

TOLBERT'S ROOST  
AND OTHER PAPERS,

Now first Collected

BY  
WASHINGTON IRVING.

AUTHOR'S REVISED EDITION.

NEW YORK:  
G. P. PUTNAM; HURD AND HOUGHTON.  
CLEVELAND: INGHAM AND BRAGG.

1866.

TOLBERT'S ROOST  
AND OTHER PAPERS,

Now first Collected

BY  
WASHINGTON IRVING.

AUTHOR'S REVISED EDITION.

NEW YORK:  
G. P. PUTNAM; HURD AND HOUGHTON.  
CLEVELAND: INGHAM AND BRAGG.  
1866.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1865, by

GEORGE P. PUTNAM,

in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District  
of New York

RIVERSIDE, CAMBRIDGE:

STEREOTYPED AND PRINTED BY

H. O. HOUGHTON AND COMPANY.



## CONTENTS.

	PAGE
WOLFERT'S ROOST . . . . .	5
THE BIRDS OF SPRING . . . . .	30
THE CREOLE VILLAGE . . . . .	38
MOUNTJOY . . . . .	50
THE BERMUDAS . . . . .	109
The Three Kings of Bermuda . . . . .	119
THE WIDOW'S ORDEAL . . . . .	126
THE KNIGHT OF MALTA . . . . .	144
The Grand Prior of Minorca . . . . .	147
"A TIME OF UNEXAMPLED PROSPERITY" . . . . .	168
The Great Mississippi Bubble . . . . .	172
SKETCHES IN PARIS IN 1825. — The Parisian Hotel . . . . .	215
My French Neighbor . . . . .	219
The Englishman at Paris . . . . .	222
English and French Character . . . . .	226
The Tuileries and Windsor Castle . . . . .	230
The Field of Waterloo . . . . .	235
Paris at the Restoration . . . . .	238
A CONTENTED MAN . . . . .	245
BROEK: THE DUTCH PARADISE . . . . .	253
GUESTS FROM GIBBET ISLAND . . . . .	262
THE EARLY EXPERIENCES OF RALPH RINGWOOD . . . . .	279

	PAGE
THE SEMINOLES . . . . .	325
Origin of the White, the Red, and the Black Men	330
The Conspiracy of Neamathla . . . . .	333
THE COUNT VAN HORN . . . . .	343
DON JUAN: A SPECTRAL RESEARCH . . . . .	362
LEGEND OF THE ENGULPHED CONVENT . . . . .	376
THE PHANTOM ISLAND . . . . .	384
The Adalantado of the Seven Cities . . . . .	387
RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ALHAMBRA . . . . .	412
The Abencerrage . . . . .	416





## WOLFERT'S ROOST.

### CHRONICLE I.

**A**BOUT five-and-twenty miles from the ancient and renowned city of Manhattan, formerly called New Amsterdam, and vulgarly called New York, on the eastern bank of that expansion of the Hudson known among Dutch mariners of yore as the Tappan Zee, being in fact the great Mediterranean Sea of the New Netherlands, stands a little, old-fashioned stone mansion, all made up of gable ends, and as full of angles and corners as an old cocked hat. It is said, in fact, to have been modelled after the cocked hat of Peter the Headstrong, as the Escorial was modelled after the gridiron of the blessed St. Lawrence. Though but of small dimensions, yet, like many small people, it is of mighty spirit, and values itself greatly on its antiquity, being one of the oldest edifices, for its size, in the whole country. It claims to be an ancient seat of empire, — I may rather say an empire in itself, — and like all empires, great and small, has had its grand historical epochs. In speaking of this doughty and valorous little pile, I shall call it by its usual appellation of "The Roost";

though that is a name given to it in modern days, since it became the abode of the white man.

Its origin, in truth, dates far back in that remote region commonly called the fabulous age, in which vulgar fact becomes mystified and tinted up with delectable fiction. The eastern shore of the Tappan Sea was inhabited in those days by an unsophisticated race, existing in all the simplicity of nature; that is to say, they lived by hunting and fishing, and recreated themselves occasionally with a little tomahawking and scalping. Each stream that flows down from the hills into the Hudson had its petty sachem, who ruled over a hand's-breadth of forest on either side, and had his seat of government at its mouth. The chieftain who ruled at the Roost was not merely a great warrior, but a medicine-man, or prophet, or conjurer, for they all mean the same thing in Indian parlance. Of his fighting propensities evidences still remain, in various arrow-heads of flint, and stone battle-axes, occasionally dug up about the Roost; of his wizard powers we have a token in a spring which wells up at the foot of the bank, on the very margin of the river, which, it is said, was gifted by him with rejuvenating powers, something like the renowned Fountain of Youth in the Floridas, so anxiously but vainly sought after by the veteran Ponce de Leon. This story, however, is stoutly contradicted by an old Dutch matter-of-fact tradition, which declares that the spring in question was smuggled over from Holland in a churn, by Femmetie Van Blarcom, wife of Goosen Garret Van Blarcom, one of the

first settlers, and that she took it up by night, unknown to her husband, from beside their farmhouse near Rotterdam; being sure she should find no water equal to it in the new country; — and she was right.

