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The Burgomaster's Wife -- Volume 03 by Georg Ebers

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The Burgomaster's Wife -- Volume 03

CHAPTER XIII.

On the afternoon of the sixteenth of May, Burgomaster Van der Werff's wife was examining chests and boxes. Her husband was at the town-hall, but had told her that towards evening, the Prince's commissioner, Herr Dietrich Van Bronkhorst, the two Seigneurs von Nordwyk, the city clerk Van Hout, and several other heads of municipal affairs and friends of freedom would meet at his house for a confidential consultation. Maria had the charge of providing the gentlemen with a nice collation, wine, and many similar cares.

This invitation had a very cheering influence on the young wife. It pleased her to be able to play the hostess, according to the meaning of the word in her parents' house. How long she had been debarred from hearing any grave, earnest conversation. True, there had been no lack of visitors: the friends and relatives of her husband's family, who called upon her and talked with Barbara, often begged her to come to their houses; among them were many who showed themselves kindly disposed and could not help respecting her worth, but not one to whom she was attracted by any warm affection. Maria, whose life was certainly not crowded with amusements, dreaded their coming, and when they did call, endured their presence as an unavoidable evil. The worthy matrons were all much older than herself and, while sitting over their cakes, stewed fruit, and hippocras, knitting, spinning or netting, talked of the hard times during the siege, of the cares of children and servants, washing and soap-making, or subjected to a rigid scrutiny the numerous incomprehensible and reprehensible acts other women were said to have committed, to be committing, or to desire to commit, until Maria's heart grew heavy and her lonely room seemed to her a peaceful asylum.

She could find words only when the conversation turned upon the misery of the country and the sacred duty of bearing every privation a second time, if necessary for the freedom of the nation, and then she gladly listened to the sturdy women, who evidently meant what they said; but when the hours were filled with idle gossip, it caused her actual pain. Yet she dared not avoid it and was obliged to wait until the departure of the last acquaintance; for after she had ventured to retire early several times, Barbara kindly warned her against it, not concealing that she had had great difficulty in defending her against the reproach of pride and incivility.

"Such chat," said the widow, "is pleasant and strengthens the courage, and whoever leaves the visitors while they are together, can pray the Lord for a favorable report."

One lady in Leyden pleased the burgomaster's wife. This was the wife of Herr Van Hout, the city clerk, but the latter rarely appeared in company, for though a delicate, aristocratic-looking woman, she was obliged to be busy from morning till night, to keep the children and household in good order on a narrow income.

Maria felt brighter and happier than she had done for many days, as she stood before the shelf that contained the table-furniture and the cupboard where the silver was kept. All the handsome dishes belonging to the house were bright and shining, free from every grain of dust, so too were the white linen cloths, trimmed with lace. She selected what she needed, but many of the pewter, glass, and silver articles did not please her; for they did not match, and she found scratches and cracks on numerous pieces.

When her mother had begun to prepare her wedding-outfit, Peter expressed a desire that in these hard times the money should be kept and no useless things purchased. There was an abundance of household articles of every kind in his home, and he would have thought it wrong to buy even a plate. In fact there was no lack of anything on the shelves and cupboards, but she had not selected and bought them herself; they belonged to her, but not entirely, and what was worse, her eyes, accustomed to prettier things, could find no pleasure in these dull, scratched pewter plates, these pitchers, cups

and tankards painted in coarse figures with glaring colors. The clumsy glass, too, did not suit her taste, and, while looking it over and selecting what was necessary, she could not help thinking of her recently-wedded friends, who, with sparkling eyes, had showed her their spick-and-span new table-furniture as proudly and happily, as if each piece had been their own work. But, even with the articles she possessed, a table could be set very prettily and daintily.

She had gone out with Adrian before dinner to cut some flowers in the garden by the city wall, and also gathered some delicate grasses in the meadow before the gate. These gifts of May were now tastefully arranged, mixed with peacock-feathers, and placed in vases, and she was delighted to see even the clumsiest dishes win a graceful aspect from the garlands she twined around them. Adrian watched her in astonishment. He would not have marvelled if, under her hands, the dark dining-room had been transformed into a hall of mother-of-pearl and crystal.

When the table was laid, Peter returned home for a moment. He was going to ride out to Valkenburg with Captain Allertssohn, Janus Dousa, and other gentlemen, to inspect the fortifications before his guests appeared. As he passed through the dining-room, he waved his hand to his wife and glancing over the table, said:

"This decoration was not necessary, least of all the flowers. We expect to hold a serious consultation, and you have arranged a wedding-banquet."

Perceiving that Maria cast down her eyes, he exclaimed kindly:

"But it can remain so for aught I care," and left the room.

Maria stood irresolutely before her work. Bitter emotions were again beginning to stir in her mind, and she was already extending her hand defiantly towards one particularly beautiful vase, when Adrian raised his large eyes to her face, exclaiming in a tone of earnest entreaty:

"No, mother, you mustn't do that, it looks quite too pretty."

Maria smiled, passed her hand over the boy's curls, took two cakes from a dish, gave them to him, and said:

"One for you, the other for Bessie; our flowers shall stay."

Adrian hurried off with the sweet gifts, but Maria glanced over the table once more, saying:

"Peter never wants anything but what is absolutely necessary; yet that surely isn't all, or God would have made all the birds with grey feathers."

After helping Barbara in the kitchen, she went to her own room. There she arranged her hair, put a fresh, beautifully-starched ruff around her neck and carefully-plaited lace in the open bosom of her dress, but wore her every-day gown, for her husband did not wish to give the assembly at his house a festal aspect.

Just as she had put the last gold pin in her hair, and was considering whether the place of honor at the table belonged to Herr Van Bronkhorst, as representative of the Prince, or to the older Herr yon Nordwyk, Trautchen knocked at the door and informed her, that Doctor Bontius wished to see the burgomaster on urgent business. The maid-servant had told the physician that her master had ridden out, but he would not be put off, and asked permission to see her mistress.

Maria instantly went to Peter's room. The doctor seemed to be in haste. His only greeting was to point with the gold head of his long staff towards the peaked black hat, that never left his head, even beside the sickbed, and asked in a curt,

hurried tone:

"When will Meister Peter come home?"

"In an hour," replied Maria. "Sit down, Doctor."

"Another time. It will keep me too long to wait for your husband. After all, you can come with me even without his consent."

"Certainly; but we are expecting visitors."

"Yes. If I find time, I shall come too. The gentlemen can do without me, but you are necessary to the sick person to whom I wish to take you."

"I have no idea of whom you are speaking."

"Haven't you? Then once more, it is of some one who is suffering, and that will be enough for you at first."

"And you think I could---"

"You can do far more than you know. Barbara is attending to affairs in the kitchen, and now I tell you again: You must help a sufferer."

"But, Doctor---"

"I must beg you to hurry, for my time is limited. Do you wish to make yourself useful; yes or no?" The door of the dining-room had remained open. Maria again glanced at the table, and all the pleasures she had anticipated this evening passed through her mind. But as the doctor was preparing to go, she stopped him, saying:

"I will come."

The manners of this blunt, but unselfish and clever man were familiar to Maria who, without waiting for a reply, brought her shawl, and led the way downstairs. As they passed by the kitchen, Bontius called to Barbara:

"Tell Meister Peter, I have taken his wife to see Fraulein Van Hoogstraten in Nobelstrasse."

Maria could scarcely keep up with the doctor's rapid strides and had some difficulty in understanding him, as in broken sentences he told her that all the Glipper friends of the Hoogstraten family had left the city, the old Fraulein was dead, the servants had run away from fear of the plague, which had no existence, and Henrica was now deserted. She had been very ill with a severe fever, but was much better during the past few days. "Misfortune has taken up its abode in the Glipper nest," he added. "The scythe-man did the old lady a favor when he took her. The French maid, a feeble nonentity, held out bravely, but after watching a few nights broke down entirely and was to have been carried to St. Catharine's hospital, but the Italian steward, who is not a bad fellow, objected and had her taken to a Catholic laundress. He has followed to nurse her. No one is left in the deserted house to attend to the young lady, except Sister Gonzaga, a good little nun, one of the three who were allowed to remain in the old convent near you, but early this morning, to cap the climax of misfortune, the kind old woman scalded her fingers while heating a bath. The Catholic priest has faithfully remained at his post, but what can we men do in nursing the sick girl! You doubtless now suspect why I brought you with me. You ought not and cannot become the stranger's nurse permanently; but if the young lady is not to sink after

all, she must now have some face about her which she can love, and God has blessed you with one. Look at the sick girl, talk with her, and if you are what I believe you---but here we are."

The air of the dark entrance hall of the Hoogstraten residence was filled with a strong odor of musk. The old lady's death had been instantly announced at the town-hall by Doctor Bontius' representative, and an armed man was marching up and down in the hall, keeping guard, who told the physician that Herr Van Hout had already been here with his men and put seals on all the doors.

On the staircase Maria siezed her guide's arm in terror; for through an open door-way of the second story, to which she was ascending with her companion, she saw in the dusk a shapeless figure, moving strangely hither and thither, up and down. Her tone was by no means confident as, pointing towards it with her finger, she asked the doctor:

"What is that?"

The physician had paused with her, and seeing the strange object to which the burgomaster's wife pointed, recoiled a step himself. But the cool-headed man quickly perceived the real nature of the ghostly apparition, and leading Maria forward exclaimed smiling:

"What in the world are you doing there on the floor, Father Damianus?"

"I am scouring the boards," replied the priest quietly.

