then looks as if he had just finished reading.

There, now are you satisfied?

RIP.

Takes the document. In childlike surprise.

Well, well, and does it take all that pen and ink to say such a little thing like that?

DERRICK.

Why, of course it does.

COCKLES.

Aside to Derrick.

Oh, the fool! he swallows it whole, hook and all.

RIP.

Spreading the paper on the table.

Where goes my cross, Derrick?

DERRICK.

Pointing.

There, you see I've left a nice little white corner for you.

RIP.

Folds up paper in a leisurely manner, and puts it in game-bag.

W-e-l-l, I'll yust think about it.

Looks up at Derrick, innocently.

DERRICK.

Think about it? Why, what's the matter, Rip, is n't the money correct?

RIP.

Oh, yes, I got the money all right.

Chuckling.

Oh! you mean about signing it.

Rising. At a loss, for a moment.

Stop, yesterday was Friday, was n't it?

DERRICK.

So it was.

RIP.

With an air of conviction.

Well, I never do nothing like that the day after Friday, Derrick.

Rip walks away towards his cottage.

DERRICK.

Aside.

The idiot! what can that signify? But I must not arouse his suspicions by pressing him.

Aloud.

You are right, Rip: sign it when you please; but I say, Rip, now that you're in funds, won't you help your old friend Nick Vedder, who owes me a year's rent?

RIP.

Coming back to the table.

Oh, yah, I will wipe off my schore, and stand treat to the whole willage.

DERRICK.

Run, boy, and tell all the neighbours that Rip stands treat.

RIP.

Leans on back of chair.

An', Cockles, tell them we'll have a dance.

COCKLES.

A dance!

Runs off.

DERRICK.

And I'll order the good cheer for you.

Exit.

RIP.

So do! so do!

Cogitating dubiously.

I don't understand it.

Re-enter Hendrick with the basket over his head, followed by Meenie.

Oh, you've come back?

HENDRICK.

Yes, we've left the clothes.

RIP.

Meenie, you take in the basket.

Exit Meenie with basket into cottage.

Hendrick is following.

Hendrick, come here.

Hendrick kneels between Rip's knees.

So you are going to marry my daughter?

Hendrick nods.

So, so. That's very kind of yer.

Abruptly.

Why you don't been to school to-day, you go to school sometimes, don't you?

HENDRICK.

Yes, when father can spare me.

RIP.

What do you learn mit that school,— pretty much something?

Laughing at his mistake.

I mean, everything?

HENDRICK.

Yes; reading, writing, and arithmetic.

RIP.

Reading, and what?

HENDRICK.

And writing, and arithmetic.

RIP.

Puzzled.

Writing, and what?

HENDRICK.

Arithmetic.

RIP.

More puzzled.

Whatmeticks is that?

HENDRICK.

Arithmetic.

RIP.

With profound astonishment and patting
Hendrick's head.

I don't see how the little mind can stand it
all. Can you read?

HENDRICK.

Oh, yes!

RIP.

With a serious affectation of incredulity.

I don't believe it; now, I'm just goin' to see
if you can read. If you can't read, I won't let
you marry my daughter. No, sir.

Very drolly.

I won't have nobody in my family what can't
read.

Taking out the paper that Derrick has given
him.

Can you read ritmatics like that?

HENDRICK.

Yes, that's writing.

RIP.

Nonplussed.

Oh! I thought it was reading.

HENDRICK.

It's reading and writing, too.

RIP.

What, both together.

Suspiciously looking at the paper.

Oh, yes; I didn't see that before; go long with it.

HENDRICK.

Reads.

"Know all men by these presents"—

RIP.

Pleased, leaning back in his chair.

Yah! That's right, what a wonderful thing der readin' is; why, you read it pretty nigh as good as Derrick, yes, you do; go long.

HENDRICK.

"That I, Rip Van Winkle"—

RIP.

Taking off his hat, and holding it with his hands behind his head.

Yah, that's right; you read it yust as well as Derrick; go long.

HENDRICK.

“In consideration of the sum of sixteen pounds received do hereby sell and convey to



Derrick Von Beekman all my estate, houses,
lands whatsoever” —

Hat drops.

RIP.

Almost fiercely.

What are you readin', some ritmatics what ain't down there: Where you got that?

Looking sharply at Hendrick.

HENDRICK.

Pointing.

There. Houses! Lands, whatsoever.

RIP.

Looking not at the paper but at Hendrick very earnestly, as if turning over in his mind whether the boy has read it correctly. Then satisfied of the deception Derrick has practised upon him, and struck by the humour of the way in which he has discovered it, he laughs exultantly and looks towards the inn-door through which Derrick disappeared a short time before.

Yes, so it is; go long mit the rest.

He leans forward, and puts his ear close to Hendrick, so as not to miss a word.

HENDRICK.

“Whereof he now holds possession by mortgaged deeds, from time to time executed by me.”

RIP.

Takes paper, and looks towards the inn
fiercely exultant.

You read it better than Derrick, my boy,
much better.

After a moment's pause recollects himself.

Kindly, to Hendrick.

That will do; run along mit you.

Exit Hendrick.

RIP.

Triumphantly.

Aha, my friend, Derrick! I guess you got
some snakes in the grass. Now keep sober,
Rip; I don't touch another drop so long what
I live; I swore off now, that's a fixed fact.

Enter Derrick, Vedder, Stein, and villagers.

DERRICK.

Come, Rip, we'll have a rouse.

RIP.

Seriously; half fiercely still.

Here, Nick Vedder, here is the gelt; wipe off
my score, and drink away. I don't join you; I
swore off.

NICK.

Why, Rip, you're king of the feast.

RIP.

Absently. Still intent on Derrick.
Am I dat?

OMNES.

Swore off? What for?

RIP.

I don't touch another drop.

JACOB STEIN.

Coming down towards Rip with cup.
Come, Rip, take a glass.

RIP.

Turning on him, almost angry.
Jacob Stein, you hear what I said?

STEIN.

Yes.

RIP.

Firmly.
Well, when I said a thing, I mean it.

Leans back in chair with his hands behind
his head.

STEIN.

Oh, very well.

Turns away: Nick comes down and holds
cup under Rip's nose. Rip looks to see
if they are watching him. He can resist
no longer, and takes the cup.

RIP.

Laughing.

Well, I won't count this one. Here's your good health and your families', may they all live long and prosper.

DERRICK.

Here come the fiddlers and the girls.

Enter girls.

Rip walks over and closes the shutter which has held his score, then returns and seats himself on a low stool, and keeps time to the music as the villagers dance.

Finally, the rhythm fires his blood. He jumps to his feet, snatches one of the girls away from her partner, and whirls into the dance. After a round or two, he lets go of her, and pirouettes two or three times by himself. Once more he catches her in his arms, and is in the act of embracing her, when he perceives Gretchen over her shoulder. He drops the girl, who falls on her knees at Gretchen's feet. There is a general laugh at his discomfiture, in which he joins half-heartedly. As the curtain descends, Rip is seen pointing at the girl as if seeking, like a modern Adam, to put the blame on her.

Scene in the Catskill Mountains.

From Painting by Joseph Jefferson.





ACT II.

SCENE I.

The dimly lighted kitchen of Rip's cottage.

The door and window are at the back.

It is night, and through the window a furious storm can be seen raging, with thunder, lightning, and rain.

A fire smoulders on the hearth, to the right, and a candle gutters on the table in the centre; a couple of chairs, a low stool, and a little cupboard, meagrely provided with cups and platters, complete the furniture of the room. Between the door and the window a clothes-horse, with a few garments hanging on it, forms a screen. To the left is a small door leading to the other rooms of the cottage.

As the curtain rises, Meenie is seen sitting by the window, and Gretchen enters, takes off cloak, and throws a broomstick on the table.

GRETCHEN.

Meenie! Has your father come yet?

MEENIE.

No, mother.

GRETCHEN.

So much the better for him. Never let him show his face in these doors again — never!

MEENIE.

Oh, mother, don't be so hard on him.

GRETCHEN.

I'm not hard; how dare you say so.

Meenie approaches her.

There, child, that father of yours is enough to spoil the temper of an angel. I went down to the marsh to drive up the bull. I don't know what Rip has been doing to the beast; he was howling and tearing about. I barely escaped with my life.

A crash outside.

What noise is that?

MEENIE.

That's only Schneider, father's dog.

GRETCHEN.

Picking up broomstick.

Then, I'll Schneider him. I won't have him here.

Exit through the door leading to the rest of the cottage.

Out, you idle, vagabond cur; out, I say!

MEENIE.

Following her to the door, and crying.

Oh, don't, don't hurt the poor thing!

Re-enter Gretchen.

GRETCHEN.

He jumped out of the window before I could catch him. He's just like his master. Now, what are you crying for?

MEENIE.

Because my poor father is out in all this rain.
A peal of thunder is heard.
Hark, how it thunders!

GRETCHEN.

Serve him right—do him good. Is the supper ready?

MEENIE.

Yes, mother; it is there by the fireside.
Pointing to a soup-bowl by the fire.
Shall I lay the table?

GRETCHEN.

Yes.

Again it thunders.

It's a dreadful night; I wonder where Rip is?

MEENIE.

Bringing the cups and platters from the sideboard, together with a loaf of bread.

Shall I lay the table for two, mother, or for three?



GRETCHEN.

For two, girl; he gets no supper here to-night.

Another peal of thunder.

Mercy, how the storm rages! The fool, to

stop out in such a down-pour. I hope he's found shelter. I must look out the old suit I washed and mended for him last week, and put them by the fire to air. The idiot, to stop out in such a down-pour! I'll have him sick on my hands next; that's all I want to complete my misery.

She fetches clothes from the horse, and hangs them on the back of the chair in front of the fire.

He knows what I am suffering now, and that's what keeps him out.

Lightning.

Mercy, what a flash that was! The wretch will be starved with the cold! Meenie!

MEENIE.

Yes, mother.

GRETCHEN.