The wizard sachem had a great passion for discussing territorial questions, and settling boundary lines; in other words, he had the spirit of annexation. This kept him in continual feud with the neighboring sachems, each of whom stood up stoutly for his hand-breadth of territory; so that there is not a petty stream nor rugged hill in the neighborhood that has not been the subject of long talks and hard battles. The sachem, however, as has been observed, was a medicine-man as well as warrior, and vindicated his claims by arts as well as arms; so that, by dint of a little hard fighting here, and hocus-pocus (or diplomacy) there, he managed to extend his boundary line from field to field and stream to stream, until it brought him into collision with the powerful sachem of Sing-Sing.\* Many were the sharp conflicts between these rival chieftains for the sovereignty of a winding valley, a favorite hunting-ground watered by a beautiful stream called the Pocantico. Many were the ambuscades, surprisals, and deadly onslaughts that took place

\* A corruption of the old Indian name, O-sin-sing. Some have rendered it, O-sin-song, or O-sing-song, in token of its being a great market-town, where anything may be had for a mere song. Its present melodious alteration to Sing-Sing is said to have been made in compliment to a Yankee singing-master, who taught the inhabitants the art of singing through the nose.

among its fastnesses, of which it grieves me much that I cannot pursue the details, for the gratification of those gentle but bloody-minded readers, of both sexes, who delight in the romance of the tomahawk and scalping-knife. Suffice it to say, that the wizard chieftain was at length victorious, though his victory is attributed, in Indian tradition, to a great medicine, or charm, by which he laid the sachem of Sing-Sing and his warriors asleep among the rocks and recesses of the valley, where they remain asleep to the present day, with their bows and war-clubs beside them. This was the origin of that potent and drowsy spell, which still prevails over the valley of the Pocantico, and which has gained it the well-merited appellation of Sleepy Hollow. Often, in secluded and quiet parts of that valley, where the stream is overhung by dark woods and rocks, the ploughman, on some calm and sunny day, as he shouts to his oxen, is surprised at hearing faint shouts from the hill-sides in reply ; being, it is said, the spell-bound warriors, who half start from their rocky couches and grasp their weapons, but sink to sleep again.

The conquest of the Pocantico was the last triumph of the wizard sachem. Notwithstanding all his medicines and charms, he fell in battle, in attempting to extend his boundary line to the east, so as to take in the little wild valley of the Sprain ; and his grave is still shown, near the banks of that pastoral stream. He left, however, a great empire to his successors, extending along the Tappan Sea, from Yonkers quite to Sleepy

Hollow, and known in old records and maps by the Indian name of Wicquaes-Keck.

The wizard sachem was succeeded by a line of chiefs of whom nothing remarkable remains on record. One of them was the very individual on whom master Hendrick Hudson and his mate Robert Juet made that sage experiment gravely recorded by the latter, in the narrative of the discovery.

"Our master and his mate determined to try some of the cheefe men of the country, whether they had any treacherie in them. So they took them down into the cabin, and gave them so much wine and aqua vitæ, that they were all very merrie; one of them had his wife with him, which sate so modestly as any of our countrywomen would do in a strange place. In the end, one of them was drunke; and that was strange to them, for they could not tell how to take it."\*

How far master Hendrick Hudson and his worthy mate carried their experiment with the sachem's wife, is not recorded; neither does the curious Robert Juet make any mention of the after consequences of this grand moral test; tradition, however, affirms that the sachem, on landing, gave his modest spouse a hearty rib-roasting, according to the connubial discipline of the aboriginals; it farther affirms that he remained a hard drinker to the day of his death, trading away all his lands, acre by acre, for aqua vitæ; by which means the Roost and all its domains, from Yonkers to Sleepy Hollow, came, in the regular

\* See Juet's Journal, Purchas' Pilgrams.

course of trade, and by right of purchase, into the possession of the Dutchmen.