"Right is right," cried the doctor indignantly. "You are too good for maid-servant's work, Father Damianus, especially when there is plenty of money without an owner here in the house, and we can find as many scrubbing-women as we want to-morrow."

"But not to-day, doctor; and the young lady won't stay in yonder room any longer. You ordered her to go to sleep yourself, and Sister Gonzaga says she won't close her eyes so long as she is next door to the corpse."

"Then Van Hout's men ought to have carried her on her bed into the old lady's beautiful sitting-room."

"That's sealed, and so are all the other handsome chambers on this story. The men were obliging and tried to find scrub-women, but the poor things are afraid of the plague."

"Such rumors grow like wire-grass," cried the doctor. Nobody sows it, yet who can uproot it when it is once here?"

"Neither you nor I," replied the priest. "The young lady must be brought into this room at once; but it looked neglected, so I've just set it to rights. It will do the invalid good, and the exercise can't hurt me." With these words Father Damianus rose, and seeing Maria, said:

"You have brought a new nurse? That's right. I need not praise Sister Gonzaga, for you know her; but I assure you Fraulein Henrica won't allow her to remain with her long, and I shall leave this house as soon as the funeral is over."

"You have done your duty; but what does this news about the Sister mean?" cried the physician angrily. "I'd rather have your old Gonzaga with her burnt fingers than---what has happened?"

The priest approached and, hastily casting a side glance at the burgomaster's wife, exclaimed:

"She speaks through her nose, and Fraulein Henrica said just now it made her ache to hear her talk; I must keep her away."

Doctor Bontius reflected a moment, and then said: "There are eyes that cannot endure a glare of light, and perhaps certain tones may seem unbearable to irritated ears. Fran Van der Werff, you have been kept waiting a long time, please follow me."

It had grown dark. The curtains of the sick-room were lowered and a small lamp, burning behind a screen, shed but a feeble light.

The doctor approached the bed, felt Henrica's pulse, said a few words in a low tone to prepare her for her visitor, and then took the lamp to see how the invalid looked.

Maria now beheld a pale face with regular outline, whose dark eyes, in their size and lustre, formed a striking contrast to the emaciated cheeks and sunken features of the sick girl.

After old Sister Gonzaga had restored the lamp to its former place, the physician said:

"Excellent! Now, Sister, go and change the bandage on your arm and lie down." Then he beckoned Maria to approach.

Henrica's face made a strange impression upon the burgomaster's wife. She thought her beautiful, but the large eyes and firmly-shut lips seemed peculiar, rather than attractive. Yet she instantly obeyed the physician's summons, approached the bed, said kindly that she had been glad to come to stay with her a short time, and asked what she desired.

At these words, Henrica raised herself and with a sigh of relief, exclaimed:

"That does me good! Thanks, Doctor. That's a human voice again. If you want to please me, Frau Van der Werff keep on talking, no matter what you say. Please come and sit down here. With Sister Gonzaga's hands, your voice, and the doctor's---yes, I will say with Doctor Bontius' candor, it won't be difficult to recover entirely."

"Good, good," murmured the physician. "Kind Sister Gonzaga's injuries are not serious and she will stay with you, but when it is time for you to sleep, you will be moved elsewhere. You can remain here an hour, Frau Van der Werff, but that will be enough for to-day. I'll go to your house and send the servant for you with a lantern."

When the two ladies were left alone together, Maria said:

"You set great value on the sound of voices; so do I, perhaps more than is desirable. True, I have never had any serious illness---"

"This is my first one too," replied Henrica, "but I know now what it is to be compelled to submit to everything we don't like, and feel with two-fold keenness everything that is repulsive. It is better to die than suffer."

"Your aunt is dead," said Maria sympathizingly.

"She died early this morning. We had little in common save the tie of blood."

"Are your parents no longer living?"

"Only my father; but what of that?"

He will rejoice over your recovery; Doctor Bontius says you will soon be perfectly well."

"I think so too," replied Henrica confidently, and then said softly, without heeding Maria's presence: "There is one beautiful thing. When I am well again, I shall once more---Do you practise music?"

"Yes, dear Fraulein."

"Not merely as a pastime, but because you feel you cannot live without it?"

"You must keep quiet, Fraulein. Music;---yes, I think my life would be far poorer without it than it is."

"Do you sing?"

"Very seldom here; but when a girl in Delft we sung every day."

"Of course you were the soprano?"

"Yes, Fraulein."

"Let the Fraulein drop, and call me Henrica."

"With all my heart, if you will call me Maria, or Frau Maria."

"I'll try. Don't you think we could practise many a song together?"

Just as these words were uttered, Sister Gonzaga entered the room, saying that the wife of Receiver General Cornelius had called to ask if she could do anything for the sick lady.

"What does that mean?" asked Henrica angrily. "I don't know the woman."

"She is the mother of Herr Wilhelm, the musician," said the young wife.

"Oh!" exclaimed Henrica. "Shall I admit her, Maria?"

The latter shook her head and answered firmly "No, Fraulein Henrica. It is not good for you to have more than one visitor at this hour, and besides---"

"Well?"

"She is an excellent woman, but I fear her blunt manner, heavy step, and loud voice would not benefit you just now. Let me go to her and ask what she desires."

"Receive her kindly, and tell her to remember me to her son. I am not very delicate, but I see you understand me; such substantial fare would hardly suit me just now."

After Maria had performed her errand and talked with Henrica for a time, Frau Van Hout was announced. Her husband, who had been present when the doors of the house of death were sealed, had told her about the invalid and she came to see if the poor girl needed anything.

"You might receive her," said Maria, "for she would surely please you; but the bell is ringing again, and you have talked enough for to-day. Try to sleep now. I'll go home with Fran Van Hout and come again tomorrow, if agreeable to you."

"Come, pray come!" exclaimed the young girl.

"Do you want to say anything more to me?"

"I should like to do so, Fraulein Henrica. You ought not to stay in this sad house. There is plenty of room in ours. Will you be our guest until your father---"

"Yes, take me home with you!" cried the invalid, tears sparkling in her eyes. "Take me away from here, only take me away---and I will be grateful to you all my life."

CHAPTER XIV.

Maria had not mounted the stairs so joyously for weeks as she did to-day. She would have sung, had it been seemly, though she felt a little anxious; for perhaps her husband would not think she had done right to invite, on her own authority, a stranger, especially a sick stranger, who was a friend of Spain, to be their guest.

As she passed the dining-room, she heard the gentlemen consulting together. Then Peter began to speak. She noticed the pleasant depth of his voice, and said to herself that Henrica would like to hear it. A few minutes after she entered the apartment, to greet her husband's guests, who were also hers. Joyous excitement and the rapid walk through the air of the May evening, which, though the day had been warm, was still cool, had flushed her cheeks and, as she modestly crossed the threshold with a respectful greeting, which nevertheless plainly revealed the pleasure afforded by the visit of such guests, she looked so winning and lovely, that not a single person present remained unmoved by the sight. The older Herr Van der Does clapped Peter on the shoulder and then struck the palm of his hand with his fist, as if to say: "I won't question that!" Janus Dousa whispered gaily to Van Hout, who was a good Latin scholar:

"Oculi sunt in amore duces."

Captain Allertssohn started up and raised his hand to his hat with a military salute; Van Bronkhorst, the Prince's Commissioner, gave expression to his feelings in a courtly bow, Doctor Bontius smiled contentedly, like a person who has successfully accomplished a hazardous enterprise, and Peter proudly and happily strove to attract his wife's attention to himself. But this was not to be, for as soon as Maria perceived that she was the mark for so many glances, she lowered her eyes with a deep blush, and then said far more firmly than would have been expected from her timid manner:

"Welcome, gentlemen! My greeting comes late, but I would have gladly offered it earlier."

"I can bear witness to that," cried Doctor Bontius, rising and shaking hands with Maria more cordially than ever before. Then he motioned towards Peter, and exclaimed to the assembled guests: "Will you excuse the burgomaster for a moment?"

As soon as he stood apart with the husband and wife at the door, he began:

"You have invited a new visitor to the house, Frau Van der Werff; I won't drink another drop of Malmsey, if I'm mistaken."

"How do you know?" asked Maria gaily. "I see it in your face."

"And the young lady shall be cordially welcome to me," added Peter.

"Then you know?" asked Maria.

The doctor did not conceal his conjecture from me."

"Why yes, the sick girl will be glad to come to us, and to-morrow---"

"No, I'll send for her to-day," interrupted Peter. "To-day?" But dear me! It's so late; perhaps she is asleep, the gentlemen are here, and our spare bed---" exclaimed Maria, glancing disapprovingly and irresolutely from the physician to her husband.

"Calm yourself; child," replied Peter. "The doctor has ordered a covered litter from St. Catharine's hospital, Jan and one of the city-guard will carry her, and Barbara has nothing more to do in the kitchen and is now preparing her own chamber for her."

"And," chimed in the physician, "perhaps the sick girl may find sleep here. Besides, it will he far more agreeable to her pride to be carried through the streets unseen, under cover of the darkness."

"Yes, yes," said Maria sadly, "that may be so; but I had been thinking--- People ought not to do anything too hastily."

"Will you be glad to receive the young lady as a guest?" asked Peter.

"Why, certainly."

"Then we won't do things by halves, but show her all the kindness in our power. There is Barbara beckoning; the litter has come, Doctor. Guide the nocturnal procession in God's name, but don't keep us waiting too long."

The burgomaster returned to his seat, and Bontius left the room.

Maria followed him. In the entry, he laid his hand on her arm and asked:

"Will you know next time, what I expect from you?"