You may lay the table for three.

There is a knock at the outer door.

There he is now!

Enter Hendrick, who shakes the rain from his hat.

Where's Rip? Is he not at your father's?

HENDRICK.

No; I thought he was here.

GRETCHEN.

He's gone back to the mountain. He's done it on purpose to spite me.

HENDRICK.

Going to the fire.

Shall I run after him, and bring him home? I know the road; we've often climbed it together.

GRETCHEN.

No; I drove Rip from his house, and it's for me to bring him back again.

MEENIE.

Still arranging the supper-table.

But, mother —

She pauses, with embarrassment.

If he hears your voice behind him, he will only run away the faster.

GRETCHEN.

Well, I can't help it; I can't rest under cover, while he is out in the storm. I shall feel better when I'm outside sharing the storm with him. Sit down, and take your suppers. I'll take my cloak along with me.

Exit. Meenie has seated herself by the window. Hendrick carries stool to the centre of the stage, in front of the table.

HENDRICK.

Meenie! Meenie!

MEENIE.

Eh?

Hendrick beckons to her. She runs to him. He stops her suddenly, then puts the stool down with great deliberation, and sits on it, while Meenie kneels beside him.

HENDRICK.

In a very solemn tone.

I hope your father ain't gone to the mountains to-night, Meenie?

MEENIE.

In distress.

Oh, dear! he will die of the cold there.

HENDRICK.

Suddenly.

Sh!

Meenie starts.

It ain't for that.

Mysteriously.

I've just heard old Clausen, over at father's, saying, that on this very night, every twenty years, the ghosts —

MEENIE.

Catching his wrist.

The what?

HENDRICK.

In an awed tone.

The ghosts of Hendrick Hudson, and his
pirate crew, visit the Kaatskills above here.

The two children look around, frightened.



MEENIE.

Oh, dear! did he say so?

HENDRICK.

Sh!

Again they look around, frightened.

Yes; and the spirits have been seen there smoking, drinking, and playing at tenpins.

MEENIE.

Oh, how dreadful!

HENDRICK.

Sh!

He goes cautiously to the chimney, and looks up, while Meenie looks under the table; then, he returns to the stool, speaking as he comes.

Yes; and every time that Hendrick Hudson lights his pipe there 's a flash of lightning.

Lightning, and Meenie gives a gasp of fear.

And when he rolls the balls along, there is a peal of thunder.

Loud rumble of thunder. Meenie screams, and throws herself into Hendrick's arms.

Don't be frightened, Meenie; I'm here.

In a frightened tone, but with a manly effort to be courageous.

Re-enter Gretchen with her cloak.

GRETCHEN.

Here, stop that!

The children separate quickly. Hendrick looks up at the ceiling and whistles, with an attempt at unconsciousness, and Meenie assumes an innocent and unconcerned expression.

Now, don't you be filling that child's head with nonsense, but remain quietly here until I return.

Hush, what noise is that?

There is some one outside the window.

She steps behind the clothes-horse. Rip appears at the window, which he opens, and leans against the frame.

RIP.

Meenie!

MEENIE AND HENDRICK.

Trying to make him perceive Gretchen, by a gesture in her direction.

Sh!

Rip turns, and looks around outside to see what they mean, then, discovering nothing, drops his hat in at the window, and calls again, cautiously.

RIP.

Meenie!



MEENIE AND HENDRICK.

With the same warning gesture.

Sh!

Gretchen shakes her fist at the children,
who assume an air of innocence.

RIP.

What's the matter? Meenie, has the wild-
cat come home?

Rip reaches in after his hat. Gretchen
catches him by his hair, and holds his
head down.

Och, my darlin', don't do that, eh!

HENDRICK AND MEENIE.

Who run towards Gretchen.

Don't, mother! Don't, mother! Don't!

RIP.

Imitating their tone.

Don't, mother, don't! Don't you hear the
children? Let go my head, won't you?

Getting angry.

GRETCHEN.

Still holding his head down.

No; not a hair.

RIP.

Bantering.

Hold on to it then, what do I care?

HENDRICK AND MEENIE.

Catching Gretchen's dress.

Don't, mother! Don't, mother! Don't!

Gretchen lets go of Rip, and turns upon them. They escape, and disappear through the door to the left.

RIP.

Getting in through the window, and coming forward, apparently drunk, but jolly; and his resentment for the treatment he has just received is half humourous.

For what you do dat, hey? You must want a bald-headed husband, I reckon!

Gretchen picks up chair, and bangs it down; Rip imitates her with the stool. She sits down, angrily, and slaps the table. Rip throws down his felt hat with a great show of violence, and it makes no noise, then seats himself on the stool.

GRETCHEN.

Now, then!

RIP.

Now, den; I don't like it den, neider.

When Rip is drunk, his dialect grows more pronounced.

GRETCHEN.

Who did you call a wildcat?

RIP.

With a sudden little tipsy laugh, and confused.

A wildcat — dat's when I come in at the window?

GRETCHEN.

Yes; that's when you came in the window.

RIP.

Rising, and with a tone of finality.

Yes; that's the time I said it.

GRETCHEN.

Yes; and that's the time I heard it.

RIP.

With drunken assurance.

That's all right; I was afraid you would n't hear it.

GRETCHEN.

Now, who did you mean by that wildcat?

RIP.

Confused.

Who did I mean? Now, let me see.

GRETCHEN.

Yes; who did you mean?

RIP.

How do I know who-oo I mean?

With a sudden inspiration.

Maybe, it's the dog Schneider, I call that.

GRETCHEN.

Incredulously.

The dog Schneider; that's not likely.

RIP.

Argumentatively.

Of course it is likely; he's my dog. I'll call him a wildcat much as I please.

Conclusively.

He sits down in the chair on which his clothes are warming, in front of the fire.

GRETCHEN.

And then, there's your disgraceful conduct this morning. What have you got to say to that?

RIP.

How do I know what I got to say to that, when I don't know what I do-a, do-a?

Hiccoughs.

GRETCHEN.

Don't know what you do-a-oo! Hugging and kissing the girls, before my face; you thought I would n't see you.



RIP.

Boldly.

I knowed you would—I knowed you would;
because, because—

Losing the thread of his discourse.

Oh-h, don' you bodder me.

He turns, and leans his head against the
back of the chair.

GRETCHEN.

You knew I was there?

RIP.

Laughing.

I thought I saw you.

GRETCHEN.

I saw you myself, dancing with the girl.

RIP.

You saw the girl dancin' mit me.

Gretchen remembers Rip's clothes, and goes
over to see if he is wet, and pushes him
towards the centre of the stage. Rip
mistakes her intention.

You want to pull some more hair out of my
head?

GRETCHEN.

Why, the monster! He is n't wet a bit!
He's as dry as if he'd been aired!

RIP.

Of course I'm dry.

I'm always dry—always dry.

Laughing.

GRETCHEN.

Examines game-bag, and pulls out a flask,
which she holds under Rip's nose.

Why, what's here? Why, it's a bottle—a
bottle!

RIP.

Leaning against the table.

Yes; it's a bottle.

Laughs.

You think I don't know a bottle when I
see it?

GRETCHEN.

That's pretty game for your game-bag, ain't
it?

RIP.

Assuming an innocent air.

Somebody must have put it there.

GRETCHEN.

Putting the flask in her pocket.

Then, you don't get it again.

RIP.

With a show of anger.

Now mind if I don't get it again—well—all
there is about it—

Breaking down.

I don't want it. I have had enough.

With a droll air of conviction.

GRETCHEN.

I'm glad you know when you've had enough.

RIP.

Still leaning against the table.

That's the way mit me. I'm glad I know
when I got enough —

Laughs.

An' I'm glad when I've got enough, too. Give
me the bottle; I want to put it in the game-bag.

GRETCHEN.

For what?

RIP.

Lounging off the table, and coming forward
and leaning his arms on Gretchen's
shoulders.

So that I can't drink it. Here's the whole
business —

He slides his hand down to Gretchen's pocket,
and tries to find the bottle while he talks
to her.

Here's the whole business about it. What is
the use of anybody — well — wash the use of
anybody, anyhow — well — oh —

Missing the pocket.

What you talkin' 'bout —

Suddenly his hand slips into her pocket, and he begins to pull the bottle out, with great satisfaction.

Now, now I can tell you all 'bout it.

GRETCHEN.

Discovering his tactics, and pushing him away.

Pshaw!

RIP.

If you don't give me the bottle, I just break up everything in the house.

GRETCHEN.

If you dare!

RIP.

If I dare! Have n't I done it two or three times before? I just throw everything right out of the window.

Rip throws the plates and cups on the floor, and overturns a chair, and seats himself on the table. Gretchen picks them up again.

GRETCHEN.

Don't, Rip; don't do that! Now stop, Rip, stop!

Gretchen bangs down a chair by the table, and seats herself.

Now, then, perhaps you will be kind enough to tell where you've been for the last two days. Where have you been? Do you hear?

RIP.

Where I've been? Well, it's not my bottle, anyhow. I borrowed that bottle from another feller. You want to know where I been?

GRETCHEN.

Yes; and I will know.

RIP.

Good-humouredly.

Let me see. Last night I stopped out all night.

GRETCHEN.

But why?

RIP.

Why? You mean the reason of it?

GRETCHEN.

Yes, the reason.

RIP.

Inconsequently.

The reason is why? Don't bother me.

GRETCHEN.

Emphasising each word with a bang on the table.

Why — did — you — stop — out — all — night?

RIP.

Imitating her tone.

Because — I — want — to — get — up — early
— in — the — morning.

Hiccough.

Come, don't get so mad mit a feller. Why, I've been fillin' my game-bag mit game.

Rip gets down off the table, and Gretchen comes towards him and feels his game-bag.

GRETCHEN.

^ Your game-bag is full of game, is n't it?

RIP.

Taking her hand and holding it away from her pocket.

That? Why, that would n't hold it.

Finding his way into Gretchen's pocket.

