

RIP VAN WINKLE

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RIP VAN WINKLE

¹Whoever has made a voyage up the Hudson must remember ²the Catskill Mountains. They are a dismembered ³branch of the great Appalachian family, and are seen ⁴away to the west of the river, swelling up to a noble ⁵height, and lording it over the surrounding country. Every ⁶change of season, every change of weather, indeed, every hour of the ⁷day, produces some change in the magical hues and ⁸shapes of these mountains, and they are regarded by all the ⁹good wives, far and near, as perfect barometers. ¹⁰When the weather is fair and settled, they are clothed ¹¹in blue and purple, and print their bold ¹²outlines on the clear evening sky; but sometimes,

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¹when the rest of the landscape is cloudless, they will
²gather a hood of gray vapors about their ³summits,
 which, in the last rays of the setting sun, ⁴will glow
 and light up like a crown ⁵of glory.

At the foot of these fairy mountains ⁶the voyager may
 have descried the light smoke ⁷curling up from a village
 whose shingle roofs ⁸gleam among the trees, just where
 the blue ⁹tints of the upland melt away into the fresh
¹⁰green of the nearer landscape. It is a little ¹¹village
 of great antiquity, having been founded by some of the
¹²Dutch colonists, in the early times of the province,
 just ¹³about the beginning of the government of the
 good Peter Stuyvesant^a ¹⁴(may he rest in peace!), and
 there were some of the houses ¹⁵of the original settlers
 standing within a few years, built of ¹⁶small yellow
 bricks brought from Holland having

^aPeter Stuyvesant, one of the best known and most impor-
 tant governors of the New Netherlands, from 1647 to 1664 under
 the Dutch rule

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¹latticed windows, gable fronts surmounted with weathercocks.

In that same village, and in one of these ²very houses (which, to tell the precise truth, was sadly time-³worn and weather-beaten), there lived many years ⁴since, while the country was yet a province of Great Britain, ⁵a simple, good-natured fellow, of the name of Rip ⁶Van Winkle. He was a descendant of the Van Winkles ⁷who figured so gallantly in the chivalrous days of ⁸Peter Stuyvesant, and accompanied him to the siege of Fort Christina. ⁹He inherited, however, but little of the martial character of his ¹⁰ancestors. I have observed that he was a simple, good-natured ¹¹man; he was, moreover, a kind neighbor and an obedient, ¹²henpecked husband. Indeed, to the latter circumstance might be owing ¹³that meekness of spirit which gained him such universal ¹⁴popularity; for those men are most apt to be obsequious ¹⁵and conciliating abroad who are under the discipline of shrews at home.

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¹he went dodging about the village, he was surrounded by a ²troop of them, hanging on his skirts, clambering on his ³back, and playing a thousand tricks on him with impunity; ⁴and not a dog would bark at him throughout ⁵the neighborhood.

The great error in Rip's composition was an ⁶insuperable aversion to all kinds of profitable labor. It ⁷could not be from the want of assiduity or perseverance; for ⁸he would sit on a wet rock, with a rod ⁹as long and heavy as a Tartar's lance, and fish ¹⁰all day without a murmur, even though he should not be encouraged