The worthy government of the New Netherlands was not suffered to enjoy this grand acquisition unmolested. In the year 1654, the losel Yankees of Connecticut, those swapping, bargaining, squatting enemies of the Manhattoes, made a daring inroad into this neighborhood, and founded a colony called Westchester, or, as the ancient Dutch records term it, Vest Dorp, in the right of one Thomas Pell, who pretended to have purchased the whole surrounding country of the Indians, and stood ready to argue their claims before any tribunal of Christendom.

This happened during the chivalrous reign of Peter Stuyvesant, and roused the ire of that gunpowder old hero. Without waiting to discuss claims and titles, he pounced at once upon the nest of nefarious squatters, carried off twenty-five of them in chains to the Manhattoes; nor did he stay his hand, nor give rest to his wooden leg, until he had driven the rest of the Yankees back into Connecticut, or obliged them to acknowledge allegiance to their High Mightinesses. In revenge, however, they introduced the plague of witchcraft into the province. This doleful malady broke out at Vest Dorp, and would have spread throughout the country had not the Dutch farmers nailed horse-shoes to the doors of their houses and barns, sure protections against witchcraft, many of which remain to the present day.

The seat of empire of the wizard sachem now came into the possession of Wolfert Acker, one

of the privy councillors of Peter Stuyvesant. He was a worthy, but ill-starred man, whose aim through life had been to live in peace and quiet. For this he had emigrated from Holland, driven abroad by family feuds and wrangling neighbors. He had warred for quiet through the fidgety reign of William the Testy, and the fighting reign of Peter the Headstrong, sharing in every brawl and rib-roasting, in his eagerness to keep the peace and promote public tranquillity. It was his doom, in fact, to meet a head-wind at every turn, and be kept in a constant fume and fret by the perverseness of mankind. Had he served on a modern jury, he would have been sure to have eleven unreasonable men opposed to him.

At the time when the province of the New Netherlands was wrested from the domination of their High Mightinesses by the combined forces of Old and New England, Wolfert retired in high dudgeon to this fastness in the wilderness, with the bitter determination to bury himself from the world, and live here for the rest of his days in peace and quiet. In token of that fixed purpose, he inscribed over his door (his teeth clinched at the time) his favorite Dutch motto, "Lust in Rust" (pleasure in quiet). The mansion was thence called Wolfert's Rust (Wolfert's Rest), but by the uneducated, who did not understand Dutch, Wolfert's Roost; probably from its quaint cockloft look, and from its having a weathercock perched on every gable.

Wolfert's luck followed him into retirement. He had shut himself up from the world, but he

had brought with him a wife, and it soon passed into a proverb throughout the neighborhood that the cock of the Roost was the most henpecked bird in the country. His house too was reputed to be harassed by Yankee witchcraft. When the weather was quiet everywhere else, the wind, it was said, would howl and whistle about the gables; witches and warlocks would whirl about upon the weathercocks, and scream down the chimneys; nay, it was even hinted that Wolfert's wife was in league with the enemy, and used to ride on a broomstick to a witches' sabbath in Sleepy Hollow. This, however, was all mere scandal, founded perhaps on her occasionally flourishing a broomstick in the course of a curtain lecture, or raising a storm within doors, as termagant wives are apt to do, and against which sorcery horse-shoes are of no avail.

Wolfert Acker died and was buried, but found no quiet even in the grave; for if popular gossip be true, his ghost has occasionally been seen walking by moonlight among the old gray moss-grown trees of his apple orchard.

---

## CHRONICLE II.

THE next period at which we find this venerable and eventful pile rising into importance, was during the dark and troublous time of the revolutionary war. It was the keep or stronghold of Jacob Van Tassel, a valiant Dutchman of the old

stock of Van Tassels, who abound in Westchester County. The name, as originally written, was Van Texel, being derived from the Texel in Holland, which gave birth to that heroic line.

The Roost stood in the very heart of what at that time was called the debatable ground, lying between the British and American lines. The British held possession of the city and island of New York ; while the Americans drew up towards the Highlands, holding their head-quarters at Peekskill. The intervening country from Croton River to Spiting Devil Creek was the debatable ground in question, liable to be harried by friend and foe, like the Scottish borders of yore.

It is a rugged region, full of fastnesses. A line of rocky hills extends through it like a backbone, sending out ribs on either side ; but these rude hills are for the most part richly wooded, and enclose little fresh pastoral valleys watered by the Neperan, the Pocantico,\* and other beautiful streams, along which the Indians built their wigwams in the olden time.