"No," replied the burgomaster's wife, in a tone which sounded gay, though it revealed the disappointment she felt; "no---but you have taught me that you are a man who understands how to spoil one's best pleasures."

"I will procure you others," replied the doctor laughing and descended the stairs. He was Peter's oldest friend, and had made many objections to the burgomaster's marriage with a girl so many years his junior, in these evil times, but to-day he showed himself satisfied with Van der Werff's choice.

Maria returned to the guests, filled and offered glasses of wine to the gentlemen, and then went to her sister-in-law's room, to help her prepare everything for the sick girl as well as possible. She did not do so unwillingly, but it seemed as

if she would have gone to the work with far greater pleasure early the next morning.

Barbara's spacious chamber looked out upon the court-yard. No sound could be heard there of the conversation going on between the gentlemen in the dining-room, yet it was by no means quiet among these men who, though animated by the same purpose, differed widely about the ways and means of bringing it to a successful issue.

There they sat, the brave sons of a little nation, the stately leaders of a small community, poor in numbers and means of defence, which had undertaken to bid defiance to the mightiest power and finest armies of its age. They knew that the storm-clouds, which had been threatening for weeks on the horizon, would rise faster and faster, mass together, and burst in a furious tempest over Leyden, for Herr Van der Werff had summoned them to his house because a letter addressed to himself and Commissioner Van Bronkhorst by the Prince, contained tidings, that the Governor of King Philip of Spain had ordered Senor del Campo Valdez to besiege Leyden a second time and reduce it to subjection. They were aware, that William of Orange could not raise an army to divert the hostile troops from their aim or relieve the city before the lapse of several months; they had experienced how little aid was to be expected from the Queen of England and the Protestant Princes of Germany, while the horrible fate of Haarlem, a neighboring and more powerful city, rose as a menacing example before their eyes. But they were conscious of serving a good cause, relied upon the faith, courage and statesmanship of Orange, were ready to die rather than allow themselves to be enslaved body and soul by the Spanish tyrant. Their belief in God's justice was deep and earnest, and each individual possessed a joyous confidence in his own resolute, manly strength.

In truth, the men who sat around the table, so daintily decked with flowers by a woman's hand, understood how to empty the large fluted goblets so nimbly, that jug after jug of Peter's Malmsey and Rhine wine were brought up from the cellar, the men who made breaches in the round pies and huge joints of meat, juicier and more nourishing than any country except theirs can furnish---did not look as if pallid fear had brought them together.

The hat is the sign of liberty, and the free man keeps his hat on. So some of the burgomaster's guests sat at the board with covered heads, and how admirably the high plaited cap of dark-red velvet, with its rich ornaments of plumes, suited the fresh old face of the senior Seigneur of Nordwyk and the clever countenance of his nephew Janus Dousa; how well the broad-brimmed hat with blue and orange ostrich-feathers---the colors of the House of Orange---became the waving locks of the young Seigneur of Warmond, Jan Van Duivenvoorde. How strongly marked and healthful were the faces of the other men assembled here! Few countenances lacked ruddy color, and strong vitality, clear intellect, immovable will and firm resolution flashed from many blue eyes around the table. Even the black-robed magistrates, whose plaited ruffs and high white collars were very becoming, did not look as if the dust of documents had injured their health. The moustaches and beards on the lips of each, gave them also a manly appearance. They were all joyously ready to sacrifice themselves and their property for a great spiritual prize, yet looked as if they had a firm foothold in the midst of life; their hale, sensible faces showed no traces of enthusiasm; only the young Seigneur of Warmond's eyes sparkled with a touch of this feeling, while Janus Dousa's glance often seemed turned within, to seek things hidden in his own heart; and at such moments his sharply-cut, irregular features possessed a strange charm.

The broad, stout figure of Commissioner Van Bronkhorst occupied a great deal of room. His body was by no means agile, but from the round, closely shaven head looked forth a pair of prominent eyes, that expressed unyielding resolution.

The brightly-lighted table, around which such guests had gathered, presented a gay, magnificent spectacle. The yellow leather of the doublets worn by Junker von Warmond, Colonel Mulder, and Captain Allertssohn, the colored silk scarfs that adorned them, and the scarlet coat of brave Dirk Smaling contrasted admirably with the deep black robes of Pastor Verstroot, the burgomaster, the city clerk, and their associates! The violet of the commissioner's dress and the dark hues of the fur-bordered surcoats worn by the elder Herr Van der Does and Herr Van Montfort blended pleasantly and

harmonized the light and dark shades. Everything sorrowful seemed to have been banished far from this brilliant, vigorous round table, so words flowed freely and voices sounded full and strong enough.

Danger was close at hand. The Spanish vanguard might appear before Leyden any day. Many preparations were made. English auxiliaries were to garrison the fortifications of Alfen and defend the Gouda lock. The defensive works of Valkenburg had been strengthened and entrusted to other British troops, the city soldiers, the militia and volunteers were admirably drilled. They did not wish to admit foreign troops within the walls, for during the first siege they had proved far more troublesome than useful, and there was little reason to fear that a city guarded by water, walls and trees would be taken by storm.

What most excited the gentlemen was the news Van Hout had brought. Rich Herr Baersdorp, one of the four burgomasters, who had the largest grain business in Leyden, had undertaken to purchase considerable quantities of bread-stuffs in the name of the city. Several ship loads of wheat and rye had been delivered by him the day before, but he was still in arrears with three-quarters of what was ordered. He openly said that he had as yet given no positive orders for it, because owing to the prospect of a good harvest, a fall in the price of grain was expected in the exchanges of Rotterdam and Amsterdam, and he would still have several weeks time before the commencement of the new blockade.

Van Hout was full of indignation, especially as two out of the four burgomasters sided with their colleague Baersdorp.

The elder Herr von Nordwyk agreed with him, exclaiming:

"With all due respect to your dignity, Herr Peter, your three companions in office belong to the ranks of bad friends, who would willingly be exchanged for open enemies."

"Herr von Noyelles," said Colonel Mulder, "has written about them to the Prince, the good and truthful words, that they ought to be sent to the gallows."

"And they will suit them," cried Captain Allertssohn, "so long as hangmen's nooses and traitors' necks are made for each other."

"Traitors---no," said Van der Werff resolutely. Call them cowards, call them selfish and base-minded---but not one of them is a Judas."

"Right, Meister Peter, that they certainly are not, and perhaps even cowardice has nothing to do with their conduct," added Herr von Nordwyk. "Whoever has eyes to see and ears to hear, knows the views of the gentlemen belonging to the old city families, who are reared from infancy as future magistrates; and I speak not only of Leyden, but the residents of Gouda and Delft, Rotterdam and Dortrecht. Among a hundred, sixty would bear the Spanish yoke, even do violence to conscience, if only their liberties and rights were guaranteed. The cities must rule and they themselves in them; that is all they desire. Whether people preach sermons or read mass in the church, whether a Spaniard or a Hollander rules, is a matter of secondary importance to them. I except the present company, for you would not be here, gentlemen, if your views were similar to those of the men of whom I speak."

"Thanks for those words," said Dirk Smaling, "but with all due honor to your opinion, you have painted matters in too dark colors. May I ask if the nobles do not also cling to their rights and liberties?"

"Certainly, Herr Dirk; but they are commonly of longer date than yours," replied Van Bronkhorst. "The nobleman needs a ruler. He is a lustreless star, if the sun that lends him light is lacking. I, and with me all the nobles who have sworn fealty to him, now believe that our sun must and can be no other person than the Prince of Orange, who is one of

ourselves, knows, loves, and understands us; not Philip, who has no comprehension of what is passing within and around us, is a foreigner and detests us. We will uphold William with our fortunes and our lives for, as I have already said, we need a sun, that is, a monarch---but the cities think they have power to shine and wish to be admired as bright stars themselves. True, they feel that, in these troublous times, the country needs a leader, and that they can find no better, wiser and more faithful one than Orange; but if it comes to pass---and may God grant it---that the Spanish yoke is broken, the noble William's rule will seem wearisome, because they enjoy playing sovereign themselves. In short: the cities endure a ruler, the nobles gather round him and need him. No real good will be accomplished until noble, burgher and peasant cheerfully yield to him, and unite to battle under his leadership for the highest blessings of life."

"Right," said Van flout. "The well-disposed nobility may well serve as an example to the governing classes here and in the other cities, but the people, the poor hard-working people, know what is coming and, thank God, have not yet lost a hearty love for what you call the highest blessings of life. They wish to be and remain Hollanders, curse the Spanish butchers with eloquent hatred, desire to serve God according to the yearning of their own souls, and believe what their own hearts dictate-and these men call the Prince their Father William. Wait a little! As soon as trouble oppresses us, the poor and lowly will stand firm, if the rich and great waver and deny the good cause."

"They are to be trusted," said Van der Werff, "firmly trusted."

"And because I know them," cried Van Hout, "we shall conquer, with God's assistance, come what may." Janus Dousa had been looking into his glass. Now he raised his head and with a hasty gesture, said:

"Strange that those who toil for existence with their hands, and whose uncultured brains only move when their daily needs require it, are most ready to sacrifice the little they possess, for spiritual blessings."

"Yes," said the pastor, "the kingdom of heaven stands open to the simple-hearted. It is strange that the poor and unlearned value religion, liberty and their native land far more than the perishable gifts of this world, the golden calf around which the generations throng."

"My companions are not flattered to-day," replied Dirk Smaling; "but I beg you to remember in our favor, that we are playing a great and dangerous game, and property-holders must supply the lion's share of the stake."

