WASHINGTON IRVING

THE JOURNALS

EXTENDED ANNOTATED EDITION

The Journals of Washington Irving

Contents:

The Journals of Washington Irving, W. Irving
Jazzybee Verlag Jürgen Beck
86450 Altenmünster, Loschberg 9

Germany

ISBN: 9783849642235

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Washington Irving – A Biographical Primer

Washington Irving (1783-1859), American man of letters, was born at New York on the 3rd of April 1783. Both his parents were immigrants from Great Britain, his father, originally an officer in the merchant service, but at the time of Irving's birth a considerable merchant, having come from the Orkneys, and his mother from Falmouth. Irving was intended for the legal profession, but his studies were interrupted by an illness necessitating a voyage to Europe, in the course of which he proceeded as far as Rome, and made the acquaintance of Washington Allston. He was called to the bar upon his return, but made little effort to practice, preferring to amuse himself with literary ventures. The first of these of any importance, a satirical miscellany entitled *Salmagundi, or the Whim-Whams and Opinions of Launcelot Langstaff and others*, written in conjunction with his brother William and J. K. Paulding, gave ample proof of his talents as a humorist. These were still more conspicuously displayed in his next attempt, *A History of New York from the Beginning of the World to the End of the Dutch Dynasty*, by “Diedrich Knickerbocker” (2 vols., New York, 1809). The satire of *Salmagundi* had been principally local, and the original design of

“Knickerbocker's” History was only to burlesque a pretentious disquisition on the history of the city in a guidebook by Dr Samuel Mitchell. The idea expanded as Irving proceeded, and he ended by not merely satirizing the pedantry of local antiquaries, but by creating a distinct literary type out of the solid Dutch burgher whose phlegm had long been an object of ridicule to the mercurial Americans. Though far from the most finished of Irving's productions, “Knickerbocker” manifests the most original power, and is the most genuinely national in its quaintness and drollery. The very tardiness and prolixity of the story are skillfully made to heighten the humorous effect.

Upon the death of his father, Irving had become a sleeping partner in his brother's commercial house, a branch of which was established at Liverpool. This, combined with the restoration of peace, induced him to visit England in 1815, when he found the stability of the firm seriously compromised. After some years of ineffectual struggle it became bankrupt. This misfortune compelled Irving to resume his pen as a means of subsistence. His reputation had preceded him to England, and the curiosity naturally excited by the then unwonted apparition of a successful American author procured him admission into the highest literary circles, where his popularity was ensured by his amiable temper and polished manners. As an American, moreover, he stood aloof from the political and literary disputes which then divided England. Campbell, Jeffrey, Moore, Scott, were counted among his friends, and the last-named zealously recommended him to the publisher Murray, who, after at first refusing, consented (1820) to bring out *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* (7 pts., New York, 1819-1820). The most interesting part of this work is the description of an English Christmas, which displays a delicate humor not unworthy of the writer's evident model Addison. Some stories and sketches on

American themes contribute to give it variety; of these Rip van Winkle is the most remarkable. It speedily obtained the greatest success on both sides of the Atlantic. *Bracebridge Hall, or the Humourists* (2 vols., New York), a work purely English in subject, followed in 1822, and showed to what account the American observer had turned his experience of English country life. The humor is, nevertheless, much more English than American. *Tales of a Traveller* (4 pts.) appeared in 1824 at Philadelphia, and Irving, now in comfortable circumstances, determined to enlarge his sphere of observation by a journey on the continent. After a long course of travel he settled down at Madrid in the house of the American consul Rich. His intention at the time was to translate the *Coleccion de los Viajes y Descubrimientos* (Madrid, 1825-1837) of Martin Fernandez de Navarrete; finding, however, that this was rather a collection of valuable materials than a systematic biography, he determined to compose a biography of his own by its assistance, supplemented by independent researches in the Spanish archives. His *History of the Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus* (London, 4 vols.) appeared in 1828, and obtained a merited success. *The Voyages and Discoveries of the Companions of Columbus* (Philadelphia, 1831) followed; and a prolonged residence in the south of Spain gave Irving materials for two highly picturesque books, *A Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada from the MSS. of* [an imaginary] *Fray Antonio Agapida* (2 vols., Philadelphia, 1829), and *The Alhambra: a series of tales and sketches of the Moors and Spaniards* (2 vols., Philadelphia, 1832). Previous to their appearance he had been appointed secretary to the embassy at London, an office as purely complimentary to his literary ability as the legal degree which he about the same time received from the university of Oxford.

