

Nicholas. Translated from the Original Dutch of Dominie Nichola

James Kirke Paulding

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The Book of Saint Nicholas. Translated from the Original Dutch of Dominie Nicholas Aegidius Oudenarde

James Kirke Paulding

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TO
THE SOCIETIES OF SAINT NICHOLAS
IN THE
NEW NETHERLANDS,
COMMONLY CALLED
NEW-YORK.

Most Dear and Worthy Associates,

In obedience to the command of the good saint who is equally an object of affectionate reverence to us all, as well as in due deference to the feelings of brotherhood which attach us irrevocably to those who honour his name, his virtues, and his country, I dedicate this work to you all without discrimination or exception. As descendants, in whole or in part, from that illustrious people who, after conquering nature by their industry and perseverance, achieved liberty by their determined valour, and learning and science by their intellectual vigour, I rejoice to see you instituting bonds of union, for the purpose of preserving the remembrance of such an honourable lineage, and the ties of a common origin. While we recollect with honest pride the industry, the integrity, the enterprise, the love of liberty, and the heroism of old "*faderland*," let us not forget that the truest way to honour worthy ancestors is to emulate their example

That you may long live to cherish the memory of so excellent a saint, and such venerable fore-fathers is the earnest wish of

Your associate and friend,

Nicholas Ægidius Oudenarde.

Nieuw-Amsterdam, – *July, 1827.*

**THE AUTHOR'S ADVERTISEMENT, WHICH IS EARNESTLY
RECOMMENDED TO THE ATTENTIVE PERUSAL OF THE JUDICIOUS
READER.**

You will please to understand, gentle reader, that being a true descendant of the adventurous Hollanders who first discovered the renowned island of Manhattan which is every day becoming more and more worth its weight in paper money I have all my life been a sincere and fervent follower of the right reverend and jolly St. Nicholas, the only tutelary of this mighty state. I have never, on any proper occasion, omitted doing honour to his memory by keeping his birthday with all due observances, and paying him my respectful devoirs on Christmas and Newyear's eve.

From my youth upward I have been always careful to hang up my stocking in the chimney corner, on both these memorable anniversaries; and this I hope I may say without any unbecoming ebullition of vanity, that on no occasion did I ever fail to receive glorious remembrances of his favour and countenance, always saving two exceptions. Once when the good saint signified his displeasure at my tearing up a Dutch almanac, and again on occasion of my going to a Presbyterian meeting house with a certain little Dutch damsel, by filling my stockings with snow balls, instead savoury oily cookies.

Saving these manifestations of his displeasure, I can safely boast of having been always a special favourite of the good St. Nicholas, who hath ever shown a singular kindness and suavity towards me in all seasons of my life, wherein he hath at divers times and seasons of sore perplexity, more than once vouchsafed to appear to me in dreams and visions, always giving me sage advice and goodly admonition. The which never failed of being of great service to me in my progress through life, seeing I was not only his namesake, but always reverently honoured his name to the best of my poor abilities.

From my youth upward I have, moreover, been accustomed to call upon him in time of need; and this I will say for him, that he always came promptly whenever he was within hearing. I will not detain the expectant reader with the relation of these special instances, touching the years of my juvenility, but straightway proceed to that which is material to my present purpose.

The reader will please to comprehend that after I had, with the labour and research of many years, completed the tales which I now, with an humble deference, offer to his acceptance, I was all at once struck dumb, with the unparalleled difficulty of finding a name for my work, seeing that every title appertinent to such divertisements hath been applied over and over again, long and merry ago. Now, as before intimated to the judicious reader, whenever I am in sore perplexity of mind, as not unfrequently happens to such as (as it were) cudgel their brains for the benefit of their fellow-creatures I say, when thus beleagured, I always shut my eyes, lean back in my chair, which is furnished with a goodly stuffed back and arms, and grope for that which I require in the profound depths of abstraction.

It was thus I comported myself on this trying occasion, when, lo! and behold! I incontinently fell asleep, as it were, in the midst of my cogitations, and while I was fervently praying to the goodhearted St. Nicholas to inspire me with a proper and significant name for this my mental offspring. I cannot with certainty say how long I had remained in the bonds of abstraction, before I was favoured with the appearance of a vision, which, at first sight, I knew to be that of the excellent St. Nicholas, who scorns to follow the pestilent fashions of modern times, but ever appears in the ancient dress of the old patriarchs of Holland. And here I will describe the good saint, that peradventure all those to whom he may, in time to come, vouchsafe his presence, may know him at first sight,

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even as they know the father that begot them.

He is a right fat, jolly, roistering little fellow if I may make bold to call him so familiarly and had I not known him of old for a veritable saint, I might, of a truth, have taken him, on this occasion, for little better than a sinner. He was dressed in a snuff-coloured coat of goodly conceited dimensions, having broad skirts, cuffs mighty to behold, and buttons about the size of a moderate Newyear cooky. His waistcoat and breeches, of which he had a proper number, were of the same cloth and colour; his hose of gray worsted; his shoes highquartered, even up to the instep, ornamented with a pair of silver buckles, exceedingly bright; his hat was of a low crown and right broad brim, cocked up on one side; and in the buttonholes of his coat was ensconced a long delft pipe, almost as black as ebony. His visage was the picture of good-humoured benevolence; and by these marks I knew him as well as I know the nose on my own face.

The good saint, being always in a hurry on errands of good fellowship, and especially about the time of the holydays of Paas and Pinxster; and being withal a person of little ceremony, addressed me without delay, and with much frankness, which was all exceedingly proper, as we were such old friends. He spoke to me in Dutch, which is now a learned language, understood only by erudite scholars.

"What aileth thee, my Godson Nicholas?" quoth he.

I was about to say I was in sore perplexity concerning the matter aforesaid, when he courteously interrupted me, saying,

"Be quiet, I know it, and therefore there is no special occasion for thee to tell me. Thou shalt call thy work 'The Book of St. Nicholas,' in honour of thy *patroon*; and here are the materials of my biography, which I charge thee, on pain of empty pockets from this time forward, to dilate and adorn in such a manner, as that, foreseeing, as I do, thy work will go down to the latest posterity, it may do honour to my name, and rescue it from that obscurity in which it hath been enveloped through the crying ignorance of past generations, who have been seduced into a veneration for St. George, St. Dennis, St. David, and other doughty dragon-slaying saints, who were little better than roistering bullies. Moreover, I charge thee, as thou valuest my blessing and protection, to dedicate thy work unto the worthy and respectable societies of St. Nicholas in this my stronghold in the New World. Thou mightst, perhaps, as well have left out that prank of mine at the carousing of old Baltus, but verily it matters not. Let the truth be told."

Saying this, he handed me a roll of ancient vellum, containing, as I afterwards found, the particulars which, in conformity with his solemn command, I have dilated into the only veritable biography of my patron saint which hath ever been given to the world. The one hitherto received as orthodox is, according to the declaration of the saint himself, little better than a collection of legends, written under the express inspection of the old lady of Babylon.

I reverently received the precious deposite, and faithfully promised obedience to his commands; whereupon the good St. Nicholas, puffing in my face a whiff of tobacco smoke more fragrant than all the spices of the East, blessed me, and departed in haste, to be present at a wedding in Communipaw. Hereupon I awoke, and should have thought all that had passed but a dream, arising out of the distempered state of my mind, had I not held in my hand the identical roll of vellum, presented in the manner just related. On examination, it proved to contain the matter which is incorporated in the first story of this collection, under the title of "The Legend of St. Nicholas," not only in due obedience to his command, but in order that henceforward no one may pretend ignorance concerning this illustrious and benevolent saint, seeing they have now a biography under his own hand.

Thus much have I deemed it proper to preface to the reader, as some excuse for the freedom of having honoured my poor fictions with the title of The Book of St. Nicholas, which might otherwise have been deemed a piece of unchristian presumption.

THE AUTHOR'S ADVERTISEMENT, WHICH IS EARNESTLY RECOMMENDED TO THE ATTENTIV&PERUS

THE BOOK
OF
SAINT NICHOLAS.
TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL DUTCH
OF
DOMINE NICHOLAS æGIDIUS OUDENARDE.

THE LEGEND OF ST. NICHOLAS.

Everybody has heard of St. Nicholas, that honest Dutch saint, whom I look upon as having been one of the most liberal, good-natured little fat fellows in the world. But, strange as it may seem, though everybody has heard, nobody seems to know anything about him. The place of his birth, the history of his life, and the manner in which he came to be the dispenser of Newyear cakes, and the patron of good boys, are matters that have hitherto not been investigated, as they ought to have been long and long ago. I am about to supply this deficiency, and pay a debt of honour which is due to this illustrious and obscure tutelary genius of the jolly Newyear.

It hath often been justly remarked that the birth, parentage, and education of the most illustrious personages of antiquity, are usually enveloped in the depths of obscurity. And this obscurity, so far from being injurious to their dignity and fame, has proved highly beneficial; for as no one could tell who were their fathers and mothers on earth, they could the more easily claim kindred with the skies, and trace their descent from the immortals. Such was the case with Saturn, Hercules, Bacchus, and others among the heathens; and of St. George, St. Dennis, St. Andrew, St. Patrick, and the rest of the tutelaries, of whom I speak it with great respect and reverence it may justly be said, that nobody would ever have heard of their progenitors but for the renown of their descendants. It is, therefore, no reflection on the respectable St. Nicholas, that his history has hitherto remained a secret, and his origin unknown.

In prosecuting this biography, and thus striving to repay my obligations for divers, and I must say unmerited favours received from this good saint, after whom I was christened, I shall refrain from all invention or hyperbole, seeking the truth industriously, and telling it simply and without reserve or embellishment. I scorn to impose on my readers with cock and bull stories of his killing dragons, slaughtering giants, or defeating whole armies of pagans with his single arm. St. Nicholas was a peaceful, quiet, orderly saint, who, so far as I have been able to learn, never shed a drop of blood in his whole life, except, peradventure, it may be possible he sometimes cut his finger, of which I profess to know nothing, and, therefore, contrary to the custom of biographers, shall say nothing.

St. Nicholas was born and that is all I can tell of the matter on the first of January; but in what year or at what place, are facts which I have not been able to ascertain, although I have investigated them with the most scrupulous accuracy. His obscurity would enable me to give him a king and queen for his parents, whereby he might be able to hold up his head with the best of them all; but, as I before observed, I scorn to impose such doubtful, to say no worse, legends upon my readers.

Nothing is known of his early youth, except that it hath come down to us that his mother dreamed, the night before his birth, that the sun was changed into a vast Newyear cake and the stars into *oily cooks* which she concluded was the reason they burned so bright. It hath been shrewdly intimated by certain would-be antiquaries, who doubtless wanted to appear wiser than they really were, that because our worthy saint was called Nicholas, that must of course have been the name of his father. But I set such conjectures at naught, seeing that if all the sons were called after their fathers, the distinction of senior and junior would no longer be sufficient, and they would be obliged to number them as they do in the famous island of Nantucket, where I hear there are thirty-six Isaac Coffins and sixteen Pelegs.

Now, of the first years of the life of good St. Nicholas, in like manner, we have been able to learn nothing until he was apprenticed to a baker in the famous city of Amsterdam, after which this metropolis was once called, but

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which my readers doubtless know was christened over again when the English usurped possession, in the teeth of the great right of discovery derived from the illustrious navigator, Henricus Hudson, who was no more an Englishman than I am.

Whether the youth Nicholas was thus apprenticed to a baker on account of his mother's dream, or from his great devotion to Newyear cakes, which may be inferred from the bias of his after life, it is impossible to tell at this distant period. It is certain, however, that he was so apprenticed, and that is sufficient to satisfy all reasonable readers. As for those pestilent, curious, prying people, who want to know the why and wherefore of everything, we refer them to the lives of certain famous persons, which are so intermingled and confounded with the lives of their contemporaries, and the events, great and small, which happened in all parts of the world during their sojourn on the earth, that it is utterly impossible to say whose life it is we are reading. Many people of little experience take the title page for a guide, not knowing, peradventure, they might almost as safely rely upon history for a knowledge of the events of past ages.

Little Nicholas, our hero, was a merry, sweettempered caitiff, which was, doubtless, somewhat owing to his living almost altogether upon sweet things. He was marvellously devoted to cakes, and ate up numberless gingerbread alphabets before he knew a single letter.

Passing over the intermediate years, of which, indeed, I know no more than the man in the moon, I come to the period when, being twenty-four, and the term of his apprenticeship almost out, he fell desperately in love with the daughter of his worthy master, who was a burgomaster of forty years standing. In those unprecocious times, the boys did not grow to be men and the girls women, so soon as they do now. It would have been considered highly indecent for the former to think of falling in love before they were out of their time, or the latter to set up for young women before they knew how to be anything else. But as soon as the worthy Nicholas arrived at the age of twenty-four, being, as I said, within a year of the expiration of his time, he thought to himself that Katrinchee, or Catharine, as the English call it, was a clever, notable little soul, and eminently calculated to make him a good wife. This was the main point in the times of which I am speaking, when people actually married without first running mad either for love or money.

Katrinchee was the toast of all the young bakers of Amsterdam, and honest Nicholas had as many rivals as there were loaves of bread in that renowned city. But he was as gallant a little Dutchman as ever smoked his way through the world pipe foremost, and did not despair of getting the better of his rivals, especially as he was a great favourite with the burgomaster, as, indeed, his conduct merited. Instead of going the vulgar way to work, and sighing and whining out romance in her ear, he cunningly, being doubtless inspired by Cupid himself, proceeded to insinuate his passion, and make it known by degrees, to the pretty little Katrinchee, who was as plump as a partridge, and had eyes of the colour of a clear sky.

First did he bake a cake in the shape of a heart pierced half through by a toasting fork, the which he presented her smoking hot, which she received with a blush and did eat, to the great encouragement of the worthy Nicholas. A month after, for he did not wish to alarm the delicacy of the pretty Katrinchee, he did bake another cake in the shape of two hearts, entwined prettily with a true lover's knot. This, too, she received with a blush, and did eat with marvellous content. After the expiration of a like period, he did contrive another cake in the shape of a letter, on which he had ingeniously engraven the following couplet: "Wer diesen glauben wöhl hat die vernanft verschworen, Dem denken abgesaght sein eigentham verlohren." The meaning of which, if the reader doth not comprehend, I do hereby earnestly advise him to set about studying the Dutch language forthwith, that he may properly appreciate its hidden beauties.

Little Katrinchee read this poesy with a sigh, and rewarded the good Nicholas with a look which, as he afterward affirmed, would have heated an oven.

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Thus did the sly youth gradually advance himself in the good graces of the little damsel, until at length he ventured a downright declaration, in the shape of a cake made in the exact likeness of a little Dutch Cupid. The acceptance of this was conclusive, and was followed by permission to address the matter to the decision of the worthy burgomaster, whose name I regret hath not come down to the present time.

The good man consulted his pipe, and after six months' hard smoking, came to the conclusion that the thing was feasible. Nicholas was a wellbehaved, industrious lad, and the burgomaster justly concluded that the possession of virtuous and industrious habits without houses and lands, was better than houses and lands without them. So he gave his consent like an honest and ever to be respected magistrate.

The news of the intended marriage spoiled all the bread baked in Amsterdam that day. The young bakers were so put out that they forgot to put yeast in their bread, and it was all heavy. But the hearts of the good Nicholas and his bride were as light as a feather notwithstanding, and when they were married it was truly said there was not a handsomer couple in all Amsterdam.

They lived together happily many years, and nothing was wanting to their felicity but a family of little chubby boys and girls. But it was ordained that he never should be blessed with any offspring, seeing that he was predestined to be the patron and benefactor of the children of others, not of his own. In good time, and in the fullness of years, the burgomaster died, leaving his fortune and his business to Nicholas, who had ever been a kind husband to his daughter, and a dutiful son to himself. Rich and liberal, it was one of the chief pleasures of the good Nicholas to distribute his cakes, of which he baked the best in all Amsterdam, to the children of the neighbourhood, who came every morning, and sometimes in the evening; and Nicholas felt his heart warm within his bosom when he saw how they ate and laughed, and were as happy, ay, and happier, too, than so many little kings. The children all loved him, and so did their fathers and mothers, so that in process of time he was made a burgomaster, like his father-in-law before him.

Not only did he entertain the jolly little folk of the city in the manner heretofore described, but his home was open to all travellers and sojourners who had no other home, as well as those who came recommended from afar off. In particular the good pilgrims of the church, who went about preaching and propagating the true faith, by the which I mean the doctrines of the illustrious reformers in all time past.

The good Nicholas had, in the latter part of his life, embraced these doctrines with great peril to himself, for sore were the persecutions they underwent in those days who departed from the crying abominations of the ancient church; and had it not been for the good name he had established in the city of Amsterdam, among all classes, high and low, rich and poor, he might, peradventure, have suffered at the stake. But he escaped, as it were, by a miracle, and lived to see the truth triumph at last even throughout all the land.

But before this came to pass his faithful and affectionate helpmate had been taken from him by death, sorely to his grief; and he would have stood alone in the world had it not been for the little children, now grown up to be men and women, who remembered his former kindness, and did all they could to console him for such is ever the reward of kindness to our fellow-creatures.

One night as he was sitting disconsolate at home, thinking of poor Katrinchee, and wishing that either she was with him or he with her, he heard a distant uproar in the street, which seemed approaching nearer and nearer. He was about to rise and go to the door to see what was the occasion, when suddenly it was pushed open with some violence, and a man rushed past him with very little ceremony. He seemed in a great hurry, for he panted for breath, and it was some time before he could say,

"I beseech thee to shut the door and hide me, for my life is in danger."

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Nicholas, who never refused to do a good-natured act, did as he was desired, so far as shutting and barring the door. He then asked,

"What hath endangered thy life, and who art thou, friend, that thou art thus afraid?"

"Ask me not now, I beseech thee, Nicholas "

"Thou knowest my name then?" said the other, interrupting him.

"I do everybody knows thee, and thy kindness of heart. But ask me nothing now only hide me for the present, and when the danger is past I will tell thee all."

"Thou art no murderer or fugitive from justice?"

"No, on my faith. I am sinned against, but I never injured but one man, and I was sorry for that. But hark, I hear them coming wilt thou or wilt thou not protect me?"

"I will," said the good Nicholas, who saw in the dignified air and open countenance of the stranger something that inspired both confidence and awe. Accordingly he hastily led him into a remote apartment, where he secreted him in a closet, the door of which could not be distinguished, and in which he kept his money and valuables, for he said to himself, I will trust this man, he does not look as if he would abuse my confidence.

"Take this key and lock thyself in, that thou mayst be able to get out in case they take me away."

Presently there was heard a great hallooing and banging at the outward door, with a cry of "Open! open!" and Nicholas went to the door and opened it. A flood of people rushed in helter-skelter, demanding the body of an arch heretic, who, they said, had been seen to take refuge in the house. But with all their rage and eagerness, they begged his excuse for this unceremonious proceeding, for Nicholas was beloved and respected by all, though he was a heretic himself.

"He's here we saw him enter!" they cried.

"If he is here, find him," quoth Nicholas, quietly.

"I will not say he is not here, neither would I betray him if he were."

The interlopers then proceeded to search all parts of the house, except the secret closet, which escaped their attention. When they had done this, one of them said.

"We have heard of thy having a secret place in thy house where thy money and papers are secured. Open it to us we swear not to molest or take away aught that is thine."

The good Nicholas was confounded at this demand, and stood for a moment not knowing what to say or what to do. The stranger in the closet heard it too; but he was a stout-hearted man, and trusted in the Lord.

"Where is thy strong closet?" cried one of the fiercest and most forward of the intruders. "We must and will find it."

"Well, then, find it," quoth Nicholas, quietly.

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They inspected the room narrowly, and knocked against the walls in hopes the hollow sound would betray the secret of the place. But they were disappointed, for the door was so thick that it returned no hollow sound.

They now began to be impatient, and savage withal, and the ferocious leader exclaimed,

"Let us take this fellow then. One heretic is as good as another as bad I mean."

"Seize him!" cried one.

"Away with him!" cried another.

"To the stake!" cried a third.

They forgot the ancient kindness of the good man; for bigotry and over-heated zeal remember not benefits, and pay no respect to the obligations of gratitude. The good Nicholas was violently seized, his hands tied behind him, and he was about to be carried away a sacrifice to the demon of religious discord, when the door of the closet flew open, and the stranger came forth with a step so firm, a look so lofty and inspired, that the rabble quailed, and were silent before him.

"Unbind this man," said he, in a voice of authority, "and bind me in his stead."

Not a man stirred. They seemed spell bound, and stood looking at each other in silent embarrassment.

"Unbind this man, I say!"

Still they remained, as it were, petrified with awe and astonishment.

"Well, then, I shall do it myself," and he proceeded to release the good Nicholas from his bonds, while the interlopers remained silent and motionless.

"Mistaken men!" then said he, looking at them with pity, mingled with indignation, "you believe yourselves fulfilling the duties of your faith when you chase those who differ from you about the world, as if they were wild beasts, and drag them to the stake, like malefactors who have committed the worst crimes against society. You think that the blood of human victims is the most acceptable offering to your Maker, and worse than the ignorant pagans, who made martyrs of the blessed saints, sacrifice them on the altar of a religion which is all charity, meekness, and forgiveness. But I see you are ashamed of yourselves. Go, and do so no more."

The spirit of intolerance quailed before the majesty of truth and genius. The poor deluded men, whose passions had been stimulated by mistaken notions of religious duty, bowed their heads and departed, rebuked and ashamed.

"Who art thou?" asked Nicholas, when they were gone.

"Thou shalt soon know," replied the stranger. "In the mean time listen to me. I must be gone before the fiend, which I have, perhaps, only laid for a few moments, again awakens in the bosoms of these deluded men, or some others like them get on the scent of their prey, and track their victim hither. Listen to me, Nicholas, kind and good Nicholas. Thou wouldst have endangered thy own life for the safety of a stranger one who had no claim on thee save that of hospitality nay, not even that, for I was not thy guest by invitation, but intrusion. Blessed be thee and thine, thy house, thy memory when thou art dead, and thy lot hereafter. Thou art worthy to know who I am."

He then disclosed to him a name with which the world hath since rung, from clime to clime, from country to country. A name incorporated inseparably with the interests of truth and the progress of learning.

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"Tell it not in Gath proclaim it not in the streets of Askalon," continued he, "for it is a name which carries with it the sentence of death in this yet benighted city. Interests of the deepest nature interests vitally connected with the progress of truth the temporal and eternal happiness of millions living, of millions yet unborn, brought me hither. The business I came upon is in part performed; but it is now known to some that I am, or have been in the city, who will never rest till they run me down and tear me in pieces. Farewell, and look for thy reward, if not here, hereafter for, sure as thou livest and breathest, a good action, done with a pure and honest motive, is twice blessed once to the doer and once to him to whom it is done."

The good Nicholas would have knelt to the mighty genius that stood before him, but he prevented him.

"I am no graven image, nor art thou an idolater that thou shouldst kneel to me. Farewell! Let me have thy prayers, for the prayers of a good man are indeed blessings."

Saying this, the illustrious stranger departed in haste, and Nicholas never saw him more for a long time. But he said to himself,

"Blessed is my house, for it hath sheltered the bright light of the universe."

From that time forward, he devoted himself to the good cause of the reformation with heart and soul. His house was ever the refuge of the persecuted; his purse the never-failing resource of the distressed; and many were the victims of bigotry and intolerance whom his influence and entreaties saved from the stake and the torture. He lived a blessing to all within the sphere of his influence, and was blessed in living to see the faith which he loved and cherished at length triumph over the efforts of power, the arts of intrigue, and the fire of bigotry.

Neither did he forget or neglect the customary offices of kindness and good will to the little children of the city, who continued still to come and share his goodly cakes, which he gave with the smile and the open hand of kind and unaffected benignity. It must have been delightful to see the aged patriarch sitting at his door, while the little boys and girls gathered together from all parts to share his smiles, to be patted on the head, and kissed, and laden with his bounties.

Every Newyear's day especially, being his birthday, as it came round, was a festival, not only to all the children, but to all that chose to come and see him. It seemed that he grew younger instead of older on each return of the season; for he received every one with smiles, and even his enemies were welcome to his good cheer. He had not the heart to hate anybody on the day which he had consecrated to innocent gayety, liberal hospitality, and universal benevolence. In process of time, his example spread among the whole city, and from thence through the country, until every village and town, nay, every house, adopted the good custom of setting apart the first day of the year to be gay and happy, to exchange visits, and shake hands with friends and to forgive enemies.

Thus the good Nicholas lived, blessing all and blessed by all, until he arrived at a happy old age. When he had reached fourscore years, he was sitting by himself late in the evening of the first of January, old style, which is the only true and genuine era after all the new style being a pestilent popish innovation he was sitting, I say, alone, the visitors having all departed, laden with gifts and good wishes. A knock was heard at the door, which always opened of itself, like the heart of its owner, not only on Newyear's day, but every day in the year.

A stately figure entered and sat down by him, after shaking his hand right heartily. The good Nicholas was now old, and his eyesight had somewhat failed him, particularly at night.

"Thou art welcome," quoth the old man.

"I know it," replied the other, "every one is welcome to the house of the good Nicholas, not only on this, but every other day. I have heard of thee in my travels."

"Thou knowest my name may I not know thine?"

The stranger whispered a name in his ear, which made the heart of the good Nicholas leap in his bosom.

"Dost thou remember the adventure of the closet?" said the stranger.

"Yea blessed be the day and the hour," said the old man.

And now they had a long conversation, which pertained to high matters, not according with the nature of my story, and therefore I pass them by, more especially as I do not exactly know what they were.

"I almost fear to ask thee," at length said Nicholas; "but thou wilt partake of my cheer, on this the day of my birth. I shall not live to see another."

Old people are often prophetic on the duration of their lives.

"Assuredly," replied the other, "for it is neither beneath my character nor calling to share the good man's feast, and to be happy when I can."

So they sat down together and talked of old times, and how much better the new times were than the old, inasmuch as the truth had triumphed, and they could now enjoy their consciences in peace.

The illustrious visiter staid all night; and the next morning, as he was about to depart, the aged Nicholas said to him,

"Farewell I shall never see thee again. Thou art going a long journey, thou sayst, but I am about venturing on one yet longer."

"Well, be it so," said the other. "But those who remain behind will bless thy name and thy memory. The little children will love thee, and so long as thy countrymen cherish their ancient customs, thou wilt not be forgotten."

They parted, and the prediction of the good Nicholas was fulfilled. He fell asleep in the arms of death, who called him so softly, and received him so gently in his embrace, that though his family knew he slept, they little thought it was for ever.

When this news went abroad into the city, you might see the worthy burgomasters and citizens knocking the ashes out of their pipes, and putting them quietly by in their buttonholes; and the good housewives, ever and anon lifting their clean white aprons to their eyes, that they might see to thread their needles or find the stitches, as they sat knitting their stockings. The shops and schools were all shut the day he was buried; and it was remarked that the men neglected their usual amusements, and the little children had no heart to play.

When the whole city had gathered together at the side of his grave, there suddenly appeared among them a remarkable and goodly-looking man, of most reverent demeanour. Every one bowed their bodies, in respectful devotion, for they knew the man, and what they owed him. All was silent as the grave, just about to receive the body of Nicholas, when he I have just spoken of lifted his head, and said as follows:

"The good man just about to enter the narrow house never defrauded his neighbour, never shut his door on the stranger, never did an unkind action, nor ever refused a kind one either to friend or foe. His heart was all goodness, his faith all purity, his morals all blameless, yea, all praiseworthy. Such a man deserves the highest title that can be bestowed on man. Join me then, my friends, old and young men, women, and children, in blessing his memory as *the good Saint Nicholas*; for I know no better title to such a distinction than pure faith, inflexible

integrity, and active benevolence." Thus spake the great reformer, John Calvin.

The whole assembled multitude, with one voice and one heart, cried out, "Long live the blessed memory of the good St. Nicholas!" as they piously consigned him to the bosom of his mother earth.

Thus did he come to be called St. Nicholas; and the people, not content with this, as it were by a mutual sympathy, and without coming to any understanding on the subject, have ever since set apart the birthday of the good man, for the exercise of hospitality to men, and gifts to little children. From the Old World they carried the custom to the New, where their posterity still hold it in reverence, and where I hope it will long continue to flourish, in spite of the cold heartless forms, unmeaning ceremonies, and upstart pretensions of certain vulgar people, who don't know any better, and therefore ought to be pitied for their ignorance, rather than contemned for their presumption.

THE LITTLE DUTCH SENTINEL OF THE MANHADOES.

"How times change in this world, and especially in this New World!" exclaimed old Aurie Doremus, as he sat at the door of his domicil the last of the little Dutch houses, built of little Dutch bricks, with gable end turned to the street on a sultry summer evening, in the year so many honest people found out that paper money was not silver or gold. Half a dozen of his grown-up grandchildren were gathered about him, on the seats of the little porch, the top of which was shaped something like an old revolutionary cocked hat, as the good patriarch made this sage observation. He was in fine talking humour, and after a little while, went on amid frequent pauses, as if taxing his memory to make up his chronicle.

"It was the twenty-fourth no, the twenty-fifth of March, 1609, that Hendrick Hudson sailed from Amsterdam. On the fourth of September, after coasting along Newfoundland to Cape Cod, from Cape Cod to Chesapeake Bay, and thence back again along the Jersey coast, he came in sight of the Highlands of Neversink, and anchored in the evening inside of Sandy Hook. This was in 1609 how long ago is that, Egbert?" said the good man, turning to me.

"Two hundred and sixteen years," replied I, after sore tribulation, for I never was good at ciphering.

"Two hundred and sixteen years well, at that time there was not a single white man, or white man's habitation, in sight of where we are now sitting, in the midst of thousands, ten of thousands I might almost say hundreds of thousands. Ah! boys, 'tis a rapid growth, and Heaven grant it may not afford another proof, that the quick of growth are quick of decay." After musing a little he proceeded, as if speaking to himself rather than to us.

"If it were possible that an Indian, who had lived on this spot at the time of Hudson's first visit, could rise from the dead, with all his recollections of the past about him, what would he think at beholding the changes that have taken place. Nothing that he had ever seen, nothing that he had ever known, would he recognise; for even the face of the earth has passed away, and the course of the mighty rivers intruded upon by the labours of the white strangers. No vestiges, not even the roots of the woods where he hunted his game no landmarks familiar to his early recollections no ruins of his ancient habitations no traces to guide him to the spot where once reposed the remains of his fathers nothing to tell him that his eyes had opened on the very spot where they closed two hundred years ago." Again he paused a few moments, and then resumed his cogitations.

"And this is not all, its name and destinies, as well as its nature, are changed. From the Manhadoes of the ancient proprietors, it passed into the New-Amsterdam of the Dutch, and the New-York of the English; and now," continued he, his eyes sparkling with exultation "now it is the possession of a free and sovereign people. The sandy barren which formed the projecting point of our isle, and where a few Indian canoes were hauled up, is now the resort of thousands of stately ships, coming from the farthest parts of the earth, and bearing the rich products

of the New World into every corner of the Old. Their masts bristle around the city, like the leafless trees of a wintry forest. The rugged island, to which nature had granted nothing but its noble situation, and which seemed condemned to perpetual sterility, is now become a region of rich gardens and white groups of houses the very rocks are turned to beds of flowers, and the tangled swamps of ivy clinging about the stunted shrubbery, into smooth lawns, embellishing and embellished by the sprightly forms of playful lads and lasses, escaped from the city to enjoy a summer afternoon of rural happiness. All, all is changed and man the most of all. Simplicity has given place to the ostentatious, vulgar pride of purse—proud ignorance the wild Indian to the idle and effeminate beau politeness to ceremony comfort to splendour honest mechanics to knavish brokers morals to manners wampum to paper money and the fear of ghosts to the horror of poverty." Here again the old man paused, and seemed to retire within himself for a minute or two; after which I observed him begin to chuckle and rub his hands, while his mischievous old eye assumed a new vivacity.