"By no means," retorted Van Hout, "the highest stake for which the die will be cast is life, and this has the same value to rich and poor. Those who will hold back---I think I know them---have no plain motto or sign, but a proud escutcheon over their doors. Let us wait."

"Yes, let us wait," said Van der Werff; "but there are more important matters to be considered now. Day after to-morrow will be Ascension Day, when the bells will ring for the great fair. More than one foreign trader and traveller has passed through the gates yesterday and the day before. Shall we order the booths to be set up, or have the fair deferred until some other time? If the enemy hastens his march, there will be great confusion, and we shall perhaps throw a rich prize into his hands. Pray give me your opinion, gentlemen."

"The traders ought to be protected from loss and the fair postponed," said Dirk Smaling.

"No," replied Van Hout, "for if this prohibition is issued, we shall deprive the small merchants of considerable profit and prematurely damp their courage."

"Let them have their festival," cried Janus Dousa. "We mustn't do coming trouble the favor of spoiling the happy present on its account. If you want to act wisely, follow the advice of Horace."

"The Bible also teaches that 'sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof,'" added the pastor, and Captain Allertssohn exclaimed:

"On my life, yes! My soldiers, the city-guard and volunteers must have their parade. Marching in full uniform, with all their weapons, while beautiful eyes smile upon them, the old wave greetings, and children run before with exultant shouts, a man learns to feel himself a soldier for the first time."

So it was determined to let the fair be held. While other questions were being eagerly discussed, Henrica found a loving welcome in Barbara's pleasant room. When she had fallen asleep, Maria went back to her guests, but did not again approach the table; for the gentlemen's cheeks were flushed and they were no longer speaking in regular order, but each was talking about whatever he choose. The burgomaster was discussing with Van Hout and Van Bronkhorst the means of procuring a supply of grain for the city, Janus Dousa and Herr von Warmond were speaking of the poem the city clerk had repeated at the last meeting of the poets' club, Herr Van der Does senior and the pastor were arguing about the new rules of the church, and stout Captain Allertssohn, before whom stood a huge drinking-horn drained to the dregs, had leaned his forehead on Colonel Mulder's shoulder and, as usual when he felt particularly happy over his wine, was shedding tears.

CHAPTER XV.

The next day after the meeting of the council, Burgomaster Van der Werff, Herr Van Hout, and a notary, attended by two constables, went to Nobelstrasse to set old Fraulein Van Hoogstraten's property in order. The fathers of the city had determined to seize the Glippers' abandoned dwellings and apply the property found in them to the benefit of the common cause.

The old lady's hostility to the patriots was known to all, and as her nearest relatives, Herr Van Hoogstraten and Matanesse Van Wibisma, had been banished from Leyden, the duty of representing the heirs fell upon the city. It was to be expected that only notorious Glippers would be remembered in the dead woman's will, and if this was the case, the revenue from the personal and real estate would fall to the city, until the deserters mended their ways, and adopted a course of conduct that would permit the magistrates to again open their gates to them. Whoever continued to cling to the Spaniards and oppose the cause of liberty, would forfeit his share of the inheritance. This was no new procedure. King Philip had taught its practice, nay not only the estates of countless innocent persons who had been executed, banished or gone into voluntary exile for the sake of the new religion, but also the property of good Catholic patriots had been confiscated for his benefit. After being anvil so many years, it is pleasant to play hammer; and if that was not always done in a proper and moderate way, people excused themselves on the ground of having experienced a hundred-fold harsher and more cruel treatment from the Spaniards. It might have been unchristian to repay in the same coin, but they dealt severe blows only in mortal conflict, and did not seek the Glippers' lives.

At the door of the house of death, the magistrates met the musician Wilhelm Corneliussohn and his mother, who had come to offer Henrica a hospitable reception in their house. The mother, who had at first refused to extend her love for her neighbor to the young Glipper girl, now found it hard to be deprived of the opportunity to do a good work, and gave expression to these feelings in the sturdy fashion peculiar to her.

Belotti was standing in the entry, no longer attired in the silk hose and satin-bordered cloth garments of the steward, but in a plain burgher dress. He told the musician and Peter, that he remained in Leyden principally because he could not bear to leave the sick maid, Denise, in the lurch; but other matters also detained him, especially, though he was reluctant to acknowledge it, the feeling, strengthened by long years of service, that he belonged to the Hoogstraten house. The dead woman's attorney had said that his account books were in good order, and willingly paid the balance due him. His savings had been well invested, and as he never touched the interest, but added to the capital, had considerably

increased. Nothing detained him in Leyden, yet he could not leave it until everything was settled in the house where he had so long ruled.

He had daily inquired for the sick lady, and after her death, though Denise began to recover, still lingered in Leyden; he thought it his duty to show the last honors to the dead by attending her funeral.

The magistrates were glad to find Belotti in the house. The notary had managed his little property, and respected him as an honest man. He now asked him to act as guide to his companions and himself. The most important matter was to find the dead woman's will. Such a document must be in existence, for up to the day after Henrica's illness it had been in the lawyer's possession, but was then sent for by the old lady, who desired to make some changes in it. He could give no information about its contents, for his dead partner, whose business had fallen to him, had assisted in drawing it up.

The steward first conducted the visitors to the padrona's sitting-room and boudoir, but though they searched the writing-tables, chests and drawers, and discovered many letters, money and valuable jewels in boxes and caskets, the document was not found.

The gentlemen thought it was concealed in a secret drawer, and ordered one of the constables to call a locksmith. Belotti allowed this to be done, but meantime listened with special attention to the low chanting that issued from the bedroom where the old lady's body lay. He knew that the will would most probably be found there, but was anxious to have the priest complete the consecration of his mistress undisturbed. As soon as all was still in the death-chamber, he asked the gentlemen to follow him.

The lofty apartment into which he led them, was filled with the odor of incense. A large bedstead, over which a pointed canopy of heavy silk rose to the ceiling, stood at the back, the coffin in which the dead woman lay had been placed in the middle of the room. A linen cloth, trimmed with lace, covered the face. The delicate hands, still unwrinkled, were folded, and lightly clasped a well-worn rosary. The lifeless form was concealed beneath a costly coverlid, in the centre of which lay an exquisitely-carved ivory crucifix.

The visitors bowed mutely before the corpse. Belotti approached it and, as he saw the padrona's well-known hands, a convulsive sob shook the old man's breast. Then he knelt beside the coffin, pressed his lips, to the cold, slender fingers, and a warm tear, the only one shed for this dead form, fell on the hands now clasped forever.

The burgomaster and his companion did not interrupt him, even when he laid his forehead upon the wood of the coffin and uttered a brief, silent prayer. After he had risen, and an elderly priest in the sacerdotal robes had left the room, Father Damianus beckoned to the acolytes, with whom he had lingered in the background, and aided by them and Belotti put the lid on the coffin, then turned to Peter Van der Werff, saying:

"We intend to bury Fraulein Van Hoogstraten at midnight, that no offence may be given."

"Very well, sir!" replied the burgomaster. "Whatever may happen, we shall not expel you from the city. Of course, if you prefer to go to the Spaniards--–"

Damianus shook his head and, interrupting the burgomaster, answered modestly:

"No, sir; I am a native of Utrecht and will gladly pray for the liberty of Holland."

"There, there!" exclaimed Van Hout. "Those were good words, admirable words! Your hand, Father."

"There it is; and, so long as you don't change the 'haec libertatis ergo' on your coins to 'haec religionis ergo,' not one of those words need be altered."

"A free country and in it religious liberty for each individual, even for you and your followers," said the burgomaster, "is what we desire. Doctor Bontius has spoken of you, worthy man; you have cared well for this dead woman. Bury her according to the customs of your church; we have come to arrange the earthly possessions she leaves behind. Perhaps this casket may contain the will."

"No, sir," replied the priest. "She opened the sealed paper in my presence, when she was first taken sick, and wrote a few words whenever she felt stronger. An hour before her end, she ordered the notary to be sent for, but when he came life had departed. I could not remain constantly beside the corpse, so I locked up the paper in the linen chest. There is the key."

The opened will was soon found. The burgomaster quietly unfolded it, and, while reading its contents aloud, the notary and city clerk looked over his shoulder.

The property was to be divided among various churches and convents, where masses were to be read for her soul, and her nearest blood relations. Belotti and Denise received small legacies.

"It is fortunate," exclaimed Van Hout, "that this paper is a piece of paper and nothing more."

"The document has no legal value whatever," added the notary, "for it was taken from me and opened with the explicit statement, that changes were to be made. Here is a great deal to be read on the back."

The task, that the gentlemen now undertook, was no easy one, for the sick woman had scrawled short notes above and below, hither and thither, on the blank back of the document, probably to assist her memory while composing a new will.

At the very top a crucifix was sketched with an unsteady hand, and below it the words: "Pray for us! Everything shall belong to holy Mother Church."

Farther down they read: "Nico, I like the lad. The castle on the downs. Ten thousand gold florins in money. To be secured exclusively to him. His father is not to touch it. Make the reason for disinheriting him conspicuous. Van Vliet of Haarlem was the gentleman whose daughter my cousin secretly wedded. On some pitiful pretext he deserted her, to form another marriage. If he has forgotten it, I have remembered and would fain impress it upon him. Let Nico pay heed: False love is poison. My life has been ruined by it---ruined."

The second "ruined" was followed by numerous repetitions of the same word. The last one, at the very end of the sentence, had been ornamented with numerous curves and spirals by the sick woman's pen.