Now I can tell you all about it. You know last night I stopped out all night —

GRETCHEN.

Yes; and let me catch you again.

He is pulling the bottle out, when Gretchen catches him, and slaps his hand.

You paltry thief!

RIP.

Oh, you ain't got no confidence in me. Now what do you think was the first thing I saw in the morning?

Dragging a chair to the front of the stage.

GRETCHEN.

I don't know. What?

RIP.

Seating himself.

A rabbit.

GRETCHEN.

Pleased.

I like a rabbit. I like it in a stew.

RIP.

Looking at her, amused.

I guess you like everything in a stew — everything what 's a rabbit I mean. Well, there was a rabbit a-feedin' mit the grass, — you know they always come out early in der mornin' and feed mit the grass ?

GRETCHEN.

Never mind the grass. Go on.

RIP.

Don't get so patient; you wait till you get the rabbit.

Humourously.

Well, I crawl up —

GRETCHEN.

Yes, yes!

RIP.

Becoming interested in his own powers of invention.

An' his little tail was a-stickin' up so —

With a gesture of his forefinger.

GRETCHEN.

Never mind his tail. Go on.

Impatiently.

RIP.

Remonstrating at her interruption.

The more fatter the rabbit, the more whiter is his tail —

GRETCHEN.

Well, well, go on.

RIP.

Well, I haul up —

Taking aim.

GRETCHEN.

Yes, yes!

RIP.

And his ears was a-stickin' up so —

Making the two ears with his two forefingers.

GRETCHEN.

Never mind his ears. Go on.

RIP.

I pull the trigger.

GRETCHEN.

Bang went the gun, and —

Eagerly.

RIP.

Seriously.

And the rabbit run away.

GRETCHEN.

Angrily.

And so you shot nothing?

RIP.

How will I shot him when he run away?

He laughs at her disappointment.

There, don't get so mad mit a feller. Now I'm going to tell you what I did shot; that 's what I did n't shot. You know that old forty-acre field of ours?

GRETCHEN.

Scornfully.

Ours! Ours, did you say?

RIP.

Shamefacedly.

You know the one I mean well enough. It used to be ours.

GRETCHEN.

Regretfully.

Yes; it used, indeed!

RIP.

It ain't ours now, is it?

GRETCHEN.

No, indeed, it is not.

Sighing.

RIP.

No? Den I would n't bodder about it. Better let somebody bodder about that field what belongs to it. Well, in that field dere 's a pond; and what do you think I see in that pond?

GRETCHEN.

I don't know. Ducks?

RIP.

Ducks! More an' a thousand.

GRETCHEN.

Walking to where broomstick is.
More than a thousand ducks?

RIP.

I haul up again —

GRETCHEN.

Picking up broomstick.
Yes, and so will I. And if you miss fire this time —

She holds it threateningly over Rip's shoulder.

RIP.

Looking at it askance out of the corner of his eye, then putting up his hand and pushing it aside.

You will scare the ducks mit that. Well, I take better aim this time as I did before. I pull the trigger, and — bang!

GRETCHEN.

How many down?

RIP.

Indifferently.

One.

GRETCHEN.

Indignantly.

What! only one duck out of a thousand?

RIP.

Who said one duck?

GRETCHEN.

You did.

RIP.

Getting up, and leaning on the back of the chair.

I did n't say anything of the kind.

GRETCHEN.

You said "one."

RIP.

Ah! *One.* But I shot more as one duck.

GRETCHEN.

Did you?

RIP.

Crosses over, and sits on the low stool, and laughs silently.



I shot our old bull.

Gretchen flings down the broomstick, and throws herself into the chair at the right of the table, in dumb rage.

I did n't kill him. I just sting him, you know. Well, then the bull come right after me; and I come right away from him. O Gretchen, how you would laugh if you could see that —

With a vain appeal to her sense of humour. the bull was a-comin', and I was a-goin. Well, he chased me across the field. I tried to climb over the fence so fast what I could, —

Doubles up with his silent laugh.

an' the bull come up an' save me the trouble of that. Well, then, I rolled over on the other side.

GRETCHEN.

With disgust.

And then you went fast asleep for the rest of the day.

RIP.

That 's a fact. That 's a fact.

GRETCHEN.

Bursting into tears, and burying her head in her arms on the table.

O Rip, you 'll break my heart! You will.

RIP.

Now she gone crying mit herself! Don't cry, Gretchen, don't cry. My d-a-r-l-i-n', don't cry.

GRETCHEN.

Angrily.

I will cry!

RIP.

Cry 'way as much you like. What do I care? All the better soon as a woman gets cryin'; den all the danger 's over.

Rip goes to Gretchen, leans over, and puts his arm around her.

Gretchen, don't cry; my angel, don't.

He succeeds in getting his hand into her pocket, and steals the bottle.



Don't cry, my darlin'.

Humourously.

Gretchen, won't you give me a little drop out of that bottle what you took away from me?

He sits on the table, just behind her, and takes a drink from the bottle.

GRETCHEN.

Here 's a man drunk, and asking for more.

RIP.

I was n't. I swore off.

Coaxingly.

You give me a little drop, an' I won't count it.

GRETCHEN.

Sharply.

No!

RIP.

Drinking again.

Well, den, here 's your good health, an' your family, and may they live long and prosper!

Puts bottle in his bag.

GRETCHEN.

You unfeeling brute. Your wife 's starving. And, Rip, your child 's in rags.

RIP.

Holding up his coat, and heaving a sigh of resignation.

Well, I 'm the same way ; you know dat.

GRETCHEN.

Sitting up, and looking appealingly at Rip.

Oh, Rip, if you would only treat me kindly!

RIP.

Putting his arms around her.

Well, den, I will. I'm going to treat you kind. I'll treat you kind.

GRETCHEN.

Why, it would add ten years to my life.

RIP.

Over her shoulder, and after a pause.

That's a great inducement; it is, my darlin'. I know I treat you too bad, an' you deserve to be a widow.

GRETCHEN.

Getting up, and putting her arms on Rip's shoulders.

Oh, Rip, if you would only reform!

RIP.

Well, den, I will. I won't touch another drop so long what I live.

GRETCHEN.

Can I trust you?

RIP.

You must n't suspect me.

GRETCHEN.

Embracing him.

There, then, I will trust you.

She takes the candle, and goes to fetch the children.

Here, Hendrick, Meenie. Children, where are you?

Exit through the door on the left.

RIP.

Sits himself in the chair to the right of the table, and takes out flask.

Well, it's too bad; but it's all a woman's fault any way. When a man gets drinkin' and that, they ought to let him alone. So soon as they scold him, he goes off like a sky-rocket.

Re-enter Gretchen and the children.

GRETCHEN.

Seeing the flask in Rip's hand.

I thought as much.

RIP.

Unconscious of her presence.

How I did smooth her down! I must drink her good health. Gretchen, here's your good health.

About to drink.

GRETCHEN.

Snatching the bottle, and using it to gesticulate with.

Oh, you paltry thief!

RIP.

Concerned for the schnapps.

What you doin'? You'll spill the licker out of the bottle.

He puts in the cork.

GRETCHEN.

Examining the flask.

Why, the monster, he's emptied the bottle!

RIP.

That's a fac'. That's a fac'.

GRETCHEN.

Throwing down the flask.

Then that is the last drop you drink under my roof!

RIP.

What! What!

Meenie approaches her father on tiptoe, and kneels beside him.

GRETCHEN.

Out, you drunkard! Out, you sot! You disgrace to your wife and to your child! This house is mine.

RIP.

Dazed, and a little sobered.

Yours! Yours!

GRETCHEN.

Raising her voice above the storm, which
seems to rage more fiercely outside.Yes, mine, mine! Had it been yours to sell, it
would have gone along with the rest of your
land. Out, then, I say—

Pushing open the door.

for you have no longer any share in me or mine.

A peal of thunder.

MEENIE.

Running over, and kneeling by Gretchen.

Oh, mother, hark at the storm!

GRETCHEN.

Pushing her aside.

Begone man, can't you speak? Are you struck
dumb? You sleep no more under my roof.

RIP.

Who has not moved, even his arm remaining
outstretched, as it was when Meenie slipped
from his side, murmurs in a bewildered,
incredulous way.Why, Gretchen, are you goin' to turn me out
like a dog?

Gretchen points to the door. Rip rises and leans against the table with a groan. His conscience speaks.

Well, maybe you are right.

His voice breaks, and with a despairing gesture.

I have got no home. I will go. But mind, Gretchen, after what you say to me to-night, I can never darken your door again — never —

Going towards the door.

I will go.

HENDRICK.

Running to Rip.

Not into the storm, Rip. Hark, how it thunders!

RIP.

Putting his arm round him.

Yah, my boy; but not as bad to me as the storm in my home. I will go.

At the door by this time.

MEENIE.

Catching Rip's coat.

No, father, don't go!

RIP.

Bending over her tenderly, and holding her close to him.

My child! Bless you, my child, bless you!

Meenie faints. Rip gives a sobbing sigh.

"No ; you have driven me from your bouse."



GRETCHEN.

Relenting.

No, Rip — I —

RIP.

Waving her off.

No; you have drive me from your house. You have opened the door for me to go. You may never open it for me to come back.

Leans against the doorpost, overcome by his emotion. His eye rests on Meenie, who lies at his feet.

You say I have no share in this house.

Points to Meenie in profound despair.

Well, see, then, I wipe the disgrace from your door.

He staggers out into the storm.

GRETCHEN.

No, Rip! Husband, come back!

Gretchen faints, and the curtain falls.







ACT III.

SCENE I.

A steep and rocky clove in the Kaatskill Mountains, down which rushes a torrent, swollen by the storm. Overhead, the hemlocks stretch their melancholy boughs. It is night. Rip enters, almost at a run, with his head down, and his coat-collar turned up, beating his way against the storm. With the hunter's instinct, he protects the priming of his gun with the skirt of his jacket. Having reached a comparatively level spot, he pauses for breath, and turns to see what has become of his dog.