"I wonder what figure our Dutch belles or beaux of 1700, or thereabout, would make at a rout, or the Italian opera? I'faith I believe they would be more out of their element than the Indian I spoke of just now. They would certainly make rare sport in a cotillon, and I doubt would never arrive at that acme of modern refinement, which enables people to prefer sounds without sense, to sense without sound and to expire with ecstasy at sentiments expressed in a language of which they don't comprehend a word."

"But did they believe in ghosts, grandfather?" asked the youngest little granddaughter, who was just beginning to dip in the modern wonders of romance, and had been caught by the word ghost in the old gentleman's harangue.

"Ay, that they did, and in everything else. Now people believe in nothing except what they see in the newspapers and the only exercise of their faith appears, not indeed in believing a crust of bread is a shoulder of mutton, but that a greasy rag of paper is a guinea. I have heard my grandfather tell fifty stories of ghosts and witches; but they have all passed from my memory, except one about a little Dutch sentinel, which he used to repeat so often, that I have never forgotten it to this day."

"Oh, tell us the story," cried the little romance reader, who was the old gentleman's prime favourite, and to whom he never thought of denying anything, either in or out of reason. "I'll give you two kisses if you will."

"A bargain," cried the good Aurie; "come hither, baggage." The little girl presented first one rosy cheek and then the other, which he kissed affectionately, and began as follows, while we all gathered about him, and listened like so many Schahriars.

"Once upon a time, then, to use the words of a pleasant and instructive historian, the governors of New—Amsterdam were little kings, and the burgomasters such great men, that whoever spoke ill of one of them, had a bridle put into his mouth, rods under his arms, and a label on his breast recording his crime. In this trim he was led by the sheriff and tied to a post, where he remained a spectacle to the public, and an example to all evil doers or rather evil sayers. I wonder how such a custom would go down nowadays, with the great champions of the liberty of the press? Then, too, instead of street inspectors, whose duty it is to take care of one side of a street and let the other take care of itself, there were roy meesters to look to the fences, and keep the cows from trespassing on their neighbour's pastures then the houses were covered with reeds and straw, and the chimneys were made of wood then all matrimonial disputes were settled by `a commissary of marriage affairs,' and no man could eat a loaf of bread, except the flour had been inspected by the `comptroller general of the company's windmill,' who could be no other than the sage Don Quixote himself then, the distinction of ranks, instead of being designated by great and little barons, was signified by great and little burghers, who danced hipsey—saw and reels plucked the goose rambled on the commons, now the park, for nuts and strawberries made parties of pleasure to enjoy the retired shades of the Ladies' Valley, since metamorphosed into Maiden Lane shot bears in the impenetrable forests of Harlem Heights hunted the deer along the Bloomingdale road and erected Maypoles on the first of May, in the great meadow where the college now stands."

"In what year of our Lord was that?" asked the little pet lady.

"Why, in the year 1670, or thereabout, you baggage."

"I declare I thought it must have been somewhere about the year one," said she, laughing. The old man patted her cheek, and went on.

"About this time the good citizens of New-Amsterdam were most especially afraid of three things Indians, ghosts, and witches. For the first, they had good reason, for the Indians inhabited the country around them in all directions, and though the honest Amsterdammers could beat them at a bargain, there was another game at which they had rather the advantage. In regard to ghosts and witches, I cannot say as much in justification of their fears. But that is neither here nor there. Some people that will run like a deer from real danger, defy ghosts and witches, and all their works; while the fearless soldier who faces death without shrinking in a hundred battles, trembles and flees from a white cow in a churchyard, or a white sheet on a clothes line, of a moonlight night. It was thus with honest Jan Sol, the little Dutch sentinel of the Manhadoes.

"Jan was a short, square-built, bandy-legged, broad-faced, snub-nosed little fellow, who valued himself upon being an old soldier; a species of men that, with the exception of travellers, are the most given to telling what are called tough stories, of any people in the world. According to his own account, he had been in more pitched battles than Henry the Lion, or Julius Cæsar; and made more lucky escapes than any knight-errant on record. The most miraculous one of all, was at some battle I forget the name where he would certainly have been killed, if he had not very opportunely arrived just after it was over. But though one of the most communicative persons in the world, he never gave any tolerable reason for visiting New-Amsterdam. He hinted, indeed, that he had been invited over to discipline the raw provincias; but there was a counter story abroad, that he was drummed out of the regiment for walking in his sleep, and emptying the canteens of the whole mess. Indeed, he did not positively deny that he was apt to be a rogue in his sleep; but then he made it up by being as honest as the day when he was awake.

"However this may be, at the time I speak of, Jan Sol figured as corporal in the trusty city guard, whose business it was to watch during the night, to guard against the inroads of the savages, and to enforce, in the daytime, the military code established for the good order and well being of the metropolis. This code consisted of nineteen articles, every one of which was a perfect blue law. Bread and water, boring tongues with a red-hot iron, hanging, and such like trifles, were the least a man had to expect in those days. The mildest infliction of the whole code, was that of riding a wooden horse, for not appearing on parade at the ringing of a bell. This town was always famous for bellringing. Jan had many a ride in this way for nothing. Among the most rigid of these regulations, was one which denounced death for going in and out of the fort, except through the gate; and another, ordaining a similar punishment for entering or leaving the city by any other way but the land poort, after the mayor had gone his rounds in the evening, and received the keys from the guard.

"The state of society, and the neighbourhood of the Indians, I suppose, made these severe restrictions necessary; and we are not, while sitting quietly at our firesides, out of their reach, to set ourselves in judgment upon our ancestors, who planted the seeds of this empire in the midst of dangers. In the little sketch of New-Amsterdam to which I have before referred, and which is well worth your reading, it is stated that the gate was shut in the evening before dark, and opened at daylight. At nine o'clock the tattoo was beat, as the signal for the honest folks to go to sleep as quick as possible, and it is recorded they all obeyed the summons in the most exemplary manner. The sentinels were placed at different points considered the most accessible, and changed every half hour, that being the limit of a quiet, orderly Dutchman's capacity for keeping awake after nine o'clock.

"One bright moonlight night, in the month of August, it fell to the lot of Jan Sol to mount guard, not a hundred yards from the great gate, or land poort, which was situated in Broadway, near where Trinity Church now stands. Beyond this, between Liberty and Courtlandt streets, stood the company's windmill, where nearly all the flour was

made for the consumption of the little metropolis. The place where he took his rounds was a sand bank, elevated above the surrounding objects, and whence he could see the river, the opposite shore of New Jersey, then called Pavonia, the capacious bay, and the distant hills of Staten Island. The night was calm, and the cloudless sky showed thousands of wandering glories overhead, whose bright twinklings danced on the slow undulating surface of the glassy mirror. All round there was perfect silence and repose, nothing moved upon the land or the waters, neither lights were burning nor dogs barking; these sagacious animals having been taught, by a most infallible way of appealing to their instincts, that it was unlawful to disturb the somniferous indulgences of their masters. It was a scene for poetic inspiration, but Jan Sol was no poet, although he often availed himself of the poetic license in his stories. He was thinking of something else, besides the beauty of the night and the scene. The truth is, his nerves were very much out of order at that moment.

"It was about the time that witches made their first appearance in the New World, whither they came, I suppose, to escape the pleasant alternative of being either drowned or hanged, proffered to them in those days by the good people of England. But they got out of the frying pan into the fire, as history records, particularly to the eastward of the Manhadoes, where some of them underwent the ordeal of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Others fled to New-Amsterdam, greatly to the discomfort of the good citizens, who took such umbrage at broomsticks, that the industrious and cleanly housewife's vocation of sweeping the parlour twelve times a day was considered as naught. It is affirmed, that instead of a broom, they used the broad-brimmed Sunday hats of their husbands in blowing away the dust, for fear of being taken for witches. There was a universal panic, and a universal dust throughout all the city.

"But this was not the worst of it either. Just about this time Dominie Egidius Luyck prophesied the world was coming speedily to an end, as plainly appeared from the great quantity of toad stools, which made their appearance in the Ladies' Valley and Windmill Meadow after a heavy rain. This prophecy was followed up by the appearance of the northern lights, falling stars, and mysterious rattlings of invisible carriages through the streets at midnight. To crown all, an inspired fanatic had passed through the Broadway, crying out 'Wo, wo to the crown of pride, and the drunkards of Ephraim. Two woes past, and the third coming, except ye repent repent repent.' All these horrors now encompassed the imagination of Jan Sol, as he paced the little sand hillock with slow steps, and from time to time started at his shadow. The half hour seemed an age, and never did anybody long so much for the appearance of a corporal's guard to relieve him.

"He had not been on his watch more than ten minutes, or so, when, happening to look towards the opposite shore of Pavonia, he saw something moving on the waters like a canoe shooting across the river. Five hundred Indians with tomahawks and scalping knives all at once stood before the little sentinel, whose imagination was ready cocked and primed for the reception of all sorts of horrors. He had a great mind to fire his gun, and alarm the garrison, but a little of the fear of his companions' jokes restrained him for that time. However, he drew a pistol, and refreshed his courage with a little of the genuine Schiedam, after which he ventured to look that way again. But the canoe had disappeared in a most miraculous manner, and Jan was satisfied in his own mind, that it was neither more nor less than the ghost of a canoe. There was not much consolation in this; but it was better than the five hundred Indians, with their tomahawks and scalping knives.

"The night breeze now sprung up with its chilling dews, and cooled Jan's courage till it nearly fell down to the freezing point. The wind, or some other cause, produced a sort of creaking and moaning in the old crazy windmill, which drew the eyes of the little sentinel in that direction. At that moment, Jan saw a head slowly rising and peeping over the wall, directly in a line with the windmill. His eyes became riveted to the spot, with the irresistible fascination of overwhelming terror. Gradually the head was followed by shoulders, body and legs, which Jan swore belonged to a giant at least sixteen ells high. After sitting a moment upon the wall, the figure, according to Jan's relation before the governor next morning, put forth a pair of enormous wings, and whirling itself round and round in a circle while its eyes flashed fire, and its teeth appeared like live coals actually flew down from the wall towards the governor's garden, where it disappeared, or rather sank into the ground, close by the garden gate. Jan fired his gun, and one might have supposed he killed himself, for he fell flat on his face,

apparently as dead as a door nail.

"Here he was found by the relief guard, about five minutes afterwards, with his face buried in the sand hill. The moment they touched him, he began to roar out with awful vociferation, 'Wo, wo to the crown of pride, and the drunkards of Ephraim.' They could make nothing of Jan or his story, and forthwith carried him to the 'big house,' as it was called, where the governor resided, and who, together with the whole corporation and city, had been waked by the discharge of the gun. Such a thing had not happened within the memory of man. Jan told his story, and swore to it afterwards; but all he got by it, was a ride on the wooden horse the next morning. The story, however, took wind, and there was more liquor sold that day at the Stadt Herberg, or city tavern, than for a whole week before. Coming upon the back of the dominie's toad stools, the northern lights, the rumbling of the invisible wheels, and the mysterious denunciation of the drunkards of Ephraim, it made a great impression; and many, not to say all, believed there must be something in it. Several people went to church the next day, who had not been there since they were christened.

"Measures were taken the following night, and for several nights afterwards, to detect this gigantic spectre, but in vain. Nothing appeared to disturb the quiet repose of the guard and the city, till the next Saturday night, when it came to Jan Sol's turn to take his watch upon the sand hill, about the same hour as before. They say Jan fortified himself with a double allowance of Schiedam, and put a little Dutch Bible in the pocket of one of his breeches. But all would not do, for many people were ready to swear afterwards, that his hair stood on end so sturdily that he could hardly keep his tin cap upon it. Ghosts, hobgoblins, and all that sort of thing, have not only a propensity to visit some one particular person, but are likewise extremely regular in their habits, as well as in their hours of appearing. Exactly at the same hour the little canoe shot from Pavonia the night breeze sprang up as before the old windmill began to creak and moan the gigantic spectre peered over the wall at the same spot as before, and cautiously glaring round with his fiery eyes, unfurled his mighty wings, and after turning a few somersets, flew towards the gate of the governor's garden, where he disappeared as before. This time Jan was too far gone to fire his matchlock, but a few minutes after he was found almost insensible with fright, by the relief guard, who carried him before the governor next morning, where he swore to the same story, and was complimented with another ride on the wooden horse.

"But the repetition of a miracle is sure to make it less miraculous; and a wonder twice told is almost half proved. People began to believe, and from believing, to be sure there was something out of the way, at least, in this affair. Miracles, like misfortunes, never come single; and almost every one had a wonder of his own to reinforce that of the little Dutch sentinel. At least fifty of them happened within less than a week, each more alarming than the other. Doors opened at midnight, by invisible hands strange black cats with green eyes, and sparks of fire flying out of their backs, appeared at different times the old mahogany chests of drawers made divers strange noises, and sometimes went off with a report almost as loud as a pistol and an old woman coming into market with cabbages before daylight in the morning, met a black figure, she could almost swear had a tail and a cloven foot. A horseman was heard in the middle of the night galloping furiously towards the land poort, crying 'Whoa! whoa!' with a hollow voice; and what was very singular, though several persons got up to look out of the windows, not one could see the least sign of horse or horseman. In short, the whole city of New-Amsterdam was in a panic, and he was a bold man that did not run away from his own shadow. Even the 'big house,' where the governor dwelt, was infected, insomuch that his excellency doubled his guards, and slept with loaded pistols at his bedside. One of these made a voluntary discharge one night, and the bullet passed right through the picture of Admiral Van Tromp, which hung up in the chamber. If it had been the admiral himself he would have been killed as sure as a gun. This accident was considered as very remarkable, as there were no hair triggers in those days, to go off of themselves.

"There was at that time a public-spirited little magistrate in office, by the name of Dirck Smet, a pipemaker by trade, who was the father of more laws than all the lawyers before or after him, from Moses down to the present time. He had the itch of legislation to a most alarming degree, and like Titus, considered he had lost a day when he had not begotten at least one law. A single circumstance or event, no matter how insignificant, was enough for

him. If a little boy happened to frighten a sober Dutch horse, which, by—the—way, was no such easy matter, by flying his kite, the worshipful Dirck Smet would forthwith call a meeting of the common council, and, after declaiming a full hour upon the dangers of kiteflying, get a law passed, denouncing a penalty upon all wicked parents who allowed their children to indulge in that pestilent amusement. If there happened a rumour of a man, a horse, a cow, or any other animal being bitten by a mad dog, in some remote part of New—England, or elsewhere, Dirck Smet would spout a speech enough to make one's hair stand on end, about the horrors of hydrophobia, and get a law passed against all the honest mastiffs of New—Amsterdam, who had no more idea of running mad than I have at this moment. Owing to the number of little creeks intersecting the city, and the quantity of grass growing in the streets at that time, there was never a finer city for raising flocks of geese than New—Amsterdam in fact, there were as many geese as inhabitants. Dirck declared war against these in a speech of three hours, which so overpowered the council, that they all fell asleep, and passed a law banishing the geese from the city; although one of the members, who had the finest goose pond in the place, talked very learnedly about the famous goose that saved the capitol. It is said that Dirck's antipathy to these honest birds arose from having been attacked and sorely buffeted by a valiant old gander, whose premises he had chanced to invade on some occasion. He was, indeed, the most arrant meddler and busybody of his day, always poking his nose into holes and corners, ferreting out nuisances, and seeking pretexts for new laws; so that if the people had paid any attention to them they would have been under a worse tyranny than that of the Turk or the Spaniard. But they were saved from this by a lucky circumstance the council thinking they did enough by making the laws, let them take care of themselves afterwards; and honest Dirck Smet was too busy begetting new laws, to mind what became of the old ones. Nevertheless, he got the reputation of a most vigilant magistrate, which means a pestilent intermeddler with people's domestic sports and occupations, and a most industrious busybody in attempting impossibilities.

"As soon as Dirck Smet heard the story of the inroads of the winged monster, he fell into a fever of anxiety to do something for the good of the community. He was on the point of proposing a severe law against winged monsters, but from this he was dissuaded by a judicious friend, who represented the difficulty of catching this sort of delinquents, and that this was absolutely necessary, before he could punish them. Baffled in this point, he fumed about from one place to another, insisting that something must be done for the quiet and security of the city, and that a law of some kind or other was absolutely necessary on the occasion, if it were only to show their zeal for the public good. It was his opinion that a bad law was better than no law at all, and that it would be an inexcusable piece of negligence to let these interloping monsters fly over the wall with impunity.

"All this while his excellency the governor of New—Amsterdam said nothing, but thought a great deal. He was a little jealous of the popularity of Dirck Smet, who had got the title of Father of the City, on account of having saved it from the horrors of flying kites, mad dogs, and hissing ganders. In fact, they were two such great men, that the city was not half large enough for them both, and the consequence was, that instead of assisting, they only stood in each other's way, like two carts in a narrow lane. We can have too much of a good thing, even as regards laws and rulers. The governor was determined to do nothing, for no other reason that could ever be discovered than because his rival was so busy. The fears of the good citizens, however, and their increasing clamours against the negligence of their rulers, at length roused the activity of the governor, who forthwith convened his council, to deliberate upon the best means of saving the city of New—Amsterdam.

"Dirck Smet, who was ex—officio a member, was in his glory on this occasion, and talked so much that there was no time for acting. At length, however, the inward man gave out, and he had not breath to say anything more. It was then, tradition says, that a silent old member, who never made a set speech in his life, proposed, in as few words as possible, and in a quiet colloquial manner, that measures should be first taken to ascertain the truth of the story, after which means might be found to detect the miracle or the impostor, whatever it might be. It is affirmed the whole council was astonished that a man should be able to say so much in so few words, and that henceforth the silent member was considered the wisest of them all. Even Dirck Smet held his tongue for the rest of the sitting, thus furnishing another striking proof, my children, that good sense is an overmatch for the most confirmed garrulity. The same old gentleman suggested, that as Saturday night seemed to be the period chosen for his two visits by the winged monster, it would be advisable to place some of the most trusty of the city guard in

ambush in the vicinity of the spot where, according to the testimony of Jan Sol, he had flown over the wall, to intercept him there, or at least overtake him in his progress to the governor's garden. Everybody wondered at the wisdom of this proposal, which was adopted with only one dissenting voice. Dirck Smet moved, as an amendment, that the word `progress' should be changed to `flight,' but it was negatived, greatly to his mortification, and therefore he voted against the whole proposition, declaring it went against his conscience.

"Accordingly, the next Saturday night a party was got in readiness, of six picked men of the city guard, under the command of Captain Balthaser Knyff, of immortal memory, who had faced more ghosts in his generation than any man living. The whole band was equipped with an extraordinary number of nether garments for defence, and fortified with double allowance of Schiedam, to keep up their courage in this arduous service. The captain was considered a person of the greatest weight in all the city; and in addition to this, he added to his specific gravity, by stuffing into his pocket all the leaden weights he could borrow of a neighbouring grocer, for he did not know but the monster might fly away with him. His comrades remonstrated that this additional weight would impede his pursuit of the foe; but the captain nobly replied, `it was beneath a soldier to run, either from or after an enemy.' The most perfect secrecy was preserved in all these arrangements.

"Thus equipped, they took their station, about eleven o'clock on the Saturday night following the last appearance of the winged monster, under cover of one of the neighbouring houses, and there waited the coming of the mysterious visiter. Twelve o'clock, the favourite hour of spectres of all sorts, came and passed, yet no spectre appeared peeping over the wall. By this time they began to be wearied with long watching, and it was proposed that they should take turns, one at a time, while the others slept off the fatigue of such unheard-of service. The lot fell upon Jan Sol, who being, as it were, a sort of old acquaintance of the spectre, was supposed to be particularly qualified for this honour. Jan forthwith posted himself at the corner of the house, upon one leg, to make sure of keeping awake, as he had whilome seen the New-Amsterdam geese do, ere they were banished from the city, by the inflexible patriotism of Dirck Smet, the great lawgiver.

"The little Dutch sentinel stood for about half an hour, sometimes on one leg, sometimes on the other, with his head full of hobgoblins and his heart full of fears. All was silent as the grave, save the sonorous music of the captain's vocal nose, or, as it might be poetically expressed, `living lyre,' which ever and anon snorted a low requiem to the waning night. The moon was on the swift decrease, and now exhibited an arch not unlike a bright Indian bow, suspended in the west, a little above the distant horizon. Gradually it sank behind the hills, leaving the world to the guardianship of the watchmen of the night, the twinkling stars. Scarcely a minute after, the heart of honest Jan was sent bumping against his trusty ribs, by the appearance of something slowly rising above the indistinct line of the city wall, which I ought to observe was made of wood. The spectre gradually mounted higher and higher, and rested on the very spot where he had seen it twice before. The teeth of Jan Sol chattered, and his knees knocked against each other but he stood his ground manfully, and either would not or could not run away. This time the spectre, though he appeared with two enormous wings projecting from his shoulders, did not whirl them round, or expand them in the manner he had done before. After sitting perched for a few moments on the wall, he flew down to the ground, and crept cautiously along, under cover of the wall, in a direction towards the big house. At this moment, the trusty Jan with some difficulty roused his companions, and silently pointed to the spectre gliding along as before related. Whether it was that it saw or heard something to alarm it, I cannot say; but scarcely had the redoubtable Captain Knyff risen, and shaken from his valiant spirit the fumes of sleep and Schiedam, when the spirit took as it were to itself wings, and sped rapidly towards the gate of the governor's garden. The party pursued, with the exception of the captain, who carried too much weight for a race, and arrived within sight of the gate just in time to see the spectre vanish, either under, over, or inside of it, they could not tell which. When they got to the gate, they found it fast locked, a proof, if any had been wanting, that it must have been something supernatural.

"In pursuance of their instructions, the guard roused the governor, his household, and his troops, with the intention of searching the garden, and, if necessary, every part of his house, for the purpose of detecting this mysterious intruder. The garden was surrounded by a high brick wall, the top of which bristled with iron spikes

and pieces of bottles set in mortar. It was worth a man's life to get over it. There was no getting in or out except by the gate, on the outside of which the governor stationed two trusty fellows, with orders to stand a little apart, and perfectly quiet. Now all the governor's household was wide awake, and in a bustle of anxiety and trepidation, except one alone, who did not make her appearance. This was the governor's only daughter, as pretty a little Dutch damsel as ever crossed Kissing Bridge, or rambled over the green fields of the Manhadoes. Compared to the queer little bodies that figure nowadays in the Broadway, seemingly composed of nothing but hats, feathers, and flounces, she was a composition of real flesh and blood, which is better than all the gauze, silk, tulle, and gros de Naples in the world. A man marries a milliner's shop instead of a woman nowadays," said the old gentleman, glancing a little archly at the fashionable paraphernalia of his pretty pet granddaughter. "Her face and form was all unsophisticated native beauty, and her dress all simplicity and grace."

"Is that her picture hanging in the back parlour?" asked the little girl, in a sly way.

"Yes; but the picture does not do justice either to the beauty or the dress of the original."

"I hope not," said the other; "for if it does, I am sure I would not be like her for the world."

"Pshaw, you baggage," replied the old gentleman, "you'll never be fit to hold a candle to her."

"The search now commenced with great vigour in the garden, although Jan Sol openly declared it as his opinion, that they might look themselves blind before they found the spectre, who could fly over a wall as easy as a grasshopper. He accordingly kept aloof from the retired part of the garden, and stuck close to his noble commander, Captain Knyff, who by this time had come up with the pursuers. All search, however, proved vain; for after a close investigation of more than an hour, it was unanimously agreed that the intruder, whether man, monster, or ghost, could not possibly be hid in the garden. The governor then determined to have the house searched, and accordingly the whole party entered for that purpose, with the exception of the two sentinels without the gate. Here, while rummaging in closets, peering under beds, and looking up chimneys in vain, they were alarmed by a sudden shout from the garden, which made their hearts quake with exceeding apprehension. The shout was succeeded by loud talking and apparent tugging and struggling, as if between persons engaged in hot contention. At the same moment the governor's daughter rushed into her chamber, and throwing herself on the bed with a loud shriek, remained insensible for some time. Everybody was sure she had seen the spectre.

"It appears that while the search was going on in the big house, and the attention of everybody employed in that direction, the sentinels outside the gate heard the key cautiously turned inside, then, after a little pause, slowly open. A face then peeped out as if to take an observation, and the owner, apparently satisfied that the coast was clear, darted forward. The first step, he unluckily tripped over a rope which these trusty fellows had drawn across the gate, and fell full length on the ground. Before he could recover his feet the two sentinels were upon him, and in spite of his exertions kept him down, until their shouts drew the rest of the guard to their assistance. The spectre was then secured with ropes, and safely lodged in the cellar under a strong escort, to await his examination the next morning. Jan Sol was one of the band, though he insisted it was all nonsense to mount guard over a spectre.

"The council met betimes at the sound of a bell, rung by a worthy citizen, who, in addition to his vocation of bellringer, was crier of the court, messenger to the governor, sexton, clerk, and gravedigger to the whole city of New-Amsterdam. It was something to be a man in those days, before the invention of steam engines, spinning jennies, and chessplaying automatons caused such a superfluity of human beings, that it is much if they can now earn salt to their porridge. At that time, men were so scarce, that there were at least half a dozen offices to one man; now there are half a dozen men to one office; all which is owing to machinery. This accumulation of honours in the person of the bellringer, made him a man of considerable consequence, insomuch, that the little boys about Flattenbarrack Hill chalked his name upon their sleighs, and it is even asserted that he had an Albany sloop called after him. I could, therefore, do no less than make honourable mention of a person of his dignity.

"After the council met, and everything was ready, the door of the cellar was cautiously opened, and Jan Sol, at the head, that is to say, in the rear of a file of soldiers, descended for the purpose of bringing forth this daring interloper, who had thus, from time to time, disturbed the sleep of the sober citizens of New-Amsterdam. Jan offered to bet a canteen of Schiedam, that they would find nobody in the cellar; but, contrary to all expectation, they presently came forth with the body of a comely youth, apparently about the age of five-and-twenty, which was considered very young in those days. Nothing was more customary there, than for a sturdy mother to bastinado her boys, as she called them, after they had grown to be six feet high. They were all the better for it, and made excellent husbands.

"When the young man came into the presence of the puissant governor of the New Netherlands, he appeared a comely person, tall, fair complexioned, and pleasant of feature. He was asked whence he came, and not having a lawyer at his elbow to teach him the noble art of prevarication, replied without hesitation,

"`From Pavonia.'

"`How did you get into the city?'

"`I climbed the wall, near the company's windmill. '

"`And how did you get into the governor's garden?'

"`The same way I got out.'

"`How was that?'

"`Through the gate.'

"`How did you get through the gate?'

"`By unlocking it.'

"`With what?'

"`With a key.'

"`Whence came that key?'

"No answer.

"`Whence came that key?'

"`I shall not tell.'

"`What induced you to scale the wall and intrude into the garden?'

"`I shall not tell.'

"`Not if you are hanged for not telling?'

"`Not if I am hanged for not telling.'

"What have you done with the wings with which, according to the testimony of Jan Sol, you flew from the wall, and through the street to the governor's garden?"

"I never had any wings, and never flew in the whole course of my life."

"Here Jan Sol was called up, and testified positively to the wings and the flying. There was now great perplexity in the council, when the keeper of the windmill demanded to be heard. He stated he remembered perfectly well, that on the two nights referred to, he had set his windmill going about the hour in which Jan Sol saw the spectre whirl round and fly from the wall. There had been a calm for several days previous, and the citizens began to be in want of flour. He had therefore taken advantage of the rising of the wind at the time, to set his mill going. A little further inquiry led to the fact, that the place where the spectre scaled the wall was exactly in a line with the windmill and the spot where Jan held his watch. It was thus that the spectre became identified with the wings of the mill. This exposition marvellously quieted the fears of the good people; but there were a number of stern believers who stuck by the little sentinel, and continued to believe in the winged monster. As for poor Jan, he looked ten times more foolish than when he used to be caught emptying the canteens of his comrades in his sleep. This elucidation being over, the examination proceeded.

"Did you know of the law making it death for any one to enter or depart from the city between sunset and sunrise, except through the gate?"

"I did."

"What induced you to violate it?"

"I shall not tell."

"Was it plunder?"

"I am no thief."

"Was it treason against the state?"

"I am no traitor."

"Was it mischief?"

"I am not a child."

"Was it to frighten people?"

"I am no fool."

"What is your name?"

"My name is of no consequence a man can be hanged without a name."

"And this was all they could get out of him. Various cross-questions were put to entrap him. He replied to them all with perfect freedom and promptitude, until they came to his name, and his motives for intruding into the city in violation of a law so severe, that none as yet had ever been known to transgress it. Then, as before, he declined answering.

"In those early days, under the Dutch dynasty, trial by jury was not in fashion. People were too busy to serve as jurymen, if they had been wanted; and the decision of most cases was left either to the burgomasters, or if of great consequence, to the governor and council. Justice was severe and prompt, in proportion to the dangers which surrounded the early colonists, and the spirit of the times in which they flourished. They lived in perpetual apprehension; and fear is the father of cruelty. The law denouncing death to any person who should enter the city between sunset and sunrise, except by the gate, was considered as too essential to the security of the citizens to be relaxed in favour of any one, especially of a person who refused to tell either his name or the motive for his intrusion. By his own admission, he was guilty of the offence, and but one course remained for the council. The young man was sentenced to be hanged that day week, and sent to the fort for safe keeping till the period arrived.

"That day the daughter of the governor did not appear to grace the table of his excellency, nor in the management of those little household affairs, that are not beneath the dignity of the daughters of kings. She was ill with a headache, and kept her bed. The governor had no child but her, and though without any great portion of sensibility, was capable of all the warmth of parental affection. Indeed, all his affections were centred in this little blooming offspring, who was the only being in all the New World that carried a drop of his blood coursing in her blue veins. He was also proud of her so proud, that his pride often got the better of his affection. She had many admirers for she was fair, wealthy, and the daughter of the greatest governor in the New World, not excepting him of Virginia. It followed, as a matter of course, that she was admired, but it was at an awful distance. The honest Dutch swains, who had not pursued the female sprite through all the mazes of romance, and learned how oftentimes highborn ladies stooped to lads of low degree, gaped at her at church, as if she had been a sea serpent. They would as soon have thought of aspiring to the governor's dignity, as to the governor's daughter. Besides, he was one of those absurd old blockheads, who consider nobody good enough for their daughters at home, and hawk them about Europe, in search of some needy sprig of nobility, who will exchange his mighty honours for bags of gold, and a fair, blooming, virtuous virgin into the bargain. He had sworn a thousand times, that his Blandina should never marry anything below a Dutch baron."

"Was her name Blandina was she my namesake?" interrupted the little granddaughter.

"Yes, girl, she was your great great grandmother, and you were christened after her," said the old man, and proceeded.

"This fear on the part of the young fellows of New-Amsterdam, and this well-known determination of the governor, kept all admirers at an awful distance from the young lady, who grew up to the age of eighteen, loving no one save her father, now that her mother was no more; and an old black woman, who had taken care of her ever since she was a child. The throne of her innocent bosom had remained till then quite vacant, nor did she know for certain what it was that made her sometimes so weary of the world, and so tired of the length of the livelong sultry summer hours. She walked into the garden to pluck the flowers, until she became tired of that. She strolled with her old nurse into the rural retirement of Ladies' Valley, and the shady paths which coursed the wood where the Park is now, until she became tired of these. In short, she became tired of everything, and so spiritless, that her father was not a little alarmed for her health.

"About this time the governor was called by important political business to the eastern frontier, and the journey was expected to take up several days. During his absence, a party was formed to cross the river, and spend the day in rambling about the romantic solitudes of Weehawk, then a sort of frontier between the white man and the Indian. Blandina was pressed to accompany them, and at last consented, although against the will, not only of the governor's deputy, but of the governor himself, who would certainly have forbidden it, had he been present; but he was a hundred miles off, and in the absence of the governor there was nobody equal to the governor's daughter. The morning was fine, and the party set out as happy as youthful spirits and youthful anticipations could make them. Here they rambled at will and at random, in groups, in pairs, and alone, just as it suited them; gathering together to take their refreshments, and again separating, as chance or will directed them.