Returning to the United States in 1832, after seventeen years' absence, he found his name a household word, and himself universally honored as the first American who had won for his country recognition on equal terms in the literary republic. After the rush of fêtes and public compliments had subsided, he undertook a tour in the western prairies, and returning to the neighborhood of New York built for himself a delightful retreat on the Hudson, to which he gave the name of “Sunnyside.” His acquaintance with the New York millionaire John Jacob Astor prompted his next important work — *Astoria* (2 vols., Philadelphia, 1836), a history of the fur-trading settlement founded by Astor in Oregon, deduced with singular literary ability from dry commercial records, and, without labored attempts at word-painting, evincing a remarkable faculty for bringing scenes and incidents vividly before the eye. *The Adventures of Captain Bonneville* (London and Philadelphia, 1837), based upon the unpublished memoirs of a veteran explorer, was another work of the same class. In 1842 Irving was appointed ambassador to Spain. He spent four years in the country, without this time turning his residence to literary account; and it was not until two years after his return that Forster's life of Goldsmith, by reminding him of a slight essay of his own which he now thought too imperfect by comparison to be included among his collected writings, stimulated him to the production of his *Life of Oliver Goldsmith, with Selections from his Writings* (2 vols., New York, 1849). Without pretensions to original research, the book displays an admirable talent for employing existing material to the best effect. The same may be said of *The Lives of Mahomet and his Successors* (New York, 2 vols., 1840-1850). Here as elsewhere Irving correctly discriminated the biographer's province from the historian's, and leaving the philosophical investigation of cause and effect to writers of Gibbon's caliber, applied himself to represent the picturesque features of the age as

embodied in the actions and utterances of its most characteristic representatives. His last days were devoted to his *Life of George Washington* (5 vols., 1855-1859, New York and London), undertaken in an enthusiastic spirit, but which the author found exhausting and his readers tame. His genius required a more poetical theme, and indeed the biographer of Washington must be at least a potential soldier and statesman. Irving just lived to complete this work, dying of heart disease at Sunnyside, on the 28th of November 1859.

Although one of the chief ornaments of American literature, Irving is not characteristically American. But he is one of the few authors of his period who really manifest traces of a vein of national peculiarity which might under other circumstances have been productive. “Knickerbocker's” *History of New York*, although the air of mock solemnity which constitutes the staple of its humor is peculiar to no literature, manifests nevertheless a power of reproducing a distinct national type. Had circumstances taken Irving to the West, and placed him amid a society teeming with quaint and genial eccentricity, he might possibly have been the first Western humorist, and his humor might have gained in depth and richness. In England, on the other hand, everything encouraged his natural fastidiousness; he became a refined writer, but by no means a robust one. His biographies bear the stamp of genuine artistic intelligence, equally remote from compilation and disquisition. In execution they are almost faultless; the narrative is easy, the style pellucid, and the writer's judgment nearly always in accordance with the general verdict of history. Without ostentation or affectation, he was exquisite in all things, a mirror of loyalty, courtesy and good taste in all his literary connexions, and exemplary in all the relations of domestic life. He never married, remaining true to the memory of an early attachment blighted by death.

The principal edition of Irving' s works is the “Geoffrey Crayon,” published at New York in 1880 in 26 vols. His *Life and Letters* was published by his nephew Pierre M. Irving (London, 1862-1864, 4 vols.; German abridgment by Adolf Laun, Berlin, 1870, 2 vols.) There is a good deal of miscellaneous information in a compilation entitled *Irvingiana* (New York, 1860); and W. C. Bryant's memorial oration, though somewhat too uniformly laudatory, may be consulted with advantage. It was republished in *Studies of Irvine* (1880) along with C. Dudley Warner's introduction to the “Geoffrey Crayon” edition, and Mr. G. P. Putnam's personal reminiscences of Irving, which originally appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*. See also *Washington Irving* (1881), by C. D. Warner, in the “American Men of Letters” series; H. R. Haweis, *American Humourists* (London, 1883).

THE TOUR IN WALES 1815

July 31st, 1815.--Left Birmingham at ten o'clock in post-chaise with Renwick. [1] Weather uncommonly beautiful. After six miles ride thro' picturesque country, alight and visit the Leasowes [2]--formerly the ferme orné[e] of Shenstone. The walks have been well laid out to produce scenic effect without encroaching on the grounds. The ornaments (such as grottoes, urns, etc.) are paltry and injure the whole.

[Note 1: 1 Irving's travelling companion on this journey was James Renwick (1790--1863), a graduate of Columbia College, afterwards for many years professor of natural philosophy and chemistry in that institution. He wrote numerous scientific treatises and text-books as well as biographies.]

[Note 2: 2 This estate and Hagley, mentioned six lines below, were two of the most famous show-places in England during the eighteenth century. The first was laid out by the poet, William Shenstone (1714--1763); the second is perhaps chiefly associated with the name of "the

good Lord Lyttelton," George, the first baron (1709--1773), a liberal patron of literature and a writer of some consequence in his day. The Lord Lyttelton of the text (Lyttleton in Irving's spelling) is George Fulke Lyttelton, second Baron Lyttelton of Frankley of the second creation.]