RIP.

Whistling to the dog.

Schneider! Schneider! What's the matter with Schneider? Something must have scared that dog. There he goes head over heels down the hill. Well, here I am again — another night in the mountains! Heigho! these old trees begin to know me, I reckon.

Taking off his hat.

How are you, old fellows? Well, I like the trees, they keep me from the wind and the rain, and they never blow me up; and when I lay me

down on the broad of my back, they seem to bow their heads to me, an' say: Go to sleep, Rip, go to sleep.

Lightning.

My, what a flash that was! Old Hendrick Hudson's lighting his pipe in the mountains to-night; now, we'll hear him roll the big balls along.

Thunder.

Rip looks back over the path he has come, and whistles again for his dog.

Well, I — no — Schneider! No; whatever it is, it's on two legs. Why, what a funny thing is that a comin' up the hill? I thought nobody but me ever come nigh this place.

Enter a strange dwarfish figure, clad all in gray like a Dutch seaman of the seventeenth century, in short-skirted doublet, hose, and high-crowned hat drawn over his eyes. From beneath the latter his long gray beard streams down till it almost touches the ground. He carries a keg on his shoulder. He advances slowly towards Rip, and, by his gesture, begs Rip to set the keg down for him. Rip does so, and the dwarf seats himself upon it.

RIP.

With good-humoured sarcasm.

Sit down, and make yourself comfortable.

A long pause and silence.



What? What's the matter? Ain't ye goin' to speak to a feller? I don't want to speak to you, then. Who you think you was, that I want to speak to you, any more than you want to speak to me; you hear what I say?

Rip pokes the dwarf in the ribs, who turns, and looks up. Rip retreats hastily.

Donner an' Blitzen! What for a man is das? I have been walking over these mountains ever since I was a boy, an' I never saw a queer-looking codger like that before. He must be an old sea-snake, I reckon.

The dwarf approaches Rip, and motions Rip to help him up the mountain with the keg.

RIP.

Well, why don't you say so, den? You mean you would like me to help you up with that keg?

The dwarf nods in the affirmative.

Well, sir, I don't do it.

The dwarf holds up his hands in supplication.

No; there's no good you speakin' like that. I never seed you before, did I?

The dwarf shakes his head. Rip, with great decision, walking away, and leaning against a tree.

I don't want to see you again, needer. What have you got in that keg, schnapps?

The dwarf nods.

I don't believe you.

The dwarf nods more affirmatively.

Is it good schnapps?

The dwarf again insists.

Well, I'll help you. Go 'long pick up my gun, there, and I follow you mit that keg on my shoulder. I'll follow you, old broadchops.

As Rip shoulders the keg, a furious blast whirls up the valley, and seems to carry him and his demon companion before it. The rain that follows blots out the landscape. For a few moments, all is darkness. Gradually, the topmost peak of the Kaatskill Mountains becomes visible, far above the storm. Stretching below, the country lies spread out like a map. A feeble and watery moonlight shows us a weird group, gathered upon the peak, — Hendrick Hudson, and his ghostly crew. In the foreground, one of them poises a ball, about to bowl it, while the others lean forward in attitudes of watchful expectancy. Silently he pitches it; and, after a momentary pause, a long and rumbling peal of thunder reverberates among the valleys below.

At this moment, the demon, carrying Rip's gun, appears over the crest of the peak in the background, and Rip toils after

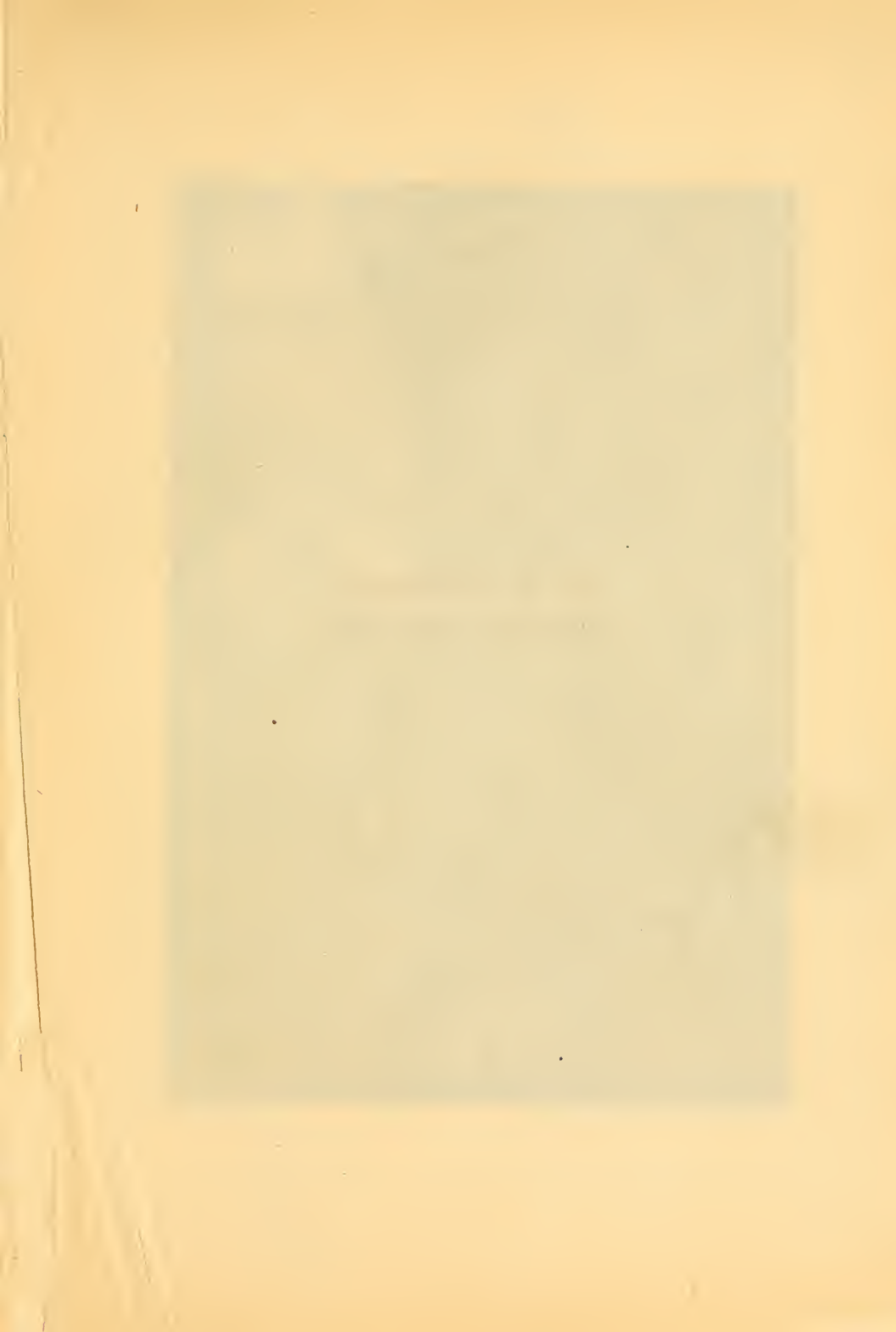


“What’s the matter with Schneider?”

From Painting, — the figure by F. Eugene Smith; the landscape
background by Joseph Jefferson.







Scene in Catskill Mountains.

From Painting by Joseph Jefferson.



"No one remembers Rip Van Winkle."



with the keg on his shoulder. Arrived at the summit, he drops the keg on his knee, and gasps for breath.

RIP.

Glancing out over the landscape.

I say, old gentleman, I never was so high up in the mountains before. Look down into the valley there; it seems more as a mile. I—

Turning to speak to his companion, and perceiving another of the crew.

You're another feller!

The second demon nods assent.

You're that other chap's brother?

The demon again assents. Rip carries the keg a little further, and comes face to face with a third.

RIP.

You're another brother?

The third demon nods assent. Rip takes another step, and perceives Hendrick Hudson in the centre, surrounded by many demons.

You're his old gran'father?

Hudson nods. Rip puts down the keg in perplexity, not untinged with alarm.

Donner and Blitzen! here's the whole family;
I'm a dead man to a certainty.

The demons extend their arms to Hudson, as if inquiring what they should do. He points to Rip, they do the same.

RIP.

My, my, I suppose they 're speakin' about me!

Looking at his gun, which the first demon has deposited on the ground, and which lies within his reach.

No good shootin' at 'em; family's too big for one gun.

Hendrick Hudson advances, and seats himself on the keg facing Rip. The demons slowly surround the two.

RIP.

Looking about him with growing apprehension.

My, my, I don't like that kind of people at all! No, sir! I don't like any sech kind. I like that old gran'father worse than any of them.

With a sheepish attempt to be genial, and appear at his ease.

How you was, old gentleman? I did n't mean to intrude on you, did I?

Hudson shakes his head.

What?

No reply.

I'll tell you how it was; I met one of your gran'children, I don't know which is the one—

Glancing around.

They're all so much alike. Well—

Embarrassed, and looking at one demon.

That's the same kind of a one. Any way this one, he axed me to help him up the mountain mit dat keg. Well, he was an old feller, an' I thought I would help him.

Pauses, troubled by their silence.

Was I right to help him?

Hudson nods.

I say, was I right to help him?

Hudson nods again.

If he was here, he would yust tell you the same thing any way, because—

Suddenly perceiving the demon he had met below.

Why, dat's the one; ain't it?

The demon nods.

Yes; dat is the one, dat's the same kind of a one dat I met. Was I right to come?

Hudson nods approval.

I didn't want to come here, anyhow; no, sir, I didn't want to come to any such kind of a place.

After a pause, seeing that no one has anything to say.

I guess I better go away from it.

Rip picks up his gun, and is about to return by the way he came; but the demons raise

their hands threateningly, and stop him.
He puts his gun down again.