"Blandina had separated from the others, and wandered, almost unconsciously, half a mile from the landing place by herself. Perhaps when she set out, she expected some of the beaux to follow, but they stood in such awe of her, that not one had the temerity to offer his attendance. Each being occupied with his own pursuits and reflections, no one missed the young madam for some time, until their attention was roused by a shriek at a distance in the wood. After a momentary pause, the shrieks were repeated in quick succession, and almost immediately succeeded by the report of a gun. The little group of young people was struck with dismay, and the first impulse was to run to the boats, and escape into the stream. But to do them justice, this was but an involuntary selfishness, for the moment they missed Blandina, the young men prepared to pursue in the direction of the shrieks and the gun. At this crisis, a figure darted swiftly from the wood, bearing the young lady insensible in his arms, and approaching the group, placed her with her head in the lap of one of the girls, while he ran to the river, and returned with some water in his hat.

"Blandina soon came to herself, and related that she had been seized by an Indian, and rescued by the young man, who, all the young damsels presently discovered, was very handsome. He wore the dress of a gentleman of that day, which, sooth to say, would not cut much of a figure just now. He was accoutred as a sportsman, and had in his bag sufficient evidence of his skill. It was decided on all hands that the stranger, having saved the life of Blandina, or at least rescued her from captivity, was destined to be her future husband, and that her time was now come. Such prophecies are very apt to be fulfilled. The stranger announced himself as the son of the ancient and honourable Lord of Pavonia, and was blushing invited by Blandina to come and receive the thanks of her father, when he should return from the eastern frontier. But he only shook his head, and replied with a dubious smile, 'Are you sure I shall be welcome?'

"From this time Blandina became more languid and thoughtful than ever. When the father returned, and heard the story of her straying into the woods, and of her deliverance, he swore he would reward the gallant young man, like a most liberal and puissant governor. But when afterwards, on inquiring his name, he found that he was the son of the Lord of Pavonia, he retracted his promise, and swore that the son was no better than the father, who was an arrant splutterkin. They had quarrelled about boundaries; his excellency claiming the whole of the river on the west side, up to the high-water mark, while the Lord of Pavonia, whose territories lay exactly opposite the city of New-Amsterdam, had the temerity to set nets, and catch shad in the very middle of the stream. The feud was bitter in proportion to the dignity of the parties and the importance of the point at issue. The governor commanded his daughter never to mention the name of the splutterkin, on pain of his displeasure.

"Rumour, however, says that the young man found means to renew his acquaintance with Blandina, and that though she might never mention his name to her father, she thought of him all day, and dreamed about him all night. After a while the rumour died away, and the people began to think and talk of something else. Some of the young men, however, who happened to see the culprit that had dared to leap over the wall against the statute, thought he had a strong resemblance to the youth who had rescued Blandina from the Indian. The young lady, as I said before, continued ill all day, and for several days after the condemnation of the spectre youth, who persevered in obstinately refusing any disclosure of his name, or his motives for scaling the walls of New-Amsterdam. In the mean time the period of his execution approached; only two days of life now remained to him, when Blandina, with an effort, determined to bring her fate to a crisis at once. She rose from her bed, pale and drooping like a lily, and tottering to her father's study, sank at his feet.

"'Father,' said she, 'will you forgive him and me?'

"'Forgive thee, my daughter; I have nothing to forgive, so that is settled. But who is the other?'

"'My husband.'

"'Thy husband!' exclaimed the puissant governor, starting up in dismay; 'and who is he?'

"The youth who is sentenced to die the day after the morrow."

"And who is he in the d l's name, I had almost said," exclaimed his excellency, in wrathful amazement.

"He is the son of the Lord of Pavonia," replied she, hiding her face with her hands.

"And thou art married to that splutterkin?"

"Yes, father."

"Then I shall take care to unmarry thee the knot the parson tied the hangman shall untie the day after the morrow, or I'm no governor. But who dared to marry thee against my will?"

"Dominie Curtenius."

"He did then the dominie shall hang by the side of the splutterkin. Go to thy chamber, to thy bed, to thy grave, thou art no daughter of mine."

Poor Blandina crawled to her bed, and wept herself into a temporary forgetfulness. The next day she was so much worse, that the old nurse declared she would die before her husband. The governor kept up a good countenance, but his heart was sorely beset by pity and forgiveness, which both clung weeping about him. He went so far as to sound some of the council about pardoning the young man; but one of them, who was suspected of looking up to the fair Blandina, talked so eloquently about the safety of the city and the public good, that he was fain to hold his tongue, and shut himself up, for he could not bear to see his daughter.

At length the day arrived, big with the fate of poor Blandina and her unhappy husband. She sent to her father for permission to see him before he died, but the governor, after a sore struggle, denied her request.

"Then, indeed, he is no longer my father," cried Blandina, and sinking upon her bed, covered her head, as if to shut out the world. Presently the bell tolled the hour of the sacrifice, and its hollow vibrations penetrated the ears of the mourning wife. In spite of her weakness, and the endeavours of the old nurse, she started up, and rushing towards the door of her chamber, exclaimed, wildly, "I will see him I will go and see him die." But her strength failed her, and she sank on the floor. In the mean time a scene, peculiarly interesting to the fortunes of Blandina, was passing below. The proud, obdurate, rich old Lord of Pavonia, had heard of the capture, the condemnation of his only son. For a while his pride and hatred of the Governor of New-Amsterdam almost choked the thought of entreaty or concession to his ancient enemy. But as the time approached, and he heard of the situation of his son, and of his unfortunate wife, who had never offended him, his heart gradually relented. When the morning arrived, and he looked across the smooth river, from the long porch fronting his stately mansion, towards the spot where his son was about suffering an ignominious death, he could restrain his feelings no longer.

Calling for his boatmen and his barge, and hastily putting on his cocked hat and sword, he embarked, crossed swiftly over the river, and landing, proceeded directly to the big house. He demanded an audience of the governor.

"The splutterkin is here too but let him come in, that I may be satisfied the old dog is as miserable as myself," said the governor, with tears in his eyes.

The Lord of Pavonia entered with a stately bow, which was returned in as stately a manner by the governor.

"I come," said Pavonia, "I come," and his voice became choked, "to ask the life of my son at your hands."

"Thy son has broken the laws, and the laws have condemned him to death, justly.'

"I know it,' said the other; `but what if I pay the price of his ransom?'

"I am no money higgler.'

"But if I surrender the right of the river to high-water mark?'

"What!" said his excellency, pricking up his ears, `wilt thou? And the shad fishery, and the diabolical gill nets?'

"Yea all all,' said the other, `to save the life of my only son.'

"Wilt thou sign, seal, and deliver?'

"This instant so I receive back my boy alive.'

"Stay, then, a moment.'

"The governor then hastily directed his bellringer to call the council together, and laid the proposition before them. The concession was irresistible, and the council decided to pardon the son, on condition that the father executed the deed of relinquishment. He did so, and the young man was forthwith set at liberty. It is time for me to retire," said our good grandfather, "so I must cut short my story. The meeting of the husband and his faithful wife took place without witnesses, and none was ever able to describe it. Blandina speedily recovered, and lived to see her children's children play about the room by dozens. The Lord of Pavonia and the Governor of New-Amsterdam continued a sort of grumbling acquaintance, and dined together once a year, when they always quarrelled about the fishery and high-water mark. In process of time, their respective fortunes became united in the person of the winged monster, and formed a noble patrimony, some of which I inherited with your grandmother.

"Jan Sol underwent many a joke, good, bad, and indifferent, about the winged monster. But he continued to his dying day to assert his solemn belief, that the young Lord of Pavonia and the spectre were two different persons. Many a time and oft did he frighten his wife and children with the story, which he improved every time he told it, till he was at length gathered to his fathers, as his fathers had been gathered before him. He had enough people to keep him in countenance, for there were hundreds of discreet citizens, who treated all doubts concerning the appearance of the winged monster with as little toleration as do the good folks of the town of Salem the wicked unbelievers in the existence of the great sea serpent."

COBUS YERKS.

Little Cobus Yerks his name was Jacob, but being a Dutchman, if not a double Dutchman, it was rendered in English Cobus little Cobus, I say, lived on the banks of Sawmill River, where it winds close under the brow of the Raven Rock, an enormous precipice jutting out of the side of the famous Buttermilk Hill, of which the reader has doubtless often heard. It was a rude, romantic spot, distant from the high road, which, however, could be seen winding up the hill about three miles off. His nearest neighbours were at the same distance, and he seldom saw company except at night, when the fox and the weasel sometimes beat up his quarters, and caused a horrible cackling among the poultry.

One Tuesday, in the month of November, 1793, Cobus had gone in his wagon to the little market town on the river, from whence the boats plied weekly to New-York, with the produce of the neighbouring farmers. It was then a pestilent little place for running races, pitching quoits, and wrestling for gin slings; but I must do it the

credit to say, that it is now a very orderly town, sober and quiet, save when Parson Mathias, who calls himself a son of thunder, is praying in secret, so as to be heard across the river. It so happened, that of all the days in the year, this was the very day a rumour had got into town, that I myself the veritable writer of this true story had been poisoned by a dish of Souchong tea, which was bought a great bargain of a pedler. There was not a stroke of work done in the village that day. The shoemaker abandoned his awl; the tailor his goose; the hatter his bowstring; and the forge of the blacksmith was cool from dawn till nightfall. Silent was the sonorous harmony of the big spinning wheel; silent the village song, and silent the fiddle of Master Timothy Canty, who passed his livelong time in playing tuneful measures, and catching bugs and butterflies. I must say something of Tim before I go on with my tale.

Master Timothy was first seen in the village, one foggy morning, after a drizzling, warm, showery night, when he was detected in a garret, at the extremity of the suburbs; and it was the general supposition that he had rained down in company with a store of little toads that were seen hopping about, as is usual after a shower. Around his garret were disposed a number of unframed pictures, painted on glass, as in the olden time, representing the Four Seasons, the old King of Prussia, and Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, in their sharp-pointed cocked hats; the fat, bald-pated Marquis of Granby, the beautiful Constantia Phillips, and divers others, not forgetting the renowned Kitty Fisher, who, I honestly confess, was my favourite among them all. The whole village poured into the garret to gaze at these chef d'oeuvres; and it is my confirmed opinion, which I shall carry to the grave, that neither the gallery of Florence, Dresden, nor the Louvre, was ever visited by so many real amateurs. Besides the pictures, there were a great many other curiosities, at least curiosities to the simple villagers, who were always sure of being welcomed by Master Tim with a jest and a tune.

Master Tim, as they came to call him when they got to be a little acquainted, was a rare fellow, such as seldom rains down anywhere, much less on a country village. He was of "merry England," as they call it *lucus a non lucendo* at least so he said and I believe, although he belied his nativity, by being the merriest rogue in the world, even when the fog was at the thickest. In truth, he was ever in a good humour, unless it might be when a rare bug or gorgeous butterfly, that he had followed through thick and thin, escaped his net at last. Then, to be sure, he was apt to call the recreant all the "vagabonds" he could think of. He was a middle-sized man, whose person decreased regularly, from the crown of his head to the I was going to say, sole of his foot but it was only to the commencement of the foot, to speak by the card. The top of his head was broad and flat, and so was his forehead, which took up at least two thirds of his face, that tapered off suddenly to a chin, as sharp as the point of a triangle. His forehead was indeed a large field, diversified like the country into which he had rained down, with singular varieties of hill and dale, meadow and plough land, hedge and ditch, ravine and watercourse. It had as many points as a periwinkle. The brow projected exuberantly, though not heavily, over a pair of rascally little cross-firing, twinkling eyes, that, as the country people said, looked at least nine ways from Sunday. His teeth were white enough, but no two of them were fellows. But his head would have turned the brains of a phrenologist, in exploring the mysteries of its development; it was shaped somewhat like Stony Point which everybody knows as the scene of a gallant exploit of Pennsylvanian Wayne and had quite as many abruptnesses and quizzical protuberances to brag about. At the upper extremity of his forehead, as he assured us, he carried his money, in the shape of a piece of silver, three inches long and two wide, inserted there in consequence of a fracture he got by falling down a precipice in hot chase of a "vagabond of a beetle," as he was pleased to call him. Descending towards terra firma, to wit, his feet, we find his body gradually diminishing to his legs, which were so thin, everybody wondered how they could carry the great head. But, like Captain Wattle, each had a foot at the end of it, full as large as the Black Dwarf. It is so long ago that I almost forget his costume. All I recollect is, that he never wore boots or pantaloons, but exhibited his spindles in all weathers in worsted stockings, and his feet in shoes, gorgeously caparisoned in a pair of square silver buckles, the only pieces of finery he ever displayed.

In the merry months of spring and summer, and early in autumn, Master Timothy was most of his time chasing bugs and butterflies about the fields, to the utter confusion of the people, who wondered what he could want with such trumpery. Being a genius and an idler by profession, I used to accompany him frequently in these excursions, for he was fond of me, and called me vagabond oftener than he did anybody else. He had a little net of

green gauze, so constructed as to open and shut as occasion required, to entrap the small fry, and a box with a cork bottom, upon which he impaled his prisoners with true scientific barbarity, by sticking a pin in them. Thus equipped, this Don Quixote of butterfly catchers, with myself his faithful esquire, would sally out of a morning into the clovered meadows and flower-dotted fields, over brook, through tangled copse and briery dell, in chase of these gentlemen commoners of nature. Ever and anon, as he came upon some little retired nook, where nature, like a modest virgin, shrouded her beauties from the common view a rocky glen, romantic cottage, rustic bridge, or brawling stream, he would take out his little portfolio, and pointing me to some conspicuous station to animate his little landscape, sketch it and me together, with a mingled taste and skill I have never since seen surpassed. I figure in all his landscapes, although he often called me a vagabond, because he could not drill me into picturesque attitudes. But the finest sport for me, was to watch him creeping slyly after a humming bird, the object of his most intense desires, half buried in the bliss of the dewy honeysuckle, and just as he was on the point of covering it with his net, to see the little vagrant flit away with a swiftness that made it invisible. It was an invaluable sight to behold Master Timothy stand wiping his forehead of a forehead, and blessing the bird for a "little vagabond." These were happy times, and at this moment I recall them, I hardly know why, with a melancholy yet pleasing delight.

During the winter season, Master Timothy was usually employed in the daytime painting pleasure sleighs, which, at that period, it was the fashion among the farmers to have as fine as fiddles. Timothy was a desperate hand at a true lover's knot, a cipher, or a wreath of flowers; and as for a blazing sun! he painted one for the squire, that was seriously suspected of melting all the snow in ten leagues round. He would go ten or a dozen miles to paint a sleigh, and always carried his materials on a board upon the top of his head it was before the invention of high-crowned hats. Destiny had decreed he should follow this trade, and nature had provided him a head on purpose. It was as flat as a pancake. In the long winter evenings it was his pleasure to sit by the fireside, and tell enormous stories to groups of horrorstruck listeners. I never knew a man that had been so often robbed on Hounslow Heath, or had seen so many ghosts in his day, as Master Tim Canty. Peace to his ashes! he is dead, and, if report is to be credited, is sometimes seen on moonlight nights in the churchyard, with his little green gauze net, chasing the ghosts of moths and beetles, as he was wont in past times.

But it is high time to return to my story; for I candidly confess I never think of honest Tim that I don't grow as garrulous as an old lady, talking about the revolution and the Yagers. In all country villages I ever saw or heard of, whenever anything strange, new, horrible, or delightful happens, or is supposed to have happened, all the male inhabitants, not to say female, make for the tavern as fast as possible, to hear the news, or tell the news, and get at the bottom of the affair. I don't deny that truth is sometimes to be found at the bottom of a well; but in these cases she is generally found at the bottom of the glass. Be this as it may when Cobus Yerks looked into the village inn, just to say How d'ye do to the landlady, he beheld a party of some ten or a dozen people, discussing the affair of my being poisoned with Souchong tea, which by this time had been extended to the whole family, not one of whom had been left alive by the bloody-minded damsel, Rumour.

Cobus could not resist the fascination of these horrors. He edged himself in among them, and after a little while they were joined by Master Timothy, who, on hearing of the catastrophe of his old fellow-labourer in butterfly catching, had strode over a distance of two miles to our house to ascertain the truth of the story. He of course found it was a mistake, and had now returned with a nefarious design of frightening them all out of their wits by a story of more than modern horrors. By this time it was the dusk of the evening, and Cobus had a long way to travel before he could reach home. He had been so fascinated with the story, and the additions every moment furnished by various new comers, that he forgot the time till it began to grow quite dark; and then he was so horrorstruck at what he had heard, that he grew fast to his chair in the chimney corner, where he had intrenched himself. It was at this moment Master Timothy came in with the design aforesaid.

The whole party gathered round him to know if the story of the poisoning was true. Tim shook his head, and the shaking of such a head was awful. "What! all the family?" cried they, with one voice. "Every soul of them," cried Tim, in a hollow tone "every soul of them, poor creatures; and not only they, but all the cattle, horses, pigs,

ducks, chickens, cats, dogs, and guinea hens, are poisoned." "What! with Souchong tea?" "No with coloquintida." Coloquintida! the very name was enough to poison a whole generation of Christian people. "But the black bulldog!" cried Timothy, in a sepulchral voice, that curdled the very marrow of their innermost bones. "What of the black bulldog?" quoth little Cobus. "Why, they do say that he came to life again after laying six hours stone dead, and ran away howling like a d l incarnate." "A d l incarnate!" quoth Cobus, who knew no more about the meaning of that fell word than if it had been Greek. He only knew it was something very terrible. "Yes," replied Timothy; "and what's more, I saw where he jumped over the barnyard gate, and there was the print of a cloven foot, as plain as the daylight this blessed minute." It was as dark as pitch, but the comparison was considered proof positive. "A cloven foot!" quoth Cobus, who squeezed himself almost into the oven, while the thought of going home all alone in the dark, past the churchyard, the old grave at the cross roads, and, above all, the spot where John Ryer was hanged for shooting the sheriff, smote upon his heart, and beat it into a jelly at least it shook like one. What if he should meet the big black dog, with his cloven foot, who howled like a d l incarnate! The thought was enough to wither the heart of a stone.

Cobus was a little, knock-kneed, broad-faced, and broad-shouldered Dutchman, who believed all things, past, present, and to come, concerning spooks, goblins, and fiends of all sorts and sizes, from a fairy to a giant. Tim Canty knew him of old, for he had once painted a sleigh for him, and frightened Cobus out of six nights' sleep, by the story of a man that he once saw murdered by a highwayman on Hounslow Heath. Tim followed up the story of the black dog with several others, each more appalling than the first, till he fairly lifted Cobus's wits off the hinges, aided as he was by certain huge draughts upon a pewter mug, with which the little man reinforced his courage at short intervals. He was a true disciple of the doctrine that spirit and courage, that is to say, whiskey and valour were synonymous.

It now began to wax late in the evening, and the company departed, not one by one, but in pairs, to their respective homes. The landlady, a bitter root of a woman, and more than a match for half the men in the village, began to grow sleepy, as it was now no longer worth her while to keep awake. Gradually all became quiet within and without the house, except now and then the howling of a wandering cur, and the still more doleful moaning of the winds, accompanied by the hollow thumpings of the waves, as they dashed on the rocky shores of the river that ran hard by. Once, and once only, the cat mewed in the garret, and almost caused Cobus to jump out of his skin. The landlady began to complain that it grew late, and she was very sleepy; but Cobus would take no hints, manfully keeping his post in the chimney corner, till at last the good woman threatened to call up her two negroes, and have him turned neck and heels out of doors. For a moment the fear of the big black dog with the cloven foot was mastered by the fear of the two stout black men, and the spirit moved Cobus towards the door, lovingly hugging the stone jug, which he had taken care to have plentifully replenished with the creature. He sallied forth in those graceful curves, which are affirmed to constitute the true lines of beauty; and report says that he made a copious libation of the contents of the stone jug outside the door, ere the landlady, after assisting to untie his patient team, had tumbled him into his wagon. This was the last that was seen of Cobus Yerks.

That night his faithful, though not very obedient little wife, whom he had wedded at Tappan, on the famous sea of that name, and who wore a cap trimmed with pink ribands when she went to church on Sundays, fell asleep in her chair, as she sat anxiously watching his return. About midnight she waked, but she saw not her beloved Cobus, nor heard his voice calling her to open the door. But she heard the raven, or something very like it, screaming from the Raven Rock, the foxes barking about the house, the wind whistling and moaning among the rocks and trees of the mountain side, and a terrible commotion among the poultry, Cobus having taken the great house dog with him that day. Again she fell asleep, and waked not until the day was dawning. She opened the window, and looked forth upon as beautiful an autumnal morning as ever blessed this blessed country. The yellow sun threw a golden lustre over the many-tinted woods, painted by the cunning hand of Nature with a thousand varied dyes; the smoke of the neighbouring farmhouses rose straight upward to heaven in the pure atmosphere, and the breath of the cattle mingled its warm vapour with the invisible clearness of the morning air. But what were all these beauties of delicious nature to the eye and the heart of the anxious wife, who saw that Cobus was not there?

She went forth to the neighbours to know if they had seen him, and they good-naturedly sallied out to seek him on the road that led from the village to his home. But no traces of him could be found, and they were returning with bad news for his anxious wife, when they bethought themselves of turning into a byroad that led to a tavern, that used whilome to attract the affections of honest Cobus, and where he was sometimes wont to stop and wet his whistle.

They had not gone far, when they began to perceive traces of the lost traveller. First his broad-brimmed hat, which he had inherited through divers generations, and which he always wore when he went to the village, lay grovelling in the dirt, crushed out of all goodly shape by the wheel of his wagon, which had passed over it. Next, they encountered the backboard of the wagon, ornamented with C. Y. in a true lover's knot, painted by Tim Canty, in his best style and anon a little farther, a shoe, that was identified as having belonged to our hero, by having upward of three hundred hobnails in the sole, for he was a saving little fellow, though he would wet his whistle sometimes, in spite of all his wife and the minister could say. Proceeding about a hundred rods farther, to a sudden turn of the road, they encountered the wagon, or rather the fragments of it, scattered about and along in the highway, and the horses standing quietly against a fence, into which they had run the pole of the wagon.

But what was become of the unfortunate driver, no one could discover. At length, after searching some time, they found him lying in a tuft of blackberry briars, amid the fragments of the stone jug, lifeless and motionless. His face was turned upward, and streaked with seams of blood; his clothes torn, bloody, and disfigured with dirt; and his pipe, that he carried in the buttonholes of his waistcoat, shivered all to naught. They made their way to the body, full of sad forebodings, and shook it, to see if any life remained. But it was all in vain there seemed neither sense nor motion there. "Maybe, after all," said one, "he is only in a swound here is a little drop of the spirits left in the bottom of the jug let us hold it to his nose, it may bring him to life."

The experiment was tried, and wonderful to tell, in a moment or two, Cobus, opening his eyes, and smacking his lips, with peculiar satisfaction, exclaimed, "Some o' that, boys!" A little shaking brought him to himself, when being asked to give an account of the disaster of his wagon and his stone jug, he at first shook his head mysteriously, and demurred. Being, however taken to the neighbouring tavern, and comforted a little with divers refreshments, he was again pressed for his story, when, assuming a face of awful mystification, he began as follows:

"You must know," said Cobus, "I started rather late from town, for I had been kept there by by business; and because, you see, I was waiting for the moon to rise, that I might find my way home in the dark night. But it grew darker and darker, until you could not see your hand before your face, and at last I concluded to set out, considering I was as sober as a deacon, and my horses could see their way blindfold. I had not gone quite round the corner, where John Ryer was hung for shooting Sheriff Smith, when I heard somebody coming, pat, pat, pat, close behind my wagon. I looked back, but I could see nothing, it was so dark. By-and-by, I heard it again, louder and louder, and then I confess I began to be a little afeard. So I whipped up my horses a quarter of a mile or so, and then let them walk on. I listened, and pat, pat, pat, went the noise again. I began to be a good deal frightened, but considering it could be nothing at all, I thought I might as well take a small dram, as the night was rather chilly, and I began to tremble a little with the cold. I took but a drop, as I am a living sinner, and then went on quite gayly; but pat, pat, pat, went the footsteps ten times louder and faster than ever. And then! then I looked back, and saw a pair of saucer eyes just at the tail of my wagon, as big and as bright as the mouths of a fiery furnace, dancing up and down in the air like two stage lamps in a rough road.

"By gosh, boys, but you may depend I was scared now! I took another little dram, and then made the whip fly about the ears of old Pepper and Billy, who cantered away at a wonderful rate, considering. Presently, bang! something heavy jumped into the wagon, as if heaven and earth were coming together. I looked over my shoulder, and the great burning eyes were within half a yard of my back. The creature was so close that I felt its breath blowing upon me, and it smelled for all one exactly like brimstone. I should have jumped out of the wagon, but, somehow or other, I could not stir, for I was bewitched as sure as you live. All I could do was to bang away upon

Pepper and Billy, who rattled along at a great rate up hill and down, over the rough roads, so that if I had not been bewitched, I must have tumbled out to a certainty. When I came to the bridge, at old Mangham's, the black dog, for I could see something black and shaggy under the goggle eyes, all at once jumped up, and seated himself close by me on the bench, snatched the whip and reins out of my hands like lightning. Then looking me in the face, and nodding, he whispered something in my ear, and lashed away upon Pepper and Billy, till they seemed to fly through the air. From that time I began to lose my wits by degrees, till at last the smell of brimstone overpowered me, and I remember nothing till you found me this morning in the briars."

Here little Cobus concluded his story, which he repeated with several variations and additions to his wife, when he got home. That good woman, who, on most occasions, took the liberty of lecturing her good man, whenever he used to be belated in his excursions to the village, was so struck with this adventure, that she omitted her usual exhortation, and ever afterwards viewed him as one ennobled by supernatural communication, submitting to him as her veritable lord and master. Some people, who pretend to be so wise that they won't believe the evidence of their senses when it contradicts their reason, affected to be incredulous, and hinted that the goggle eyes, and the brimstone breath, appertained to Cobus Yerks's great housedog, which had certainly followed him that day to the village, and was found quietly reposing by his master, in the tuft of briars. But Cobus was ever exceedingly wroth at this suggestion, and being a sturdy little brusier, had knocked down one or two of these unbelieving sinners, for venturing to assert that the contents of the stone jug were at the bottom of the whole business. After that, everybody believed it, and it is now for ever incorporated with the marvellous legends of the renowned Buttermilk Hill.

A STRANGE BIRD IN NIEUW-AMSTERDAM.

In the year of the building of the city (which in Latin is called *Anno Urba Conditur*) fifty-five, to wit, the year of our Lord 1678, there appeared a phenomenon in the street of Nieuw-Amsterdam called Garden-street. This was a youthful stranger, dressed in the outlandish garb of the English beyond the Varsche river, towards the east, where those interlopers have grievously trespassed on the territories of their high mightinesses, the states general. Now, be it known that this was the first stranger from foreign parts that ever showed himself in the streets of Nieuw-Amsterdam, which had never been before invaded in like manner. Whereat the good people were strangely perplexed and confounded, seeing they could by no means divine his business. The good yffrouws did gaze at him as he passed along by their stoops, and the idle boys followed him wheresoever he went, shouting and hallooing, to the great disturbance of the peaceable and orderly citizens, of whom it was once said that the barking of a cur disturbed the whole city.

But the stranger took not the least heed of the boys or their hallooings, but passed straight onward, looking neither to the right nor to the left, which circumstance seemed exceedingly perplexing to the good yffrouws, seeing it savoured of having no curiosity to see or be seen, which to them appeared altogether out of nature. The stranger proceeded in a sort of rigmarole way, seeming little to care whither he went, all along by the Stadt Huys, the East and West Docks, the Bendeel or Battery, the Rondeels, and I can't tell where else. All the while he seemed to take no notice of anything, which everybody thought strange, since he appeared as if he had no other business than to see the city.

In the course of his marvellous peregrinations, he at length came to the great building, which, being the only house of public resort, was called, by way of eminence, the City Tavern. Here he stopped all of a sudden, so abruptly, that little Brom, son of Alderman Botherwick, who was close at his heels, did run right upon his hinder parts, and almost knocked him down, before he could stop himself. Whereupon the stranger turned round and gave him a look, whether of menace or good will, was long after disputed by divers people that saw him. Be this as it may, the stranger, on seeing the tavern, nodded his head, and went straight up the steps into the bar-room, where he courteously saluted the landlord, good Mynheer Swighauser, by pulling off his hat, saying, at the same time, nothing; which mynheer thought rather mighty particular. He asked the interloping stranger what he would

please to have; for he was a polite man enough, except to losel beggars, and that sort of vermin. The stranger hereupon said nothing, but addressed Mynheer Swighauser in a figurative style, which all landlords comprehend. He pulled out a purse, and showed him the money, at the sight of which mynheer made him a reverend bow, and ushered him into the Half Moon, so called from being ornamented with a gallant picture of the vessel of that name, in which good Master Hendrick Hudson did first adventure to the discovery of the Manhadoes. It was the best room in the house, and always reserved by Mynheer Swighauser for guests that carried full purses.

Having so done, mynheer courteously asked the stranger what he would please to have for dinner, it being now past eleven o'clock, and the dinner hour nigh. Whereat the stranger looked hard at him, and said not a word. Mynheer thereupon raised his voice so loud, that he frightened divers tame pigeons, sitting on their coop in the yard, who rose into the air out of sight, and, it is affirmed, never returned again. The stranger answered not a word, as before.

"*Wat donder is dat?*" exclaimed mynheer; "a man with such a full purse might venture to call for his dinner, I think."

However, when Mynheer Swighauser and his family sat down to their dinner at twelve o'clock, the stranger, without any ceremony, sat down with them, taking the chair from time immemorial appropriated to mynheer's youngest child, who was thereat so mortally offended, that she set up a great cry, and refused to eat any dinner. Yffrouw Swighauser looked hard and angry at the stranger, who continued to eat as if it were his last, saying nothing all the while, and paying no more heed to the little child than he did to the hallooing of the boys or mynheer's courteous interrogatories.

When he had finished, he took up his hat, and went forth on a peregrination, from which he did not return until it was nigh dusk. Mynheer was in tribulation lest he should lose the price of his dinner, but the yffrouw said she did not care if she never saw such a dumb noddy again. The stranger ate a huge supper in silence, smoked his pipe, and went to bed at eight o'clock, at which hour mynheer always shut up the front of his house, leaving the back door open to the roistering younkers, who came there to carouse every night, and play at all-fours. Soon after the stranger retired, there was heard a great noise in his room, which so excited the curiosity of Yffrouw Swighauser, that she took a landlady's liberty, and went and listened at the door. It proved only the stranger playing a concert with Morpheus, on the nasal trumpet, whereupon the yffrouw went away, exclaiming,

"The splutterkin! he makes noise enough in his sleep, if he can't when he is awake."

That night the good city of Nieuw-Amsterdam was impestered with divers strange noises, grievous mishaps, and unaccountable appearances. The noises were such as those who heard them could not describe, and, for that reason, I hope the courteous reader will excuse me, if I say nothing more about them; the mishaps were of certain mysterious broken heads, black eyes, and sore bruises received, as was affirmed, from unknown assailants; and the mysterious appearances consisted in lights moving about, at midnight, in the Ladies' Valley, since called Maiden Lane, which might have passed for lightning bugs, only people that saw them said they were as big as jack-a-lanterns. Besides these, there were seen divers stars shooting about in the sky, and an old yffrouw, being called out after midnight on a special occasion, did certify that she saw two stars fighting with each other, and making the sparks fly at every blow. Other strange things happened on that memorable night, which alarmed the good citizens, and excited the vigilance of the magistrates.

The next night, matters were still worse. The lights in the Ladies' Valley were larger and more numerous; the noises waxed more alarming and unaccountable; and the stranger, while he continued to act and say nothing all day, snored louder than ever. At length, Yffrouw Swighauser, being thereunto, as I suspect, instigated by a stomachful feeling, on account of the stranger's having got possession of her favourite's seat, and set her a crying, did prevail, by divers means, of which, thank Heaven, I have little experience, being a bachelor, to have her husband go and make a complaint against the stranger, as having some diabolical agency in these matters.