On the right-hand margin of the sheet stood a series of short notes

"Ten thousand florins to Anna. To be secured to herself. Otherwise they will fall into the clutches of that foot-pad, d'Avila.

"Three times as much to Henrica. Her father will pay her the money---from the sum he owes me. Where he gets it is his affair. Thus the account with him would be settled.

"Belotti has behaved badly. He shall be passed over.

"Denise may keep what was given her."

In the middle of the paper, written in large characters, twice and thrice underlined, was the sentence: "The ebony-casket with the Hoogstraten and d'Avila arms on the lid is to be sent to the widow of the Marquis d'Avennes. Forward it to Chateau Rochebrun in Normandy."

The men, who had mutually deciphered these words, looked at each other silently, until Van Hout exclaimed:

"What a confused mixture of malice and feminine weakness. Let a woman's heart seem ever so cold; glacier flowers will always be found in it."

"I'm sorry for the young lady in your house, Herr Peter," cried the notary, it would be easier to get sparks from rye-bread, than such a sum from the debt-laden poor devil. The daughter's portion will be curtailed by the father; that's what I call bargaining between relations."

"What can be in the casket?" asked the notary. "There it is," cried Van Hout.

"Bring it here, Belotti."

"We must open it," said the lawyer, "perhaps she is trying to convey her most valuable property across the frontiers."

"Open it? Contrary to the dead woman's express desire?" asked Van der Werff.

"Certainly!" cried the notary. "We were sent here to ascertain the amount of the inheritance. The lid is fastened. Take the picklock, Meister. There, it is open." The city magistrates found no valuables in the casket, merely letters of different dates. There were not many. Those at the bottom, yellow with age, contained vows of love from the Marquis d'Avennes, the more recent ones were brief and, signed Don Louis d'Avila. Van Hout, who understood the Castilian language in which they were written, hastily read them. As he was approaching the end of the last one, he exclaimed with lively indignation:

"We have here the key of a rascally trick in our hands! Do you remember the excitement aroused four years ago by the duel, in which the Marquis d'Avennes fell a victim to a Spanish brawler? The miserable bravo writes in this letter that he has....It will be worth the trouble; I'll translate it for you. The first part of the note is of no importance; but now comes the point: 'And now, after having succeeded in crossing swords with the marquis and killing him, not without personal danger, a fate he has doubtless deserved, since he aroused your displeasure to such a degree, the condition you imposed upon me is fulfilled, and to-morrow I hope through your favor to receive the sweetest reward. Tell Donna Anna, my adored betrothed, that I would fain lead her to the altar early to-morrow morning, for the d'Avennes are influential and the following day my safety will perhaps be imperilled. As for the rest, I hope I may be permitted to rely upon the fairness and generosity of my patroness."

Van Hout flung the letter on the table, exclaiming "See, what a dainty hand the bravo writes. And, Jove's thunder, the lady to whom this plotted murder was to have been sent, is doubtless the mother of the unfortunate marquis, whom the Spanish assassin slew."

"Yes, Herr Van Hout," said Belotti, "I can confirm your supposition. The marquise was the wife of the man, who broke his plighted faith to the young Fraulein Van Hoogstraten. She, who lies there, saw many suns rise and set, ere her vengeance ripened."

"Throw the scrawl into the fire!" cried Van Hout impetuously.

"No," replied Peter. "We will not send the letters, but you must keep them in the archives. God's mills grind slowly, and who knows what good purpose these sheets may yet serve."

The city clerk nodded assent and folding the papers, said: "I think the dead woman's property will be an advantage to the city."

"The Prince will dispose of it," replied Van der Werff. "How long have you served this lady, Belotti?"

"Fifteen years."

"Then remain in Leyden for a time. I think you may expect the legacy she originally left you. I will urge your claim."

A few hours before the nocturnal burial of old Fraulein Van Hoogstraten, Herr Matanesse Van Wibisma and his son Nicolas appeared before the city, but were refused admittance by the men who guarded the gates, although both appealed to their relative's death. Henrica's father did not come, he had gone several days before to attend a tourney at Cologne.

CHAPTER XVI.

Between twelve and one o'clock on the 26th of May, Ascension-Day, the ringing of bells announced the opening of the great fair. The old circuit of the boundaries of the fields had long since given place to a church festival, but the name of "Ommegang" remained interwoven with that of the fair, and even after the new religion had obtained the mastery, all sorts of processions took place at the commencement of the fair.

In the days of Catholic rule the cross had been borne through the streets in a soleum procession, in which all Leyden took part, now the banners of the city and standards bearing the colors of the House of Orange headed the train, followed by the nobles on horseback, the city magistrates in festal array, the clergy in black robes, the volunteers in magnificent uniforms, the guilds with their emblems, and long joyous ranks of school-children. Even the poorest people bought some thing new for their little ones on this day. Never did mothers braid their young daughters' hair more carefully, than for the procession at the opening of the fair. Spite of the hard times, many a stiver was taken from slender purses for fresh ribbons and new shoes, becoming caps and bright-hued stockings. The spring sunshine could be reflected from the little girls' shining, smoothly-combed hair, and the big boys and little children looked even gayer than the flowers in Herr Van Montfort's garden, by which the procession was obliged to pass. Each wore a sprig of green leaves in his cap beside the plume, and the smaller the boy, the larger the branch. There was no lack of loud talk and merry shouts, for every child that passed its home called to its mother, grandparents, and the servants, and when one raised its voice many others instantly followed. The grown people too were not silent, and as the procession approached the town-hall, head-quarters of military companies, guild-halls or residences of popular men, loud cheers arose, mingled with the ringing of bells, the shouts of the sailors on both arms of the Rhine and on the canals, the playing of the city musicians at the street corners, and the rattle of guns and roar of cannon fired by the gunners and their assistants from the citadel. It was a joyous tumult in jocund spring! These merry mortals seemed to lull themselves carelessly in the secure enjoyment of peace and prosperity, and how blue the sky was, how warmly and brightly the sun shone! The only grave, anxious faces were among the magistrates; but the guilds and the children behind did not see them, so the rejoicings continued without interruption until the churches received the procession, and words so earnest and full of warning echoed from the pulpits, that many grew thoughtful.

All three phases of time belong to man, the past to the graybeard, the future to youth, and the present to childhood. What cared the little boys and girls of Leyden, released from school during the fair, for the peril close at hand? Whoever, on

the first day and during the great linen-fair on Friday and the following days, received spending money from parents or godparents, or whoever had eyes to see, ears to hear, and a nose to smell, passed through the rows of booths with his or her companions, stopped before the camels and dancing-bears, gazed into the open taverns, where not only lads and lasses, but merry old people whirled in the dance to the music of bagpipes, clarionets and violins--– examined gingerbread and other dainties with the attention of an expert, or obeyed the blasts of the trumpet, by which the quack doctor's negro summoned the crowd.

Adrian, the burgomaster's son, also strolled day after day, alone or with his companions, through the splendors of the fair, often grasping with the secure sense of wealth the leather purse that hung at his belt, for it contained several stivers, which had flowed in from various sources; his father, his mother, Barbara and his godmother. Captain Van Duivenvoorde, his particular friend, on whose noble horse he had often ridden, had taken him three times into a wafer booth, where he eat till he was satisfied, and thus, even on the Tuesday after Ascension-Day, his little fortune was but slightly diminished. He intended to buy something very big and sensible: a knight's sword or a cross-bow; perhaps even--–but this thought seemed like an evil temptation--–the ginger-cake covered with almonds, which was exhibited in the booth of a Delft confectioner. He and Bessie could surely nibble for weeks upon this giant cake, if they were economical, and economy is an admirable virtue. Something must at any rate be spared for "little brothers,"--–[A kind of griddle or pancake.]--–the nice spiced cakes which were baked in many booths before the eyes of the passers-by.

On Tuesday afternoon his way led him past the famous Rotterdam cake-shop. Before the door of the building, made of boards lightly joined together and decked with mirrors and gay pictures, a stout, pretty woman, in the bloom of youth, sat in a high arm-chair, pouring rapidly, with remarkable skill, liquid dough into the hot iron plate, provided with numerous indentations, that stood just on a level with her comfortably outspread lap. Her assistant hastily turned with a fork the little cakes, browning rapidly in the hollows of the iron, and when baked, laid them neatly on small plates. The waiter prepared them for purchasers by putting a large piece of yellow butter on the smoking pile. A tempting odor, that only too vividly recalled former enjoyment, rose from the fireplace, and Adrian's fingers were already examining the contents of his purse, when the negro's trumpet sounded and the quack doctor's cart stopped directly in front of the booth.

The famous Doctor Morpurgo was a fine-looking man, dressed in bright scarlet, who had a thin, coalblack beard hanging over his breast. His movements were measured and haughty, the bows and gestures with which he saluted the assembled crowd, patronizing and affable. After a sufficient number of curious persons had gathered around his cart, which was stocked with boxes and vials, he began to address them in broken Dutch, spiced with numerous foreign words.

He praised the goodness of the Providence which had created the marvel of human organism. Everything, he said, was arranged and formed wisely and in the best possible manner, but in one respect nature fared badly in the presence of adepts.

"Do you know where the error is, ladies and gentlemen?" he asked.

"In the purse," cried a merry barber's clerk, "it grows prematurely thin every day."

"Right, my son," answered the quack graciously. "But nature also provides it with the great door from which your answer has come. Your teeth are a bungling piece of workmanship. They appear with pain, decay with time, and so long as they last torture those who do not industriously attend to them. But art will correct nature. See this box--–" and he now began to praise the tooth-powder and cure for toothache he had invented. Next he passed to the head, and described in vivid colors, its various pains. But they too were to be cured, people need only buy his arcanum. It was to be had for a trifle, and whoever bought it could sweep away every headache, even the worst, as with a broom.