From hence to Hagley, six miles. Visit the noble seat of Lord Lyttelton. The house large and imposing, but heavy. Fine herds of deer--large obelisk, temples, etc. Fine lawns, forest trees, etc.

Take a luncheon in the garden of the Inn, which was full of company.

Hence to Kidderminster. Fine old church on elevated ground commanding fine view of distant country. Lion Inn, where we had fine bottle of Perry. [1]

[Note 1: 1 A drink made from pears, as cider is from apples.]

Hence to Worcester, where we arrive before sundown.

Cathedral interior very fine by sunset. Old sexton gives me much account of tombs.

August 1st.--In morning, visit china works.

Hoppole Inn at Worcester. Parlour on ground floor--rooms third story.

Leave Worcester at one o'clock--ride to Tewkesbury.

From Tewkesbury to Cheltenham. Put up at Plough Inn--not very good--walk in the grounds. In evening see "The Will"--

Mrs. Edwin [2] played Miss Mandeville.

[Note 2: 2 This favourite actress was Eliza Rebecca Richards (1771?--1854), daughter of one actor and wife of another--John Edwin the younger. Albina Mandeville, in Frederic Reynolds' "The Will," was one of her most noted parts. For the once popular play, see Genest, under Drury Lane, April 19, 1797.]

August 2d.--From Cheltenham to Gloucester, ten miles. Cathedral a fine building--Saxon, with Gothic additions. Clambered up to the tower which commands a noble view of the valley in which Gloucester stands--rich and fertile, bordered by picturesque hills, with Severn winding thro'--old sexton locked me up in the tower while he accompanied other visitors round the church--fearful I might give him the slip. Service performing in the Cathedral and listened to the organ and the choir, resounding thro' the vaulted roofs.

Old sexton who shews the church--by the name of Deane--a humourist--has shewn it to the King [3] of England and France and prides himself on it--wears a foxy wig and black robe--has many odd stories and regular jokes--King of England abused a new altar-piece put up in the chapel and shewed great judgment in finding fault with all the innovations in the building.

[Note 3: 3 If the plural is meant, and if the old sexton was accurate, the royal visitors were George III and Louis XVIII of France, while the latter was in exile in England.]

Tomb of Edward II is in body of the church--also of Robert of Normandy, son of Wm. ye Conqueror. His figure in coat of mail with face painted like life--all of a single piece of oak--countenance fine.

Crypt of the Abbey--fine vaults--Saxon style. Shewn a place where two Bishops were immured, chained to the wall and starved to death.

From Gloucester the road lay thro' a finely wooded and romantic country. Stopped at the ruins of an old Abbey called Painswick, where we took sketches. From there thro' various villages, among the number Stroud--villages very old Gothic and picturesque--pass canal, manufactures, etc., to Radborough, where we take a luncheon at Fleece Hotel, situated in a valley with rich wooded country in front.

This valley thro' which the Stroud water runs presents the most peculiar and most beautiful scene I have seen in England. The valley is full of hamlets and edifices of the cloth manufacturers--buildings are principally Gothic and give an antique air to the landscape.

After passing thro' this valley we ascended high hills and continued riding along a ridge of heights--the country on these heights very bare--roads bordered by stone walls. Fine sunset. Sky coloured as in America. Descend the heights into the valley where Bath is situated and arrive at the York House about half-past eight.

August 3d and part of 4th.--Remained at Bath and walked thro' the principal streets. Visited a collection of Roman antiquities found at Bath and environs.

Evening--Spectacle--slack and tight rope and melodrama, "Tyger Horde."

Avon Street inhabited by sweeps and trulls--sweep advertises that he "understands the smoke Jack." [1]

[Note 1: 1 "A machine for turning a roasting-spit by means of a fly-wheel or wheels, set in motion by the current of ascending air in a chimney."--The Century Dictionary.]

Leave Bath August 4th in the afternoon for Bristol--ride thro' a beautiful hilly country--distance fourteen m[iles]. The view down the valley towards Bath very fine--country well cultivated but soil poor--chalky. Arrive at Bristol between five and six. Beautiful view of Bristol as you approach it. Put up at The Bush--a vile, dirty inn, tho' highly recommended. Visit the Church of St. Mary's Redcliff[e] and see the room where Chatterton pretended to have found his papers.

August 5th.--Stroll about Bristol through the morning--town has some handsome squares, Queen's, Portland, etc. Many of the streets extremely old in style of architecture. Leave Bristol at twelve. Distance to New Passage nine and three-quarters miles, but in posting charged us twelve. Arrived just in time to cross with the mail. It requires a particular time of tide to pass here--tide rises and falls from thirty to forty feet--distance across three miles. Cross in about half an hour. Dined at the opposite ferry on excellent salmon. Quarrel and fight in kitchen between two ragged and drunken Irishmen who afterwards have a whimsical reconciliation and cannot recollect what they quarrelled about.