I did n't want to come here, anyhow —

Grumbling to himself, then pulling himself together with an effort, and facing Hudson.

Well, old gentleman, if you mean to do me any harm, just speak it right out —

Then with a little laugh.

Oh! I will die game —

Glancing round for a means of escape, and half to himself.

If I can't run away.

Hudson extends a cup to Rip, as if inviting him to drink.

RIP.

Doubtfully.

You want me to drink mit you?

Hudson nods. Rip approaches him cautiously, unable to resist the temptation of a drink.

Well, I swore off drinkin'; but as this is the first time I see you, I won't count this one —

He takes the cup. Hudson holds up another cup. Rip is reassured, and his old geniality returns.

You drink mit me? We drink mit one another?



Hudson nods affirmatively. Rip feels at home under these familiar circumstances, and becomes familiar and colloquial again.

What's the matter mit you, old gentleman, anyhow? You go and make so

Imitating the demon.

mit your head every time; was you deaf?

Hudson shakes his head.

Oh, nein.

Laughing at his error.

If you was deaf, you would n't hear what I was sayin'. Was you dumb?

Hudson nods yes.

So? You was dumb?

Hudson nods again.

Has all of your family the same complaint?

Hudson nods.

All the boys dumb, hey? All the boys dumb.

All the demons nod. Then, suddenly, as if struck with an idea.

Have you got any girls?

Hudson shakes his head.

Don't you? Such a big family, and all boys?

Hudson nods.

RIP.

With profound regret.

That's a pity; my, that's a pity. Oh, my, if you had some dumb girls, what wives they would make—

Brightening up.

Well, old gentleman, here's your good health,
and all your family —

Turning, and waving to them.
may they live long and prosper.

Rip drinks. As he does so, all the demons
lean forward, watching the effect of the
liquor. Rip puts his hand to his head.
The empty cup falls to the ground.

RIP.

In an awed and ecstatic voice.

What for licker is that!

As he turns, half reeling, he sees Hudson
holding out to him another cup. He
snatches it with almost frantic eagerness.

RIP.

Give me another one!

He empties it at a draught. A long pause
follows, during which the effect of the
liquor upon Rip becomes apparent; the
light in his eyes fades, his exhilaration dies
out, and he loses his grasp on the reality
of his surroundings. Finally, he clasps
his head with both hands, and cries in a
muffled, terrified voice.

RIP.

Oh, my, my head was so light, and now,
it's heavy as lead!

He reels, and falls heavily to the ground.
A long pause. The demons begin to

disappear. Rip becomes dimly conscious of this, and raises himself on his elbow.

RIP.

Are you goin' to leave me, boys? Are you goin' to leave me all alone? Don't leave me; don't go away.

With a last effort.

I will drink your good health, and your family's —

He falls back heavily, asleep.

[CURTAIN.]



ACT IV.

SCENE I.

As the curtain rises, the same high peaks of the Kaatskills, and the far-stretching valley below, are disclosed in the gray light of dawn.

Rip is still lying on the ground, as in the last act; but he is no longer the Rip we knew. His hair and beard are long and white, bleached by the storms that have rolled over his head during the twenty years he has been asleep.

As he stirs and slowly rises to a half-sitting posture, we see that his former picturesque rags have become so dilapidated that it is a matter of marvel how they hold together. They have lost all traces of colour, and have assumed the neutral tints of the moss and lichens that cover the rocks.

His voice, when he first speaks, betrays even more distinctly than his appearance the lapse of time. Instead of the full round tones of manhood, he speaks in the high treble of feeble old age. His very hands have grown old and weatherbeaten.

RIP.

Staring vacantly around.

I wonder where I was. On top of the Kaatskill Mountains as sure as a gun! Won't my wife

give it to me for stopping out all night? I must get up and get home with myself.

Trying to rise.

Oh, I feel very bad! Vat is the matter with my elbow?

In trying to rub it, the other one gives him such a twinge that he cries out.



Oh! The other elbow is more badder than the other one. I must have cotched the rheumatix a-sleepin' mit the wet grass.

He rises with great difficulty.

Och! I never had such rheumatix like that.

He feels himself all over, and then stands for a moment pondering, and bewildered by a strange memory.

I was n't sleeping all the time, needer. I know I met a queer kind of a man, and we got drinkin',



and I guess I got pretty drunk. Well, I must pick up my gun, and get home mit myself.

After several painful attempts, he succeeds in picking up his gun, which drops all to pieces as he lifts it. Rip looks at it in amazement.

My gun must have cotched the rheumatix too. Now that's too bad. Them fellows have gone and stole my good gun, and leave me this rusty old barrel.

Rip begins slowly to climb over the peak towards the path by which he had ascended, his memory seeming to act automatically. When he reaches the highest point, where he can look out over the valley, he stops in surprise.

Why, is that the village of Falling Waters that I see? Why, the place is more than twice the size it was last night. I—

He sinks down.

I don't know whether I am dreaming, or sleeping, or waking.

Then pulling himself together with a great effort, and calling up the image of his wife to act as whip and spur to his waning powers, he says, with humorous conviction, as he gets up painfully again:—

I go home to my wife. She'll let me know whether I'm asleep or awake or not.

Almost unable to proceed.



I don't know if I will ever get home, my k-nees are so stiff. My backbone, it's broke already.

As the curtain falls, Rip stands leaning on the barrel of his gun as on a staff, with one hand raised, looking out over the valley.

SCENE II.

A comfortable-looking room in Derrick's house. As the curtain rises, Meenie and Gretchen enter. Meenie is a tall young woman of twenty-six, and Gretchen is a matronly figure with white hair. They are well dressed, and have every appearance of physical and material prosperity.

GRETCHEN.

I am sent to you by your father, Meenie.

MEENIE.

Oh, don't call him so; he is not my father! He is your husband, mother; but I owe him no love. And his cruel treatment of you —

GRETCHEN.

Hush, child! Oh, if he heard you, he would make me pay for every disrespectful word you utter.

MEENIE.

Yes; he would beat you, starve and degrade you. You are not his wife, mother, but his menial.

GRETCHEN.

My spirit is broken, Meenie. I cannot resent it. Nay, I deserve it; for as Derrick now treats me, so I treated your poor father when he was alive.

MEENIE.

You, mother? You, so gentle? You, who are weakness and patience itself?

GRETCHEN.

Yes; because for fifteen years I have been Derrick's wife. But it was my temper, my cruelty, that drove your father from our home twenty years ago. You were too young then to remember him.

MEENIE.

No, mother, I recollect my dear father taking me on his knee, and saying to Hendrick that I should be his wife; and I promised I would.

GRETCHEN.

Poor Rip! Poor, good-natured, kind creature that he was! How gently he bore with me; and

I drove him like a dog from his home. I hunted him into the mountains, where he perished of hunger or cold, or a prey to some wild beast.

MEENIE.

Don't cry, mother!

Enter Derrick, now grown old and bent over his cane, and infinitely more disagreeable than before. He, too, has thriven, and is dressed in a handsome full suit of black silk.

DERRICK.

Snivelling again, eh? Teaching that girl of yours to be an obstinate hypocrite?

MEENIE.

Oh, sir, she —

DERRICK.

Hold your tongue, miss. Speak when you're spoken to. I'll have you both to understand that there's but one master here. Well, mistress, have you told her my wishes; and is she prepared to obey them?

GRETCHEN.

Indeed, sir, I was trying to —

DERRICK.

Beating about the bush, prevaricating, and sneaking, as you usually do.

MEENIE.

If you have made her your slave, you must expect her to cringe.

DERRICK.

Approaching her threateningly.

What's that?

GRETCHEN.

Meenie! Meenie! For Heaven's sake, do not anger him!

DERRICK.

Raising his cane.

She had better not.

MEENIE.

Defiantly.

Take care how you raise your hand to me, for I'll keep a strict account of it. And when Hendrick comes back from sea, he'll make you smart for it, I promise you.

DERRICK.

Is the girl mad?

MEENIE.

He thrashed your nephew once for being insolent to me. Go and ask him how Hendrick pays my debts; and then when you speak to me you'll mind your stops.

DERRICK.

To Gretchen.

Oh, you shall pay for this!



GRETCHEN.

No, Derrick, indeed, indeed I have not urged her to this! O Meenie, do not speak so to him; for my sake forbear!

MEENIE.

For your sake, yes, dear mother. I forgot that he could revenge himself on you.

DERRICK.

As for your sailor lover, Hendrick Vedder, I've got news of him at last. His ship, the "Mayflower," was lost, three years ago, off Cape Horn.

MEENIE.

No, no. Not lost?

DERRICK.

If you doubt it, there's the "Shipping Gazette," in on my office table. You can satisfy yourself that your sailor bully has gone to the bottom.

GRETCHEN.

Oh, sir, do not convey the news to her so cruelly.

DERRICK.

That's it. Because I don't sneak and trick and lie about it, I'm cruel. The man's dead, has been dead and gone these two years or more. The time of mourning is over. Am I going to be nice about it this time of day?

MEENIE.

Then all my hope is gone, gone forever!

DERRICK.

So much the better for you. Hendrick's whole fortune was invested in that ship. So there's an end of him and your expectations. Now you are free, and a beggar. My nephew has a fancy for you. He will have a share of my business now, and my money when — when I die.

GRETCHEN.

Do not ask her to decide now!

DERRICK.

Why not? If she expects to make a better bargain by holding off, she's mistaken.

GRETCHEN.

How can you expect her to think of a husband at this moment?

DERRICK.

Don't I tell you the other one is dead these two years?

GRETCHEN.

Leading Meenie away

Come, my child. Leave her to me, sir; I will try and persuade her.

DERRICK.

Take care that you do ; for if she don't consent to accept my offer, she shall pack bag and baggage out of this house. Aye, this very day ! Not a penny, not a stitch of clothes but what she has on her back, shall she have ! Oh, I've had to deal with obstinate women before now, and I've taken them down before I've done with them. You know who I mean ? Do you know who I mean ? Stop. *Answer me ! Do you know who I mean ?*

GRETCHEN.