Adrian listened to the famous doctor with mouth wide open. Specially sweet odors floated over to him from the hot surface of the stove before the booth, and he would have gladly allowed himself a plate of fresh cakes. The baker's stout wife even beckoned to him with a spoon, but he closed his hand around the purse and again turned his eyes towards the quack, whose cart was now surrounded by men and women buying tinctures and medicines.

Henrica lay ill in his father's house. He had been taken into her room twice, and the beautiful pale face, with its large dark eyes, had filled his heart with pity. The clear, deep voice in which she addressed a few words to him, also seemed wonderful and penetrated the inmost depths of his soul: He was told one morning that she was there, and since that time his mother rarely appeared and the house was far more quiet than usual; for everybody walked lightly, spoke in subdued tones, rapped cautiously at a window instead of using the knocker, and whenever Bessie or he laughed aloud or ran up or down-stairs, Barbara, his mother, or Trautchen appeared and whispered: "Gently, children, the young lady has a headache."

There were many bottles in the cart which were warranted to cure the ailment, and the famous Morpurgo seemed to be a very sensible man, no buffoon like the other mountebanks. The wife of the baker, Wilhelm Peterssohn, who stood beside him, a woman he knew well, said to her companion that the doctor's remedies were good, they had quickly cured her godmother of a bad attack of erysipelas.

The words matured the boy's resolution. Fleeting visions of the sword, the cross-bow, the gingerbread and the nice little brothers once more rose before his mind, but with a powerful effort of the will he thrust them aside, held his breath that he might not smell the alluring odor of the cakes, and hastily approached the cart. Here he unfastened his purse from his belt, poured its contents into his hand, showed the coins to the doctor, who had fixed his black eyes kindly on the odd customer, and asked: "Will this be enough?"

"For what?"

"For the medicine to cure headache."

The quack separated the little coins in Adrian's hand with his forefinger, and answered gravely: "No, my son, but I am always glad to advance the cause of knowledge. There is still a great deal for you to learn at school, and the headache will prevent it. Here are the drops and, as it's you, I'll give this prescription for another arcanum into the bargain."

Adrian hastily wrapped the little vial the quack handed him in the piece of printed paper, received his dearly-bought treasure, and ran home. On the way he was stopped by Captain Allertssohn, who came towards him with the musician Wilhelm.

"Have you seen my Andreas, Master Good-for-nothing?" he asked.

"He was standing listening to the musicians," replied Adrian, released himself from the captain's grasp, and vanished among the crowd.

"A nimble lad," said the fencing-master. "My boy is standing with the musicians again. He has nothing but your art in his mind. He would rather blow on a comb than comb his hair with it, he's always tooting on every leaf and pipe, makes triangles of broken sword-blades, and not even a kitchen pot is sate from his drumming; in short there's nothing but singsong in the good-for-nothing fellow's head; he wants to be a musician or something of the sort."

"Right, right!" replied Wilhelm eagerly; "he has a fine ear and the best voice in the choir."

"The matter must be duly considered," replied the captain, "and you, if anybody, are the person to tell us what he can accomplish in your art. If you have time this evening, Herr Wilhelm, come to me at the watch house, I should like to speak to you. To be sure, you'll hardly find me before ten o'clock. I have a stricture in my throat again, and on such days---Roland, my fore man!"

The captain cleared his throat loudly and vehemently. "I am at your service," said Wilhelm, "for the night is long, but I won't let you go now until I know what you mean by your fore man Roland."

"Very well, it's not much of a story, and perhaps you won't understand. Come in here; I can tell it better over a mug of beer, and the legs rebel if they're deprived of rest four nights in succession."

When the two men were seated opposite to each other in the tap-room, the fencing-master pushed his moustache away from his lips, and began: "How long ago is it-? We'll say fifteen years, since I was riding to Haarlem with the innkeeper Aquarius, who as you know, is a learned man and has all sorts of old stuff and Latin manuscripts. He talks well, and when the conversation turned upon our meeting with many things in life that we fancy we have already seen, remarked that this could be easily explained, for the human soul was an indestructible thing, a bird that never dies. So long as we live it remains with us, and when we die flies away and is rewarded or punished according to its deserts; but after centuries, which are no more to the Lord than the minutes in which I empty this fresh mug ---one more, bar-maid---the merciful Father releases it again, and it nestles in some new born child. This made me laugh; but he was not at all disturbed and told the story of an old Pagan, a wonderfully wise chap, who knew positively that his soul had formerly lodged in the body of a mighty hero. This same hero also remembered exactly where, during his former life, he had hung his shield, and told his associates. They searched and found the piece of armor, with the initials of the Christian and surname which had belonged to the philosopher in his life as a soldier, centuries before. This puzzled me, for you see---now don't laugh---something had formerly happened to me very much like the Pagan's experience. I don't care much for books, and from a child have always read the same one. I inherited it from my dead father and the work is not printed, but written. I'll show it to you some time---it contains the history of the brave Roland. Often, when absorbed in these beautiful and true stories, my cheeks have grown as red as fire, and I'll confess to you, as I did to my travelling-companion: If I'm not mistaken, I've sat with King Charles at the board, or I've worn Roland's chain armor in battle and in the tourney. I believe I have seen the Moorish king, Marsilia, and once when reading how the dying Roland wound his horn in the valley of the Roncesvalles, I felt such a pain in my throat, that it seemed as if it would burst, and fancied I had felt the same pain before. When I frankly acknowledged all this, my companion exclaimed that there was no doubt my soul had once inhabited Roland's body, or in other words, that in a former life I had been the Knight Roland."

The musician looked at the fencing-master in amazement and asked: "Could you really believe that, Captain?"

"Why not," replied the other. "Nothing is impossible to the Highest. At first I laughed in the man's face, but his words followed me; and when I read the old stories---I needn't strain my eyes much, for at every line I know beforehand what the next will be---I couldn't help asking myself---In short, sir, my soul probably once inhabited Roland's body, and that's why I call him my 'fore man.' In the course of years, it has become a habit to swear by him. Folly, you will think, but I know what I know, and now I must go. We will have another talk this evening, but about other matters. Yes, everybody in this world is a little crackbrained, but at least I don't bore other people. I only show my craze to intimate friends, and strangers who ask me once about the fore man Roland rarely do so a second time. The score, bar-maid---There it is again. We must see whether the towers are properly garrisoned, and charge the sentinels to keep their eyes open. If you come prepared for battle, you may save yourself a walk, I'll answer for nothing to-day. You will probably pass the new Rhine. Just step into my house, and tell my wife she needn't wait supper for me. Or, no, I'll attend to that myself; there's something in the air, you'll see it, for I have the Roncesvalles throat again."

CHAPTER XVII.

In the big watch-house that had been erected beside the citadel, during the siege of the city, raised ten months before, city-guards and volunteers sat together in groups after sunset, talking over their beer or passing the time in playing cards by the feeble light of thin tallow candles.

The embrasure where the officers' table stood was somewhat better lighted. Wilhelm, who, according to his friend's advice, appeared in the uniform of an ensign of the city-guards, seated himself at the empty board just after the clock in the steeple had struck ten. While ordering the waiter to bring him a mug of beer, Captain Allertssohn appeared with Junker von Warmond, who had taken part in the consultation at Peter Van der Werff's, and bravely earned his captain's sash two years before at the capture of Brill. As this son of one of the richest and most aristocratic families in Holland, a youth whose mother had borne the name of Egmont, entered, he drew his hand, encased in a fencing glove, from the captain's arm and said, countermanding the musician's order:

"Nothing of that sort, waiter! The little keg from the Wurzburger Stein can't be empty yet. We'll find the bottom of it this evening. What do you say, Captain?"

"Such an arrangement will lighten the keg and not specially burden us," replied the other. "Good-evening, Herr Wilhelm, punctuality adorns the soldier. People are beginning to understand how much depends upon it. I have posted the men, so that they can overlook the country in every direction. I shall have them relieved from time to time, and at intervals look after them myself. This is good liquor, Junker. All honor to the man who melts his gold into such a fluid. The first glass must be a toast to the Prince."

The three men touched their glasses, and soon after drank to the liberty of Holland and the prosperity of the good city of Leyden. Then the conversation took a lively turn, but duty was not forgotten, for at the end of half an hour the captain rose to survey the horizon himself and urge the sentinels to vigilant watchfulness.

When he returned, Wilhelm and Junker von Warmond were so engaged in eager conversation, that they did not notice his entrance. The musician was speaking of Italy, and Allertssohn heard him exclaim impetuously:

"Whoever has once seen that country can never forget it, and when I am sitting on the house-top with my doves, my thoughts only too often fly far away with them, and my eyes no longer see our broad, monotonous plains and grey, misty sky."

"Oh! ho! Meister Wilhelm," interrupted the captain, throwing himself into the arm-chair and stretching out his booted legs. "Oh! ho! This time I've discovered the crack in your brain. Italy, always Italy! I know Italy too, for I've been in Brescia, looking for good steel sword-blades for the Prince and other nobles, I crossed the rugged Apennines and went to Florence to see fine pieces of armor. From Livorno I went by sea to Genoa, where I obtained chased gold and silverwork for shoulder-belts and sheaths. Truth is truth the brown-skinned rascals can do fine work. But the country---the country! Roland, my fore man---how any sensible man can prefer it to ours is more than I understand."