The ride hence to Chepstow is hilly, but the views beautiful. The country is wild and picturesque, and you have occasional views of the Severn.

At Chepstow put up at the George. A decent old landlady and plain but comfortable Inn. Visit the ruins of Chepstow Castle at sunset--they are extremely picturesque--built on

precipices that overhang the river Wye which makes fine bends and sweeps just here. The Castle was shewn us by an old woman who has one or two of the old towers fitted up for her residence. She has lived here twenty years--has buried her husband and three daughters and has six grandchildren living with her--has gardens and wall front in the courts of the Castle. Village boys plunder her orchard. Pays the Duke of Beaufort £6 rent. Says it is cold and dreary in winter when the wind howls through the old courts and among the towers. The roof and flooring in one of the towers (where Marten [1] was confined) once fell in about dusk, and the people of the village crowded to the Castle expecting to find the old lady buried under the ruins.

[Note 1: 1 Henry or Harry Marten (1602--1680), the regicide. He died in Chepstow Castle, the last of his several prisons after his conviction in 1660 for his share in the execution of Charles I.]

Her aunt lived ninety years--had been born in that tower.

Dungeon of the Castle a large vaulted room under the part she inhabited--windows opening on the river which rolls a great distance beneath--remains of grand chapel within the third court.

Sunday, 6th.--Rise early and visit the ruins of the Castle. After breakfast stroll around its environs--sea-gulls soaring around it and sweeping down to the river. A broad mass of light falling on the grey towers of the Castle--visit the interior of the Castle--sit on the grass in its large court-yard and listen to the distant bell of the village tolling for church. Walls of Castle overrun with ivy. Various birds have made their nests in the crevices of the towers and battlements and keep up a continuous twittering. Great

hammering at the great gate and at length it is thrown open and enter thro' the echoing barbican two jackasses.

Great walnut tree standing in the centre of the court.

Leave Chepstow about eleven and have a fine romantic ride to Tintern. Cross a high hill and descend thro' scenery similar to the Glens in the Hudson Highlands.

Tintern Abbey [1] beautifully situated in the valley on the banks of the Wye--fine stroll along the banks to the village--villagers winding along the bank going to church--sound of the bell down the valley--church a little white stone building on the green. Church and churchyard on the hill above Tintern Abbey, commanding a beautiful view of the valley.

[Note 1: 1 Here, and often, Irving makes no reference to a literary association which a modern diarist would almost be sure to mention. Wordsworth's poem, which has given these ruins most of their fame, was first published in 1798.]

Old Gothic church.

Dined at the Bramford Arms--a small indifferent tavern, the landlord of which shows the Abbey. Had excellent salmon for dinner taken from the Wye.

The road from this to Monmouth is extremely mountainous and so narrow (previous to entering the Turnpike) that two carriages could not pass each other in many places. Scenery very like America.

On reaching the Turnpike a vast and beautiful prospect breaks upon you of a large and fertile valley surrounded by

fine swelling mountains.

Reach Monmouth at sunset--a town beautifully situated in a valley with the Wye running through and the Monnow flowing by it--put up at Beaufort Arms--not very good--have difficulty in finding the ruins of Monmouth Castle, where Henry V was born--very few vestiges are left, consisting principally of a part of a tower where he was born and an adjoining hall.

Monday, 7th.--Leave Monmouth about ten o'clock. After passing thro' a beautiful fertile valley for some miles the road ascends a high hill, or rather mountain, from whence we have an extensive view of the valley with the windings of the Wye--not unlike the scenery of the Mohawk River.

The distance to Ross is fourteen miles--the valley in which it stands less beautiful than that of Monmouth. We are now in Herefordshire. The hills not so high or picturesque as those of Monmouthshire. Wilton Castle opposite to Ross--now in ruins--but the ruins picturesque--of brown freestone, like Newark stone--Ross an indifferent place but pleasantly situated--the Wye running close by it. Saw the walk of the famous Man of Ross. [1]

[Note 1: 1 This was John Kyrle (1637--1724), a philanthropist, made famous through the third of Pope's "Moral Essays." He lived a life of much simplicity, and, with a comparatively moderate surplus income, managed to do a great deal of good.]

Hence to Hereford--dine at City Arms, an excellent hotel--but as the house was full we were obliged to dine in coffee room. Large church with fine Gothic tower--curious fretwork to the angles of the tower.

From Hereford to Leominster--a very old town --houses of the old style--wood and plaster--curious wooden market-house with grotesque figures carved in oak.

Post from hence to Ludlow, where we arrive after dark and put up at Angel Inn--very good.

Tuesday morning, 8th.--Castle of Ludlow [1] a noble ruin--commands fine view of neighbouring country--the situation of the Castle and town on an eminence in the midst of the beautiful valley--the Teme flows close under the Castle.