Submissively.

Yes, sir.

DERRICK.

Then why did n't you say so before ? Sulky, I suppose. There, you may be off.

Exeunt.

SCENE III.

The village of Falling Waters, which has grown to be a smart and flourishing town, but whose chief features remain unchanged.

To the left, as of yore, is the inn, bearing scarcely any mark of the lapse of time, save that the sign of George III. has been replaced by a portrait of George Washington. To the right, where Rip's cottage used to stand, nothing remains, however, but the blackened and crumbling ruins of a chimney. A table and chairs stand in front of the Inn porch.

Into this familiar scene Rip makes his entrance, but not as before,—in glee, with the children clinging about him. Faint, weak, and weary he stumbles along, followed by a jeering, hooting mob of villagers; while the children hide from him in fear, behind their elders. His eyes look dazed and uncomprehending, and he catches at the back of a chair as if in need of physical as well as mental support.

KITCHEN.

As Rip enters.

Why, what queer looking creature is this, that all the boys are playing —

SETH.

Why, he looks as though he'd been dead for fifty years, and dug up again!

RIP.

My friends, *Kanst du Deutsch sprechen?*



FIRST VILLAGER.

I say, old fellow, you ain't seen anything of an old butter-tub with no kiver on, no place about here, have you?

RIP.

Bewildered, but with simplicity.

What is that? I don't know who that is.

SECOND VILLAGER.

I say, old man, who 's your barber?

The crowd laughs, and goes off repeating,
"Who 's your barber?" Some of the children remain to stare at Rip; but when he holds out his hand to them, they, too, run off frightened.

RIP.

Who 's my barber; what dey mean by dat?

Noticing his beard.

Why, is that on me? I didn't see that before. My beard and hair is so long and white — Gretchen won't know me with that, when she gets me home.

Looking towards the cottage.

Why, the home's gone away!

Rip becomes more and more puzzled, like a man in a dream who sees unfamiliar things amid familiar surroundings, and cannot make out what has happened: and as in a dream a man preserves his individuality, so Rip stumbles along through his bewilderment, exhibiting flashes of his old humour, wit, and native shrewdness. But with all this he never laughs.

SETH.

I say, old man, had n't you better go home and get shaved?

RIP.

Looking about for the voice.

What?

SETH.

Here, this way. Had n't you better go home and get shaved?

RIP.

My wife will shave me when she gets me home. Is this the village of "Falling Waters," where we was?

SETH.

Yes.

RIP.

Still more puzzled, not knowing his face.
Do you live here?

SETH.

Well, rather. I was born here.

RIP.

Then you live here?

Reflectively.

SETH.

Well, rather; of course I do.

RIP.

Feeling that he has hold of something
certain.

Do you know where I live?

SETH.

No; but I should say you belong to Noah's
Ark.

RIP.

Putting his hand to his ear.
That I belong mit vas?

SETH.

Noah's Ark.

RIP.

Very much hurt.

Why will you say such thing like that?

Then, with a flash of humour, and drawing
his beard slowly through his fingers.

Well, look like it, don't I?

Beginning all over again to feel for his clue.

My friend, did you never hear of a man in
this place whose name was Rip Van Winkle?

SETH.

Rip Van Winkle, the laziest, drunken vagabond
in the country?

RIP.

Somewhat taken aback by this description,
but obliged to concur in it.

Yah, that is the one; there is no mistaking
him, eh?

SETH.

I know all about him.

RIP.

Hopefully.

Do you?

SETH.

Yes.

RIP.

Quite eagerly.

Well, if you know all about him; well, what
has become of him?

SETH.

What has become of him? Why, bless your
soul, he's been dead these twenty years!

RIP.

Looking at Seth.

Then I am dead, I suppose. So Rip Van
Winkle was dead, eh?

SETH.

Yes; and buried.

RIP.

Humourously.

I'm sorry for that; for he was a good fellow,
so he was.

SETH.

Aside.

There appears to be something queer about
this old chap; I wonder who he is.

Rises, and taking chair over to Rip.

There, old gentleman, be seated.

RIP.

Seating himself with great difficulty, aided
by Seth.

Oh, thank you; every time I move a new
way, I get another pain. My friend, where is
the house what you live in?

SETH.

Pointing at inn.

There.

RIP.

Did you live there yesterday?

SETH.

Well, rather.

RIP.

No; it is Nick Vedder what live in that house.
Where is Nick Vedder?

SETH.

Does he? Then I wish he'd pay the rent for it. Why, Nick Vedder has been dead these fifteen years.

RIP.

Did you know Jacob Stine, what was with him?

SETH.

No; but I've heard of him. He was one of the same sort as Rip and Nick.

RIP.

Yes, them fellows was all pretty much alike.

SETH.

Well, he went off the hooks a short time after Rip.

RIP.

Where has he gone?

SETH.

Off the hooks.

RIP.

What is that, when they go off the hooks?

SETH.

Why, he died.

RIP.

With an air of hopelessness.

Is there anybody alive here at all?

Then, with a sudden revulsion of feeling,
convinced of the impossibility of what he
hears.

That man is drunk what talks to me.

SETH.

Ah, they were a jolly set, I reckon.

RIP.

Oh, they was. I knowed them all.

SETH.

Did you?

RIP.

Yes, I know Jacob Stine, and Nick Vedder,
and Rip Van Winkle, and the whole of them.

A new idea strikes him, and he beckons to
Seth, whom he asks, very earnestly.

Oh, my friend, come and see here. Did you
know Schneider?

SETH.

Schneider! Schneider! No, I never heard of
him.

RIP.

Simply.

He was a dog. I thought you might know
him. Well, if dat is so, what has become of my

child Meenie, and my wife Gretchen? Are they gone, too?

Turning to look at the ruins of the house.

Yah, even the house is dead.

SETH.

Poor old chap! He seems quite cast down at the loss of his friends. I'll step in and get a drop of something to cheer him up.

Exit.

RIP.

Puzzling it out with himself.

I can't make it out how it all was; because if this here is me, what is here now, and Rip Van Winkle is dead, then who am I? That is what I would like to know. Yesterday, everybody was here; and now they was all gone.

Very forlorn.

Re-enter Seth, followed by the villagers.

SETH.

Offering Rip the cup.

There, old gent, there's a drop of something to cheer you up.

RIP.

Shaking hands with Seth and Katchen.

Oh, thank you. I—I—I swore off; but this is the first time what I see you. I won't count this one.

His voice breaks.

My friend, you have been very kind to me. Here is your good health, and your family's, and may they all live long and prosper!

SETH.

I say, wife, ain't he a curiosity fit for a show?

RIP.

Aside.

That gives me courage to ask these people anodder question.

He begins with difficulty.

My friend, I don't know whether you knowed it or not, but there was a child of Rip, — Meenie her name was.

SETH.

use Oh, yes; ~~that's~~ ^{they} all right.

RIP.

With great emotion, leaning forward.

She is not gone? She is not dead? No, no!

SETH.

No. She's alive.

RIP.

Sinking back with relief.

Meenie is alive. It's all right now, — all right now.

SETH.

She's the prettiest girl in the village.

RIP.

I know dat.

SETH.

But if she wastes her time waiting on Hendrick Vedder, she'll be a middle-aged woman before long.



RIP.

Incredulously.

She's a little child, only six years old.

SETH.

Six - and -
twenty, you
mean.

RIP.

Thinking they
are making
fun of him.

She's a little child no bigger than that. Don't bodder me; I don't like that.

SETH.

Why, she's as big as her mother.

RIP.

Very much surprised that Seth knows Gretchen.
What, Gretchen?

SETH.

Yes, Gretchen.

RIP.

Is n't Gretchen dead?

SETH.

No; she 's alive.

RIP.

With mixed emotions.

Gretchen is alive, eh! Gretchen 's alive!

SETH.

Yes; and married again.

RIP.

Fiercely

How would she do such a thing like that?

SETH.

2nd
~~Why, easy enough.~~ After Rip died, she was
a widow, was n't she?

RIP.

Oh, yes. I forgot about Rip's being dead.
Well, and then?

SETH.

Well, then Derrick made love to her.

RIP.

Surprised, and almost amused.

What for Derrick? Not Derrick Von Beekman?

SETH.

Yes, Derrick Von Beekman.

RIP.

Still more interested.

Well, and then?

SETH.

Well, then her affairs went bad; and at last she married him.

RIP.

Turning it over in his mind.

Has Derrick married Gretchen?

SETH.

Yes.

RIP.

With a flash of his old humour, but still with no laughter.

Well, I did n't think he would come to any good; I never did. So she cotched Derrick, eh! Poor Derrick!

SETH.

Yes.

RIP.

Well, here's their good health, and their family's, and may they all live long and prosper!

Drinks.

SETH.

Now, old gent, had n't you better be going home, wherever that is?

RIP.

With conviction.

Where my home was? Here's where it is.

SETH.

What, here in this village? Now do you think we're going to keep all the half-witted strays that choose to come along here? No; be off with you. Why, it's a shame that those you belong to should allow such an old tramp as you to float around here.

VILLAGERS.

Roughly, and trying to push him along.

Yes; away with him!

RIP.

Frightened, and pleading with them.

Are you going to drive me away into the hills again?

FIRST VILLAGER.

Yes; away with him! He's an old tramp.

Enter Hendrick, with stick and bundle, followed by some of the women of the village.

VILLAGERS.

Away with him!

HENDRICK.

Throwing down bundle.

Avast there, mates. Where are you towing that old hulk to? What, you won't?

Pushing crowd aside, and going forward.

Where are you towing that old hulk to?

SETH.

Who are you?

HENDRICK.

I'm a man, every inch of me; and if you doubt it, I'll undertake to remove the suspicions from any two of you in five minutes. Ain't you ashamed of yourselves? Don't you see the poor old creature has but half his wits?

SETH.

Well, this is no asylum for worn out idiots.