"Holland is our mother," replied von Warmond. "As good sons we believe her the best of women; yet we can admit, without shame, that there are more beautiful ones in the world."

"Do you blow that trumpet too?" exclaimed the fencing-master, pushing his glass angrily further upon the table. Did you ever cross the Alps?"

"No, but---"

"But you believe the color-daubers of the artist guild, whose eyes are caught by the blue of the sky and sea, or the musical gentry who allow themselves to be deluded by the soft voices and touching melodies there, but you would do well to listen to a quiet man too for once."

"Go on, Captain."

"Very well. And if anybody can get an untruthful word out of me, I'll pay his score till the Day of Judgment. I'll begin the story at the commencement. First you must cross the horrible Alps. There you see barren, dreary rocks, cold snow, wild glacier torrents on which no boat can be used. Instead of watering meadows, the mad waves fling stones on their banks. Then we reach the plains, where it is true many kinds of plants grow. I was there in June, and made my jokes about the tiny fields, where small trees stood, serving as props for the vines. It didn't look amiss, but the heat, Junker, the heat spoiled all pleasure. And the dirt in the taverns, the vermin, and the talk about bravos, who shed the blood of honest Christians in the dark for a little paltry money. If your tongue dries up in your mouth, you'll find nothing but hot wine, not a sip of cool beer. And the dust, gentlemen, the frightful dust. As for the steel in Brescia---it's worthy of all honor. But the feather was stolen from my hat in the tavern, and the landlord devoured onions as if they were white bread. May God punish me if a single piece of honest beef, such as my wife can set before me every day---and we don't live like princes---ever came between my teeth.

"And the butter, Junker, the butter! We burn oil in lamps, and grease door-hinges with it, when they creak, but the Italians use it to fry chickens and fish. Confound such doings!"

"Beware, Captain," cried Wilhelm, "or I shall take you at your word and you'll be obliged to pay my score for life. Olive-oil is a pure, savory seasoning."

"For a man that likes it. I commend Holland butter. Olive-oil has its value for polishing steel, but butter is the right thing for roasting and frying; so that's enough! But I beg you to hear me farther. From Lombardy I went to Bologna, and then crossed the Apennines. Sometimes the road ascended, then suddenly plunged downward again, and it's a queer pleasure, which, thank God, we are spared in this country, to sit in the saddle going down a mountain. On the right and left, lofty cliffs tower like walls. Your breathing becomes oppressed in the narrow valleys, and if you want to get a distant view---there's nothing to be seen, for everywhere some good-for-nothing mountain thrusts itself directly before your nose. I believe the Lord created those humps for a punishment to men after Adam's fall. On the sixth day of creation the earth was level. It was in August, and when the noon sun was reflected from the rocks, the heat was enough to kill one; it's a miracle, that I'm not sitting beside you dried up and baked. The famous blue of the Italian sky! Always the same! We have it here in this country too, but it alternates with beautiful clouds. There are few things in Holland I like better than our clouds. When the rough Apennines at last lay behind me, I reached the renowned city of Florence."

"And can you deny it your approval?" asked the musician.

"No, sir, there are many proud, stately palaces and beautiful churches and no lack of silk and velvet everywhere, the trade of cloth-weaving too is flourishing; but my health, my health was not good in your Florence, principally on account of the heat, and besides I found many things different from what I expected. In the first place, there's the river Arno! The stream is a puddle, nothing but a puddle! Do you know what the water looks like? Like the pools that stand between the broken fragments and square blocks in a stonecutter's yard, after a heavy thunder-shower."

"The score, Captain, the score!"

"I mean the yard of a stone-cutter, who does a large business, and pools of tolerable width. Will you still contradict me if I maintain---the Arno is a shallow, narrow stream, just fit to sail a boy's bark-boat. It spreads over a wide surface of grey

pebbles, very much as the gold fringe straggles over the top of Junker von Warmond's fencing-glove."

"You saw it at the end of a hot summer," replied Wilhelm, "it's very different in spring."

"Perhaps so; but I beg you to remember the Rhine, the Meuse, and our other rivers, even the Marne, Drecht and whatever the smaller streams are called. They remain full and bear stately ships at all seasons of the year. Uniform and reliable is the custom of this country; to-day one way, to-morrow another, is the Italian habit. It's just the same with the blades in the fencing-school."

"The Italians wield dangerous weapons," said von Warmond.

"Very true, but they bend to and fro and lack firmness. I know what I'm talking about, for I lodged with my colleague Torelli, the best fencing-master in the city. I'll say nothing of the meals he set before me. To-day macaroni, to-morrow macaroni with a couple of chicken drumsticks to boot, and so on. I've often drawn my belt tighter after dinner. As for the art of fencing, Torelli is certainly no bungler, but he too has the skipping fashion in his method. You must keep your eyes open in a passado with him, but if I can once get to my quarte, tierce, and side-thrust, I have him."

"An excellent series," said Junker von Warmond. "It has been useful to me."

"I know, I know," replied the captain eagerly. "You silenced the French brawler with it at Namur. There's the catch in my throat again. Something will happen to-day, gentlemen, something will surely happen."

The fencing-master grasped the front of his ruff with his left hand and set the glass on the table with his right. He had often done so far more carelessly, but to-day the glass shattered into many fragments.

"That's nothing," cried the young nobleman. "Waiter, another glass for Captain Allertssohn."

The fencing-master pushed his chair back from the table, and looking at the broken pieces of greenish glass, said in an altered tone, as if speaking to himself rather than his companions:

"Yes, yes, something serious will happen to-day. Shattered into a thousand pieces. As God wills! I know where my place is."

Von Warmond filled a fresh glass, saying with a slight shade of reproof in his tone: "Why, Captain, Captain, what whims are these? Before the battle of Brill I fell in jumping out of the boat and broke my sword. I soon found another, but the idea came into my head: 'you'll meet your death to-day.' Yet here I sit, and hope to empty many a beaker with you."

"It has passed already," said the fencing-master, raising his hat and wiping the perspiration from his forehead with the back of his hand. "Every one must meet his death-hour, and if mine is approaching to-day ---be it as God wills! My family won't starve. The house on the new Rhine is free from mortgage, and though they don't inherit much else, I shall leave my children an honest name and trustworthy friends. I know you won't lose sight of my second boy, the musician, Wilhelm. Nobody is indispensable, and if Heaven wishes to call me from this command, Junker von Nordwyk, Jan Van der Does, can fill my place. You, Herr von Warmond, are in just the right spot, and the good cause will reach a successful end even without me."

The musician listened with surprise to the softened tone of the strange man's voice, but the young nobleman raised his drinking-cup, exclaiming:

"Such heavy thoughts for a light glass! You make too much of the matter, Captain. Take your bumper again, and pledge me: Long live the noble art of fencing, and your series: quarte, tierce and side-thrust!"

"They'll live," replied Allertssohn, "ay, they'll live. Many hundreds of noble gentlemen use the sword in this country, and the man who sits here has taught them to wield it according to the rules. My series has served many in duelling, and I, Andreas, their master, have made tierce follow quarte and side-thrust tierce thousands of times, but always with buttons on the foils and against padded doublets. Outside the walls, in the battle-field, no one, often as I have pressed upon the leaders, has ever stood against me in single combat. This Brescian sword-blade has more than once pierced a Spanish jerkin, but the art I teach, gentlemen, the art I love, to which my life has been devoted, I have never practised in earnest. That is hard to bear, gentlemen, and if Heaven is disposed, before calling him away from earth, to grant a poor man, who is no worse than his neighbors, one favor, I shall be permitted to cross blades once in a true, genuine duel, and try my series against an able champion in a mortal struggle. If God would grant Andreas this---"

Before the fencing-master had finished the last sentence, an armed man dashed the door open, shouting: "The light is raised at Leyderdorp!"

At these words Allertssohn sprang from his chair as nimbly as a youth, drew himself up to his full height, adjusted his shoulder-belt and drew down his sash, exclaiming:

"To the citadel, Hornist, and sound the call for assembling the troops. To your volunteers, Captain Van Duivenvoorde. Post yourself with four companies at the Hohenort Gate, to be ready to take part, if the battle approaches the city-walls. The gunners must provide matches. Let the garrisons in the towers be doubled. Klaas, go to the sexton of St. Pancratius and tell him to ring the alarm-bell, to warn the people at the fair. Your hand, Junker. I know you will be at your post, and you, Meister Wilhelm."

"I'll go with you," said the musician resolutely. "Don't reject me. I have remained quiet long enough; I shall stifle here."

Wilhelm's cheeks flushed, and his eyes sparkled with a lustre so bright and angry, that Junker von Warmond looked at his phlegmatic friend in astonishment, while the captain called:

"Then station yourself in the first company beside my ensign. You don't look as if you felt like jesting, and the work will be in earnest now, bloody earnest."

Allertssohn walked out of doors with a steady step, addressed his men in a few curt, vigorous words, ordered the drummers to beat their drums, while marching through the city, to rouse the people at the fair, placed himself at the head of his trusty little band, and led them towards the new Rhine.

The moon shone brightly down into the quiet streets, was reflected from the black surface of the river, and surrounded the tall peaked gables of the narrow houses with a silvery lustre. The rapid tramp of the soldiers was echoed loudly back from the houses through the silence of the night, and the vibration of the air, shaken by the beating of the drums, made the panes rattle.

This time no merry children with paper flags and wooden swords preceded the warriors, this time no gay girls and proud mothers followed them, not even an old man, who remembered former days, when he himself bore arms. As the silent troops reached the neighborhood of Allertssohn's house, the clock in the church-steeple slowly struck twelve, and directly after the alarm-bell began to sound from the tower of Pancratius.