Left Ludlow about eleven o'clock. Wretched posthorses--players had engaged all the good horses to take them to Worcester--change horses about seven and one-half miles and then have a very pleasant ride to Church Stretton. The road for some miles is thro' a narrow romantic valley with high hills, or rather mountains--some quite naked. In the vicinity of church is Caer Caradoc where Caractacus [2] made a stand. Hence to Shrewsbury--the country more open--hills less.

In the evening, ramble about Shrewsbury Castle courts and towers. At present fitted up as a modern mansion.

Wednesday, 9th.--From Shrewsbury to Ellesmere--sixteen miles thro' beautiful scenery. Ellesmere Lake a very commonplace sheet of water--fine view from the Bowling Green on a knoll where formerly the Castle stood. Beauty of Ellesmere--in cream-coloured house opposite the principal street by which you enter--a lovely girl about eighteen. The ride from hence to Wrexham is very fine. Dined at Wrexham, where we were waited on by landlady's

daughter, a very pretty girl. Wrexham Church and town remarkably fine.

[Note 1: 1 Here again we miss the natural reference to a notable literary event. Milton's "Comus" was acted in Ludlow Castle in 1634.]

[Note 2: 2 A British king, who resisted the Roman invaders, but was finally defeated, apparently near Shrewsbury, in A. D. 50, and was sent captive to Rome, where he died.]

Hence to Llangollen, a most picturesque ride. Stop at the Iron Aqueduct to examine that stupendous work--1,000 feet long--stone piers 125 feet. Put up at the Land, a very good inn. Strolled to the grounds of Lady Eleanor Butler. [1] Lady Slack-Jacket in her flimsy muslin pelisse. Arrived in coach and hovered about the door of Lady Butler. Returned bootless to the Inn. Old harper played while we supped--trout and grayling.

[Note 1: 1 A once famous recluse (1745--1829), whose eccentric costume is probably referred to below. For about fifty years she lived with a friend, Sarah Ponsonby, in great seclusion in a cottage in the vale of Llangollen. Tourists sought introduction to these "Ladies of the Vale," as they were called, and they figure in the pages of contemporary writers, e. g., Miss Seward and De Quincey.]

Thursday, August 10th.--Walk before breakfast to Crucis Abbey, two miles, and return by eight o'clock. Old Lady Slack-Jacket sponging for a breakfast.

Owen Glendower [2] owned this valley and adjacent country.

[Note 2: 2 The celebrated Welsh rebel (1359--1416), who rose against Henry IV. He is a character in the first of Shakespeare's two plays dealing with that monarch.]

N. B.--Breakfast at Llangollen where we had a fine grayling, only 2/ each. Paid harper 2/6. From Llangollen the road wound up a hill for some distance, commanding a fine view of the valley and Val[l]e Crucis, with the Abbey to the right. On the road passed on the right the place where Owen Glendower's Castle stood.

Change post-chaises at Corwen, a small village, in rear of which is a rocky height called Owen Glendower's Seat.

From Corwen to Carnagoge, on which ride we get among the mountains where the valley is destitute of trees, and marshy--postillion drives furiously--his half-starved horses seem possessed of true Welsh spirit--harper playing at Carnagoge--inn almost solitary.

From hence to Llanrwst--a wild and almost savage country--precipices and rocks. The scenery at Llanrwst in the highest degree picturesque--bridge by Inigo Jones. Market, or rather Fair Day, and the wretched little town of Llanrwst crowded with country people--harsh featured. Leave them and find the road full of peasantry, whose horses prance and play the devil as we drive past them. After a most romantic ride arrive in evening at Conway and put up at the Harp.

Conway Castle. Immense strength--a sublime ruin--the tide being low we were enabled to stroll on the beach below it. Owls and bats alarmed by our intrusion and fluttering about the towers. The walls are many feet thick--one of the towers having been undermined by the people digging for slate has given way and large masses of it have tumbled to

the shore. The rest hangs threatening from above. The huge masses on the shore shew the prodigious thickness of the walls.

The scenery in North Wales is not so luxuriantly beautiful as the scenery in Monmouthshire, but much more grand and sublime. Mountains rocky, huge and precipitous. The valleys are however rich and fertile.

Friday, 11th.--Leave Conway eleven o'clock. After rising a road winding up a mountain descend a deep valley in sight of Penmanmaur [1] --then wind round the foot of that mountain--road cut along its profile like a shelf--steep precipices above and below with sheep feeding. (View of Anglesea, Atlantic Sea and Bangor Sea). After leaving Penmanmaur road lay thro'a beautiful country along the shore. Stop at Aber, a small village along beautiful and romantic valley. See the Miod (or Mood) whereon stood the Castle of Llewellyn [2] ab Gryffield. Interesting story of him and William De Braose and Llewellyn's wife, Joan Plantagenet, daughter of King John. Saw the place where De Braose was hanged.