"*Wat donner meen je, wife?*" quoth mynheer; "what have I to say against the man? He is a very civil, good sort of a body, and never makes any disturbance except in his sleep."

"Ay, there it is," replied the yffrouw. "I never heard such a snore in all my life. Why, it's no more like yours than the grunt of a pig is to the roar of a lion. It's unnatural."

Mynheer did not like this comparison, and answered and said, "By St. Johannes de Dooper, whoever says I snore like a pig is no better than a goose."

The yffrouw had a point to gain, or Mynheer Swighauser would have repented this rejoinder.

"My duck—a—deary," said she, "whoever says you don't snore like a fiddle has no more ear for music than a mole I mean a squeaking fiddle," quoth she, aside.

Without further prosecuting this dialogue, let it suffice to say that the yffrouw at length wrought upon mynheer to present the stranger unto Alderman Schlepvalcker as a mysterious person, who came from nobody knew where, for nobody knew what; and for aught he knew to the contrary, was at the bottom of all the disturbances that had beset the good people of Nieuw—Amsterdam for the last two nights. Accordingly, the honest man went on his way to the Stadt Huys, where the excellent magistrate was taking his turn in presiding over the peace of the city of Nieuw—Amsterdam, and told all he knew, together with much more besides.

During this communication, the worthy alderman exclaimed, from time to time, "Indeedaad!" "Onbegrypelyk!" "Goeden Hemel!" "Is het mogelyk!" "Vuur envlammen!" and finally dismissed Mynheer Swighauser, desiring him to watch the stranger, and come next day with the result of his observations. After which he went home to consult his pillow, which he considered worth all the law books in the world.

The honest publican returned to the City Tavern, where he found supper all ready; and the stranger, sitting down as usual in the old place, ate a hearty meal without uttering one word. The yffrouw was out of all patience with him, seeing she never before had a guest in the house four—and—twenty hours, without knowing all about him. The upshot of the interview with the worthy magistrate being disclosed to the yffrouw, it was agreed in secret to set old Quashee, the black hostler, to watch the stranger; though the yffrouw told her husband he might as well set a wooden image to do it, for Quashee was the most notorious sleepyhead in all Nieuw—Amsterdam, not excepting himself.

"Well, well," quoth mynheer, "*men weet niet hoe een koe een haas vangt kan;*" which means, "There is no saying that a cow won't catch a hare," and so the matter was settled.

When the stranger retired to his room after supper, the old negro was accordingly stationed outside the door, with strict injunctions to keep himself awake, on pain of losing his Newyear present, and being shut up in the stable all Newyear's day. But it is recorded of Quashee, that the flesh was too strong for the spirit, though he had a noggin of genuine Holland to comfort him, and that he fell into a profound nap, which lasted till after sunrise next day, when he was found sitting bolt upright on a three—legged stool, with his little black stump of a pipe declining from the dexter corner of his mouth. Mynheer was exceeding wroth, and did accommodate old Quashee with such a hearty cuff on the side of his head, that he fell from the stool, and did incontinently roll down the stairs and so into the kitchen, where he was arrested by the great Dutch andirons. "*Een vervloekte jonge ,*" exclaimed Mynheer Swighauser, "*men weet niet, hoe een dubbeltje rollen kan*" in English, "There is no saying which way a sixpence will roll."

At breakfast, the stranger was for the first time missing from his meals, and this excited no small wonder in the family, which was marvellously aggravated, when, after knocking some time and receiving no answer, the door was opened, and the stranger found wanting.

"*Is het mogelyk!*" exclaimed the yffrouw, and "*Wat blixen!*" cried mynheer. But their exclamations were speedily arrested by the arrival of the reverend schout, Master Roelif, as he was commonly called, who summoned them both forthwith to the Stadt Huys, at the command of his worship Alderman Schlepevalker.

"*Ben je bedonnered?*" cried mynheer; "what can his worship want of my wife now?"

"Never mind," replied the good yffrouw, "*het is goed visschen in troebel water,*" and so they followed Master Roelif to the Stadt House, according to the behest of Alderman Schlepevalker, as aforesaid. When they arrived there, whom should they see, in the middle of a great crowd in the hall of justice, but that "*vervloete hond,*" the stranger, as the yffrouw was wont to call him, when he would not answer her questions.

The stranger was standing with his hands tied behind, and apparently unconscious, or indifferent to what was going forward around him. It appears he had been detected very early in the morning in a remote part of the King's Farm, as it was afterwards called, but which was then a great forest full of rabbits and other game, standing over the dead body of a man, whose name and person were equally unknown, no one recollecting ever to have seen him before. On being interrogated on the subject, he had not only declined answering, but affected to take not the least heed of what they said to him. Under these suspicious circumstances he was brought before the magistrate, charged with the murder of the unknown person, whose body was also produced in proof of the fact. No marks of violence were found on the body, but all agreed that the man was dead, and that there must have been some cause for his death. The vulgar are ever prone to suspicions, and albeit, are so fond of seeing a man hanged, that they care little to inquire whether he is guilty or not.

The worthy alderman, after ordering Master Roelif to call the people to order, proceeded to interrogate the prisoner as followeth:

"What is thy name?"

The stranger took not the least notice of him.

"What is thy name, *ben je bedonnered?*" repeated the worthy magistrate, in a loud voice, and somewhat of a violent gesture of impatience.

The stranger looked him in the face and nodded his head.

"*Wat donner is dat?*" cried the magistrate.

The stranger nodded as before.

"*Wat donner meen je?*"

Another nod. The worthy magistrate began, as it were, to wax wroth, and demanded of the prisoner whence he came; but he had relapsed into his usual indifference, and paid not the least attention, as before. Whereupon the angry alderman committed him for trial, on the day but one following, as the witnesses were all on the spot, and the prisoner contumacious. In the interim, the body of the dead man had been examined by the only two doctors of Nieuw-Amsterdam, Mynheer Van Dosum and Mynheer Vander Cureum, who being rival practitioners, of course differed entirely on the matter. Mynheer Van Dosum decided that the unknown died by the hand of man, and Mynheer Vander Cureum, by the hand of his Maker.

When the cause came to be tried, the stranger, as before, replied to all questions, either by taking not the least notice, or nodding his head. The worthy magistrate hereupon was sorely puzzled, whether this ought to be construed into pleading guilty or not pleading at all. In the former case his course was quite clear; in the latter, he

did not exactly know which way to steer his doubts. But fortunately having no lawyers to confound him, he finally decided, after consulting the ceiling of the courtroom, that as it was so easy for a man to say not guilty, the omission or refusal to say it was tantamount to a confession of guilt. Accordingly he condemned the prisoner to be hanged, in spite of the declaration of Doctor Vander Cureum, that the murdered man died of apoplexy.

The prisoner received the sentence, and was conducted to prison without saying a word in his defence, and without discovering the least emotion on the occasion. He merely looked wistfully, first on the worthy magistrate, then on his bonds, and then at Master Roelif, who, according to the custom of such losel varlets in office, rudely pushed him out of the court and dragged him to prison.

On the fourteenth day after his condemnation, it being considered that sufficient time had been allowed him to repent of his sins, the poor stranger was brought forth to execution. He was accompanied by the good dominie, who had prepared his last dying speech and confession, and certified that he died a repentant sinner. His face was pale and sad, and his whole appearance bespoke weakness and suffering. He still persisted in his obstinate silence, and seemed unconscious of what was going forward; whether from indifference or despair, it was impossible to decide. When placed on a coffin in the cart, and driven under the gallows, he seemed for a moment to be aware of his situation, and the bitter tears coursed one by one down his pallid cheeks. But he remained silent as before; and when the rope was tied round his neck, only looked wistfully with a sort of innocent wonder in the face of the executioner.

All being now ready, and the gaping crowd on the tiptoe of expectation, the dominie sang a devout hymn, and shaking hands for the last time with the poor stranger, descended from the cart. The bell tolled the signal for launching him into the illimitable ocean of eternity, when, all at once, its dismal moanings were, as it were, hushed into silence by the piercing shrieks of a female which seemed approaching from a distance. Anon a voice was heard crying out, "Stop, stop, for the love of Heaven stop; he is innocent!"

The crowd opened, and a woman of good appearance, seemingly about forty–five years old, rushed forward, and throwing herself at the feet of the worthy alderman, whose duty it was to preside at the execution and maintain due order among the crowd, cried out aloud,

"Spare him, he is my son he is innocent!"

"*Ben je bedonnered?*" cried the magistrate, "*he is een verdoemde schurk*, and has confessed his crime by not denying it."

"He cannot confess or deny it he was born deaf and dumb!"

"*Goeden Hemel!*" exclaimed Alderman Schlepevalcker; "that accounts for his not pleading guilty or not guilty. But art thou sure of it, good woman?"

"Sure of it! Did not I give him birth, and did I not watch like one hanging over the deathbed of an only child, year after year, to catch some token that he could hear what I said? Did I not try and try, day after day, month after month, year after year, to teach him only to name the name of mother? and when at last I lost all hope that I should ever hear the sound of his voice, did I not still bless Heaven that I was not childless, though my son could not call me mother?"

"*Het is jammer!*" exclaimed the worthy magistrate, wiping his eyes. "But still a dumb man may kill another, for all this. What have you to say against that?"

At this moment the poor speechless youth recognised his mother, and uttering a strange inarticulate scream, burst away from the executioner, leaped from the cart, and throwing himself on her bosom, sobbed as if his heart was

breaking. The mother pressed him to her heart in silent agony, and the absence of words only added to the deep pathos of the meeting.

Alderman Schlepevalcker was sorely puzzled as well as affected on this occasion, and after wiping his eyes, addressed the weeping mother.

"How came thy son hither?"

"He is accustomed to ramble about the country, sometimes all day, alone; and one day having strayed farther than usual, lost his way, and being unable to ask any information, wandered we knew not whither, until a neighbour told us a rumour of a poor youth, who was about to be executed at Nieuw–Amsterdam for refusing to answer questions. I thought it might be my son, and came in time, I hope, to save him."

"Why did not thy husband come with thee?"

"He is dead."

"And thy father?"

"He died when I was a child."

"And thy other relatives?"

"I have none but him," pointing to the dumb youth.

"*Het is jammer!* but how will he get rid of the charge of this foul murder?"

"I will question him," said the mother, who now made various signs, which were replied to by the youth in the same way.

"What does he say?" asked the worthy magistrate.

"He says that he went forth early in the morning of the day; he was found standing over the dead body, as soon as the gate was opened to admit the country people, where he saw the dead man lying under a tree, and was seized while thus occupied. He knows nothing more."

"*Onbegrypelijk!* how can you understand all this?"

"Oh, sir, I have been used to study every look and action of his life since he was a child, and can comprehend his inmost thoughts."

"*Goeden Hemel!* is all this true? but he must go back to prison, while I wait on the governor to solicit his pardon. Wilt thou accompany him?"

"Oh yes! but no. I will go with thee to the governor. He will not deny the petition of a mother for the life of her only child."

Accordingly, the worthy magistrate calling on Doctor Vander Cureum on his way, proceeded to the governor's house, accompanied by the mother of the youth, who repeated what he had told her by signs. The doctor also again certified, in the most positive manner, that the supposed murdered man had died of apoplexy, brought on, as he supposed, by excessive drinking; and the good governor, moved by the benevolence of his heart, did thereupon

grant the poor youth an unconditional pardon. He was rewarded by the tears, the thanks, and the blessings of the now happy mother.

"Where dost thou abide?" asked the governor "If it is at a distance, I will send some one to protect thee."

"My home is beyond the fresh water river."

"*Wat blikslager!* thou belongest to the Splutterkins, who but no matter, thou shalt have protection in thy journey home." The governor, being somewhat of a conscientious man, instead of swearing by the lightning, did piously asseverate by the tinman.

The young man was forthwith released, to the unutterable joy of the mother, and the infinite content of the Yffrouw Swighauser, who, now that she knew the cause of his silence, forgave him with all her heart. The next day the mother and son departed towards home, accompanied by an escort provided by the good governor, the commander of which carried a stout defiance to the Yankees; and the last words of that upright and excellent magistrate, Alderman Schlepevalcker, as he looked kindly at the youth, were,

"*Het is jammer* it is a pity."

CLAAS SCHLASCHENSCHLINGER.

Thrice blessed St. Nicholas! may thy memory and thine honours endure for ever and a day! It is true that certain arch calumniators, such as Romish priests, and the like, have claimed thee as a Catholic saint, affirming, with unparalleled insolence, that ever since the pestilent heresy of the illustrious John Calvin, there hath not been so much as a single saint in the Reformed Dutch Church. But beshrew these keepers of fasts, and other abominations, the truth is not, never was, nor ever will be in their mouths, or their hearts! Doth not everybody know that the blessed St. Nicholas was of the Reformed Dutch Church, and that the cunning Romanists did incontinently filch him from us to keep their own calendar in countenance? The splutterkins! But I will restrain the outpourings of my wrath, and contenting myself with having proved that the good saint was of the true faith, proceed with my story, which is of undoubted authority, since I had it from a descendant of Claas Schlaschenschlinger himself, who lives in great honour and glory at the Waalbocht on Long Island, and is moreover a justice of the peace and deacon of the church.

Nicholas, or, according to the true orthography, Claas Schlaschenschlinger, was of a respectable parentage, being born at Saardam, in our good faderland, where his ancestors had been proprietors of the greatest windmill in all the coiuntry round, ever since the period when that bloody tyrant, Philip of Spain, was driven from the Low Countries by the invincible valour of the Dutch, under the good Prince of Orange. It is said in a certain credible tradition, that one of the family had done a good turn to the worshipful St. Nicholas, in secreting him from the persecutions of the Romanists, who now, forsooth, claim him to themselves! and that ever afterwards the saint took special interest and cognizance in their affairs.

While at Saardam, little Claas, who was the youngest of a goodly family of seventeen children, was observed to be a great favourite of St. Nicholas, whose namesake he was, who always brought him a cake or two extra at his Christmas visits, and otherwise distinguished him above his brothers and sisters; whereat they were not a little jealous, and did sometimes slyly abstract some of the little rogue's benefactions, converting them to their own comfort and recreation.

In the process of time, Claas grew to be a stout lad, and withal a little wild, as he did sometimes neglect the great windmill, the which he had charge of in turn with the rest of his brothers, whereby it more than once came to serious damage. Upon these occasions, the worthy father, who had a reverend care of the morals of his children,

was accustomed to give him the bastinado; but as Claas wore a competent outfit of breeches, he did not much mind it, not he; only it made him a little angry, for he was a boy of great spirit. About the time, I say, that Claas had arrived at the years of two or three and twenty, and was considered a stout boy for his age, there was great talk of settling a colony at the Manhadoes, which the famous Heinrick Hudson had discovered long years before. Many people of good name and substance were preparing to emigrate there, seeing it was described as a land flowing with milk and honey that is to say, abounding in shad and herrings and affording mighty bargains of beaver and other skins.

Now Claas began to cherish an earnest longing to visit these parts, for he was tired of tending the windmill, and besides he had a natural love for marshes and creeks, and being a shrewd lad, concluded that there must be plenty of these where beavers and such like abounded. But his father and the Vrouw Schlaschenschlinger did eschew and anathematize this notion of Claas's, and placed him apprentice to an eminent shoemaker, to learn that useful art and mystery. Claas considered it derogatory to the son of the proprietor of the greatest windmill in all Saardam to carry the lapstone, and wanted to be a doctor, a lawyer, or some such thing. But his father told him in so many words, that there were more lawyers than clients in the town already, and that a good cobbler saved more people from being sick, than all the doctors cured. So Claas became apprentice to the shoemaking business, and served out his time, after which he got to be his own master, and determined to put in practice his design of visiting the Manhadoes, of which he had never lost sight.

After much ado, Mynheer Schlaschenschlinger, and the good vrouw, consented unwillingly to let him follow the bent of his inclinations, and accordingly all things were got ready for his departure for the New World, in company with a party which was going out under that renowned Lord Michael Paauw, who was proceeding to settle his domain of Pavonia, which lieth directly opposite to New-Amsterdam. Mynheer Schlaschenschlinger fitted out his son nobly, and becoming the owner of the largest windmill in all Saardam, equipping him with awls, and knives, and wax, and thread, together with a bench, and a goodly lapstone, considering in his own mind that the great scarcity of stones in Holland might, peradventure, extend to the Manhadoes. Now all being prepared, it was settled that Claas should depart on the next day but one, the next being St. Nicholas his day, and a great festival among the people of Holland.

According to custom, ever since the days of the blessed saint, they had a plentiful supper of waffles and chocolate that pestilent beverage tea not having yet come into fashion and sat up talking of Claas, his adventures, and what he would see and hear in the Manhadoes, till it was almost nine o'clock. Upon this, mynheer ordered them all to bed, being scandalized at such unseasonable hours. In the morning when Claas got up, and went to put on his stocking, he felt something hard at the toe, and turning it inside out, there fell on the floor the bowl of a pipe of the genuine *Meerschaum*, which seemed to have been used beyond memory, since its polish was a thousand times more soft and delightful than ivory or tortoise shell, and its lustre past all price. Would that the blessed saint would bestow such a one on me!

Claas was delighted; he kissed it as if he had been an idolatrous Romanist which, by the blessing of St. Nicholas, he was not and bestowing it in the bottom of his strong oaken chest, resolved, like unto a prudent Dutchman, never to use it, for fear of accidents. In a few hours afterwards, he parted from his parents, his family, and his home; his father gave him a history of the bloody wars and persecutions of Philip of Spain; a small purse of guilders, and abundance of advice for the government of his future life; but his mother gave him what was more precious than all these her tears, her blessing, and a little Dutch Bible with silver clasps. Bibles were not so plenty then as they are now, and were considered as the greatest treasures of the household. His brothers and sisters took an affectionate farewell of him, and asked his pardon for stealing his Newyear cookies. So Claas kissed his mother, promising, if it pleased Heaven, to send her stores of herrings and beaver skins, whereat she was marvellously comforted; and he went on his way, as it were sorrowfully rejoicing.

I shall pass over the journey, and the voyage to the Manhadoes, saving the relation of a curious matter that occurred after the ship had been about ninety days at sea, and they were supposed to be well on their way to the

port of New–Amsterdam. It came into the heads of the passengers to while away the time as they were lying to one day with the sails all furled, except one or two, which I name not, for a special reason, contrary to the practice of most writers namely, because I am ignorant thereof having the sails thus furled, I say, on account of certain suspicious–looking clouds, the which the captain, who kept a bright lookout day and night, had seen hovering overhead, with no good intentions, it came into the noddles of divers of the passengers to pass the time by opening their chests, and comparing their respective outfits, for they were an honest set of people, and not afraid of being robbed.

When Claas showed his lapstone, most of the company, on being told the reasons for bringing it such a long distance, held up their hands, and admired the foresight of his father, considering him an exceeding prudent and wise man to think of such matters. Some of them wanted to buy it on speculation, but Claas was too well acquainted with its value to set a price on it. While they were thus chaffering, an old sailor, who had accompanied the renowned Heinrick Hudson as cabin boy, in his first voyage to the Manhadoes, happening to come by and hear them, swore a great Dutch oath, and called Claas a splutterkin for bringing stones all the way from Holland, saying that there were enough at the Manhadoes to furnish lapstones for the whole universe. Whereupon Claas thought to himself, "What a fine country it must be, where stones are so plenty."

In process of time, as all things, and especially voyagings by sea, have an end, the vessel came in sight of the highlands of Neversink vulgarly called by would–be learned writers, Navesink and Claas and the rest, who had never seen such vast mountains before, did think that it was a wall, built up from the earth to the sky, and that there was no world beyond.

Favoured by a fine south wind, whose balmy freshness had awakened the young spring into early life and beauty, they shot like an arrow from a bow through the Narrows, and sailing along the heights of Staaten Island, came in sight of the illustrious city of New–Amsterdam, which, though at that period containing but a few hundred people, I shall venture to predict, in some future time, may actually number its tens of thousands.

Truly it was a beautiful city, and a beautiful sight as might be seen of a spring morning. As they came through Buttermilk Channel, they beheld with delighted astonishment the fort, the church, the governor's house, the great dock jutting out into the salt river, the Stadt Huys, the rondeel, and a goodly assemblage of houses, with the gable ends to the street, as before the villanous introduction of new fashions, and at the extremity of the city, the gate and wall, from whence Wall–street deriveth its name. But what above all gloriously delighted Claas, was a great windmill, towering in the air, and spreading its vast wings on the rising ground along the Broadway, between Liberty and Courtlandt streets, the which reminded him of home and his parents. The prospect rejoiced them all mightily, for they thought to themselves, "We have come to a little Holland far over the sea."

So far as I know, it was somewhere about the year of our Lord one thousand six hundred and sixty, or threabout, and in the month of May, that Claas landed in the New World; but of the precise day of the month I cannot be certain, seeing what confusion of dates hath been caused by that idolatrous device of Pope Gregory, called the New Style, whereby events that really happened in one year are falsely put down to another, by which means history becomes naught. The first thing he thought of, was to provide himself a home, for be it known it was not then the fashion to live in taverns and boarding houses, and the man who thus demeaned himself was considered no better than he should be; nobody would trust or employ him, and he might consider it a special bounty of the good St. Nicholas, if he escaped a ride on the wooden horse provided for the punishment of delinquents. So Claas looked out for a pleasant place whereon to pitch his tent. As he walked forth for this end, his bowels yearned exceedingly for a lot on the Broad–street, through which ran a delightful creek, crooked like unto a ram's horn, the sides of which were low, and, as it were, juicy with the salt water which did sometimes overflow them at spring tides, and the full of the moon. More especially the ferry house, with its never to be forgotten weathercock, did incite him sorely to come and set himself down thereabout. But he was deterred by the high price of lots in that favoured region, seeing they asked him as much as five guilders for the one at the corner of the Broad and Wall streets, a most unheard–of price, and not to be thought of by a prudent man like Claas Schlaschenschlinger.

So he sought about elsewhere, though he often looked wistfully at the fair meads of the Broadstreet, and nothing deterred him from ruining himself by gratifying his longings, but the truly excellent expedient of counting his money, which I recommend to all honest people, before they make a bargain. But though he could not settle in Broadstreet, he resolved in his mind to get as nigh as possible, and finding a lot with a little puddle of brackish water in it large enough for a goose pond, nigh unto the wall and gate of the city, and just at the head of what hath lately been called Newstreet then the region of unsettled lands he procured a grant thereof from the schout, scheepens, and burgomasters, who then ruled the city, for five stivers, being the amount of fees for writing and recording the deed by the Geheim Schryver.

Having built himself a comfortable house, with a little stoop to it, he purchased a pair of geese, or, to be correct and particular, as becometh a conscientious historian, a goose and gander, that he might recreate himself with their gambols in the salt puddle, and quietly sat himself down to the making and mending of shoes. In this he prospered at first indifferently well, and thereafter mightily, when the people found that he made shoes, some of which were reported never to wear out; but this was, as it were, but a sort of figure of speech to express their excellent qualities.

Every Sunday, after church, in pleasant weather, Claas, instead of putting off his Sunday suit, as was the wont of the times, used to go and take a walk in the Ladies' Valley, since called Maiden Lane, for everything has changed under those arch intruders, the English, who, I believe, in their hearts, are half Papists. This valley was an exceeding cool, retired, and pleasant place, being bordered by a wood, in the which was plenty of pinkster blossoms in the season. Being a likely young fellow, and dressed in a goodly array of breeches and what not, he was much noticed, and many a little damsel cast a sheep's eye upon him as he sat smoking his pipe of a summer afternoon under the shade of the trees which grew plentifully in that quarter. I don't know how it was, but so it happened, that in process of time he made acquaintance with one of these, a buxom creature of rare and unmatchable lineaments and dimensions, insomuch that she was considered the beauty of New-Amsterdam, and had refused even the burgomaster, Barendt Roeloffsen, who was taxed three guilders, being the richest man of the city. But Aintjie was not to be bought with gold; she loved Claas because he was a solid young fellow, who plucked for her the most beautiful pinkster blossoms, and was the most pleasant companion in the world, for a ramble in the Ladies' Valley.

Report says, but I believe there was no great truth in the story, that they sometimes QUEESTED together, but of that I profess myself doubtful. Certain it is, however, that in good time they were married, to the great content of both, and the great discontent of the burgomaster, Barendt Roeloffsen.

In those days young people did not marry to set up a coach, live in fine houses filled with rich furniture, for which they had no use, and become bankrupt in a few years. They began in a small way, and increased their comforts with their means. It was thus with Claas and his wife, who were always employed in some useful business, and never ran into extravagance, except it may be on holydays. In particular Claas always feasted lustily on St. Nicholas his day, because, he was his patron saint, and he remembered his kindness in faderland.

Thus they went on prospering as folks always do that are industrious and prudent, every year laying up money, and every year increasing their family; for be it known, those who are of the true Dutch blood, always apportion the number of children to the means of providing for them. They never are caught having children for other people to take care of. But be this as it may, about this time began the mischievous and oppressive practice of improving the city, draining the marshes, cutting down hills, and straightening streets, which hath since grown to great enormity in this city, insomuch that a man may be said to be actually impoverished by his property.

Barendt Roeloffsen, who was at the head of the reformers, having a great estate in vacant lands, which he wanted to make productive at the expense of his neighbours Barendt Roeloffsen, I say, bestirred himself lustily to bring about what he called, in outlandish English, the era of improvement, and forthwith looked around to see where he should begin. I have always believed, and so did the people at that time, that Barendt singled out Claas his goose

pond for the first experiment, being thereunto impelled by an old grudge against Claas, on account of his having cut him out with the damsel he wished to marry, as before related.

But, however, Barendt Roeloffsen, who bore a great sway among the burgomasters, on account of his riches, got a law passed, by hook or by crook, for draining Claas his pond, at his own expense, making him pay at the same time for the rise in the value of his property, of which they did not permit him to be the judge, but took upon themselves to say what it was. The ancestors of Claas had fought valiantly against Philip of Spain, in defence of their religion and liberty, and he had kept up his detestation of oppression by frequently reading the account of the cruelties committed in the Low Countries by the Spaniard, in the book which his father had given him on his departure from home. Besides, he had a great admiration, I might almost say affection, for his goose pond, as is becoming in every true Dutchman. In it he was accustomed to see, with singular delight, his geese, now increased to a goodly flock, sailing about majestically, flapping their wings, dipping their necks into the water, and making a noise exceedingly tuneful and melodious. Here, too, his little children were wont to paddle in the summer days, up to their knees in the water, to their great contentment as well as recreation, thereby strengthening themselves exceedingly. Such being the case, Claas resisted the behest of the burgomasters, declaring that he would appeal to the laws for redress if they persisted in trespassing on his premises. But what can a man get by the law at any time, much less when the defendant, as in this case, was judge as well as a party in the business? After losing a vast deal of time, which was as money to him, and spending a good portion of what he had saved for his children, Claas was at length cast in his suit, and the downfall of his goose pond irrevocably decreed.

It was a long time before he recovered this blow, and when he did, Fortune, as if determined to persevere in her ill offices, sent a blacksmith from Holland, who brought over with him the new and diabolical invention of hobnails, the which he so strenuously recommended to the foolish people, who are prone to run after novelties, that they, one and all, had their shoes stuck full of nails, whereby they did clatter about the streets like unto a horse newly shod. As might be expected, the business of shoemaking decreased mightily upon this, insomuch that the shoes might be said to last for ever; and I myself have seen a pair that have descended through three generations, the nails of which shone like unto silver sixpences. Some people supposed this was a plot of Barendt Roeloffsen, to complete the ruin of poor Claas; but whether it was or not, it is certain that such was the falling off in his trade, on account of the pestilent introduction of hobnails, that, at the end of the year, Claas found that he had gone down hill at a great rate. The next year it was still worse, and thus, in the course of a few more, from bad to worse, he at last found himself without the means of support for himself, his wife, and his little children. But what shows the goodness of Providence, it is worthy of record, that from this time his family, miraculously as it were, ceased to increase.

Neither begging nor running in debt without the prospect of paying was in fashion in those days, nor were there any societies to invite people to idleness and improvidence by the certainty of being relieved from their consequences without the trouble of asking. Claas tried what labouring day and night would do, but there was no use in making shoes when there was nobody to buy them. His good wife tried the magic of saving; but where there is nothing left to save, economy is to little purpose. He tried to get into some other business, but the wrath of Barendt Roeloffsen was upon him, and the whole influence of the burgomasters stood in his way on account of the opposition he had made to the march of improvement. He then offered his house and lot for sale; but here again his old enemy Barendt put a spoke in his wheel, going about among the people and insinuating that as Claas had paid nothing for his lot, the title was good for nothing. So one by one he tried all ways to keep want from his door; but it came at last, and one Newyear's eve, in the year of our Lord I don't know what, the family was hovering round a miserable fire, not only without the customary means of enjoying the festivity of the season, but destitute of the very necessaries of life.

The evening was cold and raw, and the heavy moanings of a keen northeast wind announced the approach of a snow storm. The little children cowered over the almost expiring embers, shivering with cold and hunger; the old cat lay half buried in the ashes to keep herself warm; and the poor father and mother now looked at the little flock of ragged no, not ragged the mother took care of that; and industry can always ward off rags and dirt. But

though not ragged or dirty, they were miserably clad and worse fed; and as the parents looked first at them and then at each other, the tears gathered in their eyes until they ran over.

"We must sell the silver clasps of the Bible my mother gave me, wife," said Claas, at last.

"The Goodness forbid," said she; "we should never prosper after it."

"We can't prosper worse than we do now, Aintjie."

"You had better sell the little book about the murders of the Spaniards, that you sometimes read to me."

"It has no silver clasps, and will bring nothing," replied Claas, despondingly, covering his face with his hand, and seeming to think for a few moments. All at once he withdrew his hand, and cried,

"The pipe! the meershaum pipe! it is worth a hundred guilders!" and he ran to the place where he had kept it so carefully that he never used it once in the whole time he had it in his possession.

He looked at it wistfully, and it brought to his mind the time he found it in his stocking. He thought of his parents, his brothers, his sisters, and old faderland, and wished he had never parted from them to visit the New World. His wife saw what was passing in his heart, and said,

"Never mind, dear Claas, with these hundred guilders we shall get on again by the blessing of the good St. Nicholas, whose namesake you are."

Claas shook his head, and looked at the meershaum, which he could not bear to part with, because, somehow or other, he could not help thinking it was the gift of St. Nicholas. The wind now freshened, and moaned more loudly than ever, and the snow began to come in through the crevices of the door and windows. The cold increased apace, and the last spark of fire was expiring in the chimney. There was darkness without and within, for the candle, the last they had, was just going out.

Claas, without knowing what he was doing, rubbed the pipe against his sleeve, as it were mechanically.

He had scarcely commenced rubbing, when the door suddenly opened, and without more ado, a little man, with a right ruddy good-humoured face, as round as an apple, and a cocked beaver, white with snow, walked in, without so much as saying, "By your leave," and sitting himself by the side of the yffrouw, began to blow at the fire, and make as if he was warming his fingers, though there was no fire there, for that matter.

Now Claas was a good-natured fellow, and though he had nothing to give, except a welcome, which is always in the power of everybody, yet he wished to himself he had more fire to warm people's fingers. After a few moments, the little man rubbed his hands together, and looking around him, with a good-humoured smile, said,

"Mynheer Schlaschenschlinger, methinks it might not be amiss to replenish this fire a little; 'tis a bitter cold night, and my fingers are almost frostbitten."

"Alack, mynheer," quoth Claas, "I would, with all my heart, but I have nothing wherewith to warm myself and my children, unless I set fire to my own house. I am sorry I cannot entertain thee better."

Upon this the little man broke the cane with which he walked into two pieces, which he threw in the chimney, and thereupon the fire began to blaze so cheerfully that they could see their shadows on the wall, and the old cat jumped out of the ashes, with her coat well singed, which made the little jolly fellow laugh heartily.

The sticks burnt and burnt, without going out, and they were soon all as warm and comfortable as could be. Then the little man said,

"Friend Claas, methinks it would not be much amiss if the good vrouw here would bestir herself to get something to eat. I have had no dinner today, and come hither on purpose to make merry with thee. Knowest thou not that this is Newyear's eve?"