VILLAGERS.

Coming forward.

No, it ain't!

HENDRICK.

Ain't it?

OMNES.

No, it ain't.

HENDRICK.

Then I'll make it a hospital for broken heads
if you stand there much longer. Clear the decks,
you lubberly swabs!

Drives them aside. Turns to Rip, who stands
bewildered.

What is the cause of all this?

RIP.

Helplessly.

I don't know; do you?

HENDRICK.

To villagers.

Do any of you know him?

FIRST VILLAGER.

No; he appears to be a stranger.

HENDRICK.

To Rip.

You seem bewildered. Can I help you?

RIP.

Feebly.

Just tell me where I live.

HENDRICK.

And don't you know?

RIP.

No, I don't.

HENDRICK.

Why, what's your name?

RIP.

Almost childishly.

I don't know; but I believe I know vat it used to be. My name, it used to be Rip Van Winkle.

VILLAGERS.

In astonishment.

Rip Van Winkle?

HENDRICK.

Rip Van Winkle? Impossible!

RIP.

Pathetically feeble, and old.

Well, I would n't swear to it myself. I tell you how it was: Last night, I don't know about the time, I went away up into the mountains, and while I was there I meet a queer kind o' man, and we got drinkin'; and I guess I got pretty drunk. And then I went to sleep; and when I woke up this morning, I was dead.

All laugh.

HENDRICK.

Poor old fellow; he's crazy. Rip Van Winkle has been dead these twenty years. I knew him when I was a child.

RIP.

Clutching at a faint hope.
You don't know me?

HENDRICK.

No; nor anybody else here, it seems.

The villagers, finding that there is to be no amusement for them, straggle off to their occupations.

SETH.

As he goes into the inn.
Why, wife, he's as cracked as our old teapot.

RIP.

With simple pathos.
Are we so soon forgot when we are gone?
No one remembers Rip Van Winkle.

HENDRICK.

Come, cheer up, my old hearty, and you shall share my breakfast.

Assists Rip to sit at the table. Rip has fallen into a dream again.

To Katchen.

Bring us enough for three, and of your best.

KATCHEN.

That I will.

Exit into inn.

HENDRICK.

So here I am, home again. And yonder 's the very spot where, five years ago, I parted from Meenie.

RIP.

Roused by the name.

What, Meenie Van Winkle?

HENDRICK.

And she promised to remain true to Hendrick Vedder.

RIP.

Oh, yah; that was Nick Vedder's son.

HENDRICK.

Turning to Rip.

That 's me.

RIP.

Resentfully.

That was you! You think I 'm a fool? He 's a little child, no bigger than that, — the one I mean.

HENDRICK.

How mad he is!

Enter Katchen from inn with tray, on which is laid a breakfast. She puts it on table, and exits into inn.

There, that's right. Stow your old locker full while I take a cruise around yonder house, where, five years ago, I left the dearest bit of human nature that was ever put together. I'll be back directly.

Who comes here? It's surely Derrick and his wife. Egad, I'm in luck; for now the old birds are out, Meenie will surely be alone. I'll take advantage of the coast being clear, and steer into harbour alongside.

Exit. Enter Derrick, followed by Gretchen.

DERRICK.

So you have come to that conclusion, have you?

GRETCHEN.

I cannot accept this sacrifice.

RIP.

Starting from his reverie, and turning to look at her.

Why, that is Gretchen's voice.

As he recognises her, and sees how aged she is.

My, my! Is that my wife?

DERRICK.

Oh, you can't accept! Won't you kindly allow me a word on the subject?

RIP.

Aside, humourously.

No, indeed, she will not. Now, my friend, you are going to catch it.

GRETCHEN.

There is a limit even to my patience. Don't drive me to it.

RIP.

Aside, drolly.

Take care, my friend, take care.

DERRICK.

Look you, woman; Meenie has consented to marry my nephew. She has pledged her word to do so on condition that I settle an annuity on you.

GRETCHEN.

I won't allow my child to break her heart.

DERRICK.

You won't allow? Dare to raise your voice, dare but to speak except as I command you, you shall repent it to the last hour of your life.

RIP.

Expectantly.

Now she'll knock him down, flat as a flounder.

DERRICK.

Sneeringly.

You won't allow? This is something new. Who are you; do you think you are dealing with your first husband?

GRETCHEN.

Alas, no; I wish I was.

RIP.

Lost in wonderment.

My, my, if Rip was alive, he never would have believed it!

DERRICK.

So you thought to get the upper hand of me, when you married me; didn't you?

GRETCHEN.

I thought to get a home for my little girl—shelter, and food; want drove me to your door, and I married you for a meal's victuals for my sick child.

DERRICK.

So you came to me as if I was a poor-house, eh? Then you can't complain of the treatment you received. You sacrificed yourself for

Meenie; and the least she can do now, is to do the same for you. In an hour, the deeds will be ready. Now, just you take care that no insolent interference of yours spoils my plans; do you hear?

GRETCHEN.

Yes, sir.



DERRICK.

Why can't you be kind and affectionate to her, as I am to you. There, go and blubber over her; that's your way. You are always pretending to be miserable.

GRETCHEN.

Alas, no, sir! I am always pretending to be happy.

DERRICK.

Don't cry. I won't have it; come now, none of that. If you come home to-day with red eyes, and streaky cheeks, I'll give you something to cry for; now you know what's for supper.

Exit.

RIP.

Still amazed.

Well, if I had n't seen it, I never would have believed it!

GRETCHEN.

Absorbed in her grief.

Oh, wretch that I am, I must consent, or that man will surely thrust her out of doors to starve, to beg, and to become—

Seeing Rip.

Yes, to become a thing of rags and misery, like that poor soul.

RIP.

She always driv'd the beggars away; I suppose I must go.

Getting up, and starting to go.

GRETCHEN.

Taking penny from her pocket.

Here, my poor man, take this. It is only a penny; but take it, and may God bless you, poor wanderer, so old, so helpless. Why do you come to this strange place, so far from home?

RIP.

Keeping his face turned away from her.
She don't know me; she don't know me!

GRETCHEN.

Are you alone in the world?

RIP.

Trying to bring himself to look directly at
Gretchen.

My wife asks me if I'm alone.

GRETCHEN.

Come with me. How feeble he is; there, lean on me. Come to yonder house, and there you shall rest your limbs by the fire.

Gretchen takes his arm, and puts it in her own. As they move towards her house, Rip stops, and, with an effort, turns and looks her full in the face, with a penetrating gaze, as if imploring recognition, but there is none; and, sadly shaking his head, he shrinks into himself, and allows her to lead him tottering off.

SCENE IV.

The same room in Derrick's home as in
Scene II.

Enter Derrick.

DERRICK.

I don't know what women were invented for, except to make a man's life miserable. I can get a useful, hard-working woman to keep my house clean, and order my dinner for me, for half that weak snivelling creature costs me.

Enter Cockles.

COCKLES.

Well, uncle, what news; will she have me?

DERRICK.

Leave it to me; she must, she shall.

COCKLES.

If she holds out, what are we to do? It was all very well, you marrying Rip's widow, that choked off all inquiry into his affairs; but here's Meenie, Rip's heiress, who rightly owns all this property; if we don't secure her, we're not safe.

DERRICK.

You've got rid of Hendrick Vedder; that's one obstacle removed.

COCKLES.

I'm not so sure about that. His ship was wrecked on a lonely coast; but some of the crew may have, unfortunately, been saved.

DERRICK.

If he turns up after you're married, what need you care?

COCKLES.

I'd like nothing better; I'd like to see his face when he saw my arm around his sweetheart—my wife. But if he turns up before our marriage—

DERRICK.

I must put the screw on somewhere.

COCKLES.

I'll tell you, Meenie will do anything for her mother's sake. Now you are always threatening to turn her out, as she turned out Rip. That's the tender place. Meenie fears more for her mother, than she cares for herself.

DERRICK.

Well, what am I to do?

COCKLES.

Make Gretchen independent of you; settle the little fortune on her, that you are always talking about doing, but never keeping your word. The girl will sell herself to secure her mother's happiness.

DERRICK.

And it would be a cheap riddance for me. I was just talking about it to Gretchen this morning. You shall have the girl; but I hope you are not going to marry her out of any weak feeling of love. You're not going to let her make a fool of you by and by?

COCKLES.

I never cared for her until she was impudent to me, and got that sailor lover of hers to thrash me; and then I began to feel a hunger for her I never felt before.

DERRICK.

That's just the way I felt for Gretchen.

COCKLES.

'Tain't revenge that I feel; it's enterprise. I want to overcome a difficulty.

DERRICK.

Chuckling.

And so you shall. Come, we'll put your scheme in train at once; and let this be a warn-



ing to you hereafter, never marry another man's widow.

COCKLES.

No, uncle; I'll take a leaf out of your book, and let it be a warning to her.

Exeunt.

SCENE V.

A plain sitting-room in Derrick's house. A table stands in the centre with several chairs around it. There are cups, a jug, and a work-basket on the table. As the curtain rises, Meenie is discovered seated by the table.

MEENIE.

Why should I repine? Did my mother hesitate to sacrifice her life to make a home for me? No; these tears are ungrateful, selfish.

The door at the back opens, and Gretchen enters, leading Rip, who seems very feeble and a little wild.

GRETCHEN.

Come in and rest awhile.

RIP.

This your house, your home?

GRETCHEN.

Yes. Meenie, Meenie, bring him a chair.

RIP.

Turning aside so as to shield his face from Meenie.

Is that your daughter?

GRETCHEN.

That is my daughter.

RIP.

Looking timidly at Meenie, as Gretchen helps him into a chair.

I thought you was a child.

GRETCHEN.

Crossing to go into another room, and speaking to Meenie, who starts to follow her.

Stay with him until I get some food to fill his wallet. Don't be frightened, child, he is only a simple, half-witted creature whose misery has touched my heart.

Exit. Meenie takes her work-basket, and starts to follow.