[Note 1: 1 The accepted spelling is Penmaenmawr. So below, Anglesey for Anglesea.]

[Note 2: 2 Irving seems to have confused Llywelyn ab Gruffydd, prince of Wales, who died in 1282, with his grandfather Llywelyn ab Iorweth, Llywelyn the Great, who died in 1240. It was the latter who married King John's illegitimate daughter, Joan, and caused her paramour, William de Braose, to be hanged openly at Crokeen on May 2, 1230.]

From hence along a wild and picturesque coast to Bangor--a finely situated little city (more like a village). Walk in a fine public promenade thro' the Bishop's Grounds. Dined at Bangor in company with the Master [3] of Rugby School and a wild Cornish miner who happened to be at the hotel. Cornishman's question to servant girl--"Have you never a garden here?"--(alluding to the scantiness of vegetables on the table). Thinks we should find the mines in Anglesea very picturesque. On paying the bill, 17/4, schoolmaster calculates four times four are sixteen and four sixpence--eighteen, but to his dismay Cornishman says five shillings apiece--that will leave something for the waiter. Cornishman takes our chaise back and treats old man to a ride by way of company.

[Note 3: 3 If "the Master" means headmaster, this was the Rev. Dr. John Wooll (1767--1833), a successful educator and the biographer of Joseph Warton.]

Rugby thinks he must be rich, he's so independent--the secret is I suspect, from his talk, he is on the expense of others, going to arrest some person at Conway.

Stopped at Bangor at the Mitre--but were not much pleased.

From hence to Carnarvon--nothing remarkable. Arrived before sunset and visited the old Castle--very extensive but by no means so sublime and picturesque as Conway. Put up at Hotel--a large building but poor attendance--all women--house crowded because last of the Assizes--and so much taken up with a larger dinner party that we could scarcely be attended to.

Saturday, 12th.--No post-chaise to be had in Carnarvon--all engaged taking home people from the Assizes. Procure a gig in the Goat Inn and a boy to precede us on foot and bring the gig back. Fare for gig half a guinea. The lad who was to bring the gig back a complete picture--hump-back and distorted in body--short legged--knock-kneed--small grey eyes sunk in his head and crossing each other at right angles. I could scarcely believe that this apparently crippled being could walk the distance, but on asking him, he returned the usual Welsh answer, "Yes, sure," observing that we had a rough, mountainous road which he could tread as fast as a horse. I afterwards was hailed in the street and on looking round saw our avant-courrier. He had been home--arrayed himself in best blue coat with the skirts to his heels, a pair of blue and white clouded cotton stockings, and with huge shoes was shambling off on his expedition as lively as a true Taffy.

Welsh women--costume white cap frilled around the face--coloured silk handk[erchie]f over it--tied under chin with corner hanging on shoulders--black man's hat over all--and a long blue cloth cloak with bord[er] of satin.

Dirty gentleman in market-place, Carnarvon, with old grey hat furbished up and twisted on one side--immense dirty neckcloth--thread-bare black coat--clouded stockings--pantaloons, etc.--black gaiters--with sprightly consequential look, pricing vegetables of market-women to make his dinner of.

Market Day at Carnarvon--the peasantry flock in from all quarters with cattle and hogs--the latter are harnessed in a kind of leading strings, though some will neither be led nor driven and several whimsical scenes occur, where a whole family, men, women and children, is engaged coaxing and banging some refractory hog that will go any way but

forward--now and then a hog that had broken loose with a fiery little Welshman pursuing him threw the whole market in a hubbub.

About eleven o'clock the gig was brought to the door and our baggage piled in and tied with ropes. Our steed was a stout, venerable cart-horse. Off we set in solemn state accompanied by two or three tatterdemalions to set the animal going--but there was no getting him off a laborious walk as tho' he had the loaded cart at his heels. Having flogged him half thro' the little town of Carnarvon we relinquished the attempt to get to Carnarvon this way--and ordered the gig back to the hotel.

After dinner we were at length furnished with a post-chaise and set off for Beddgelert. The road lay up among the mountains, which were here bare, sterile and savage, but highly grand and imposing.

After a few miles we came to a little valley among the mountains with a small but silvery lake in it--Snowdon on the left, his summit wrapped in clouds--on the right is a mountain called Castel Cidwin with the rocky cliff overhanging the lake on which the castle stood that anciently defended the pass. This lake is called Llyn Cywellyn. [1] After riding some miles through the wildest and most romantic scenery arrive at Beddgelert--a small village, consisting of a few scattered houses situated in a beautiful green meadow and surrounded by vast rocky mountains where the little rivers Glaslyn and Colwyn mingle and pour out their pure waters. This place is called Beddacleff or Bethkellert (i. e., the tomb of the greyhound) from the story of Llewellyn and his favourite dog, Cilian, [2] which he killed in passion and error and buried here, where since a church has been erected. The New Inn is a very neat and a very

handsome establishment but was crowded with company so that we could not get admittance--old harper playing in the hall of the inn. At the old inn we applied--house had a most unpromising appearance, but we were very comfortably accommodated with two bedrooms and a sitting-room. Oak chairs--tables well polished--had fine trout for supper and fared extremely well.