"Alack!" replied Claas, "I know it full well; but we have not wherewithal to keep away hunger, much less to make merry with. Thou art welcome to all we have, and that is nothing."

"Come, come, Friend Claas, thou art a prudent man, I know, but I never thought thou wert stingy before. Bestir thyself, good Aintjie, and see what thou canst find in that cupboard. I warrant there is plenty of good fare in it."

The worthy yffrouw looked rather foolish at this proposal, for she knew she would find nothing there if she went; but the little man threatened her, in a good-humoured way, to break the long pipe he carried stuck in his cocked hat, over her nightcap, if she didn't do as he bid her. So she went to the cupboard, resolved to bring him out the empty pewter dishes, to show they had nothing to give him. But when she opened the cupboard, she started back, and cried out aloud, so that Claas ran to see what was the matter; and what was his astonishment to find the cupboard full of all sorts of good things for a notable jollification.

"Aha!" cried the merry little man, "you're caught at last. I knew thou hadst plenty to entertain a stranger withal; but I suppose thou wantedst to keep it all to thyself. Come, come! bestir thyself, Aintjie, for I am as hungry as a schoolboy."

Aintjie did as she was bid, wondering all the time who this familiar little man could be; for the city was not so big, but that she knew by sight everybody that lived in it, and she was sure she had never seen him before.

In a short time there was a glorious array of good things set out before them, and they proceeded to enjoy themselves right lustily in keeping of the merry Newyear's eve. The little man cracked his jokes, patted little Nicholas Claas, his youngest son, who was called after his father on the head; chucked Aintjie under the chin; said he was glad she did not wed the splutterkin Barendt Roeloffsen, and set them so good an example, that they all got as merry as crickets.

By-and-by the little man inquired of Claas concerning his affairs, and he gave him an account of his early prosperity, and how he had declined, in spite of all he could do, into poverty and want; so that he had nothing left but his wife, his children, his Dutch Bible, his history of the Low Country wars, and his meershaum pipe.

"Aha!" quoth the little man, "you've kept that, hey! Let me see it."

Claas gave it to him, while the tears came into his eyes, although he was so merry, to think that he must part with it on the morrow. It was the pride of his heart, and he set too great a value on it to make any use of it whatever.

The little man took the pipe, and looking at it, said, as if to himself,

"Yes; here it is! the very identical meershaum out of which the great Calvin used to smoke. Thou hast done well, Friend Claas, to preserve it; and thou must keep it as the apple of thine eye all thy life, and give it as an inheritance to thy children."

"Alack!" cried Aintjie, "he must sell it to-morrow, or we shall want wherewithal for a dinner."

"Yea," said Claas, "of a truth it must go tomorrow!"

"Be quiet, splutterkin!" cried the little man, merrily; "give me some more of that spiced beverage, for I am as thirsty as a dry sponge. Come, let us drink to the Newyear, for it will be here in a few minutes."

So they drank a cup to the jolly Newyear, and at that moment the little boys and negroes, who didn't mind the snow any more than a miller does flour, began to fire their cannon at a great rate; whereupon the little man jumped up, and cried out,

"My time is come! I must be off, for I have a great many visits to pay before sunrise."

Then he kissed the yffrouw with a hearty smack, just as doth the illustrious Rip Van Dam, on the like occasions; patted little Nicholas on the head, and gave him his blessing; after which he did incontinently leap up the chimney and disappear. Then they knew it was the good St. Nicholas, and rejoiced mightily in the visit he had paid them, looking upon it as an earnest that their troubles were over.

The next morning the prudent housewife, according to custom, got up before the dawn of day to put her house in order, and when she came to sweep the floor, was surprised to hear something jingle just like money. Then opening the embers, the sticks which the good saint had thrown upon the fire again blazed out, and she descried a large purse, which, on examination, was found filled with golden ducats. Whereupon she called out to Claas, and they examined the purse, and found fastened to it a paper bearing this legend:

"THE GIFT OF SAINT NICHOLAS."

While they stood in joyful wonder, they heard a great knocking and confusion of tongues outside the door, and the people calling aloud upon Claas Schlaschenschlinger to come forth; whereupon he went forth, and, to his great astonishment, found that his little wooden house had disappeared in the night, and in its place was standing a gorgeous and magnificent mansion of Dutch bricks, two stories high, with three windows in front, all of a different size; and a door cut right out of the corner, just as it is seen at this blessed day.

The neighbours wondered much, and it was whispered among them, that the fiend had helped Claas to this great domicil, which was one of the biggest in the city, and almost equal to that of Barendt Roeloffsen. But when Claas told them of the visit of St. Nicholas, and showed them the purse of golden ducats, with the legend upon it, they thought better of it, and contented themselves with envying him heartily his good fortune.

I shall not relate how Claas prospered ever afterwards, in spite of his enemies the burgomasters, who, at last, were obliged to admit him as one of their number; or how little Aintjie held up her head among the highest; or how Claas ever after eschewed the lapstone, and, like a worshipful magistrate, took to bettering the condition of mankind, till at length he died, and was gathered to his forefathers, full of years and honours.

All I shall say is, that the great house in Newstreet continued in the family for several generations, until a degenerate descendant of Claas, being thereunto incited by the devil, did sell it to another degenerate splutterkin, who essayed to pull it down. But mark what followed. No sooner had the workmen laid hands on it, than the brickbats began to fly about at such a rate, that they all came away faster than they went; some with broken heads, and others with broken bones, and not one could ever be persuaded to meddle with it afterwards.

And let this be a warning to any one who shall attempt to lay their sacrilegious hands on the LAST OF THE DUTCH HOUSES, the gift of St. Nicholas, for whoever does so, may calculate, to a certainty, on getting well peppered with brickbats, I can tell them.

THE REVENGE OF SAINT NICHOLAS. A TALE FOR THE HOLYDAYS.

Everybody knows that in the famous city of New-York, whose proper name is New-Amsterdam, the excellent St. Nicholas who is worth a dozen St. Georges and dragons to boot, and who, if every tub stood on its right bottom, would be at the head of the Seven Champions of christendom I say, everybody knows the excellent St. Nicholas, in holyday times, goes about among the people in the middle of the night, distributing all sorts of toothsome and becoming gifts to the good boys and girls in this his favourite city. Some say that he comes down the chimneys in a little Jersey wagon; others, that he wears a pair of Holland skates, with which he travels like the wind; and others, who pretend to have seen him, maintain that he has lately adopted a locomotive, and was once actually detected on the *Albany* railroad. But this last assertion is looked upon to be entirely fabulous, because St. Nicholas has too much discretion to trust himself in such a newfangled jarvie; and so I leave this matter to be settled by whomsoever will take the trouble. My own opinion is, that his favourite mode of travelling is on a canal, the motion and speed of which aptly,, comport with the philosophic dignity of his character. But this is not material, and I will no longer detain my readers with extraneous and irrelevant matters, as is too much the fashion with our statesmen, orators, biographers, and story tellers.

It was in the year one thousand seven hundred and sixty, or sixty-one, for the most orthodox chronicles differ in this respect; but it was a very remarkable year, and it was called *annus mirabilis* on that account. It was said that several people were detected in speaking the truth about that time; that nine staid, sober, and discreet widows, who had sworn on an anti-masonic almanac never to enter a second time into the holy state, were snapped up by young husbands before they knew what they were about; that six venerable bachelors wedded as many buxom young belles, and, it is reported, were afterwards sorry for what they had done; that many people actually went to church, from motives of piety; and that a great scholar, who had written a book in support of certain opinions, was not only convinced of his error, but acknowledged it publicly afterwards. No wonder the year one thousand seven hundred and sixty, if that was the year, was called *annus mirabilis!*

What contributed to render this year still more remarkable, was the building of six new three-story brick houses in the city, and three persons setting up equipages, who, I cannot find, ever failed in business afterwards, or compounded with their creditors at a pistareen in the pound. It is, moreover, recorded in the annals of the horticultural society of that day, which were written on a cabbage leaf, as is said, that a member produced a forked radish, of such vast dimensions, that being dressed up in fashionable male attire at the exhibition, it was actually mistaken for a travelled beau by several inexperienced young ladies, who pined away for love of its beautiful complexion, and were changed into daffadownillies. Some maintained it was a mandrake, but it was finally detected by an inquest of experienced matrons. No wonder the year seventeen hundred and sixty was called *annus mirabilis!*

But the most extraordinary thing of all, was the confident assertion that there was but one *gray mare* within the bills of mortality; and, incredible as it may appear, she was the wife of a responsible citizen, who, it was affirmed, had grown rich by weaving velvet purses out of sows' ears. But this we look upon as being somewhat of the character of the predictions of almanac makers. Certain it is, however, that Amos Shuttle possessed the treasure of a wife who was shrewdly suspected of having established within doors a system of government not laid down in Aristotle or the Abbe Sièyes, who made a constitution for every day in the year, and two for the first of April.

Amos Shuttle, though a mighty pompous little man out of doors, was the meekest of human creatures within. He belonged to that class of people who pass for great among the little, and little among the great; and he would certainly have been master in his own house had it not been for a woman! We have read somewhere that no wise woman ever thinks her husband a demigod. If so, it is a blessing that there are so few wise women in the world.

Amos had grown rich, Heaven knows how he did not know himself; but, what was somewhat extraordinary, he considered his wealth a signal proof of his talents and sagacity, and valued himself according to the infallible

standard of pounds, shillings, and pence. But though he lorded it without, he was, as we have just said, the most gentle of men within doors. The moment he stepped inside of his own house, his spirit cowered down, like that of a pious man entering a church; he felt as if he was in the presence of a superior being to wit, Mrs. Abigail Shuttle. He was, indeed, the meekest of beings at home, except Moses; and Sir Andrew Aguecheek's song, which Sir Toby Belch declared "would draw nine souls out of one weaver," would have failed in drawing half a one out of Amos. The truth is, his wife, who ought to have known, affirmed he had no more soul than a monkey; but he was the only man in the city thus circumstanced at the time we speak of. No wonder, therefore, the year one thousand seven hundred and sixty was called *annus mirabilis!*

Such as he was, Mr. Amos Shuttle waxed richer and richer every day, insomuch that those who envied his prosperity were wont to say, "that he had certainly been born with a dozen silver spoons in his mouth, or such a great blockhead would never have got together such a heap of money." When he had become worth ten thousand pounds, he launched his shuttle magnanimously out of the window, ordered his weaver's beam to be split up for oven wood, and Mrs. Amos turned his weaver's shop into a *boudoir*. Fortune followed him faster than he ran away from her. In a few years the ten thousand doubled, and in a few more trebled, quadrupled in short, Amos could hardly count his money.

"What shall we do now, my dear?" asked Mrs. Shuttle, who never sought his opinion, that I can learn, except for the pleasure of contradicting him.

"Let us go and live in the country, and enjoy ourselves," quoth Amos.

"Go into the country! go to " I could never satisfy myself what Mrs. Shuttle meant; but she stopped short, and concluded the sentence with a withering look of scorn, that would have cowed the spirits of nineteen weavers.

Amos named all sorts of places, enumerated all sorts of modes of life he could think of, and every pleasure that might enter into the imagination of a man without a soul. His wife despised them all; she would not hear of them.

"Well, my dear, suppose you suggest something; do now, Abby," at length said Amos, in a coaxing whisper; "will you, my onydoney?"

"Ony fiddlestick! I wonder you repeat such vulgarisms. But if I must say what I should like, I should like to travel."

"Well, let us go and make a tour as far as Jamaica, or Hackensack, or Spiking-devil. There is excellent fishing for striped bass there."

"Spiking-devil!" screamed Mrs. Shuttle; "an't you ashamed to swear so, you wicked mortal! I won't go to Jamaica, nor Hackensack among the Dutch Hottentots, nor to Spiking-devil to catch striped bass. I'll go to Europe!"

If Amos had possessed a soul it would have jumped out of its skin at the idea of going beyond seas. He had once been on the sea-bass banks, and got a seasoning there; the very thought of which made him sick. But, as he had no soul, there was no great harm done.

When Mrs. Shuttle said a thing, it was settled. They went to Europe, taking their only son with them; the lady ransacked all the milliners' shops in Paris, and the gentleman visited all the restaurateurs. He became such a desperate connoisseur and gourmand, that he could almost tell an *omelette au jambon* from a gammon of bacon. After consummating the polish, they came home, the lady with the newest old fashions, and the weaver with a confirmed preference of *potage à la Turque* over pepper-pot. It is said the city trembled, as with an earthquake, when they landed; but the notion was probably superstitious.

They arrived near the close of the year, the memorable year, the *annus mirabilis*, one thousand seven hundred and sixty. Everybody that had ever known the Shuttles flocked to see them, or rather to see what they had brought with them; and such was the magic of a voyage to Europe, that Mr. and Mrs. Amos Shuttle, who had been nobodies when they departed, became somebodies when they returned, and mounted at once to the summit of *ton*.

"You have come in good time to enjoy the festivities of the holydays," said Mrs. Hubblebubble, an old friend of Amos the weaver and his wife.

"We shall have a merry Christmas and a happy Newyear," exclaimed Mrs. Doubletrouble, another old acquaintance of old times.

"The holydays," drawled Mrs. Shuttle; "the holydays? Christmas and Newyear? Pray what are they?"

It is astonishing to see how people lose their memories abroad sometimes. They often forget their old friends, old customs, and occasionally themselves.

"Why, la! now, who'd have thought it?" cried Mrs. Doubletrouble; "why, sure you haven't forgot the oily cooks and the mince pies, the merry meetings of friends, the sleigh-rides, the Kissing Bridge, and the family parties?"

"Family parties!" shrieked Mrs. Shuttle, and held her salts to her nose; "family parties! I never heard of anything so Gothic in Paris or Rome; and oily cooks oh shocking! and mince pies detestable! and throwing open one's doors to all one's old friends, whom one wishes to forget as soon as possible. Oh! the idea is insupportable!" and again she held the salts to her nose.

Mrs. Hubblebubble and Mrs. Doubletrouble found they had exposed themselves sadly, and were quite ashamed. A real, genteel, well-bred, enlightened lady of fashion ought to have no rule of conduct no conscience, but Paris whatever is fashionable there is genteel whatever is not fashionable is vulgar. There is no other standard of right, and no other eternal fitness of things. At least so thought Mrs. Hubblebubble and Mrs. Doubletrouble.

"But is it possible that all these things are out of fashion abroad?" asked the latter, beseechingly.

"They never were in," said Mrs. Amos Shuttle.

"For my part, I mean to close my doors and windows on Newyear's day I'm determined."

"And so am I," said Mrs. Hubblebubble.

"And so am I," said Mrs. Doubletrouble.

And it was settled that they should make a combination among themselves and their friends, to put down the ancient and good customs of the city, and abolish the sports and enjoyments of the jolly Newyear. The conspirators then separated, each to pursue her diabolical designs against oily cooks, mince pies, sleigh ridings, sociable visitings, and family parties.

Now the excellent St. Nicholas, who knows well what is going on in every house in the city, though, like a good and honourable saint, he never betrays any family secrets, overheard these wicked women plotting against his favourite anniversary, and he said to himself,

"*Vuur en Vlammen!* but I'll be even with you, *mein vrouw* ." So he determined he would play these conceited and misled women a trick or two before he had done with them.

It was now the first day of the new year, and Mrs. Amos Shuttle, and Mrs. Doubletrouble, and Mrs. Hubblebubble, and all their wicked abettors, had shut up their doors and windows, so that when their old friends called they could not get into their houses. Moreover, they had prepared neither mince pies, nor oily cooks, nor crullers, nor any of the good things consecrated to St. Nicholas by his pious and well-intentioned votaries, and they were mightily pleased at having been as dull and stupid as owls, while all the rest of the city were as merry as crickets, chirping and frisking in the warm chimney corner. Little did they think what horrible judgments were impending over them, prepared by the wrath of the excellent St. Nicholas, who was resolved to make an example of them for attempting to introduce their newfangled corruptions in place of the ancient customs of his favourite city. These wicked women never had another comfortable sleep in their lives!

The night was still, clear, and frosty the earth was everywhere one carpet of snow, and looked just like the ghost of a dead world, wrapped in a white winding sheet; the moon was full, round, and of a silvery brightness, and by her discreet silence afforded an example to the rising generation of young damsels, while the myriads of stars that multiplied as you gazed at them, seemed as though they were frozen into icicles, they looked so cold, and sparkled with such a glorious lustre. The streets and roads leading from the city were all alive with sleighs, filled with jovial souls, whose echoing laughter and cheerful songs, mingled with a thousand merry bells, that jingled in harmonious dissonance, giving spirit to the horses and animation to the scene. In the license of the season, hallowed by long custom, each of the sleighs saluted the others in passing with a "Happy Newyear," a merry jest, or mischievous gibe, exchanged from one gay party to another. All was life, motion, and merriment; and as old frostbitten Winter, aroused from his trance by the rout and revelry around, raised his weatherbeaten head to see what was passing, he felt his icy blood warming and coursing through his veins, and wished he could only overtake the laughing buxom Spring, that he might dance a jig with her, and be as frisky as the best of them. But as the old rogue could not bring this desirable matter about, he contented himself with calling for a jolly bumper of cocktail, and drinking a swinging draught to the health of the blessed St. Nicholas, and those who honour the memory of the president of good fellows.

All this time the wicked women and their abettors lay under the malediction of the good saint, who caused them to be bewitched by an old lady from Salem. Mrs. Amos Shuttle could not sleep, because something had whispered in her apprehensive ear, that her son, her only son, whom she had engaged to the daughter of Count Grenouille, in Paris, then about three years old, was actually at that moment crossing Kissing Bridge, in company with little Susan Varian, and some others besides. Now Susan was the fairest little lady of all the land; she had a face and an eye just like the Widow Wadman, in Leslie's charming picture; a face and an eye which no reasonable man under Heaven could resist, except my Uncle Toby beshrew him and his fortifications, I say! She was, moreover, a good little girl, and an accomplished little girl but, alas! she had not mounted to the step in Jacob's ladder of fashion, which qualifies a person for the heaven of high ton, and Mrs. Shuttle had not been to Europe for nothing. She would rather have seen her son wedded to dissipation and profligacy than to Susan Varian; and the thought of his being out sleighriding with her, was worse than the toothache. It kept her awake all the livelong night; and the only consolation she had was scolding poor Amos, because the sleigh bells made such a noise.

As for Mrs. Hubblebubble and Mrs. Doubletrouble, they neither of them got a wink of sleep during a whole week, for thinking of the beautiful French chairs and damask curtains Mrs. Shuttle had brought from Europe. They forthwith besieged their good men, leaving them no rest until they sent out orders to Paris for just such rich chairs and curtains as those of the thrice happy Mrs. Shuttle, from whom they kept the affair a profound secret, each meaning to treat her to an agreeable surprise. In the mean while they could not rest for fear the vessel which was to bring these treasures might be lost on her passage. Such was the dreadful judgment inflicted on them by the good St. Nicholas.

The perplexities of Mrs. Shuttle increased daily. In the first place, do all she could, she could not make Amos a fine gentleman. This was a metamorphosis which Ovid would never have dreamed of. He would be telling the price of everything in his house, his furniture, his wines, and his dinners, insomuch that those who envied his prosperity, or, perhaps, only despised his pretensions, were wont to say, after eating his venison and drinking his

old Madeira, "that he ought to have been a tavern keeper, he knew so well how to make out a bill." Mrs. Shuttle once overheard a speech of this kind, and the good St. Nicholas himself, who had brought it about, almost felt sorry for the mortification she endured on the occasion.

Scarcely had she got over this, when she was invited to a ball, by Mrs. Hubblebubble, and the first thing she saw on entering the drawing room, was a suit of damask curtains and chairs, as much like her own as two peas, only the curtains had far handsomer fringe. Mrs. Shuttle came very near fainting away, but escaped for that time, determining to mortify this impudent creature, by taking not the least notice of her finery. But St. Nicholas ordered it otherwise, so that she was at last obliged to acknowledge they were very elegant indeed. Nay, this was not the worst, for she overheard one lady whisper to another, that Mrs. Hubblebubble's curtains were much richer than Mrs. Shuttle's.

"Oh, I dare say," replied the other "I dare say Mrs. Shuttle bought them second hand, for her husband is as mean as pursley."

This was too much. The unfortunate woman was taken suddenly ill called her carriage, and went home, where it is supposed she would have died that evening had she not wrought upon Amos to promise her an entire new suit of French furniture for her drawing room and parlour to boot, besides a new carriage. But for all this she could not close her eyes that night for thinking of the "second-hand curtains."

Nor was the wicked Mrs. Doubletrouble a whit better off, when her friend Mrs. Hubblebubble treated her to the agreeable surprise of the French window curtains and chairs. "It is too bad too bad, I declare," said she to herself; "but I'll pay her off soon." Accordingly she issued invitations for a grand ball and supper, at which both Mrs. Shuttle and Mrs. Hubblebubble were struck dumb at beholding a suit of curtains and a set of chairs exactly of the same pattern with theirs. The shock was terrible, and it is impossible to say what might have been the consequences, had not the two ladies all at once thought of uniting in abusing Mrs. Doubletrouble for her extravagance.

"I pity poor Mr. Doubletrouble," said Mrs. Shuttle, shrugging her shoulders significantly, and glancing at the room.

"And so do I," said Mrs. Hubblebubble, doing the same.

Mrs. Doubletrouble had her eye upon them, and enjoyed their mortification until her pride was brought to the ground by a dead shot from Mrs. Shuttle, who was heard to exclaim, in reply to a lady who observed the chairs and curtains were very handsome,

"Why, yes; but they have been out of fashion in Paris a long time; and, besides, really they are getting so common, that I intend to have mine removed to the nursery."

Heavens! what a blow! Poor Mrs. Doubletrouble hardly survived it. Such a night of misery as the wicked woman endured almost made the good St. Nicholas regret the judgment he had passed upon these mischievous and conceited females. But he thought to himself he would persevere until he had made them a sad example to all innovators upon the ancient customs of our forefathers.

Thus were these wicked and miserable women spurred on by witchcraft from one piece of extravagance to another, and a deadly rivalry grew up between them, which destroyed their own happiness and that of their husbands. Mrs. Shuttle's new carriage and drawing-room furniture in due time were followed by similar extravagances on the part of the two other wicked women, who had conspired against the hallowed institutions of St. Nicholas; and soon their rivalry came to such a height that neither of them had a moment's rest or comfort from that time forward. But they still shut their doors on the jolly anniversary of St. Nicholas, though the old

respectable burghers and their wives, who had held up their heads time out of mind, continued the good custom, and laughed at the presumption of these upstart interlopers, who were followed only by a few people of silly pretensions, who had no more soul than Amos Shuttle himself. The three wicked women grew to be almost perfect skeletons, on account of the vehemence with which they strove to outdo each other, and the terrible exertions necessary to keep up the appearance of being the best friends in the world. In short, they became the laughingstock of the town; and sensible, well-bred folks cut their acquaintance, except when they sometimes accepted an invitation to a party, just to make merry with their folly and conceitedness.

The excellent St. Nicholas, finding they still persisted in their opposition to his rites and ceremonies, determined to inflict on them the last and worst punishment that can befall the sex. He decreed that they should be deprived of all the delights springing from the domestic affections, and all taste for the innocent and virtuous enjoyments of a happy fireside. Accordingly, they lost all relish for home; were continually gadding about from one place to another in search of pleasure, and worried themselves to death to find happiness where it is never to be found. Their whole lives became one long series of disappointed hopes, galled pride, and gnawing envy. They lost their health, they lost their time, and their days became days of harassing impatience, their nights nights of sleepless, feverish excitement, ending in weariness and disappointment. The good saint sometimes felt sorry for them, but their continued obstinacy determined him to persevere in his plan to punish the upstart pride of these rebellious females.

Young Shuttle, who had a soul, which I suppose he inherited from his mother, all this while continued his attentions to little Susan Varian, which added to the miseries inflicted on his wicked mother. Mrs. Shuttle insisted that Amos should threaten to disinherit his son, unless he gave up this attachment.

"Lord bless your soul, Abby," said Amos, "what's the use of my threatening, the boy knows as well as I do that I've no will of my own. Why, bless my soul, Abby "

"Bless your soul!" interrupted Mrs. Shuttle; "I wonder who'd take the trouble to bless it but yourself? However, if you don't I will."

Accordingly, she threatened the young man with being disinherited unless he turned his back on little Susan Varian, which no man ever did without getting a heartache.

"If my father goes on as he has done lately," sighed the youth, "he won't have anything left to disinherit me of but his affection, I fear. But if he had millions I would not abandon Susan."

"Are you not ashamed of such a lowlived attachment? You, that have been to Europe! But, once for all, remember this, renounce this lowborn upstart, or quit your father's home for ever."

"Upstart!" thought young Shuttle; "one of the oldest families in the city." He made his mother a respectful bow, bade Heaven bless her, and left the house. He was, however, met by his father at the door, who said to him,

"Johnny, I give my consent; but mind, don't tell your mother a word of the matter. I'll let her know I've a soul as well as other people;" and he tossed his head like a war horse.

The night after this Johnny was married to little Susan, and the blessing of affection and beauty lighted upon his pillow. Her old father, who was in a respectable business, took his son-in-law into partnership, and they prospered so well that in a few years Johnny was independent of all the world, with the prettiest wife and children in the land. But Mrs. Shuttle was inexorable, while the knowledge of his prosperity and happiness only worked her up to a higher pitch of anger, and added to the pangs of jealousy perpetually inflicted on her by the rivalry of Mrs. Hubblebubble and Mrs. Doubletrouble, who suffered under the like infliction from the wrathful St. Nicholas, who was resolved to make them an example to all posterity.

No fortune, be it ever so great, can stand the eternal sapping of wasteful extravagance, engendered and stimulated by the baleful passion of envy. In less than ten years from the hatching of the diabolical conspiracy of these three wicked women against the supremacy of the excellent St. Nicholas, their spendthrift rivalship had ruined the fortunes of their husbands, and entailed upon themselves misery and remorse. Rich Amos Shuttle became at last as poor as a church mouse, and would have been obliged to take to the loom again in his old age, had not Johnny, now rich, and a worshipful magistrate of the city, afforded him and his better half a generous shelter under his own happy roof. Mrs. Hubblebubble and Mrs. Doubletrouble had scarcely time to condole with Mrs. Shuttle, and congratulate each other, when their husbands went the way of all flesh, that is to say, failed for a few tens of thousands, and called their creditors together to hear the good news. The two wicked women lived long enough after this to repent of their offence against St. Nicholas; but they never imported any more French curtains, and at last perished miserably in an attempt to set the fashions in Pennypot alley.

Mrs. Abigail Shuttle might have lived happily the rest of her life with her children and grandchildren, who all treated her with reverent courtesy and affection, now that the wrath of the mighty St. Nicholas was appeased by her exemplary punishment. But she could not get over her bad habits and feelings, or forgive her lovely little daughter-in-law for treating her so kindly when she so little deserved it. She gradually pined away; and though she revived at hearing of the catastrophe of Mrs. Hubblebubble and Mrs. Doubletrouble, it was only for a moment. The remainder of the life of this wicked woman was a series of disappointments and heartburnings, and when she died, Amos tried to shed a few tears, but he found it impossible, I suppose, because, as his wife always said, "he had no soul."

Such was the terrible revenge of St. Nicholas, which ought to be a warning to all who attempt to set themselves up against the venerable customs of their ancestors, and backslide from the hallowed institutions of the blessed saint, to whose good offices, without doubt, it is owing that this his favourite city has transcended all others of the universe in beautiful damsels, valorous young men, mince pies, and Newyear cookies. The catastrophe of these three wicked women had a wonderful influence in the city, insomuch that from this time forward, no *gray mares* were ever known, no French furniture was ever used, and no woman was hardy enough to set herself up in opposition to the good customs of St. Nicholas. And so, wishing many happy Newyears to all my dear countrywomen and countrymen, saving those who shut their doors to old friends, high or low, rich or poor, on that blessed anniversary, which makes more glad hearts than all others put together I say, wishing a thousand happy Newyears to all, with this single exception, I lay down my pen, with a caution to all wicked women to beware of the revenge of St. Nicholas.

THE ORIGIN OF THE BAKERS' DOZEN.

Little Brom Boompie, or Boss Boompie, as he was commonly called by his apprentices and neighbours, was the first man that ever baked Newyear cakes in the good city of New-Amsterdam. It is generally supposed that he was the inventor of those excellent and respectable articles. However this may be, he lived and prospered in the little Dutch house in William-street, called, time out of mind, Knickerbocker Hall, just at the outskirts of the good town of New-Amsterdam.

Boompie was a fat comfortable creature, with a capital pair of oldfashioned legs; a full, round, good-natured face; a corporation like unto one of his plump loaves; and as much honesty as a Turkish baker, who lives in the fear of having his ears nailed to his own door for retailing bad bread. He wore a low-crowned, broad-brimmed beaver; a gray bearskin cloth coat, waistcoat, and breeches, and gray woollen stockings, summer and winter, all the year round. The only language he spoke, understood, or had the least respect for, was Dutch and the only books he ever read or owned, were a Dutch Bible, with silver clasps and hinges, and a Dutch history of the Duke of Alva's bloody wars in the Low Countries. Boss Boompie was a pious man, of simple habits and simple character; a believer in "demonology and witchcraft;" and as much afraid of *spooks* as the mother that bore him. It ran in the family to be bewitched, and for three generations the Boompies had been very much pestered with

supernatural visitations. But for all this they continued to prosper in the world, insomuch that Boss Boomptie daily added a piece of wampum or two to his strong box. He was blessed with a good wife, who saved the very parings of her nails, and three plump boys, after whom he modelled his gingerbread babies, and who were every Sunday zealously instructed never to pass a pin without picking it up and bringing it home to their mother.

It was on Newyear's eve, in the year 1655, and the good city of New-Amsterdam, then under the special patronage of the blessed St. Nicholas, was as jovial and wanton as hot spiced rum and long abstinence from fun and frolic could make it. It is worth while to live soberly and mind our business all the rest of the year, if it be only to enjoy the holydays at the end with a true zest. St. Nicholas, thrice blessed soul! was riding up one chimney and down another like a locomotive engine in his little one-horse wagon, distributing cakes to the good boys, and whips to the bad ones; and the laugh of the good city, which had been pent up all the year, now burst forth with an explosion that echoed even unto Breuckelen and Communipaw.

Boss Boomptie, who never forgot the main chance, and knew from experience that Newyear's eve was a shrewd time for selling cakes, joined profit and pleasure on this occasion. He was one minute in his shop, dealing out cakes to his customers, and the next laughing, and tipping, and jiggling, and frisking it with his wife and children in the little back room, the door of which had a pane of glass that commanded a full view of the shop. Nobody, that is, no genuine disciple of jolly St. Nicholas, ever went to bed till twelve o'clock on Newyear's eve. The Dutch are eminently a sober, discreet folk; but somehow or other, no people frolic so like the very dickens, when they are once let loose, as your very sober and discreet bodies.

By twelve o'clock the spicy beverage, sacred to holydays at that time, began to mount up into Boss Boomptie's head, and he was vociferating a Dutch ditty in praise of St. Nicholas with marvellous discordance, when just as the old clock in one corner of the room struck the hour that ushers in the new year, a loud knock was heard on the counter, which roused the dormant spirit of trade within his bosom. He went into the shop, where he found a little ugly old thing of a woman, with a sharp chin, resting on a crooked black stick, which had been burned in the fire and then polished; two high sharp cheek bones; two sharp black eyes; skinny lips, and a most diabolical pair of leather spectacles on a nose ten times sharper than her chin.

"I want a dozen Newyear cookies," screamed she, in a voice sharper than her nose.

"Vel, den, you needn't sbeak so loud," replied Boss Boomptie, whose ear being just then attuned to the melody of his own song, was somewhat outraged by this shrill salutation.

"I want a dozen Newyear cookies," screamed she again, ten times louder and shriller than ever.

"Duyvel I an't teaf den," grumbled the worthy man, as he proceeded to count out the cakes, which the other very deliberately counted after him.

