



The Journals of Washington Irving: Extended Annotated Edition

Washington Irving

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This is the extended annotated edition including a detailed biographical primer on the life and works of the author.

These are the notebooks of Washington Irving, containing the jottings made by Irving during his travels in Europe between 1815 and 1830. These journals have been kept in the Irving family until within the last few years of the 19th century. The number of people who think they could write is larger than most of us suspect; it is pleasantly larger than the number who think they can write. There is not one of the former but will be eager to read Irving's notebooks. For they are the genuine backstage of literature. They are real notebooks: they are not journals, written with an eye on the public, as are most of the notebooks that push into print. They are not a collection of Irving's profound thoughts. Neither are they commentaries; Waterloo was but just over, but you will find in these pages few choice bits of gossip concerning the men and affairs of that momentous period. Obeying the strange impulse which seems to be common to all of us, big and little, Irving did set down each day the state of the weather and if he slept well. But this is about as far as the journalizing goes: the rest is observations, character sketches, scraps of sentences, skeleton plots—these three volumes should help to dispel the notion that writers "make up" their books; only the poor writers invent anything, for they write for the sake of writing; fellows like Irving write for the sake of life, straining to catch and fix some of its overwhelming stream of pictures and passions.

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