[Note 1: 1 Apparently Llyn Cuellyn, the mountain named above being probably the precipitous Craig Cwm Bychan.]

[Note 2: 2 The name of the famous hound of Llywelyn the Great usually appears as Gelert (cf. the name of the beautiful Welsh village, Beddgelert--the grave of Gelert). The story of how Llywelyn killed his dog thinking that his own infant had been killed by the faithful animal who had really preserved the child from a wolf is pleasantly told in William Robert Spencer's poem, "Beth-Gelert, or the Grave of the Greyhound."]

Sunday, 13th.--Leave Beddgelert at half-past nine for Capel Curig. Road lies thro' valleys destitute of trees and surrounded by high mountains--Snowdon on left--lakes. Pass thro' valley where Vortigern [1] retired and where Madoc [2] resided previous to his sailing to discover America. Goats on precipices--loud shouts echoing from opposite mountain. Arrive at Capel Curig, where is a fine hotel--beautiful little lake and noble prospect of Snowdon. The hotel is built of slate--sides and roof--and commands a fine view up and down the valley. From hence ride thro' a continuation of wild mountain scenery until we come out upon the valley of the Conway and arrive at Llanrwst. Visit the old church w[h]ere are several curious brass plates finely engraved with likenesses and monumental inscriptions of the Wynne family--also ceiling and gallery of

oak finely carved from the old Abbey at Conway--but most interesting curiosity is the stone coffin of Llewellyn from Abbey Conway.

[Note 1: 1 The British prince (circa 450 A. D.) who called in the Saxons against the northern tribes. In tradition, he is the traitor who betrayed his country for love of the beautiful Rowena.]

[Note 2: 2 The hero of Southey's poem, the supposed Welsh discoverer of America. His period is 1150--1180, but his existence is very shadowy, and his disappearance with his fleet of ten ships is first mentioned in a poem of the fifteenth century.]

From hence have a tedious and uninteresting ride up the mountainous road of Cernogy. [3] On the way meet Mr. Townsend [4] and his brother making a picturesque tour on foot. Dined at Cernogy and not being able to procure beds there, the house being filled with shooting parties (grouse season) we take chaise for Ruthin. Road for some time thro' desolate country--blasted heath on top of the mountains -- clouds lowering around us. Afterwards rapid descent--boy drives furiously, being anxious to get in before dark. The twilight prevents our having anything more than dim views of rich valleys and embowered gulfs into which we seemed to be hurried down. Thus whirled along one moment, and dozing with fatigue and exhaustion the next, we are rattled after dark into Ruthin.

[Note 3: 3 So in the original, but the place has not been identified.]

[Note 4: 4 Presumably the Mr. Townshend referred to in Irving's letter (Edinburgh, August 27,1817) to his brother,

Peter, at Liverpool. "Oh, for a little of Townshend ubiquity I made two or three rambles with him in London I feel really sorry he is going to India, for he is truly a worthy good fellow "]

Monday, 14th.--Visit the ruins of Ruthin Castle, which are very scanty--built of brown freestone--one of the courts turned into a bowling green. This was the residence of the Lord of Ruthin, who was the antagonist of Owen Glendower and whose lawsuit first occasioned Glendower's opposition to the Crown. Glendower took him prisoner and compelled him to marry his daughter. Hotel at Ruthin--the White Lion--so-so.

The ride from hence to Denbigh thro' a rich, broad and beautiful valley--the upper part particularly so--where the surrounding mountains are uncommonly fine in their outlines and tinted with the blossoms of the furze, heather, etc.

Denbigh has a picturesque situation on the side of a hill. The Castle is an utter ruin, but the gateway I think on the whole the most beautiful piece of ruin I have ever seen--the posts are rich and the tracing exquisite. From hence we crossed the Vale of Clwyd and passed thro' a succession of small beautiful valleys until we came to the village of Mold--where stood a castle which formerly withstood a siege which Welsh bards extol as equal to the siege of Troy.

After leaving this we rode for some miles and came out on the rich plains of Cheshire. About five o'clock arrived at Chester.

FRANCE 1820

[*The first jottings in this note-book preceded Irving's arrival at Havre* via *Southampton.*]

Winchester--on river Itchen--six parish churches.

Cathedral in which are interred several Saxon kings and queens in six small gilded coffins in the wall and side of the choir.

Marble coffin of William Rufus.