"I want a dozen," screamed the little woman; "here is only twelve."

"Vel, den, and what de duyvel is dwalf but a dozen?" said Boomptie.

"I tell you I want one more," screamed she, in a voice that roused Mrs. Boomptie in the back room, who came and peeped through the pane of glass, as she often did when she heard the boss talking to the ladies.

Boss Boomptie waxed wroth, for he had a reasonable quantity of hot spiced rum in his noddle, which predisposes a man to valour.

"Vel, den," said he, "you may co to de duyvel and get anoder, for you won't get it here."

Boomptie was not a stingy man; on the contrary, he was very generous to the pretty young damsels who came to buy cakes, and often gave them two or three extra for a smack, which made Mrs. Boomptie peevish sometimes, and caused her to watch at the little pane of glass when she ought to have been minding her business like an honest woman.

But this old hag was as ugly as sin, and the little baker never in his whole life could find in his heart to be generous to an ugly woman, old or young.

"In my country they always give thirteen to the dozen," screamed the ugly woman in the leather spectacles.

"And where de duyvel is your gountry?" asked Boomptie.

"It is nobody's business," screeched the old woman. "But will you give me another cake, once for all?"

"Not if it would save me and all my chineration from peing pewitched and pedemonologized dime out of mind," cried he, in a great passion.

What put it into his head to talk in this way I don't know, but he might better have held his tongue. The old woman gave him three stivers for his cakes, and went away, grumbling something about "living to repent it," which Boss Boomptie didn't understand or care a fig about. He was chock full of Dutch courage, and defied all the ugly old women in Christendom. He put his three stivers in the till and shut up his shop, determined to enjoy the rest of the night without further molestation.

While he was sitting smoking his pipe, and now and then sipping his beverage, all at once he heard a terrible jingling of money in his shop, whereupon he thought some losel caitiff was busy with his little till. Accordingly, priming himself with another reinforcement of Dutch courage, he took a pine knot, for he was too economical to burn candles at that late hour, and proceeded to investigate. His money was all safe, and the till appeared not to have been disturbed.

"Duyvel," quoth the little baker man, "I pelieve mine *vrouw* and I have bote cot a zinging in our heads."

He had hardly turned his back when the same jingling began again, so much to the surprise of Boss Boomptie, that had it not been for his invincible Dutch courage, he would, as it were, have been a little frightened. But he was not in the least; and again went and unlocked the till, when what was his astonishment to see the three diabolical stivers, received from the old woman, dancing, and kicking up a dust among the coppers and wampum with wonderful agility.

"*Wat donder is dat!*" exclaimed he, sorely perplexed; "de old duyvel has cot indo dat old sinner's stivers, I dink." He had a great mind to throw them away, but he thought it a pity to waste so much money; so he kept them locked up all night, enjoining them to good behaviour, with a design to spend them the next day in another jollification. But the next day they were gone, and so was the broomstick with which it was the custom to sweep out the shop every morning. Some of the neighbours coming home late the night before, on being informed of the "abduction" of the broomstick, deposed and said, they had seen an old woman riding through the air upon just such another, right over the top of the little bakehouse; whereat Boss Boomptie, putting these odds and ends together, did tremble in his heart, and he wished to himself that he had given the ugly old woman thirteen to the dozen.

Nothing particular came to pass the next day, except that now and then the little Boompties complained of having pins stuck in their backs, and that their cookies were snatched away by some one unknown. On examination it was found that no marks of the pins were to be seen; and as to the cookies, the old black woman of the kitchen declared she saw an invisible hand just as one of the children lost his commodity.

"Den I am pewitched, zure enough!" cried Boomptie, in despair, for he had had too much of "demonology and witchcraft" in the family not to know when he saw them, just as well as he did his own face in the Collect.

On the second day of the year, the 'prentice boys all returned to their business, and Boomptie once more solaced himself with the baking of the staff of life. The reader must know that it is the custom of bakers to knead a great batch at a time, in a mighty bread tray, into which they throw two or three little apprentice boys to paddle about, like ducks in a mill pond, whereby it is speedily amalgamated, and set to rising in due time. When the little caitiffs began their gambols in this matter they one and all stuck fast in the dough, as though it had been so much pitch, and, to the utter dismay of honest Boomptie, behold the whole batch rose up in a mighty mass, with the boys sticking fast on the top of it!

"*Wat blikslager!*" exclaimed little Boomptie, as he witnessed this catastrophe; "de duyvel ish cot into de yeast dis dime, I dink."

The bread continued to rise till it lifted the roof off the bakehouse, with the little 'prentice boys on the top, and the bread tray following after. Boss Boomptie and his wife watched this wonderful rising of the bread in dismay, and in proof of the poor woman's being bewitched, it was afterwards recollected that she uttered not a single word on this extraordinary occasion. The bread rose and rose, until it finally disappeared, boys and all, behind the Jersey hills. If such things had been known of at that time, it would have been taken for a balloon; as it was, the people of Bergen and Communipaw thought that it was a water spout.

Little Boss Boomptie was disconsolate at the loss of his bread and his 'prentice boys, whom he never expected to see again. However, he was a stirring body, and set himself to work to prepare another batch, seeing his customers must be supplied in spite of "witchcraft or demonology." To guard against such another rebellious rising, he determined to go through the process down in the cellar, and turn his bread tray upside down. The bread, instead of rising, began to sink into the earth so fast, that Boss Boomptie had just time to jump off before it entirely disappeared in the ground, which opened and shut just like a snuffbox.

"*Wat blikslager is dat!*" exclaimed he, out of breath; "my pread rises downward dis dime, I dink. My customers must go widout to-day."

By-and-by his customers came for hot rolls and muffins, but some of them had gone up and some down, as little Boss Boomptie related after the manner just described. What is very remarkable, nobody believed him; and doubtless, if there had been any rival baker in New-Amsterdam, the boss would have lost all his customers. Among those that called on this occasion, was the ugly old woman with the sharp eyes, nose, chin, voice, and leather spectacles.

"I want a dozen Newyear cookies!" screamed she, as before.

"*Vuur en vlammen!*" muttered he, as he counted out the twelve cakes.

"I want one more!" screamed she.

"Den you may co to de duyvel and kit it, I say, for not anoder shall you haf here, I dell you."

So the old woman took her twelve cakes, and went out grumbling, as before. All the time she staid, Boomptie's old dog, who followed him wherever he went, growled and whined, as it were, to himself, and seemed mightily relieved when she went away. That very night, as the little baker was going to see one of his old neighbours at the *Maiden's Valley*, then a little way out of town, walking, as he always did, with his hands behind him, every now and then he felt something as cold as death against them, which he could never account for, seeing there was not a soul with him but his old dog. Moreover, Mrs. Boomptie, having bought half a pound of tea at a grocery store,

and put it into her pocket, did feel a twitching and jerking of the paper of tea in her pocket, every step she went. The faster she ran the quicker and stronger was the twitching and jerking, so that when the good woman got home she was nigh fainting away. On her recovery she took courage, and pulled the tea out of her pocket, and laid it on the table, when behold it began to move by fits and starts, jumped off the table, hopped out of doors, all alone by itself, and jiggled away to the place from whence it came. The grocer brought it back again, but Madam Boomptie looked upon the whole as a judgment for her extravagance, in laying out so much money for tea, and refused to receive it again. The grocer assured her that the strange capers of the bundle were owing to his having forgot to cut the twine with which he had tied it; but the good woman looked upon this as an ingenious subterfuge, and would take nothing but her money. When the husband and wife came to compare notes, they both agreed they were certainly bewitched. Had there been any doubt of the matter, subsequent events would soon have put it to rest.

That very night Mrs. Boomptie was taken after a strange way. Sometimes she would laugh about nothing, and then she would cry about nothing; then she would set to work and talk about nothing for a whole hour without stopping, in a language nobody could understand; and then, all at once, her tongue would cleave to the roof of her mouth, so that it was impossible to force it away. When this fit was over she would get up and dance double trouble, till she tired herself out, when she fell asleep, and waked up quite rational. It was particularly noticed that when she talked loudest and fastest, her lips remained perfectly closed, without motion, and her mouth wide open, so that the words seemed to come from down her throat. Her principal talk was railing against Dominie Laidlie, the good pastor of Garden-street Church, whence everybody concluded that she was possessed by a devil. Sometimes she got hold of a pen, and though she had never learned to write, would scratch and scrawl certain mysterious and diabolical figures, that nobody could understand, and everybody said must mean something.

As for little Boss Boomptie, he was worse off than his wife. He was haunted by an invisible hand, which played him all sorts of scurvy tricks. Standing one morning at his counter, talking to one of the neighbours, he received a great box on the ear, whereat being exceeding wroth, he returned it with such interest on the cheek of his neighbour, that he laid him flat on the floor. His friend hereupon took the law of him, and proved, to the satisfaction of the court, that he had both hands in his breeches pockets at the time Boss Boomptie said he gave him the box on the ear. The magistrate not being able to come at the truth of the matter, fined them each twenty-five guilders for the use of the dominie.

A dried codfish was one day thrown at his head, and the next minute his walking stick fell to beating him, though nobody seemed to have hold of it. A chair danced about the room, and at last alighted on the dinner table, and began to eat with such a good appetite, that had not the children snatched some of the dinner away, there would have been none left. The old cow one night jumped over the moon, and a peweter dish ran fairly off with a horn spoon, which seized a cat by the tail, and away they all went together, as merry as crickets. Sometimes, when Boss Boomptie had money, or cakes, or perhaps a loaf of bread in his hand, instead of putting them in their proper places, he would throw them into the fire, in spite of his teeth, and then the invisible hand would beat him with a bag of flour, till he was as white as a miller. As for keeping his accounts, that was out of the question; whenever he sat himself down to write his ink horn was snatched away by the invisible hand, and by-and-by it would come tumbling down the chimney. Sometimes an old dishcloth would be pinned to the skirt of his coat, and then a great diabolical laugh heard under the floor. At night he had a pretty time of it. His nightcap was torn off his head, his hair pulled out by handfuls, his face scratched, and his ears pinched as if with a red-hot pincers. If he went out in the yard at night, he was pelted with brickbats, sticks, stones, and all sorts of filthy missives; and if he staid at home, the ashes were blown upon his supper; and old shoes, instead of plates, seen on the table. One of the frying pans rang every night of itself for a whole hour, and a three-pronged fork stuck itself voluntarily into Boss Boomptie's back, without hurting him in the least. But what astonished the neighbours more than all, the little man, all at once, took to speaking in a barbarous and unknown jargon, which was afterwards found out to be English.

The Book of Saint Nicholas. Translated from the Original Dutch of Dominie Nicholas Aegidius Oudenarde

These matters frightened some of the neighbours and scandalized others, until at length poor Boomptie's shop was almost deserted. People were jealous of eating his bread, for fear of being bewitched. Nay, more than one little urchin complained grievously of horrible, out of the way pains in the stomach, after eating two or three dozen of his Newyear cookies.

Things went on in this way until Newyear's eve came round again, when Boss Boomptie was sitting behind his counter, which was wont to be thronged with customers on this occasion, but was now quite deserted. While thinking on his present miserable state and future prospects, all of a sudden the little ugly old woman, with a sharp nose, sharp chin, sharp eyes, sharp voice, and leather spectacles, again stood before him, leaning on her crooked black cane.

"Ben je bedondered?" exclaimed Boss Boomptie, "what to you want now?"

"I want a dozen Newyear cookies!" screamed the old creature.

The little man counted out twelve, as before.

"I want one more!" screamed she, louder than ever.

"Men weet hoe een koe een haas vangen kan!" cried the boss, in a rage; "den want will pe your masder."

She offered him six stivers, which he indignantly rejected, saying,

"I want none of your duyvel's stuyvers begone, duyvel's huysvrouw!"

The old woman went her way, mumbling and grumbling as usual.

"By Saint Johannes de Dooper," quoth Boss Boomptie, "put she's a peaudy!"

That night, and all the week after, the brickbats flew about Knickerbocker Hall like hail, insomuch that Boss Boomptie marvelled where they could all come from, until one morning, after a terrible shower of bricks, he found, to his great grief and dismay, that his oven had disappeared; next went the top of his chimney; and when that was gone, these diabolical sinners began at the extreme point of the gable end, and so went on picking at the two edges downward, until they looked just like the teeth of a saw, as may be still seen in some of our old Dutch houses.

"Onbegrypelik!" cried Boss Boomptie, "put it's too pad to have my prains peat out wid my own prickpats."

About the same time a sober respectable cat, that for years had done nothing but sit purring in the chimney corner, all at once got the duyvel in her, and after scratching the poor man half to death, jumped out of the chimney and disappeared. A Whitehall boatman afterwards saw her in Buttermilk Channel, with nothing but the tail left, swimming against the tide as easy as kiss your hand. Poor Mrs. Boomptie had no peace of her life, what with pinchings, stickings of needles, and talking without opening her mouth. But the climax of the malice of the demon which beset her was in at last tying up her tongue, so that she could not speak at all, but did nothing but sit crying and wringing her hands in the chimney corner.

These carryings on brought round Newyear's even again, when Boss Boomptie thought he would have a frolic, "in spite of de duyvel," as he said, which saying was, somehow or other, afterwards applied to the creek at Kingsbridge. So he commanded his wife to prepare him a swinging mug of hot spiced rum, to keep up his courage against the assaults of the brickbats. But what was the dismay of the little man when he found that every time he put the beverage to his lips he received a great box on the ear, the mug was snatched away by an invisible hand,

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and every single drop drank out of it before it came to Boss Boomptie's turn. Then as if it was an excellent joke, he heard a most diabolical laugh down in the cellar.

"Goeden Hemel! Is het mogelyk!" exclaimed the little man in despair. This was attacking him in the very intrenchments of his heart. It was worse than the brickbats.

"Saint Nicholas! Saint Nicholas! what will become of me what sal ich doon, mynheer?"

Scarcely had he uttered this pathetic appeal, when there was a sound of horses' hoofs in the chimney, and presently a light wagon, drawn by a little, fat, gray 'Sopus pony, came trundling into the room, loaded with all sorts of knickknacks. It was driven by a jolly, fat, little rogue of a fellow, with a round sparkling eye, and a mouth which would certainly have been laughing had it not been for a glorious Meershaum pipe, which would have chanced to fall out in that case. The little rascal had on a three-cornered cocked hat, decked with old gold lace; a blue Dutch sort of a short pea jacket, red waistcoat, breeks of the same colour, yellow stockings, and honest thick-soled shoes, ornamented with a pair of skates. Altogether he was a queer figure but there was something so irresistibly jolly and good-natured in his face, that Boss Boomptie felt his heart incline towards the stranger as soon as he saw him.

"Orange Boven!" cried the good saint, pulling off his cocked hat, and making a low bow to Mrs. Boomptie, who sat tonguetied in the chimney corner.

"Wat donderdag is dat?" said Boss Boomptie, speaking for his wife, which made the good woman very angry, that he should take the words out of her mouth.

"You called on Saint Nicholas. Here am I," quoth the jolly little saint. "In one word for I am a saint of few words, and have my hands full of business to-night in one word, tell me what you want."

"I am pewitched," quoth Boss Boomptie. "The duyvel is in me, my house, my wife, my Newyear cookies, and my children. What shall I do?"

"When you count a dozen you must count thirteen," answered the wagon driver, at the same time cracking his whip, and clattering up the chimney, more like a little duyvel than a little saint.

"Wat blixum!" muttered Boss Boomptie, "when you count a dozen you must count dirdeen! je mag even wel met un stokje in de goot roeron! I never heard of such counting. By Saint Johannes de Dooper, put Saint Nicholas is a great plockhead!"

Just as he uttered this blasphemy against the excellent Saint Nicholas, he saw through the pane of glass, in the door leading from the spare room to the shop, the little ugly old woman, with the sharp eyes, sharp nose, sharp chin, sharp voice, and leather spectacles, alighting from a broomstick, at the street door.

"Dere is de duyvel's kint come again," quoth he, in one of his cross humours, which was aggravated by his getting just then a great box on the ear from the invisible hand. However, he went grumbling into the shop, for it was part of his religion never to neglect a customer, let the occasion be what it might.

"I want a dozen Newyear cookies," screamed the old beauty, as usual, and as usual Boss Boomptie counted out twelve.

"I want another one," screamed she still louder.

"Aha!" thought Boss Boompie, doubtless inspired by the jolly little caitiff, Saint Nicholas "Aha! Het is goed visschen in troebel water when you count dwalf, you must count dirdeen. Ha ha! ho ho ho!" And he counted out the thirteenth cooky like a brave fellow.

The old woman made him a low courtesy, and laughed till she might have shown her teeth, if she had had any.

"Friend Boompie," said she, in a voice exhibiting the perfection of a nicely modulated scream "Friend Boompie, I love such generous little fellows as you, in my heart. I salute you," and she advanced to kiss him. Boss Boompie did not at all like the proposition; but, doubtless inspired by Saint Nicholas, he submitted with indescribable grace.

At that moment, an explosion was heard inside the little glass pane, and the voice of Mrs. Boompie crying out,

"You false-hearted villain, have I found out your tricks at last!"

"De Philistynen Onweetende!" cried Boss Boompie. "She's come to her speech now!"

"The spell is broken!" screamed the old woman with the sharp eyes, nose, chin, and voice. "The spell is broken, and henceforward a dozen is thirteen, and thirteen is a dozen! There shall be thirteen Newyear cookies to the dozen, as a type of the thirteen mighty states that are to arise out of the ruins of the government of faderland!"

Thereupon she took a Newyear cake bearing the effigy of the blessed St. Nicholas, and caused Boss Boompie to swear upon it, that for ever afterwards twelve should be thirteen, and thirteen should be twelve. After which, she mounted her broomstick and disappeared, just as the little old Dutch clock struck twelve. From that time forward, the spell that hung over the fortunes of little Boss Boompie was broken; and ever after he became illustrious for baking the most glorious Newyear cookies in our country. Everything became as before: the little 'prentice boys returned, mounted on the batch of bread, and their adventures may, peradventure, be told some other time. Finally, from that day forward no baker of New-Amsterdam was ever bewitched, at least by an ugly old woman, and a baker's dozen has been always counted as thirteen.

THE GHOST.

Some time in the year 1800 or 1801, I am not certain which, a man of the name of William Morgan I don't mean the person whose "abduction" has made so much noise in the world enlisted on board the United States frigate for a three years' cruise in the Mediterranean. He was an awful-looking person, six feet four inches high; a long pale visage deeply furrowed with wrinkles; sunken eyes far up towards his forehead; black exuberant hair standing on end as if he was always frightened at something; a sharp chin of a length proportioned to his height; teeth white, but very irregular; and the colour of his eyes what the writers on supernatural affairs call very singular and mysterious. Besides this, his voice was hollow and sepulchral; on his right arm were engraved certain mysterious devices, surmounted with the letters E. M.; and his tobacco box was of iron. His everyday dress was a canvass hat with a black riband band, a blue jacket, white trousers, and leather shoes. On Sundays he wore a white beaver, which, among sailors, bespoke something extraordinary, and on rainy days a pea jacket too short by half a yard. It is worthy of remark that Morgan entered on Friday; that the frigate was launched on Friday; that the master carpenter who built her was born on Friday; and that the squadron went to sea on Friday. All these singular coincidences, combined with his mysterious appearance, caused the sailors to look upon Morgan with some little degree of wonder.

During the voyage to Gibraltar, Morgan's conduct served to increase the impression his appearance had made on the crew. He sometimes went without eating for several days together, at least no one ever saw him eat; and, if he ever slept at all, it was without shutting his eyes or lying down, for his messmates, one and all, swore that, wake at

what time of the night they would, Morgan was seen sitting upright in his hammock, with his eyes glaring wide open. When his turn came to take his watch upon deck, his conduct was equally strange. He would stand stock still in one place, gazing at the stars, or the ocean, apparently unconscious of his situation; and when roused by his companions, tumble on the deck in a swoon. When he revived, he would fall to preaching the most strange and incomprehensible rhapsodies that ever were heard. In their idle hours upon the fore-castle, Morgan told such stories about himself, and his strange escapes by sea and land, as caused the sailors' hair to stand on end, and made the jolly fellows look upon him as a person gifted with the privilege of living for ever. He often indeed hinted that he had as many lives as a cat, and several times offered to let himself be hanged for the gratification of his messmates. On more than one occasion, he was found lying on his back in his hammock, apparently without life, his eyes fixed and glassy, his limbs stiff and rigid, his lower jaw sunk down, and his pulse motionless, at least so his messmates swore when they went to call the doctor; though when the latter came he always found Morgan as well as ever he was in his life, and apparently unconscious of all that had happened.

As they proceeded on the voyage, which proved for the most part a succession of calms, the sailors, having little else to do, either imagined or invented new wonders about Morgan. At one time a little Welsh foretopman swore that as he was going to sit down to dinner, his canteen was snatched from under him by an invisible hand, and he fell plump on the deck. A second had his allowance of grog "abducted" in a mysterious manner, although he was ready to make oath he never had his eyes off it for a moment. A third had his tobacco box rifled, though it had never been out of his pocket. A fourth had a crooked sixpence, with a hole by which it was suspended from his neck by a riband, taken away without his ever being the wiser for it.

These things at length reached the ears of Captain R , who, the next time Morgan got into one of his trances, had him confined for four—and—twenty hours; and otherwise punished him in various ways on the recurrence of any one of these wonderful reports. All this produced no effect whatever either on Morgan or the crew, which at length had its wonder stretched to the utmost bounds by a singular adventure of our hero.

One day, the squadron being about halfway across the Atlantic, and the frigate several leagues ahead with a fine breeze, there was an alarm of the magazine being on fire. Morgan was just coming on deck with a spoon in his hand, for some purpose or other, when hearing the cry of "magazine on fire," he made one spring overboard. The fire was extinguished by the daring gallantry of an officer, now living, and standing in the first rank of our naval heroes. In the confusion and alarm, it was impossible to make any efforts to save Morgan; and it was considered a matter of course that he had perished in the ocean. Two days after, one of the other vessels of the squadron came alongside the frigate, and sent a boat on board with Billy Morgan. Twelve hours from the time of his leaping overboard, he had been found swimming away gallantly, with the spoon in his hand. When asked why he did not let it go, he replied that he kept it to help himself to salt water when he was dry. This adventure fixed in the minds of the sailors an obstinate opinion, that Morgan was either a dead man come to life again, or one that was not very easy to be killed.

After this, Morgan continued his mysterious pranks. The sailors talked and wondered, and Captain R punished him, until the squadron was within two or three days' sail of Gibraltar, admitting the wind continued fair as it then was. Morgan had been punished pretty severely that morning for stargazing and falling into a swoon on his watch the night before, and had solemnly assured his messmates, that he intended to jump overboard and drown himself the first opportunity. He made his will, dressed himself in his best, and settled all his affairs. He also replenished his tobacco box, put his allowance of biscuit in his pocket, and filled a small canteen with water, which he strung about his neck; saying that perhaps he might take it into his head to live a day or two in the water, before he finally went to the bottom.

Between twelve and one, the vessel being becalmed, the night a clear starlight, and the sentinels pacing their rounds, Morgan was distinctly seen to come up through the hatchway, walk forward, climb the bulwark, and let himself drop into the sea. A midshipman and two seamen testified to the facts; and Morgan being missing the next morning, there was no doubt of his having committed suicide by drowning himself. This affair occasioned much

talk, and various were the opinions of the ship's crew on the subject. Some swore it was one Davy Jones who had been playing his pranks; others that it was no man, but a ghost or a devil that had got among them; and others were in daily expectation of seeing him come on board again, as much alive as ever he was.

In the mean time, the squadron proceeded but slowly, being detained several days by calms and head winds, most of which were in some way or other laid to Billy Morgan by the gallant tars, who fear nothing but Fridays and men without heads. His fate, however, gradually ceased to be a subject of discussion, and the wonder was quickly passing away, when one night, about a week after his jumping overboard, the figure of Morgan, all pale and ghastly, his clothes hanging wet about him with eyes more sunken, hair more upright, and face more thin and cadaverous than ever, was seen by one of his messmates, who happened to be lying awake, to emerge slowly from the forepart of the ship, approach one of the tables where there was a can of water, from which it took a hearty draught, and disappear in the direction whence it came. The sailor told the story next morning, but as yet very few believed him.

The next night the same figure appeared, and was seen by a different person from him by whom it was first observed. It came from the same quarter again, helped itself to a drink, and disappeared in the same direction it had done before. The story of Morgan's ghost, in the course of a day or two, came to the ears of Captain R , who caused a search to be made in that part of the vessel whence the ghost had come; under the impression that the jumping overboard of Morgan had been a deception, and that he was now secreted on board the ship. The search ended, however, without any discovery. The calms and head winds still continued, and not a sailor on board but ascribed them to Billy Morgan's mysterious influence. The ghost made its appearance again the following night after the search, when it was seen, by another of Morgan's messmates, to empty his tobacco box, and seize some of the fragments of supper, which had been accidentally left on a table, with which it again vanished in the manner before described. The sailor swore that when the ghost made free with his tobacco box, he attempted to lay hold of him, but felt nothing in his hand, except something exactly like cold water.

Captain R was excessively provoked at these stories, and caused another and still more thorough search to be made, but without any discovery. He then directed a young midshipman to keep watch between decks. That night the ghost again made its appearance, and the courageous young officer sallied out upon it; but the figure darted away with inconceivable velocity, and disappeared. The midshipman, as directed, immediately informed Captain R , who instituted an immediate search, but with as little success as before. By this time there was not a sailor on board that was not afraid of his shadow, and even the officers began to be infected with a superstitious dread. At length the squadron arrived at Gibraltar, and came to in the bay of Algesiras, where the ships remained some days waiting the arrival of those they had come to relieve. About the usual hour that night, the ghost of Billy Morgan again appeared to one of his messmates, offered him its hand, and saying "Good-by, Tom," disappeared as usual.

It was a fortnight or more before the relief squadron sailed up the Mediterranean, during which time the crews of the ships were permitted to take their turn to go on shore. On one of these occasions, a messmate of Billy Morgan, named Tom Brown, was passing through a tolerably dark lane in the suburbs of Algesiras, when he heard a well-known voice call out, "Tom, Tom, d n your eyes, don't you know your old messmate?" Tom knew the voice, and looking round, recognised his old messmate Morgan's ghost. But he had no inclination to renew the acquaintance; he took to his heels, and without looking behind him to see if the ghost followed, ran to the boat where his companions were waiting, and told the story as soon as he could find breath for the purpose. This reached the ear of Captain R , who, being almost sure of the existence of Morgan, applied to the governor of the town, who caused search to be made everywhere without effect. No one had ever seen such a person. That very night the ghost made its appearance on board the frigate, and passed its cold wet hand over the face of Tom Brown, to whom Morgan had left his watch and chest of clothes. The poor fellow bawled out lustily; but before any pursuit could be made, the ghost had disappeared in the forward part of the ship as usual. After this Billy again appeared two or three times alternately to some one of his old messmates; sometimes in the town, at others on board the frigate, but always in the dead of night. He seemed desirous to say something particular, but could never succeed in getting any of the sailors to listen quietly to the communication. The last time he made his

appearance at Algeiras, on board the frigate, he was heard by one of the sailors to utter, in a low hollow whisper, "You shall see me at Malta;" after which he vanished as before.

Captain R was excessively perplexed at these strange and unaccountable visitations, and instituted every possible inquiry into the circumstances in the hope of finding some clew to explain the mystery. He again caused the ship to be examined with a view to the discovery either of the place where Morgan secreted himself, or the means by which he escaped from the vessel. He questioned every man on board, and threatened the severest punishment, should he ever discover that they deceived him in their story, or were accomplices in the escape of Morgan. He even removed everything in the forward part of the ship, and rendered it impossible for any human being to be there without being detected. The whole resulted in leaving the affair involved in complete mystery, and the squadron proceeded up the Mediterranean, to cruise along the African coast, and rendezvous at Malta.

It was some weeks before the frigate came to the latter place, and in the mean time, as nothing had been seen of the ghost, it was concluded that the shade of Billy Morgan was appeased, or rather the whole affair had been gradually forgotten. Two nights after her arrival, a party of sailors, being ashore at La Vallette, accidentally entered a small tavern in a remote part of the suburbs, where they commenced a frolic, after the manner of those amphibious bipeds. Among them was the heir of Billy Morgan, who about three or four in the morning went to bed, not quite as clear headed as he might have been. He could not tell how long he had been asleep, when he was awakened by a voice whispering in his ear, "Tom, Tom, wake up!" On opening his eyes, he beheld, by the pale light of the morning, the ghastly figure of Billy Morgan leaning over his bed and glaring at him with eyes like saucers. Tom cried, "Murder! ghost! Billy Morgan!" as loud as he could bawl, until he roused the landlord, who came to know what was the matter. Tom related the whole affair, and inquired if he had seen anything of the figure he described. Mine host utterly denied having seen or ever heard of such a figure as Billy Morgan, and so did all his family. The report was again alive on board the frigate, that Billy Morgan's ghost had taken the field once more. "Heaven and earth!" cried Captain R, "is Billy Morgan's ghost come again? Shall I never get rid of this infernal spectre, or whatever else it may be?"

Captain R immediately ordered his barge, waited on the governor, explained the situation of his crew, and begged his assistance in apprehending the ghost of Billy Morgan, or Billy himself, as the case might be. That night the governor caused the strictest search to be made in every hole and corner of the little town of La Vallette; but in vain. No one had seen that remarkable being, corporeal or spiritual; and the landlord of the house where the spectre appeared, together with all his family, utterly denied any knowledge of such a person or thing. It is little to be wondered at, that the search proved ineffectual, for that very night Billy took a fancy to appear on board the frigate, where he again accosted his old friend Tom, to whom he had bequeathed all his goods and chattels. But Tom had no mind for a confidential communication with the ghost, and roared out so lustily, as usual, that it glided away and disappeared as before, without being intercepted in the confusion which followed.

Captain R was in despair; never was man so persecuted by a ghost in this world before. The ship's crew were in a state of terror and dismay, insomuch that had an Algerine come across them they might peradventure have surrendered at discretion. They signed a round robin, drawn up by one of Billy Morgan's old messmates, representing to Captain R the propriety of running the ship ashore, and abandoning her entirely to the ghost, which now appeared almost every night, sometimes between decks, at others on the end of the bowsprit, and at others cutting capers on the yards and topgallant mast. The story spread into the town of La Vallette, and nothing was talked of but the ghost of Billy Morgan, which now began to appear occasionally to the sentinels of the fort, one of whom had the courage to fire at it, by which he alarmed the whole island and made matters ten times worse than ever.

From Malta the squadron, after making a cruise of a few weeks, proceeded to Syracuse, with the intention of remaining some time. They were obliged to perform a long quarantine; the ships were strictly examined by the health officers, and fumigated with brimstone, to the great satisfaction of the crew of the frigate, who were in great hopes this would drive away Billy Morgan's ghost. These hopes were strengthened by their seeing no more

of that troublesome visiter during the whole time the quarantine continued. The very next night after the expiration of the quarantine, Billy again visited his old messmate and heir Tom Brown, lank, lean, and dripping wet, as usual, and after giving him a rousing shake, whispered, "Hush, Tom; I want to speak to you about my watch and chest of clothes." But Tom had no inclination to converse with his old friend, and cried out "Murder" with all his might; when the ghost vanished as before, muttering, as Tom swore, "You bloody infernal lubber."

The reappearance of the ghost occasioned greater consternation than ever among the crew of the good ship, and it required all the influence of severe punishments to keep them from deserting on every occasion. Poor Tom Brown, to whom the devoirs of the spectre seemed most especially directed, left off swearing and chewing tobacco, and dwindled to a perfect shadow. He became very serious, and spent almost all his leisure time in reading chapters in the Bible or singing psalms. Captain R now ordered a constant watch all night between decks, in hopes of detecting the intruder; but all in vain, although there was hardly a night passed without Tom's waking and crying out that the ghost had just paid him a visit. It was, however, thought very singular, and to afford additional proof of its being a ghost, that on all these occasions, except two, it was invisible to everybody but Tom Brown.