RIP.

Holding out his hand to detain her, and speaking with hardly suppressed excitement.

One moment, my dear. Come here, and let me look at you.

Pathetically.

Are you afraid? I won't hurt you. I only want to look at you; that is all. Won't you come?

Meenie puts down her work-basket; and Rip is relieved of his great fear that she might leave him. His excitement increases as he goes on in his struggle to make her recognise him.

Yes; I thought you would. Oh, yah, that is Meenie! But you are grown!

Meenie smiles.



But see the smile and the eyes! That is just the same Meenie. You are a woman, Meenie. Do you remember something of your father?

He looks at her eagerly and anxiously, as if on her answer hung his reason and his life.

MEENIE.

I do. I do. Oh, I wish he was here now!

RIP.

Half rising in his chair, in his excitement.
Yah? But he is n't? No? No?

MEENIE.

No; he's dead. I remember him so well. No one ever loved him as I did.

RIP.

No; nobody ever loved me like my child.

MEENIE.

Never shall I forget his dear, good face. Tell me —

RIP.

Eagerly and expectantly.
Yah? —

MEENIE.

Did you know him?

RIP.

Confused by her question, and afraid to answer.

Well—I thought I did. But I— When I say that here, in the village, the people all laugh at me.

MEENIE.

He is wandering.

She starts to go.

RIP.

Making a great effort of will, and resolved to put the question of his identity to the test.

Don't go away from me. I want you to look at me now, and tell me if you have ever seen me before.

MEENIE.

Surprised.

No.

RIP.

Holding out his arms to her.

Try, my darlin,' won't you?

MEENIE.

Frightened.

What do you mean? Why do you gaze so earnestly and fondly on me?

RIP.

Rising from his chair, in trembling excitement, and approaching her.

I am afraid to tell you, my dear, because if you say it is not true, it may be it would break my heart. But, Meenie, either I dream, or I am mad; but I am your father.

MEENIE.

My father!

RIP.

Yes; but hear me, my dear, and then you will know.

Trying to be logical and calm, but labouring under great excitement.

This village here is the village of Falling Waters. Well, that was my home. I had here in this place my wife Gretchen, and my child Meenie — little Meenie —

A long pause, during which he strives to re-assemble his ideas and memories more accurately.

and my dog Schneider. That's all the family what I've got. Try and remember me, dear, won't you?

Pleadingly.

I don't know when it was — This night there was a storm; and my wife drove me from my



“Ah, my child! Somebody knows me now!”



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house; and I went away—I don't remember any more till I come back here now. And see, I get back now, and my wife is gone, and my home is gone. My home is gone, and my child—my child looks in my face, and don't know who I am!

MEENIE.

Rushing into his arms.

I do! Father!

RIP.

Sobbing.

Ah, my child! Somebody knows me now!
Somebody knows me now!

MEENIE.

But can it be possible?

RIP.

Oh, yah; it is so, Meenie!

With a pathetic return of his uncertainty.

Don't say it is not, or you will kill me if you do.

MEENIE.

No. One by one your features come back to my memory. Your voice recalls that of my dear father, too. I cannot doubt; yet it is so strange.

RIP.

Yah, but it is me, Meenie; it is me.

MEENIE.

I am bewildered. Surely mother will know you.

RIP.

No, I don't believe she 'll know me. Smiling.

MEENIE.

She can best prove your identity. I will call her.

RIP.

No. You call the dog Schneider. He 'll know me better than my wife.

They retire to a sofa in the background,
where Rip sits with his arm around
Meenie.¹

Enter Derrick, with documents.

¹ In reply to a question, why Rip should sit with his arm around Meenie, during the next scene, when the other persons in the drama are present, and are still ignorant of his identity, Mr. Jefferson said: "The other persons are occupied with their own affairs, and are not supposed to see this. It is natural that Rip should embrace his daughter whom he has just found; but the others are not supposed to see it. It is like a side speech on the stage. I went to a Chinese theatre once, and after the Chinese lady got through with her song, they brought her a glass of gin; she turned her back to the audience, and drank it, as much as to say, 'That's not in the play.' We are dealing with the impossible all the time on the stage; and we have got to make it appear possible. Dramatically, things may often be right, when, realistically, they are wrong. What we do is often the result of averaging the thing, determining how far good taste will admit of an error, you see; like the discord in music,—not good in itself, but good in its place."

DERRICK.

What old vagabond is this?

Meenie starts to resent insult.

RIP.

Don't you say a word.

DERRICK.

Here, give him a cold potato, and let him go.

To Gretchen, who has entered, followed by
Cockles. Gretchen seats herself in the
chair at the right of the table.

Come you here, mistress. Here are the papers
for the young couple to sign.

COCKLES.

Aside.

And the sooner the better. Hush, uncle.
Hendrick is here.

DERRICK.

Young Vedder? Then we must look sharp.

To Gretchen.

Come, fetch that girl of yours to sign this
deed.

GRETCHEN.

Never shall she put her name to that paper
with my consent. Never.

DERRICK.

Dare you oppose me in my own house? Dare you preach disobedience under my roof?

GRETCHEN.

I dare do anything when my child's life's at stake. No, a thousand times, no! You shall not make of her what you have of me. Starvation and death are better than such a life as I lead.

DERRICK.

Raising cane.

Don't provoke me.

GRETCHEN.

Kneeling.

Beat me, starve me. You can only kill me. After all, I deserve it.

Rising.

But Meenie has given her promise to Hendrick Vedder, and she shall not break her word.

COCKLES.

Seated at right of table.

But Hendrick Vedder is dead.

The door is flung open, and Hendrick enters.

HENDRICK.

That's a lie! He's alive!

GRETCHEN AND MEENIE.

Alive! Rushing to him.

HENDRICK.

To Meenie.

I've heard all about it. They made you believe that I was dead.

To Derrick.

Only wait till I get through here.

Embracing Meenie.

What a pleasure I've got to come!

To Derrick.

And what a thrashing I've brought back for you two swabs.

DERRICK.

Angrily.

Am I to be bullied under my own roof by a beggarly sailor? Quit my house, all of you.

Seizes Gretchen, and drags her away from
the crowd.

As for you, woman, this is your work, and I'll make you pay for it.

GRETCHEN.

Hendrick, save me from him. He will kill me.

HENDRICK.

Stand off!

DERRICK.

Raising cane.

No ; she is my wife, mine.

GRETCHEN.

Heaven help me, I am !

Rip has risen from the sofa, and come forward, and leans against the centre of the table, with one hand in his game-bag. He is fully awake now, and has recovered all his old shrewdness.

RIP.

Stop. I am not so sure about that. If that is so, then what has become of Rip Van Winkle?

COCKLES.

He 's dead.

RIP.

That 's another lie. He 's no more dead than Hendrick Vedder. Derrick Von Beekman, you say this house and land was yours?

DERRICK.

Yes.

RIP.

Where and what is the paper what you wanted Rip Van Winkle to sign when he was drunk, but sober enough not to do it?

Taking an old paper out of game-bag, and turning to Hendrick.

Have you forgot how to read?

HENDRICK.

No.

RIP.

Then you read that.

Hendrick takes the document from Rip, and looks it over.

DERRICK.

What does this mad old vagabond mean to say?

RIP.

I mean, that is my wife, Gretchen Van Winkle.

GRETCHEN.

Rushing to Rip.

Rip! Rip!

COCKLES.

I say, uncle, are you going to stand that? That old impostor is going it under your nose in fine style.

DERRICK.

I'm dumb with rage.

To the villagers, who have come crowding in.

Out of my house, all of you! Begone, you old tramp!

HENDRICK.

Stay where you are.

To Derrick.

This house don't belong to you. Not an acre of land, not a brick in the town is yours. They have never ceased to belong to Rip Van Winkle; and this document proves it.

DERRICK.

'T is false. That paper is a forgery.

HENDRICK.

Oh, no, it is not; for I read it to Rip twenty years ago.

RIP.

Clever boy! Clever boy! Dat 's the reason I did n't sign it then, Derrick.

DERRICK.

Approaching Hendrick.

And do you think I'm fool enough to give up my property in this way?

HENDRICK.

No. You're fool enough to hang on to it, until we make you refund to Rip every shilling over and above the paltry sum you loaned him

upon it. Now, if you are wise, you 'll take a hint. There's the door. Go! And never let us see your face again.

RIP.

Yah; give him a cold potato, and let him go.

Exit Derrick in a great rage. All the villagers laugh at him. Hendrick follows him to the door.

COCKLES.

Kneeling by Meenie.

O Meenie! Meenie!

HENDRICK.

Coming down, and taking him by ear.

I 'll Meenie you!

Takes him and pushes him out. All the villagers laugh. Meenie gives Rip a chair.

GRETCHEN.

Kneeling by the side of Rip.

O Rip! I drove you from your home; but do not desert me again. I'll never speak an unkind word to you, and you shall never see a frown on my face. And Rip—

RIP.

Yah.

GRETCHEN.

You may stay out all night, if you like.

RIP.

Leaning back in his chair.

No, thank you. I had enough of that.

GRETCHEN.

And, Rip, you can get tight as often as you please.

Taking bottle, and filling the cup from it.

RIP.

No; I don't touch another drop.

MEENIE.

Kneeling by the other side of Rip.

Oh, yes, you will, father. For see, here are all the neighbours come to welcome you home.

Gretchen offers Rip the cup.

RIP.

With all his old kindness and hospitality.

Well, bring in all the children, and the neighbours, and the dogs, and —

Seeing the cup which Gretchen is offering to him.

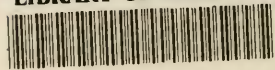
I swore off, you know. Well, I won't count this one; for this will go down with a prayer.

I will take my cup and pipe, and tell my strange story to all my friends. Here is my child Meenie, and my wife Gretchen, and my boy Hendrick. I'll drink all your good health, and I'll drink your good health, and your families', and may they all live long and prosper!

[CURTAIN.]

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