\* The Neperan, vulgarly called the Saw-Mill River, winds for many miles through a lovely valley, shrouded by groves, and dotted by Dutch farm-houses, and empties itself into the Hudson, at the ancient Dorp of Yonkers. The Pocantico, rising among woody hills, winds in many a wizard maze through the sequestered haunts of Sleepy Hollow. We owe it to the indefatigable researches of Mr. KNICKERBOCKER, that those beautiful streams are rescued from modern commonplace, and reinvested with their ancient Indian names. The correctness of the venerable historian may be ascertained by reference to the records of the original Indian grants to the Herr Frederick Philipsen, preserved in the county clerk's office at White Plains.

In the fastnesses of these hills, and along these valleys, existed, in the time of which I am treating, and indeed exist to the present day, a race of hard-headed, hard-handed, stout-hearted yeomen, descendants of the primitive *Nederlanders*. Men obstinately attached to the soil, and neither to be fought nor bought out of their paternal acres. Most of them were strong Whigs throughout the war; some, however, were Tories, or adherents to the old kingly rule, who considered the revolution a mere rebellion, soon to be put down by his majesty's forces. A number of these took refuge within the British lines, joined the military bands of refugees, and became pioneers or leaders to foraging parties sent out from New York to scour the country and sweep off supplies for the British army.

In a little while the debatable ground became infested by roving bands, claiming from either side, and all pretending to redress wrongs and punish political offences; but all prone in the exercise of their high functions — to sack hen-roosts, drive off cattle, and lay farm-houses under contribution; such was the origin of two great orders of border chivalry, the *Skinners* and the *Cow Boys*, famous in revolutionary story: the former fought, or rather marauded, under the American, the latter, under the British banner. In the zeal of service, both were apt to make blunders, and confound the property of friend and foe. Neither of them in the heat and hurry of a foray had time to ascertain the politics of a horse or cow, which they were driving off into captivity;

nor, when they wrung the neck of a rooster, did they trouble their heads whether he crowed for Congress or King George.

To check these enormities, a confederacy was formed among the yeomanry who had suffered from these maraudings. It was composed for the most part of farmers' sons, bold, hard-riding lads, well armed, and well mounted, and undertook to clear the country round of Skinner and Cow Boy, and all other border vermin; as the Holy Brotherhood in old times cleared Spain of the banditti which infested her highways.

Wolfert's Roost was one of the rallying places of this confederacy, and Jacob Van Tassel one of its members. He was eminently fitted for the service; stout of frame, bold of heart, and like his predecessor, the warrior sachem of yore, delighting in daring enterprises. He had an Indian's sagacity in discovering when the enemy was on the maraud, and in hearing the distant tramp of cattle. It seemed as if he had a scout on every hill, and an ear as quick as that of Fine Ear in the fairy tale.

The foraging parties of Tories and refugees had now to be secret and sudden in their forays into Westchester County; to make a hasty maraud among the farms, sweep the cattle into a drove, and hurry down to the lines along the river road, or the valley of the Neperan. Before they were half-way down, Jacob Van Tassel, with the holy brotherhood of Tarrytown, Petticoat Lane, and Sleepy Hollow, would be clattering at their heels. And now there would be a general scamper for

King's Bridge, the pass over Spiting Devil Creek, into the British lines. Sometimes the moss-troopers would be overtaken, and eased of part of their booty. Sometimes the whole cavalgada would urge its headlong course across the bridge with thundering tramp and dusty whirlwind. At such times their pursuers would rein up their steeds, survey that perilous pass with wary eye, and, wheeling about, indemnify themselves by foraging the refugee region of Morrisania.

While the debatable land was liable to be thus harried, the great Tappan Sea, along which it extends, was likewise domineered over by the foe. British ships of war were anchored here and there in the wide expanses of the river, mere floating castles to hold it in subjection. Stout galleys armed with eighteen pounders, and navigated with sails and oars, cruised about like hawks, while row-boats made descents upon the land, and foraged the country along shore.

It was a sore grievance to the yeomanry along the Tappan Sea to behold that little Mediterranean ploughed by hostile prows, and the noble river of which they were so proud reduced to a state of thralldom. Councils of war were held by captains of market-boats and other river-craft, to devise ways and means of dislodging the enemy. Here and there on a point of land extending into the Tappan Sea, a mud work would be thrown up, and an old field-piece mounted, with which a knot of rustic artillerymen would fire away for a long summer's day at some frigate dozing at anchor far out of reach; and reliques