In addition to the vexation arising from this persevering and diabolical persecution of Billy's ghost, various other strange and unaccountable things happened almost every day on board the frigate. Tobacco boxes were emptied in the most mysterious manner, and in the dead of the night; sailors would sometimes be missing a whole day, and return again without being able to give any account of themselves; and not a few of them were overtaken with liquor, without their being ever the wiser for it, for they all swore they had not drunk a drop beyond their allowance. Sometimes, on going ashore on leave for a limited time, the sailors would be decoyed, as they solemnly assured the captain, by some unaccountable influence into strange, out of the way places, where they could not find their road back, and where they were found by their officers in a state of mysterious stupefaction, though not one had tasted a drop of liquor. On these occasions, they always saw the ghost of Billy Morgan, either flying through the air, or dancing on the tops of the steeples, with a fiery tail like a comet. Wonder grew upon wonder every day, until the wonder transcended the bounds of human credulity.

At length, Tom Brown, the night after receiving a visit from Billy Morgan's ghost, disappeared, and was never heard of afterwards. As the chest of clothes inherited from his deceased messmate was found entirely empty, it might have been surmised that Tom had deserted, had not a sailor, who was on the watch, solemnly declared that he saw the ghost of Billy Morgan jump overboard with him in a flame of fire, and that he hissed like a red-hot ploughshare in the water. After this bold feat, the spectre appeared no more. The squadron remained some time at Syracuse, and various adventures befell the officers and crews, which those remaining alive tell of to this day. How Macdonough, then a madcap midshipman, "licked" the high constable of the town; how Burroughs quizzed the governor; what rows they kicked up at masquerades; what a dust they raised among the antiquities; and what wonders they whispered in the ear of Dionysius. From thence, they again sailed on a cruise, and after teaching the Bey of Tripoli a new way of paying tribute, and laying the foundation of that structure of imperishable glory which shall one day reach the highest heaven, returned home, after an absence of between two and three years. The crew of the frigate were paid off and discharged, and it is on record, as a wonder, that their three years' pay lasted some of them nearly three days. But though we believe in the ghost of Billy Morgan, we can scarcely credit this incredible wonder. Certain it is, that not a man of them ever doubted for a moment the reality of the spectre, or would have hesitated to make oath of having seen it more than once. Even Captain R spoke of it on his return, as one of those strange, inscrutable things, which baffle the efforts of human ingenuity, and seem to justify the most extraordinary relations of past and present times. His understanding revolted at the absurdity of a great part of the wonders ascribed to Billy Morgan's ghost; but some of the facts were so well attested, that a painful doubt would often pass over his mind, and dispose it to the reception of superstitious impressions.

He remained in this state of mixed skepticism and credulity, when, some years after his return from the Mediterranean, being on a journey to the westward, he had occasion to halt at a log house, on the borders of the Tennessee, for refreshment. A man came forth to receive him, whom he at once recognised as his old

acquaintance, Billy Morgan. "Heavens!" thought Captain R, "here's Monsieur Tonson come again!" Billy, who had also found out who his guest was, when too late to retreat, looked rather sheepish, and invited him in with little of the frank hospitality characteristic of a genuine backwoodsman. Captain R followed him into the house, where he found a comely goodnatured dame, and two or three yellow-haired boys and girls, all in a fluster at the stranger. The house had an air of comfort, and the mistress, by her stirring activity, accompanied with smiling looks withal, seemed pleased at the rare incident of a stranger's entering their door.

Bill Morgan was at first rather shy and awkward. But finding Captain R treated him with good-humoured frankness, he, in the course of the evening, when the children were gone to bed, and the wife busy in milking the cows, took occasion to accost his old commander.

"Captain, I hope you don't mean to shoot me for a deserter?"

"By no means," said the captain, smiling; "there would be little use in shooting a ghost, or a man with as many lives as a cat."

Billy Morgan smiled rather a melancholy smile. "Ah! captain, you have not forgot the ghost, I see. But it is a long time to remember an old score, and I hope you'll forgive me."

"On one condition I will," replied Captain R; "that you tell me honestly how you managed to make all my sailors believe they saw you, night after night, on board the ship as well as on shore."

"They did see me," replied Billy, in his usual sepulchral voice.

The captain began to be in some doubt whether he was talking to Billy Morgan or his ghost.

"You don't pretend to say you were really on board my vessel all the time?"

"No, not all the time, only at such times as the sailors saw me except previous to our arrival at Gibraltar."

"Then their seeing you jump overboard was all a deception."

"By no means, sir; I did jump overboard but then I climbed back again, directly after."

"The deuse you did explain."

"I will, sir, as well as I am able. I was many years among the Sandwich Islanders, where the vessel in which I was a cabin boy was wrecked, a long time ago, and I can pass whole hours, I believe days, in the water, without being fatigued, except for want of sleep. I have also got some of their other habits, such as a great dislike to hard work, and a liking for going where I will, and doing just what I please. The discipline of a man-of-war did not suit me at all, and I grew tired after a few days. To pass the time, and to make fun for myself with the sailors, I told them stories of my adventures, and pretended that I could live in the water, and had as many lives as a cat. Besides this, as you know, I played them many other pranks, partly for amusement, and partly from a kind of pride I felt in making them believe I was half a wizard. The punishment you gave me, though I own I deserved it, put me out of all patience, and I made up my mind to desert the very first opportunity. I had an old shipmate with me, whom I could trust, and we planned the whole thing together. I knew if I deserted at Gibraltar, or any of the ports of the Mediterranean, I should almost certainly be caught, and shot as an example; and for this reason we settled that I should jump overboard, return again, and hide myself in a coil of cable which was stowed away between decks, close to the bows, where it was dark even in the daytime. My messmate procured a piece of old canvass, with which I might cover myself if necessary. To make my jumping overboard have a greater effect on the crew, and to provide against accidents until the ship arrived at Gibraltar, I took care to fill my tobacco box with tobacco, my

pockets with biscuits, and to sling a canteen of water round my neck, as I told them perhaps I might take it into my head not to go to the bottom for two or three days. I got Tom Brown to write my will, intending to leave my watch and chest to my messmate, who was to return them to me at Gibraltar, the first chance he could get. But Tom played us a trick, and put his own name in place of my friend's. Neither he nor I were any great scholars, and the trick was not found out till afterwards, when my friend was afraid of discovery, if he made any rout about the matter."

"Who was your friend?" asked Captain R .

"He is still alive, and in service. I had rather not mention his name."

"Very well," replied Captain R , "go on."

"That night I jumped overboard."

"How did you get back into the ship?" asked the captain, hastily.

"Why, sir, the forward porthole, on the starboard side, was left open, with a bit of rope fastened to the gun, and hanging down so that I could catch it."

The captain struck his forehead with the palm of his hand, and said to himself,

"What a set of blockheads we were!"

"Not so great as might have been expected," said honest Billy Morgan, intending to compliment the captain; but it sounded directly the contrary.

"As soon as I had jumped overboard I swam to the rope, which I held fast, waiting the signal from my friend to climb up and hide myself in the coil of cable. In the bustle which followed it was easy enough to do this, and nobody saw me but my friend. Here I remained in my wet clothes, rather uncomfortably, as you may suppose, until my provision and water were expended, and my tobacco box empty. I calculated they would last till we arrived at Gibraltar, when nothing would have been easier for me than to jump out of the porthole and swim ashore. But the plaguy head winds and calms, which I dare say you remember, delayed the squadron several days longer than I expected, and left me without supply. I could have gone without biscuit and water, but it was impossible to live without tobacco. My friend had promised to come near enough to hear signals of distress sometimes, but, as he told me afterwards, he was confined several days for picking a quarrel with Tom Brown, whom he longed to flog for forging the will.

"I remained in this state until I was nearly starved, when, not being able to stand it any longer, I one night, when everybody between decks seemed fast asleep, crept out from my hiding place, where I was coiled up in the shape of a cable, and finding a pitcher of water, took a hearty, drink out of it. This was as far as I dared go at that time, so I went back again as quietly as possible. But I was too hungry to remain quiet, though among the Sandwich Islanders I had been used to go without eating for days at a time. The next night I crept out again, and was lucky enough to get a pretty good supply of provisions, which happened to be left by some accident in the way. Two or three times I heard search making for me, and was very much frightened lest I should be found out in my hole."

"How was it possible for the blockheads to miss you?" asked Captain R .

"Why, sir, they did come to the cable tier where I was, but I believe they were too much frightened to look into it, or could not see me in the dark hole. They did not lift the canvass that covered me either of the times they came. The night I found the officer on the watch, I gave myself up for gone; but as luck would have it, my friend was

now out of limbo, and always took care to examine the coil of cable so carefully, that nobody thought of looking into it after him. When we arrived at the bay of Algeiras, I took an opportunity to frighten Tom Brown a little, by visiting him in the night and bidding him good-by, after which I slipped quietly out of the porthole, and swam ashore, while my friend pulled up the rope and shut the port after me as usual."

"But how did you manage to escape from the search made by the police at Algeiras?"

"Oh, sir! I was on board the frigate all the time in my old hiding place."

"And when the ship was searched directly after?"

"I was ashore at that time."

"And how did you manage at Malta?"

"The landlord was my sworn brother, and wouldn't have blabbed for a thousand pounds."

"And the capers on the yardarm and topgallant, the visits paid to Tom Brown at Syracuse, and the wonderful stories told by the sailors of being robbed of their tobacco, getting tipsy upon nothing, and being led astray by nobody? What do you say to all this, Mr. Ghost?" said the captain, smiling.

"I never paid but two visits to the ship, so far as I remember, sir, after she left Malta. One was the night I wanted to talk with Tom Brown, the other when he disappeared the night afterwards. The rest of the stories were all owing to the jokes of some of the sailors, and the fears of the others."

"But you are sure you did not jump into the sea with Tom Brown, in a flame of fire?"

"Yes, sir, as I am an honest man. Tom got away without any help of mine, and without my ever knowing how, until a long time afterwards, when I accidentally met him at Liverpool."

"Well?"

"He was not to be convinced I was living, but ran away as hard as he could, and to this day believes in ghosts as much as he does in his being alive himself."

"So far all is clear enough," said Captain R ; "but what could possibly induce you to put yourself in the way of being caught after escaping, by visiting the ship and letting yourself be seen?"

"I wanted to see Tom Brown, sir."

"Why so?"

"I wanted to get back my watch and clothes from him."

"Oh! I see it now. But had you no other object?"

"Why, I'll tell you, sir; besides that, I had a sort of foolish pride, all my life, in frightening people, and making them wonder at me, by telling tough stories, or doing strange things. I haven't got over it to this day, and have been well beaten two or three times, besides being put in jail, for playing the ghost hereabout, with the country people, at court time. I confess too, sir, that I have once or twice frightened my wife almost into fits, by way of a frolic; and for all the trouble it has brought upon me, I believe in my soul I shall play the ghost till I give up the

ghost at last. Besides this, the truth is, sir, I had a little spite at you for having put me in the bilboes for some of these pranks, as I deserved, and had no objection to pay you off, by breeding trouble in the ship."

"Truly, you succeeded wonderfully; but what became of you afterwards?"

"Why, sir, after Tom Brown deserted, and, to quiet his conscience, left my watch and clothes to my friend, I had no motive for playing the ghost any more. I shipped in an American merchantman for Smyrna from thence I went to Gibraltar and after voyaging a year or two, and saving a few hundred dollars, came to Boston at last. I did not dare to stay along shore, for fear of being known by some of the officers of the squadron, so I took my money and my bundle and went into the back country. I am a little of everything, a jack of all trades, and turned farmer, as sea captains often do when they are tired of ploughing the ocean. I get on pretty well now, and hope you won't have me shot by a court martial."

"No," replied Captain R, "I am out of the navy now. I have turned farmer too, and you are quite safe."

"I hope you prosper well, sir?"

"Not quite as well as you, Billy I have come into the backwoods to see if I can do better."

"Only serve under me," said Billy, "and I will repay all your good offices."

"What, the floggings, *et cetera*?"

"By God's help, sir, I may," said Billy. "Try me, sir."

"No I am going on a little farther."

"You may go farther, and fare worse, sir."

"Perhaps so but I believe it is bedtime, and so good-night, Mr. Ghost."

Captain R retired very quietly to his room, went to bed, and slept like a top, till the broad sun shone over the summits of the trees into his face, as he lay under the window. He breakfasted sumptuously, and set out gallantly for the prairies of St. Louis.

"Good-by, captain," said Billy, leering, and lengthening his face to a supernatural degree. "I hope you won't meet any ghosts on your way."

"Good-by, Billy," replied Captain R, a little nettled at this joke. "I hope you will not get into the state prison for playing the ghost."

"I'll take care of that, sir; I've been in the state prison already, and you won't catch me there again, I warrant you."

"What do you mean, Billy?"

"I mean, that there is little or no odds between a state ship and a state prison," said Billy, with a face longer than ever, and a most expressive shrug.

Captain R proceeded on his way, reflecting on the singular story of Billy Morgan, whose pranks on board the frigate had convinced some hundreds of men of the existence of ghosts, and thrown the gloom of superstitious horror over the remainder of their existence. "Not a sailor," thought he, "out of more than five hundred, with the

exception of a single one, but will go to his grave in the full belief of the appearance of Billy Morgan's ghost. What an unlucky rencounter this of mine; it has spoiled one of the best—authenticated ghost stories of the age."

THE NYMPH OF THE MOUNTAIN.

In a certain corner of the Bay State there once stood, and we hope will continue to flourish long and happily, a snug town, now promoted to be a city, the name of which is not material to our purpose. Here in a great shingle palace, which would have been a very comfortable edifice had it only been finished, lived a reputable widow, well to do in the world, and the happy mother of a promising lad, a wonderful clever boy, as might be expected. In fact, Shearjashub (that was his name) was no bad specimen of the country lad. He was hardy, abstemious, independent, and *cute* withal; and before he was a man grown, made a great bargain once out of a travelling merchant, a Scotchman, who chanced that way. Besides this, he was a mechanical genius; and, though far from being lazy, delighted in the invention of labour-saving machines, some of which were odd enough. He peeled all his mother's pumpkins by water, and spun her flax with a windmill. Nay, it was reported of him, that he once invented a machine for digging graves upon speculation, by which he calculated he should certainly have made his fortune, had not the people of the village all with one accord taken it into their heads to live for ever. The name of the family was Yankee, they having been the first that had intercourse with the Indians, who called them Yankee, because they could not say English.

The Widow Yankee was a right pious, meetinggoing woman, who held it to be a great want of faith not to believe in everything; especially everything out of the way and impossible. She was a great amateur of demonology and witchcraft. Moreover, she was gifted with a reasonable share of curiosity, though it is recorded that once she came very near missing to get at the bottom of a secret. The story ran as follows:

One day, as she was sitting at her window, which had a happy aspect for overlooking the affairs of the village, she saw a mysterious-looking man, with a stick in his hand and a pipe in his mouth, walking exactly three feet behind a white cow. The same thing happened precisely at the same hour in the same manner the next day, and so continued for some time. The first week the widow began to think it rather odd; the second she began to think it quite strange; the third it became altogether mysterious; and the fourth the poor woman took to her bed, of the disease of the man and the cow.

Doctor Calomel undertook the cure in a new and original manner, to wit, without the use of medicine. He wrought upon the mysterious cowdriver to come to the widow's house, and tell her the whole secret of the business. When he came into the room the sick woman raised herself up, and in a faint voice addressed him as follows:

"Mysterious man! I conjure thee to tell me what under the sun makes thee always follow that cow about every day at the same hour, and at the same distance from her tail?"

"Because the cow always goes before me!" replied the mysterious man.

Upon which the widow jumped out of her sick bed, seized an old shoe, fired it at the mysterious man's head, and was miraculously cured from that moment. Doctor Calomel got into great practice thereupon.

Shearjashub inherited a considerable share of his mother's inquiring disposition, and was very inquisitive about the affairs of other people; but, to do him justice, he took pretty good care to keep his own to himself, like a discreet lad as he was. Having invented so many labour-saving machines, Jashub, as he was usually called by the neighbours, thought it was great nonsense to work himself; so he set his machines going, and took to the amusement of killing time, which, in a country village, is no such easy matter. It required a considerable share of ingenuity. His favourite mode of doing this was taking his gun on his shoulder, and sallying forth into the fields and woods, followed by a cur, whose genealogy was perfectly mysterious. Nobody could tell to what family he

belonged; certain it was, that he was neither "mongrel, puppy, whelp, nor hound," but a cur of low degree, whose delight was to bask in the sun when he was not out with his young master.

In this way Jashub would pass day after day, in what he called sporting; that is to say, toiling through tangled woods and rough bog meadows and swamps, that quivered like a jelly at every step, and returning home at night hungry as well as tired. Report said that he never was known to shoot anything; and thus far his time was spent innocently, if not improvingly.

One fast-day, early in the spring of 1776, Jashub went forth as usual, with his gun on his shoulder, and little Snap (such was the name of the dog) at his heels. The early May had put on all her charms; a thousand little patches of wild violets were peeping forth with deep blue eyes; a thousand, yea, tens of thousands of little buds were expanding into leaves apace; and crowds of chirping birds were singing a hymn to the jolly laughing spring. Jashub could not find it in his heart to fire at them; but if he had, there would have been no danger, except of frightening the little warblers, and arresting their song.

Beguiled by the beauties of Nature and her charming music, Jashub almost unconsciously wandered on until he came to the opening of a deep glen in the mountain, which rose at some miles distance, west of the village. It was formed by the passage of a pure crystal stream, which, in the course of ages, or perhaps by a single effort, had divided the mountain about the space of twenty yards, ten of which were occupied by the brook, which silently wound its way along the edge of steep and rocky precipices several hundred feet high, that formed the barriers of the glen on either side. These towering perpendicular masses of gray eternity were here and there green with the adventurous laurel, which, fastening its roots in the crevices, nodded over the mighty steep in fearful dizziness. Here and there a little spring gushed forth high up among the graybeard rocks, and trickled down their sides in silvery brightness. In other places patches of isinglass appeared, sparkling against the sober masses, and communicating a singularly lustrous character to the scene, which had otherwise been all gloomy solitude.

Jashub gazed a while in apprehensive wonder, as he stood at the entrance of these everlasting gates. Curiosity prompted him to enter, and explore the recesses within, while a certain vague unwillingness deterred him. At length curiosity, or perhaps fate, which had decreed that he should become the instrument of her great designs, prevailed against all opposition, and he entered the gates of this majestic palace of nature. He slowly advanced, sometimes arrested by a certain feeling of mysterious awe; at others driven on by the power which had assumed the direction of his conduct, until he arrived at the centre of the hallowed solitude. Not a living thing breathed around him, except his little dog, and his gun trembled in his hand. All was gloom, silence, solitude, deep and profound. The brook poured forth no murmurs, the birds and insects seemed to have shunned the unsunned region, where everlasting twilight reigned; and the scream of the hawks, pursuing their way across the deep chasm, was hushed as they passed.

Jashub was arrested by the melancholy grandeur of the scene, and his dog looked wistfully in his face, as if he wanted to go home. As he stood thus lingering, leaning on his gun, a merry strain broke forth upon the terrible silence, and echoed through the glen. The sound made him suddenly start, in doing which his foot somehow or other caught in the lock of his gun, which he had forgot to uncock, as was usual with him, and caused it to go off. The explosion rang through the recesses of the glen in a hundred repetitions, which were answered by the howlings of the little dog. As the echoes gradually subsided, and the smoke cleared away, the music again commenced. It was a careless, lively air, such as suited the taste of the young man, and he forgot his fears in his love of music.

As he stood thus entranced he heard a voice, sweet, yet animating as the clear sound of the trumpet, exclaim,

"Shearjashub! Shearjashub!"

Jashub's heart bounded into his throat, and prevented his answering. He loaded his gun, and stood on the defensive.

In a moment after the same trumpet voice repeated the same words,

"Shearjashub! Shearjashub!"

"What d'ye want, you tarnal krittter?" at length the young man answered, with a degree of courage that afterwards astonished him.

"Listen and look!"

He listened and looked, but saw nothing, until a little flourish of the same sprightly tune directed his attention to the spot whence it came.

High on the summit of the highest perpendicular cliff, which shone gorgeously with sparkling isinglass, seated under the shade of a tuft of laurels, he beheld a female figure, holding a little flageolet, and playing the sprightly air which he had just heard. Her height, notwithstanding the distance, appeared majestic; the flash of her bright beaming eye illumined the depths of the gloom, and her air seemed that of a goddess. She was dressed in simple robes of virgin white, and on her head she wore a cap, such as has since been consecrated to Liberty by my gallant countrymen.

Shearjashub looked, trembled, and was silent. In a few minutes, however, his recollection returned.

"Shearjashub!" exclaimed the lady of the rock, "listen!"

But Shearjashub had given leg bail. Both he and his faithful squire, little Snap, had left the haunted glen as fast as their feet would carry them.

He told the story when he got home, with some little exaggeration. Nobody believed him except the widow, his honoured mother, who had faith to swallow a camel. All the rest laughed at him, and the wicked damsels of the village were always joking about his mountain sweetheart.

At last he got out of patience, and one day demanded of those who were bantering him what proof they would have of the truth of his story.

"Why," said old Deacon Mayhew, "I guess I should be considerably particular satisfied if you would bring us hum that same fife you heard the gal play on so finely."

"And I," said another, "will believe the young squire if he'll play the same tune on it he heard yonder in the mountain."

Shearjashub was so pestered and provoked at last, that he determined to put his courage to the proof, and see whether it would bear him out in another visit to the chasm in the mountain. He thought he might as well be dead as have no comfort of his life.

"I'll be darned if I don't go," said he, and away he went, with no other company than his little dog. It was on the fourth day of July, 1776, that Shearjashub wrought himself up to a second visit.

"I'm just come of age this very day," said he, "and I'll show the krittters I'm not made a man for nothing."

He certainly felt, as he afterwards confessed, a little skittish on this occasion, and his dog seemed not much to relish the excursion. Shearjashub had his gun, but had not the heart to fire at any of the birds that flitted about, and seemed as if they were not afraid of coming nigh him. His mind ran upon other matters entirely. He was a long while getting to the chasm in the mountain. Sometimes he would stop to rest, as he said to himself, though he was not in the least tired; sometimes he found himself standing still, admiring nothing; and once or twice actually detected his feet moving on their way home, instead of towards the mountain.

On arriving at the vast gates that, as it were, guarded the entrance to the glen, he halted to consider the matter. All was silence, repose, gloom, and sublimity. His spirit at first sunk under the majesty of nature, but at length became gradually inspired by the scene before him with something of a kindred dignity. He marched forward with a vigorous step and firm heart, rendered the more firm by hearing and seeing nothing of the white nymph of the rock or her sprightly music. He hardly knew whether he wished to see her or not, thinking if she appeared he might be inspired to run away again; and if she did not, the deacon and the girls would laugh at him worse than ever.

With these conflicting thoughts he arrived at the very centre of the gloomy solitude, where he stood a few moments, expecting to hear the music. All was loneliness; Repose lay sleeping on his bed of rocks, and Silence reigned alone in her chosen retreat.

"Is it possible that I was dreaming the other day, when I was here, as these tarnal krittlers twit me I was?" asked the young man of himself.

He was answered by the voice of the white girl of the mountain, exclaiming, in the same sweet yet clear, animating, trumpet tones,

"Shearjashub! Shearjashub! listen."

Jashub's legs felt some little inclination to run away; but this time he kept his ground like a brave fellow.

Again the same sprightly air echoed through the silence of the deep profound, in strains of animating yet simple, careless vivacity. Shearjashub began to feel himself inspired. He bobbed his head from side to side to suit the air, and was once or twice on the point of cutting a caper.

He felt his bosom thrill with unwonted energies, and a new vigour animate his frame as he contemplated the glorious figure of the mountain nymph, and listened to her sprightly flageolet.

"Shearjashub!" cried the nymph, after finishing her strain of music, "listen!"

"Speak I hear," said the young man.

"My name is Liberty; dost thou know me?"

"I have heard my father and grandfather speak of thee, and say they came to the New World to seek thee."

"Well, I am found at last. Listen to me."

"Speak on."

"Your country has just devoted herself for ever to me and my glory. Your countrymen have this day pronounced themselves freemen, and they shall be what they have willed, in spite of fate or fortune. But my blessings are never thrown away on cowards; they are to be gained by toil, suffering, hunger, wounds, and death; by courage

and perseverance; by virtue and patriotism. The wrath and the mighty energies of the oppressor are now directed against your people; hunger assails them; force overmatches them, and their spirits begin to fail. Take this pipe," and she flung him the little flageolet, which he caught in his hand. "Canst thou play on it? Try."

He put it to his lips, and to his surprise, produced the same animating strain he had heard from the nymph of the mountain.

"Now go forth among the people and their armies, and inspire them for battle. Wherever thou goest with thy pipe, and whenever thou playest that air, I will be with thee and thy countrymen. Go, fear not; those who deserve me shall always win me. Farewell we shall meet again." So saying, she vanished behind the tuft of laurels.

Shearjashub marched straight home with his pipe, and somehow or other felt he did not quite know how; he felt as if he could eat gunpowder, and snap his fingers at the deacon.

"What the dickens has got in the kitter?" said the deacon, when he saw him strutting along like a captain of militia.

"I declare, Jashub looks like a continental," exclaimed the girls.

Just then Shearjashub put his pipe to his mouth, and played the tune he had learned, as if by magic, from the mountain nymph; whereat Deacon Mayhew made for the little white meeting house, whither all the villagers followed him, and preached a sermon, calling on the people to rise and fight for liberty, in such stirring strains that forthwith all the men, young and old, took their muskets and went out in defence of their country, under the command of Shearjashub. Wherever he came he played the magic tune on his pipe, and the men, like those of his native village, took to their arms, and went forth to meet the oppressor, like little David against Goliath, armed with a sling and a stone.

They joined the army of Liberty, which they found dispirited with defeat, and weak with suffering and want. They scarcely dared hope for success to their cause, and a general gloom depressed the hearts of all the true friends of freedom. In this state the enemy attacked them, and threw them into confusion, when Shearjashub came on at the head of his troops, playing his inspiring music with might and main. Wherever he went the sounds seemed to awaken the spirit of heroism in every breast. Those who were retreating rallied; and those who stood their ground maintained it more stoutly than ever. The victory remained with the sons of Liberty, and Shearjashub celebrated it with a tune on his pipe, which echoed through the whole land, and wakened it to new triumphs.

After a hard and bloody struggle, in which the pipe of Shearjashub animated the very clods of the valley wherever he went, the promise of the nymph of the mountain was fulfilled. The countrymen of Shearjashub were free and independent. They were about to repose under the laurels they had reaped, and to wear what they had so dearly won.

Shearjashub also departed for his native village with his pipe, which had so materially assisted in the attainment of the blessings of freedom. His way lay through the chasm in the mountain, where he first encountered the nymph with the cap and snow-white robe. He was anticipating the happiness of seeing his aged mother, who had lived through the long war, principally on the excitement of news, and the still more near and dear happiness of taking to his bosom the girl of his heart, Miss Prudence Worthy, as fair a maid as ever raised a sigh in the bosom of lusty youth.

He had got to the centre of the glen when he was roused from his sweet anticipations by the wellremembered voice of the nymph of the mountain, who sat on the same inaccessible rock, under the same tuft of laurel, where he had first seen her, with an eagle at her side.

"Shearjashub!" cried she, in a voice which made the echoes of the rocks mad with ecstasy "Shearjashub! thou hast done well, and deserved nobly of thy country. The thought of that is, in itself, a glorious reward for toil, danger, and suffering. But thou shalt have one as dear, if not dearer than even this. Look where it comes."

Shearjashub looked, and beheld afar off a figure all in white coming towards him, at the entrance of the glen. It approached nearer, and it was a woman; nearer yet, and it was a young woman; still nearer, and Shearjashub rushed towards it, and kissed its blushing cheek. It was the girl of his heart, Miss Prudence Worthy.

"This is thy other blessing," exclaimed the mountain nymph, the sight of whom made Miss Prudence a little jealous; "a richer reward for noble exertions than a virtuous woman I know not of. Live free, live virtuous, and then thou wilt be happy. I shall be with thee an invisible witness, an invisible protector; but, in the mean while, should the spirit of the people ever flag, and their hearts fail them in time of peril, go forth among them as thou didst before, and rouse them with thy pipe and thy music. Farewell, and be happy!"

The nymph disappeared, and the little jealous pang felt by Miss Prudence melted away in measureless confidence and love. The tune of the mountain nymph was played over and over again at Shearjashub's wedding, and ever afterwards became known by the name of Yankee Doodle.

THE RIDE OF SAINT NICHOLAS ON NEWYEAR'S EVE.

Of all the cities in this New World, that which once bore the name of Fort Orange, but now bears it no more, is the favourite of the good St. Nicholas. It is there that he hears the sound of his native language, and sees the honest Dutch pipe in the mouths of a few portly burghers, who, disdainful of the pestilent innovations of modern times, still cling with honest obstinacy to the dress, the manners, and customs of old faderland. It is there, too, that they have instituted a society in honour of the excellent saint, whose birthday they celebrate in a manner worthy of all commendation.

True it is, that the city of his affections has from time to time committed divers great offences, which sorely wounded the feelings of St. Nicholas, and almost caused him to withdraw his patronage from its backsliding citizens. First, by adopting the newfangled style of beginning the year at the bidding of the old lady of Babylon, whereby the jolly Newyear was so jostled out of place that the good saint scarcely knew where to look for it. Next, they essayed themselves to learn outlandish tongues, whereby they gradually sophisticated their own, insomuch that he could hardly understand them. Thirdly, they did, from time to time, admit into their churches preachings and singings in the upstart English language, until by degrees the ancient worship became adulterated in such a manner that the indignant St. Nicholas, when he first witnessed it, did, for the only time in his life, come near to uttering a great oath, by exclaiming, "Wat donderdag is dat?" Now be it known that had he said, "Wat donder is dat," it would have been downright swearing; so you see what a narrow escape he had.

Not content with these backslidings, the burghers of Fort Orange a pestilence on all new names! suffered themselves by degrees to be corrupted by various modern innovations, under the mischievous disguise of improvements. Forgetting the reverence due to their ancestors, who eschewed all internal improvement, except that of the mind and heart, they departed from the venerable customs of the faderland, and pulling down the old houses that, scorning all appearance of ostentation, modestly presented the little end to the street, began to erect in their places certain indescribable buildings, with the broadsides as it were turned frontwise, by which strange contortion the comeliness of Fort Orange was utterly destroyed. It is on record that a heavy judgment fell upon the head of the first man who adventured on this daring innovation. His money gave out before this monstrous novelty was completed, and he invented the pernicious system of borrowing and mortgaging, before happily unknown among these worthy citizens, who were utterly confounded, not long afterwards, at seeing the house change its owner a thing that had never happened before in that goodly community, save when the son entered on the inheritance of his father.

Becoming gradually more incorrigible in their backslidings, they were seduced into opening, widening, and regulating the streets; making the crooked straight and the narrow wide, thereby causing sad inroads into the strong boxes of divers of the honest burghers, who became all at once very rich, saving that they had no money to go to market. To cap the climax of their enormities, they at last committed the egregious sacrilege of pulling down the ancient and honourable Dutch church, which stood right in the middle of State–street, or Staats–street, being so called after the family of that name, from which I am lineally descended.