William of Wykeham.[1]

[Note 1: 1 This incumbent of the see from 1366 to 1404, who was also famous as a statesman, transformed the larger portion of the long nave of the cathedral. Irving mentions most of the names of the worthies associated with the great edifice except that of Jane Austen, who had been buried in it about three years before. Many of those named had been Bishops of Winchester, *e. g.*, St. Swithin, or Swithun (d. 862), Cardinal Beaufort (d. 1447), the completer of the building, and Bishop Benjamin Hoadly (1676--1761), the noted controversialist, who held successively the sees of Bangor, Hereford, Salisbury, and Winchester.]

Cardinal Beaufort.

Bishop Hoadly.

Queen Boadicea and Alfred the Great.

Isaak Walton.

On an eminence a shell of a palace built for Charles II.

St. Mary's College founded by William of Wykeham.

Henry IV married Joan of Navarre here.

Philip of Spain espoused Mary.

St. Swithin buried here.

[*The next three pages have jottings again referring to Winchester, as follows:*]

Crusades de Foi.

Ghastly effigies of Bishop Fox and Bishop Gardiner.

Bishops in reign of Mary.

William Rufus in choir--plain stone coffin.

Isaak Walton.

Prior Sil[k]sted[e][1]--a plain black stone.

[Note 1: 1 Prior Silkstede gave the cathedral its pulpit in 1498.]

St. Swithin.

William of Wykeham in a beautiful chapel or chantry--had it done ten years before his death and so had benefit.

View down Cathedral 554 feet.

Round table ag[ain]st wall.

Small Gothic windows above.

[*Here Irving has made a sketch of Arthur's Round Table, indicating by their names where Mordred and "Sir L. Du Lac"--Sir Launcelot of the Lake--were supposed to have had their places.*]

Red and white room in centre.

Below, the County Court.

King Arthur--pleasant face--grey beard--ermine robes--sword and globe--g[rea]t Gothic hall formerly a chapel.

Hall silent.

Grand jury--Ladies' seats--stone pavements and pillars--place for chafing dish of charcoal.

From Hall look down on Winchester.

Old gate-way--rich bosom of valley--naked hills.

Look down main street--gateway at top--cross at bottom--Cathedral away to the west.

From Winchester to Southampton. After leaving Winchester we see to the right the College, a monastic building with large church--fine trees about it.

Soft beautiful valley, with the Itchen wandering thro' it--naked hills around.

Beautiful view as we approach Southampton--the Itchen--with coast beyond--Southampton water, etc.

New Forest, where King Rufus was killed.

Southampton--pleasant seats with gateways as we approach.

Gateway with Sir Bevis[1] on one side.

[Note 1: 1 The paintings of this hero of romance and of the giant he overcame are now in the Guildhall.]

Remains of castle--fine mall and walk along the meadows near the shore--streets with old houses with projecting bow windows like noses.

This day we passed Hounslow and Bagshot Heath[2]--the latter with much of Hampshire looks like Scotland.

[Note 2: 2 Famous through the exploits of highwaymen.]

Southampton--where Canute commanded the sea to stand still.

Evening starlight--sounds along shore.

August 18th.--Morning--voyage to Netley Abbey, [3] with little lass from the inn--Abbey beautifully situated in woods--fine trees grown up in the court--masses of stone covered with herbage.

[Note 3: 3 A Cistercian monastery dating from the thirteenth century.]

From Southampton--pass Isle of Wight, Cowes and Cowes Castle, Portsmouth, and Spithead with frigates at anchor--

sun sets behind Isle of Wight.

Splendid evening--silvery moonlight trembling over the waves in one part of the prospect--last glow of daylight in another.

Strange assemblage of caps and coats--Gingerbread man in olive clothes--brown cap and brown face--Mr. Martin, wife and daughter--a worthy Englishman full of gaiety and jokes, but is suddenly brought up by seasickness--young brunette and her brother, laughing one moment, crying with impatience another--bivouac on deck.

August 19th.--Beautiful morning--come in sight of French coast--French pilot-boat--men with caps--petticoat trousers of canvas--one comes on board--brown face--curling side locks--japanned hat--petticoat canvas trousers over blue ones--knotted silk handkerchief--silver chain at buttonhole--straddles water cask.

The packet lays to, not being able to get into Havre with the tide.

Many of the passengers embark in pilot-boat at two francs each and go to shore. Sad time with the ladies, who suffer violently from seasickness.

Havre. Great houses--throngs on the quay--various colours of the women's dresses--everything done out-of-doors--rags and clothes fluttering from every window--chattering in the street--monkeys and parrots--great difference between neat, quiet English town with few people moving silently about and the clamorous, garrulous French town. We are followed by a troop of boys all giving advice and talking at the same time. French houses high--everything at sixes and sevens--women in long flaunting dresses--slender figures of