

**CHRONICLES OF
TARRYTOWN AND
SLEEPY HOLLOW.
[NEW YORK-1897]**

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Chronicles of Tarrytown and Sleepy Hollow. [New York-1897] by Edgar Mayhew Bacon

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EDGAR MAYHEW BACON

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

MOST books of places are prefaced with the statement of a hope that they may "foster local pride." This little work is not offered with any such futile anticipation. The slow ox, Time, that Sydney Lanier pictures as browsing through his clover-field of poets and great men and names the "course-o'-things," sweeps away old landmarks like worthless rubbish. It is no less destructive in '97 than it was in '37 or at any other date, though not a few have been the heroic efforts to check its progress. Houses wherein generations have lived and died, haunted with memories, disappear each year to make place for bright new bricks and mortar—that is to say, for the planting of the seeds which, in time, will yield a crop of new chronicles.

But the policy of destroying old sites may be justly questioned either from an æsthetic or

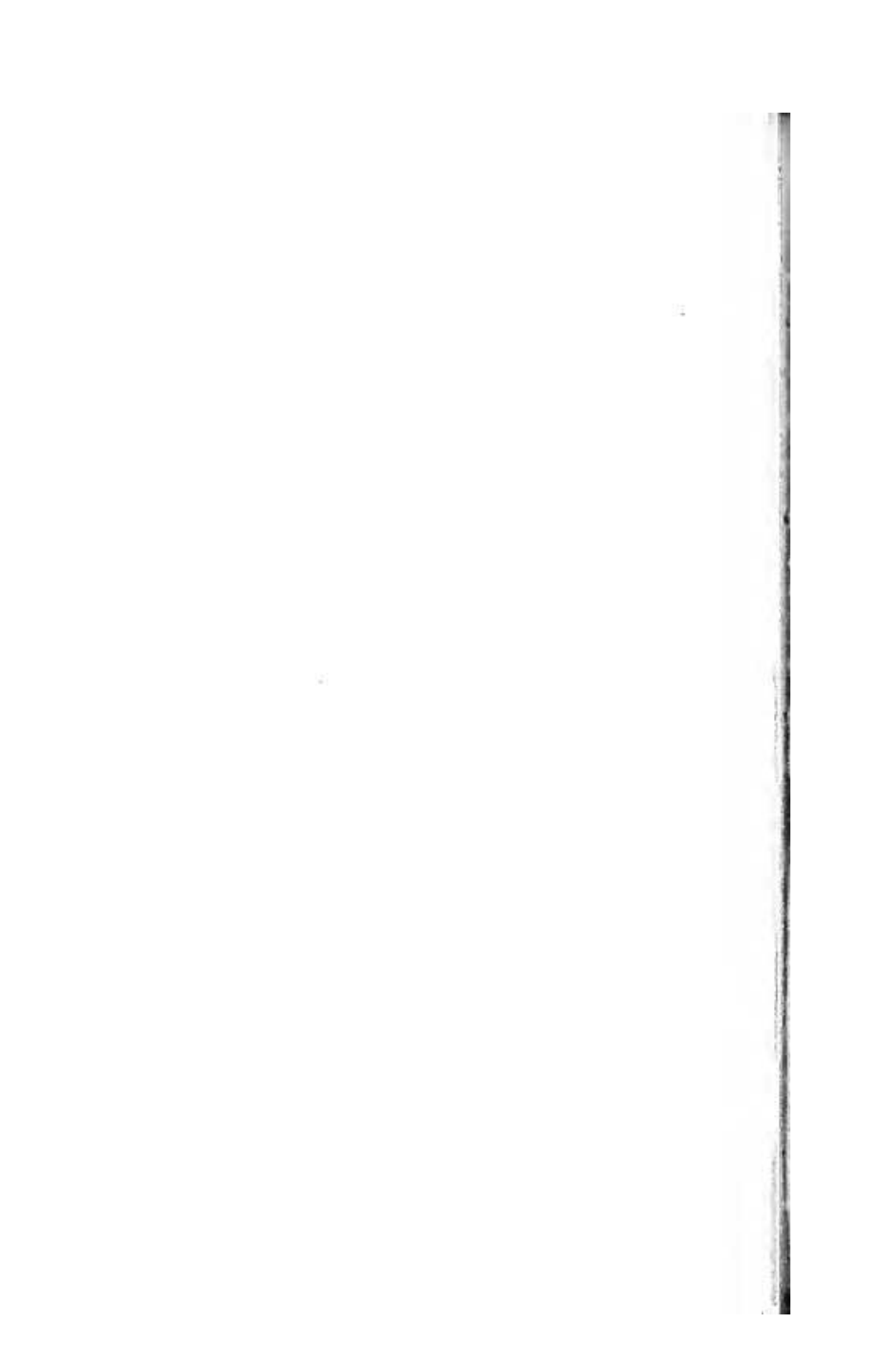
from a business standpoint ; from the first, because the sentiment which grows upon the contemplation of that which is venerable and suggestive to the imagination is a pure and worthy one, and from the second because it often happens that the chief attraction to strangers (who from visitors not infrequently become residents), lies not in the new brick and mortar, but in the old shingle sides and gambrel roofs of colonial houses.

It is certain that the genius of Washington Irving has done a great deal to attract people to Tarrytown. It seems safe to say that all other agencies together have not brought as many people into this region as the *Legend of Sleepy Hollow* has. Yet only last year the old house which was, according to Mr. Irving, the scene of the courtship, the home of Katrina van Tassel, was torn down to make way for a new schoolhouse. In 1866 Mr. James Miller wrote the following : “ It is folly to quarrel with these changes. Cut down the trees that shade your loveliest brook, if you will ; let an adventurer dam it with his pin factory ; let your old Dutch church go to ruin ; let boys

hack the woodwork and break the window-glass; show your fine taste by sticking your smart modern cemetery, with its spic-span tombstones on the hill-top to overcrowd the simple relics of the venerable dead who sleep in the old graveyard below—but remember that all this is money out of your pockets. . . . Strangers will come to see these places that Irving has written about and they will not find them. They might have been cared for and preserved, and they would have paid the interest on all it would cost to keep them from destruction.”

That was a good, honest plea, and as useless as it was earnest. The “course-o’-things” still browses in our historic field, and is no monster after all, but just the world’s ox, doing the world’s work. He has been always browsing, and the clover has always been springing again at his heels.

This book is a basket full of field fare that has been snatched from under his muzzle. If you do not want it he will come to it presently, and then, after deliberate scrutiny, the basket and its contents will go together.





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