At this the good St. Nicholas was exceedingly grieved; and when, by degrees, his favourite burghers left off eating sturgeon, being thereto instigated by divers scurvy jests of certain silly strangers, that knew not the excellence of that savoury fish, he cried out in the bitterness of his soul, "Onbegrypelyk!" "Incredible!" meaning thereby that he could scarcely believe his eyes. In the bitterness of his soul he had resolved to return to faderland, and leave his beloved city to be swallowed up in the vortex of improvement. He was making his progress through the streets, to take his last farewell, in melancholy mood, when he came to the outlet of the Grand Canal, just then completed. "Is het mogelyk?" which means, is it possible exclaimed St. Nicholas; and thereupon he was so delighted with this proof that his beloved people had not altogether degenerated from their ancestors, that he determined not to leave them to strange saints, outlandish tongues, and modern innovations. He took a sail on the canal, and returned in such measureless content, that he blessed the good city of Fort Orange, as he evermore called it, and resolved to distribute a more than usual store of his Newyear cookies, at the Christmas holydays. That jovial season was now fast approaching. The autumn frosts had already invested the forests with a mantle of glory; the farmers were in their fields and orchards, gathering in the corn and apples, or making cider, the wholesome beverage of virtuous simplicity; the robins, blackbirds, and all the annual emigrants to southern climes, had passed away in flocks, like the adventurers to the far West; the bluebird alone lingered last of all to sing his parting song; and sometimes of a morning, the river showed a little fretted border of ice, looking like a fringe of lace on the garment of some decayed dowager. At length the liquid glass of the river cooled into a wide, immoveable mirror, glistening in the sun; the trees, all save the evergreens, stood bare to the keen cold winds; the fields were covered with snow, affording no lures to tempt to rural wanderings; the enjoyments of life gradually centred themselves at the cheerful fireside it was winter, and Newyear's eve was come again!

The night was clear, calm, and cold, and the bright stars glittered in the heavens in such multitudes, that every man might have had a star to himself. The worthy patriarchs of Fort Orange, having gathered around them their children, and children's children, even unto the third and fourth generation, were enjoying themselves in innocent revelry at the cheerful fireside. All the enjoyments of life had contracted themselves into the domestic circle; the streets were as quiet as a churchyard, and not even the stroke of the watchman was heard on the curbstone. Gradually it waxed late, and the city clocks rang, in the silence of night, the hour which not one of the orderly citizens had heard, except at midday, since the last anniversary of the happy Newyear, save peradventure troubled with a toothache, or some such unseemly irritation.

The doleful warning, which broke upon the frosty air like the tolling of a funeral bell, roused the sober devotees of St. Nicholas to a sense of their trespasses on the waning night, and after one good, smoking draught of spiced Jamaica to the patron saint, they, one and all, young and old, hied them to bed, that he might have a fair opportunity to bestow his favours without being seen by mortal eye. For be it known, that St. Nicholas, like all really heart–whole generous fellows, loves to do good in secret, and eschews those pompous benefactions which are duly recorded in the newspapers, being of opinion they only prove that the vanity of man is sometimes an overmatch for his avarice.

Having allowed them fifteen minutes, which is as much as a sober burgher of good morals and habits requires, to get as fast asleep as a church, St. Nicholas, having harnessed his pony, and loaded his little wagon with a store of good things for wellbehaved, diligent children, together with whips and other mementoes for undutiful varlets, did set forth gayly on his errand of benevolence.

Vuur en vlammen! how the good saint did hurry through the streets, up one chimney and down another; for be it known, they are not such miserable narrow things as those of other cities, where the claims of ostentation are so voracious that people can't afford to keep up good fires, and the chimneys are so narrow that the little sweeps of seven years old often get themselves stuck fast, to the imminent peril of their lives. You may think he had a good deal of business on hand, being obliged to visit every house in Fort Orange, between twelve o'clock and daylight, with the exception of some few would-be fashionable upstarts, who had mortally offended him, by turning up their noses at the simple jollifications and friendly greetings of the merry Newyear. Accordingly, he rides like the wind, scarcely touching the ground; and this is the reason that he is never seen, except by a rare chance, which is the cause why certain unbelieving sinners, who scoff at old customs and notions, either really do, or pretend to doubt, whether the good things found on Christmas and Newyear mornings in the stockings of the little varlets of Fort Orange and New-Amsterdam, are put there by the jolly St. Nicholas or not. Beshrew them, say I and may they never taste the blessing of his bounty! Goeden Hemel! as if I myself, being a kinsman of the saint, don't know him as well as a debtor does his creditor! But people are grown so wise nowadays, that they believe in nothing but the increased value of property.

Be this as it may, St. Nicholas went forth blithely on his goodly errand, without minding the intense cold, for he was kept right warm by the benevolence of his heart, and when that failed, he ever and anon addressed himself to a snug little pottle, the contents of which did smoke lustily when he pulled out the stopper, a piece of snow-white corn cob.

It is impossible for me to specify one by one the visits paid that night by the good saint, or the various adventures which he encountered. I therefore content myself, and I trust my worthy and excellent readers, with dwelling briefly on those which appear to me most worthy of descending to posterity, and withal convey excellent moral lessons, without which history is naught, whether it be true or false.

After visiting various honest little Dutch houses, with notched roofs, and the gable ends to the street, leaving his benedictions, St. Nicholas at length came to a goodly mansion bearing strong marks of being sophisticated by modern fantastic innovations. He would have passed it by in scorn, had he not remembered that it belonged to a descendant of one of his favoured votaries, who had passed away to his long home without being once backslided from the customs of his ancestors. Respect for the memory of this worthy man wrought upon his feelings, and he forthwith dashed down the chimney, where he stuck fast in the middle, and came nigh being suffocated with the fumes of anthracite coal, which this degenerate descendant of a pious ancestor, who spent thousands in useless and unseemly ostentation, burned by way of economy.

If the excellent saint had not been enveloped, as it were, in the odour of sanctity, which in some measure protected him from the poison of this pestilent vapour, it might have gone hard with him; as it was, he was sadly bewildered, when his little pony, which liked the predicament no better than his master, made a violent plunge, drew the wagon through the narrow passage, and down they came plump into a magnificent bedchamber, filled with all sorts of finery, such as wardrobes, bedizened with tawdry ornaments; satin chairs too good to be looked at or sat upon, and therefore covered with brown linen; a bedstead of varnished mahogany, with a canopy over it somewhat like a cocked hat, with a plume of ostrich feathers instead of orthodox valances and the like; and a looking-glass large enough to reflect a Dutch city.

St. Nicholas contemplated the pair who slept in this newfangled abomination with a mingled feeling of pity and indignation, though I must say the wife looked very pretty in her lace nightcap, with one arm as white as snow partly uncovered. But he soon turned away, being a devout and selfdenying saint, to seek for the stockings of the little children, who were innocent of these unseemly innovations. But what was his horror at finding that, instead of being hung up in the chimney corner, they were thrown carelessly on the floor, and that the little souls, who lay asleep in each other's arms in another room, lest they should disturb their parents, were thus deprived of all the pleasant anticipations accompanying the approaching jolly Newyear.

"Een vervlochte jonge," said he to himself, for he never uttered his maledictions aloud, "to rob their little ones of such wholesome and innocent delights! But they shall not be disappointed." So he sought the cold and distant chamber of the children, who were virtuous and dutiful, who, when they waked in the morning, found the bed covered with good things, and were as happy as the day is long. When St. Nicholas returned to the splendid chamber, which, be it known, was furnished with the spoils of industrious unfortunate people, to whom the owner lent money, charging them so much the more in proportion to their necessities. It is true that he gave some of the wealth he thus got over the duyvel's back, as it were, to public charities, and sometimes churches, when he knew it would get into the newspapers, by which he obtained the credit of being very pious and charitable. But St. Nicholas was too sensible and judicious not to know that the only charitable and pious donations agreeable to the Giver of good, are those which are honestly come by. The alms which are got by ill means can never come to good, and it is better to give back to those from whom we have taken it dishonestly even one fourth, yea, one tenth, than to bestow ten times as much on those who have no such claim. The true atonement for injuries is that made to the injured alone. All other is a cheat in the eye of Heaven. You cannot settle the account by giving to Peter what you have filched from Paul.

So thought the good St. Nicholas, as he revolved in his mind a plan for punishing this degenerate caitiff, who despised his ordinances and customs, and was moreover one who, in dealing with borrowers, not only shaved but skinned them. Remembering not the perils of the chimney, he was about departing the same way he came, but the little pony obstinately refused; and the good saint, having first taken off the lace nightcap, and put a foolscap in its place, and given the money lender a tweak of the nose that made him roar, whipped instantly through the keyhole to pursue his benevolent tour through the ancient city of Fort Orange.

Gliding through the streets unheard and unseen, he at length came to a little winding lane, from which his quick ear caught the sound of obstreperous revelry. Stopping his pony, and listening more attentively, he distinguished the words, "Ich ben Liederich," roared out in a chorus of mingled voices seemingly issuing from a little low house of the true orthodox construction, standing on the right-hand side, at a distance of a hundred yards, or thereabout.

"Wat donderdag!" exclaimed St. Nicholas, "is mine old friend, Baltus Van Loon, keeping it up at this time of the morning? The old rogue! but I'll punish him for this breach of the good customs of Fort Orange." So he halted on the top of Baltus's chimney, to consider the best way of bringing it about, and was, all at once, saluted in the nostrils by such a delectable perfume, arising from a certain spiced beverage, with which the substantial burghers were wont to recreate themselves at this season of the year, that he was sorely tempted to join a little in the revelry below, and punish the merry caitiffs afterwards. Presently he heard honest Baltus propose "The jolly St. Nicholas," as a toast, which was drunk in a full bumper, with great rejoicing and acclamation.

St. Nicholas could stand it no longer, but descended forthwith into the little parlour of old Baltus, thinking, by-the-way, that, just to preserve appearances, he would lecture the roistering rogues a little for keeping such late hours, and, provided Baltus could give a good reason, or indeed any reason at all, for such an unseemly transgression, he would then sit down with them, and take some of the savoury beverage that had regaled his nostrils while waiting at the top of the chimney.

The roistering rogues were so busy roaring out, "Ich ben Liederich," that they did not take note of the presence of the saint, until he cried out with a loud and angry voice, "Wat blikslager is dat?" he did not say blixem, because that would have been little better than swearing. "Ben je be dondered, to be carousing here at this time of night, ye ancient, and not venerable sinners?"

Old Baltus was not a little startled at the intrusion of the strangers for, if the truth must out, he was a little in for it, and saw double, as is usual at such times. This caused such a confusion in his head that he forgot to rise from his seat, and pay due honour to his visiter, as did the rest of the company.

"Are you not ashamed of yourselves," continued the saint, "to set such a bad example to the neighbourhood, by carousing at this time of the morning, contrary to good old customs, known and accepted by all, except such noisy splutterkins as yourselves?"

"This time of the morning," replied old Baltus, who had his full portion of Dutch courage "this time of the morning, did you say? Look yonder, and see with your own eyes whether it is morning or not."

The cunning rogue, in order to have a good excuse for transgressing the canons of St. Nicholas, had so managed it, that the old clock in the corner had run down, and now pointed to the hour of eleven, where it remained stationary, like a rusty weathercock. St. Nicholas knew this as well as old Baltus himself, and could not help being mightily tickled at this device.. He told Baltus that this being the case, with permission of his host he would sit down by the fire and warm himself, till it was time to set forth again, seeing he had mistaken the hour.

Baltus, who by this time began to perceive that there was but one visiter instead of two, now rose from the table with much ado, and approaching the stranger, besought him to take a seat among the jolly revellers, seeing they were there assembled in honour of St. Nicholas, and not out of any regard to the lusts of the flesh. In this he was joined by the rest of the company, so that St. Nicholas, being a good-natured fellow, at length suffered himself to be persuaded, whereto he was mightily incited by the savoury fumes issuing from a huge pitcher standing smoking in the chimney corner. So he sat down with old Baltus, and being called on for a toast, gave them "Old Faderland" in a bumper.

Then they had a high time of it you may be sure. Old Baltus sang a famous song celebrating the valour of our Dutch ancestors, and their triumph over the mighty power of Spain after a struggle of more than a generation, in which the meads of Holland smoked, and her canals were red with blood. Goeden Hemel! but I should like to have been there, for I hope it would have been nothing unseemly for one of my cloth to have joined in chorus with the excellent St. Nicholas. Then they talked about the good old times when the son who departed from the customs of his ancestors was considered little better than misbegotten; lamented over the interloping of such multitudes of idle flaunting men and women in their way to and from the springs; the increase of taverns, the high price of everything, and the manifold backslidings of the rising generation. Ever and anon, old Baltus would observe that sorrow was as dry as a corn cob, and pour out a full bumper of the smoking beverage, until at last it came to pass that honest Baltus and his worthy companions, being not used to such late hours, fell fast a sleep in their goodly armchairs, and snored lustily in concert. Whereupon St. Nicholas, feeling a little waggish, after putting their wigs the hinder part before, and placing a great China bowl upside down on the head of old Baltus, who sat nodding like a mandarin, departed laughing ready to split his sides. In the morning, when Baltus and his companions awoke, and saw what a figure they cut, they laid all the trick to the door of the stranger, and never knew to the last day of their lives who it was that caroused with them so lustily on Newyear's morning.

Pursuing his way in high good humour, being somewhat exhilarated by the stout carousal with old Baltus and his roistering companions, St. Nicholas in good time came into the ancient *Colonie*, which being, as it were, at the outskirts of Fort Orange, was inhabited by many people not well to do in the world. He descended the chimney of an old weatherworn house that bore evident marks of poverty, for he is not one of those saints that hanker after palaces and turn their backs on their friends. It is his pleasure to seek out and administer to the innocent gratifications of those who are obliged to labour all the year round, and can only spare time to be merry at Christmas and Newyear. He is indeed the poor man's saint.

On entering the room, he was struck with the appearance of poverty and desolation that reigned all around. A number of little children of different ages, but none more than ten years old, lay huddled close together on a straw bed, which was on the floor, their limbs intertwined to keep themselves warm, for their covering was scant and miserable. Yet they slept in peace, for they had quiet countenances, and hunger seeks refuge in the oblivion of repose. In a corner of the room stood a miserable bed, on which lay a female, whose face, as the moonbeams fell upon it through a window without shutters, many panes of which were stuffed with old rags to keep out the

nipping air of the winter night, bore evidence of long and painful suffering. It looked like death rather than sleep. A little pine table, a few broken chairs, and a dresser, whose shelves were ill supplied, constituted the remainder of the furniture of this mansion of poverty.

As he stood contemplating the scene, his honest old heart swelled with sorrowful compassion, saying to himself, "God bewaar ous, but this is pitiful." At that moment, a little child on the straw bed cried out in a weak voice that went to the heart of the saint, "Mother, mother, give me to eat I am hungry." St. Nicholas went to the child, but she was fast asleep, and hunger had infected her very dreams. The mother did not hear, for long-continued sorrow and suffering sleep sounder than happiness, as the waters lie stillest when the tempest is past.

Again the little child cried out, "Mother, mother, I am freezing give me some more covering." "Be quiet, Blandina," answered a voice deep and hoarse, yet not unkind; and St. Nicholas, looking around to see whence it came, beheld a man sitting close in the chimney corner, though there was no fire burning, his arms folded close around him, and his head drooping on his bosom. He was clad like one of the children of poverty, and his teeth chattered with cold. St. Nicholas wiped his eyes, for he was a good-hearted saint, and coming close up to the miserable man, said to him kindly, "How do ye, my good friend?"

"Friend," said the other, "I have no friend but God, and he seems to have deserted me." As he said this, he raised his saddened eyes to the good saint, and after looking at him a little while, as if he was not conscious of his presence, dropped them again, even without asking who he was, or whence he came, or what he wanted. Despair had deadened his faculties, and nothing remained in his mind but the consciousness of suffering.

"*Het is jammer, het is jammer* it is a pity, it is a pity!" quoth the kind-hearted saint, as he passed his sleeve across his eyes. "But something must be done, and that quickly too." So he shook the poor man somewhat roughly by the shoulder, and cried out, "Ho! ho! what aileth thee, son of my good old friend, honest Johannes Garrebrantze?"

This salutation seemed to rouse the poor man, who arose upon his seat, and essaying to stand upright, fell into the arms of St. Nicholas, who almost believed it was a lump of ice, so cold and stiff did it seem. Now, be it known that Providence, as a reward for his benevolent disposition, has bestowed on St. Nicholas the privilege of doing good without measure to all who are deserving of his bounty, and that by such means as he thinks proper to the purpose. It is a power he seldom exerts to the uttermost, except on pressing occasions, and this he believed one of them.

Perceiving that the poor man was wellnigh frozen to death, he called into action the supernatural faculties which had been committed to him, and lo! in an instant a rousing fire blazed on the hearth, towards which the poor man, instinctively as it were, edged his chair, and stretched out one of his bony hands, that was as stiff as an icicle. The light flashed so brightly in the face of the little ones and their mother, that they awoke, and seeing the cheerful blaze, arose in their miserable clothing, which they had worn to aid in keeping them warm, and hied as fast as they could to bask in its blessed warmth. So eager were they, that for a while they were unconscious of the presence of a stranger, although St. Nicholas had now assumed his proper person, that he might not be taken for some one of those diabolical wizards who, being always in mischief, are ashamed to show their faces among honest people.

At length the poor man, who was called after his father Johannes Garrebrantze, being somewhat revived by the genial warmth of the fire, looked around, and became aware of the presence of the stranger, which inspired him with a secret awe, for which he could not account, insomuch that his voice trembled, though now he was not cold, when, after some hesitation, he said,

"Stranger, thou art welcome to this poor house. I would I were better able to offer thee the hospitalities of the season, but I will wish thee a happy Newyear, and that is all I can bestow." The good yffrouw, his wife, repeated

the wish, and straightway began to apologize for the untidy state of her apartment.

"Make no apologies," replied the excellent saint; "I come to give, not to receive. To-night I treat, to-morrow you may return the kindness to others."

"I?" said Johannes Garrebrantze; "I have nothing to bestow but good wishes, and nothing to receive but the scorn and neglect of the world. If I had anything to give thee to eat or drink, thou shouldst have it with all my heart. But the new year, which brings jollity to the hearts of others, brings nothing but hunger and despair to me and mine."

"Thou hast seen better days, I warrant thee," answered the saint; "for thou speakest like a scholar of Leyden. Tell me thy story, Johannes, my son, and we shall see whether in good time thou wilt not hold up thy head as high as a church steeple."

"Alas! to what purpose, since man assuredly has, and Heaven seems to have forsaken me."

"Hush!" cried St. Nicholas, "Heaven never forsakes the broken spirit, or turns a deaf ear to the cries of innocent children. It is for the wicked never to hope, the virtuous never to despair. I predict thou shalt live to see better days."

"I must see them soon then, for neither I, my wife, nor my children have tasted food since twenty-four hours past."

"What! God be with us! is there such lack of charity in the burghers of the Colonie, that they will suffer a neighbour to starve under their very noses? Onbegrypelijk I'll not believe it."

"They know not my necessities."

"No? What! hast thou no tongue to speak them?"

"I am too proud to beg."

"And too lazy to work," cried St. Nicholas, in a severe tone.

"Look you," answered the other, holding up his right arm with his left, and showing that the sinews were stiffened by rheumatism.

"Is it so, my friend? Well, but thou mightst still have bent thy spirit to ask charity for thy starving wife and children, though, in truth, begging is the last thing an honest man ought to stoop to. But Goeden Hemel! here am I talking while thou and thine are perishing with hunger."

Saying which, St. Nicholas straightway bade the good yffrouw to bring forth the little pine table, which she did, making divers apologies for the want of a tablecloth; and when she had done so, he incontinently spread out upon it such store of good things from his little cart, as made the hungry childrens' mouths to water, and smote the hearts of their parents with joyful thanksgivings. "Eat, drink, and be merry," said St. Nicholas, "for tomorrow thou shalt not die, but live."

The heart of the good saint expanded, like as the morning-glory does to the first rays of the sun, while he sat rubbing his hands at seeing them eat with such a zest, as made him almost think it was worth while to be hungry in order to enjoy such triumphant satisfaction. When they had done, and returned their pious thanks to Heaven and the good stranger, St. Nicholas willed the honest man to expound the causes which had brought him to his present deplorable condition. "My own folly," said he; and the other sagely replied, "I thought as much. Beshrew

me, friend, if in all my experience, and I have lived long, and seen much, I ever encountered distress and poverty that could not be traced to its source in folly or vice. Heaven is too bountiful to entail misery on its creatures, save through their own transgressions. But I pray thee, go on with thy story."

The good man then went on to relate that his father, old Johannes Garrebrantze

"Ah!" quoth St. Nicholas, "I knew him well. He was an honest man, and that, in these times of all sorts of improvements, except in mind and morals, is little less than miraculous. But I interrupt thee, friend proceed with thy story, once more."

The son of Johannes again resumed his story, and related how his father had left him a competent estate in the *Colonie*, on which he lived in good credit, and in the enjoyment of a reasonable competency, with his wife and children, until within a few years past, when seeing a vast number of three-story houses, with folding doors and marble mantelpieces rising up all around him, he began to be ashamed of his little one-story house with the gable end to the street, and

"Ah! Johannes," interrupted the pale wife, "do not spare me. It was I that in the vanity of my heart put such notions in thy head. It was I that tempted thee."

"It was the *duyvel*," muttered St. Nicholas, "in the shape of a pretty wife."

Johannes gave his helpmate a look of affectionate forgiveness, and went on to tell St. Nicholas how, finally egged on by the evil example of his neighbours, he had at last committed sacrilege against his household gods, and pulled down the home of his fathers, commencing a new one on its ruins.

"Donderdag!" quoth the saint to himself; "and the bricks came from faderland too!"

When Johannes had about half finished his new house, he discovered one day, to his great astonishment and dismay, that all his money, which he had been saving for his children, was gone. His strong box was empty, and his house but half finished, although, after estimating the cost, he had allowed one third more in order to be sure in the business.

Johannes was now at a dead stand. The idea of borrowing money and running in debt never entered his head before, and probably would not now, had it not been suggested to him by a neighbour, a great speculator, who had lately built a whole street of houses, not a single brick of which belonged to him in reality. He had borrowed the money, mortgaged the property, and expected to grow rich by a sudden rise. Poor Johannes may be excused for listening to the seductions of this losel varlet, seeing he had a house half finished on his hands; but whether so or not, he did listen and was betrayed into borrowing money of a bank just then established in the *Colonie* on a capital paid in according to law that is, not paid at all the directors of which were very anxious to exchange their rags for lands and houses.

Johannes finished his house in glorious style, and having opened this new mine of wealth, furnished it still more gloriously; and as it would have been sheer nonsense not to live gloriously in such a glorious establishment, spent thrice his income in order to keep up his respectability. He was going on swimmingly, when what is called a reaction took place; which means, as far as I can understand, that the bank directors, having been pleased to make money plenty to increase their dividends, are pleased thereafter to make it scarce for the same purpose. Instead of lending it in the name of the bank, it is credibly reported they do it through certain brokers, who charge lawful interest and unlawful commission, and thus cheat the law with a clear conscience. But I thank Heaven devoutly that I know nothing of their wicked mysteries, and therefore will say no more about them.

Be this as it may, Johannes was called upon all of a sudden to pay his notes to the bank, for the reaction had commenced, and there was no more renewals. The directors wanted all the money to lend out at three per cent. a month. It became necessary to raise the wind, as they say in Wall-street, and Johannes, by the advice of his good friend the speculative genius, went with him to a certain money lender of his acquaintance, who was reckoned a good Christian, because he always charged most usury where there was the greatest necessity for a loan. To a rich man he would lend at something like a reasonable interest, but to a man in great distress for money he showed about as much mercy as a weazel does to a chicken. He sucked their blood till there was not a drop left in their bodies. This he did six days in the week, and on the seventh went three times to church, to enable him to begin the next week with a clear conscience. Beshrew such varlets, I say; they bring religion itself into disrepute, and add the sin of hypocrisy to men to that of insult to Heaven.

Suffice it to say, that poor Johannes Garrebrantze the younger went down hill faster than he ever went up in his life; and inasmuch as I scorn these details of petty roguery as unworthy of my cloth and calling, I shall content myself with merely premising, that by a process very common nowadays, the poor man was speedily bereft of all the patrimony left him by his worthy father in paying commission to the money lender. He finally became bankrupt; and inasmuch as he was unacquainted with the mystery of getting rich by such a manoeuvre, was left without a shilling in the world. He retired from his fine house, which was forthwith occupied by his good friend the money lender, whose nose had been tweaked by St. Nicholas, as heretofore recorded, and took refuge in the wretched building where he was found by that benevolent worthy. Destitute of resources, and entirely unacquainted with the art of living by his wits or his labours, though he tried hard both ways, poor Johannes became gradually steeped in poverty to the very lips, and being totally disabled by rheumatism, might, peradventure, with all his family, have perished that very night, had not Providence mercifully sent the good St. Nicholas to their relief.

"*Wat donderdag!*" exclaimed the saint, when he had done "*wat donderdag!*" was that your house down yonder, with the fine bedroom, the wardrobes, the looking-glass as big as the moon, and the bedstead with a cocked hat and feathers?"

"Even so," replied the other, hanging down his head.

"*Is het mogelyk!*" And after considering a little while, the good saint slapped his hand on the table, broke forth again "By donderdag, but I'll soon settle this business."

He then began to hum an old Dutch hymn, which by its soothing and wholesome monotony so operated upon Johannes and his family, that one and all fell fast asleep in their chairs.

The good St. Nicholas then lighted his pipe, and seating himself by the fire, revolved in his mind the best mode of proceeding on this occasion. At first he determined to divest the rich money lender of all his ill-gotten gains, and bestow them on poor Johannes and his family. But when he considered that the losel caitiff was already sufficiently punished in being condemned to the sordid toils of money making, and in the privation of all those social and benevolent feelings which, while they contribute to our own happiness, administer to that of others; that he was for ever beset with the consuming cares of avarice, the hope of gain, and the fear of losses; and that, rich as he was, he suffered all the gnawing pangs of an insatiable desire for more when he considered all this, St. Nicholas decided to leave him to the certain punishment of ill-gotten wealth, and the chances of losing it by an over craving appetite for its increase, which sooner or later produces all the consequences of reckless imprudence.

"Let the splutterkin alone," thought St. Nicholas, "and he will become the instrument of his own punishment."

Then he went on to think what he should do for poor Johannes and his little children. Though he had been severely punished for his folly, yet did the good saint, who in his nightly holyday peregrinations had seen more of human life and human passions than the sun ever shone upon, very well know that sudden wealth, or sudden

poverty, is a sore trial of the heart of man, in like manner as the sudden transition from light to darkness, or darkness to light, produces a temporary blindness. It was true that Johannes had received a severe lesson, but the great mass of mankind are prone to forget the chastening rod of experience, as they do the pangs of sickness when they are past. He therefore settled in his mind, that the return of Johannes to competence and prosperity should be by the salutary process of his own exertions, and that he should learn their value by the pains it cost to attain them. "*Het is goed visschen in troebel water,*" quoth he, "for then a man knows the value of what he catches."

It was broad daylight before he had finished his pipe and his cogitations, and placing his old polished delft pipe carefully in his buttonhole, the good saint sallied forth, leaving Johannes and his family still fast asleep in their chairs. Directly opposite the miserable abode of Johannes there dwelt a little fat Dutchman, of a reasonable competency, who had all his life manfully stemmed the torrent of modern innovation. He eschewed all sorts of paper money as an invention of people without property to get hold of those that had it; abhorred the practice of widening streets; and despised in his heart all public improvements except canals, a sneaking notion for which he inherited from old faderland. He was honest as the light of the blessed sun; and though he opened his best parlour but twice a year to have it cleaned and put to rights, yet this I will say of him, that the poor man who wanted a dinner was never turned away from his table. The worthy burgher was standing at the street door, which opened in the middle, and leaning over the lower half, so that the smoke of his pipe ascended in the clear frosty morning in a little white column far into the sky before it was dissipated.

St. Nicholas stopped his wagon right before his door, and cried out in a clear hearty voice,

"Good-morning, good-morning, mynheer; and a happy Newyear to you."

"Good-morning," cried the hale old burgher, "and many happy Newyears to *you*. Hast got any good fat hen turkies to sell?" for he took him for a countryman coming in to market. St. Nicholas answered and said that he had been on a different errand that morning; and the other cordially invited him to alight, come in, and take a glass of hot spiced rum, with the which it was his custom to regale all comers at the jolly Newyear. The invitation was frankly accepted, for the worthy St. Nicholas, though no toper, was never a member of the temperance society. He chose to be keeper of his own conscience, and was of opinion that a man who is obliged to sign an obligation not to drink, will be very likely to break it the first convenient opportunity.

As they sat cozily together, by a rousing fire of wholesome and enlivening hickory, the little plump Dutchman occasionally inveighing stoutly against paper money, railroads, improving streets, and the like, the compassionate saint took occasion to utter a wish that the poor man over the way and his starving family had some of the good things that were so rife on Newyear's day, for he had occasion to know that they were suffering all the evils of the most abject poverty.

"The splutterkin," exclaimed the little fat burgher "he is as proud as Lucifer himself. I had a suspicion of this, and sought divers occasions to get acquainted with him, that I might have some excuse for prying into his necessities, and take the privilege of an old neighbour to relieve them. But *vuur en vlammen!* would you believe it he avoided me just as if he owed me money, and couldn't pay."

St. Nicholas observed that if it was ever excusable for a man to be proud, it was when he fell into a state where every one, high and low, worthless and honourable, looked down upon him with contempt. Then he related to him the story of poor Johannes, and taking from his pocket a heavy purse, he offered it to the worthy old burgher, who swore he would be dondered if he wanted any of his money.

"But hearken to me," said the saint; "you foolish lad is the son of an old friend of mine, who did me many a kindness in his day, for which I am willing to requite his posterity. Thou shalt take this purse and bestow a small portion of it, as from thyself, as a loan from time to time, as thou seest he deserves it by his exertions. It may happen, as I hope it will, that in good time he will acquire again the competency he hath lost by his own folly and

inexperience; and as he began the world a worthy, respectable citizen, I beseech thee to do this to be his friend, and to watch over him and his little ones, in the name of St. Nicholas."

The portly Burgher promised that he would, and they parted with marvellous civility, St. Nicholas having promised to visit him again should his life be spared. He then mounted his little wagon, and the little Dutchman having turned his head for an instant, when he looked again could see nothing of the saint or his equipage. "*Is het mogelyk!*" exclaimed he, and his mind misgave him that there was something unaccountable in the matter.

My story is already too long, peradventure, else would I describe the astonishment of Johannes and his wife when they awoke and found the benevolent stranger had departed without bidding them farewell. They would have thought all that had passed was but a dream, had not the fragments of the good things on which they regaled during the night bore testimony to its reality. Neither will I detail how, step by step, aided by the advice and countenance of the worthy little Dutchman, and the judicious manner of his dispensing the bounty of St. Nicholas, Johannes Garrebrantze, by a course of industry, economy, and integrity, at length attained once again the station he had lost by his follies and extravagance. Suffice it to say, that though he practised a rational self-denial in all his outlayings, he neither became a miser, nor did he value money except as the means of obtaining the comforts of life, and administering to the happiness of others.

In the mean time, the money lender, not being content with the wealth he had obtained by taking undue advantage of the distresses of others, and becoming every day more greedy, launched out into mighty speculations. He founded a score of towns without any houses in them; dealt by hundreds of thousands in fancy stocks; and finally became the victim of one of his own speculations, by in time coming to believe in the very deceptions he had practised upon others. It is an old saying, that the greatest rogue in the world, sooner or latter, meets with his match, and so it happened with the money lender. He was seduced into the purchase of a town without any houses in it, at an expense of millions; was met by one of those reactions that play the mischief with honest labourers, and thus finally perished in a bottomless pit of his own digging. Finding himself sinking, he resorted to forgeries, and had by this means raised money to such an amount, that his villany almost approached to sublimity. His property, as the phrase is, came under the hammer, and Johannes purchased his own house at half the price it cost him in building.

The good St. Nicholas trembled at the new ordeal to which Johannes had subjected himself; but finding, when he visited him, as he did regularly every Newyear's eve, that he was cured of his foolish vanities, and that his wife was one of the best housekeepers in all Fort Orange, he discarded his apprehensions, and rejoiced in the prosperity that was borne so meekly and wisely. The little fat Dutchman lived a long time in expectation that the stranger in the one-horse wagon would come for the payment of his purse of money; but finding that year after year rolled away without his appearing, often said to himself, as he sat on his stoop with a pipe in his mouth,

"I'll be dondered if I don't believe it was the good St. Nicholas."

THE END.