A window in the second story of the fencing-toaster's house was thrown open, and his wife's face appeared. An anxious married life with her strange husband had prematurely aged pretty little Eva's countenance, but the mild moonlight transfigured her faded features. The beat of her husband's drums was familiar to her, and when she saw him at midnight marching past to the horrible call of the alarm-bell, a terrible dread overpowered her and would scarcely allow her to call: "Husband, husband! What is the matter, Andreas?"

He did not hear, for the roll of the drums, the tramp of the soldiers' feet on the pavement and the ringing of the alarm-bell drowned her voice; but he saw her distinctly, and a strange feeling stole over him. Her face, framed in a white kerchief and illumined by the moonlight, seemed to him fairer than he had ever seen it since the days of his wooing, and he felt so youthful and full of chivalrous daring, on his way to the field of danger, that he drew himself up to his full height and marched by, keeping most perfect time to the beat of the drums, as in lover-like fashion he threw her a kiss with his left hand, while waving his sword in the right.

The beating of drums and waving of banners had banished every gloomy thought from his mind. So he marched on to the Gansort. There stood a cart, the home of travelling traders, who had been roused from sleep by the alarm-bell, and were hastily collecting their goods. An old woman, amid bitter lamentations, was just harnessing a thin horse to the shafts, and from a tiny window a child's wailing voice was heard calling, "mother, mother," and then, "father, father."

The fencing-master heard the cry. The smile faded from his lips, and his step grew heavier. Then he turned and shouted a loud "Forward" to his men. Wilhelm was marching close behind him and at a sign from the captain approached; but Allertssohn, quickening his pace, seized the musician's arm, saying in a low tone:

"You'll take the boy to teach?"

"Yes, Captain."

"Good; you'll be rewarded for it some day," replied the fencing-master, and waving his sword, shouted: "Liberty to Holland, death to the Spaniard, long live Orange!"

The soldiers joyously joined in the shout, and marched rapidly with him through the Hohenort Gate into the open country and towards Leyderdorp.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Adrian hurried home with his vial, and in his joy at bringing the sick lady relief, forgot her headache and struck the knocker violently against the door. Barbara received him with a by no means flattering greeting, but he was so full of the happiness of possessing the dearly-bought treasure, that he fearlessly interrupted his aunt's reproving words, by exclaiming eagerly, in the consciousness of his good cause:

"You'll see; I have something here for the young lady; where is mother?"

Barbara perceived that the boy was the bearer of some good tidings, which engrossed his whole attention, and the fresh happy face pleased her so much, that she forgot to scold and said smiling:

"You make me very curious; what is the need of so much hurry?"

"I've bought something; is mother up-stairs?"

"Yes, show me what you have bought."

"A remedy. Infallible, I tell you; a remedy for headache."

"A remedy for headache?" asked the widow in astonishment. "Who told you that fib?"

"Fib?" repeated the boy, laughing. "I got it below cost."

"Show it to me, boy," said Barbara authoritatively, snatching at the vial, but Adrian stepped back, hid the medicine behind him, and replied:

"No, aunt; I shall take it to mother myself."

"Did one ever hear of such a thing!" cried the widow. "Donkeys dance on ropes, school-boys dabble in doctor's business! Show me the thing at once! We want no quack wares."

"Quack wares!" replied Adrian eagerly. "It cost all my fair money, and it's good medicine."

During this little discussion Doctor Bontius came down-stairs with the burgomaster's wife. He had heard the boy's last words and asked sternly:

"Where did you get the stuff?"

With these words, he seized the hand of the lad, who did not venture to resist the stern man, took the little vial and printed directions from him and, after Adrian had curtly answered: "From Doctor Morpurgo!" continued angrily:

"The brew is good to be thrown away; only we must take care not to poison the fishes with it, and the thing cost half a florin. You're a rich young man, Meister Adrian! If you have any superfluous capital again, you can lend it to me."

These words spoiled the boy's pleasure, but did not convince him, and he defiantly turned half away from the physician. Barbara understood what was passing in his mind, and whispered compassionately to the doctor and her sister-in-law:

"All his fair money to help the young lady."

Maria instantly approached the disappointed child, drew his curly head towards her and silently kissed his forehead, while the doctor read the printed label, then without moving a muscle, said as gravely as ever:

"Morpurgo isn't the worst of quacks, the remedy he prescribes here may do the young lady good after all." Adrian had been nearer crying than laughing. Now he uttered a sigh of relief, but still clasped Maria's hand firmly, as he again turned his face towards the doctor, listening intently while the latter continued:

"Two parts buckbeans, one part pepper-wort, and half a part valerian. The latter specially for women. Let it steep in boiling water and drink a cupful cold every morning and evening! Not bad---really not bad. You have found a good remedy, my worthy colleague.

"I had something else to say to you, Adrian. My boys are going to the English riders this evening, and would be glad to have you accompany them. You can begin with the decoction to-day."

The physician bowed to the ladies and went on; Barbara followed him into the street, asking:

"Are you in earnest about the prescription?"

"Of course, of course," replied the doctor, "my grandmother used this remedy for headache, and she was a sensible woman. Evening and morning, and the proper amount of sleep."

Henrica occupied a pretty, tastefully-furnished room. The windows looked out upon the quiet court-yard, planted with trees, adjoining the chamois-leather work shops. She was allowed to sit up part of the day in a cushioned arm-chair, supported by pillows. Her healthy constitution was rapidly rallying. True, she was still weak, and the headache spoiled whole days and nights. Maria's gentle and thoughtful nature exerted a beneficial influence upon her, and she cheerfully welcomed Barbara, with her fresh face and simple, careful, helpful ways.

When Maria told her about the purchase Adrian had made for her, she was moved to tears; but to the boy she concealed her grateful emotion under jesting words, and greeted him with the exclamation:

"Come nearer, my preserver, and give me your hand."

Afterwards, she always called him "my preserver" or, as she liked to mingle Italian words with her Dutch, "Salvatore" or "Signor Salvatore." She was particularly fond of giving the people, with whom she associated, names of her own, and so called Barbara, whose Christian name she thought frightful, "Babetta," and little slender, pretty Bessie, whose company she specially enjoyed, "the elf." The burgomaster's wife only remained "Frau Maria," and when the latter once jestingly asked the cause of such neglect, Henrica replied that she suited her name and her name her; had she been called Martha, she would probably have named her "Maria."

The invalid had passed a pleasant, painless day, and when towards evening Adrian went to see the English riders and the fragrance of the blooming lindens and the moonlight found their way through the open windows of her room, she begged Barbara not to bring a light, and invited Maria to sit down and talk with her.

From Adrian and Bessie the conversation turned upon their own childhood. Henrica had grown up among her father's boon companions, amid the clinking of glasses and hunting-shouts, Maria in a grave burgher household, and what they told each other seemed like tidings from a strange world.

"It was easy for you to become the tall, white lily you are now," said Henrica, "but I must thank the saints, that I came off as well as I did, for we really grew up like weeds, and if I hadn't had a taste for singing and the family priest hadn't been such an admirable musician, I might stand before you in a still worse guise. When will the doctor let me hear you sing?"

"Next week; but you musn't expect too much. You have too high an opinion of me. Remember the proverb about still waters. Here in the depths it often looks far less peaceful, than you probably suppose."

"But you have learned to keep the surface calm when it storms; I haven't. A strange stillness has stolen over me here. Whether I owe it to illness or to the atmosphere that pervades this house, I can't tell, but how long will it last? My soul used to be like the sea, when the hissing waves plunge into black gulfs, the seagulls scream, and the fishermen's wives pray on the shore. Now the sea is calm. Don't be too much frightened, if it begins to rage again."

At these words Maria clasped the excited girl's hands, saying beseechingly:

"Be quiet, be quiet, Henrica. You must think only of your recovery now. And shall I confess something? I believe everything hard can be more easily borne, if we can cast it impatiently forth like the sea of which you speak; with me one thing is piled on another and remains lying there, as if buried under the sand."

"Until the hurricane comes, that sweeps it away. I don't want to be an evil prophet, but you surely remember these words. What a wild, careless thing I was! Then a day came, that made a complete revolution in my whole nature."

"Did a false love wound you?" asked Maria modestly.

"No, except the false love of another," replied Henrica bitterly. "When I was a child this fluttering heart often throbbed more quickly, I don't know how often. First I felt something more than reverence for the one-eyed chaplain, our music-teacher, and every morning placed fresh flowers on his window, which he never noticed. Then---I was probably fifteen--- I returned the ardent glances of Count Brederode's pretty page. Once he tried to be tender, and received a blow from my riding-whip. Next came a handsome young nobleman, who wanted to marry me when I was barely sixteen, but he was even more heavily in debt than my father, so he was sent home. I shed no tears for him, and when, two months after, at a tournament in Brussels, I saw Don Frederic, the son of the great Duke of Alva, fancied myself as much in love with him as ever any lady worshipped her Amadis, though the affair never went beyond looks. Then the storm, of which I have already spoken, burst, and that put an end to love-making. I will tell you more about this at some future time; I need not conceal it, for it has been no secret. Have you ever heard of my sister? No? She was older than I, a creature-God never created anything more perfect. And her singing! She came to my dead aunt's, and there---But I won't excite myself uselessly---in short, the man whom she loved with all the strength of her heart thrust her into misery, and my father cursed and would not stretch out a finger to aid her. I never knew my mother, but through Anna I never missed her. My sister's fate opened my eyes to men. During the last few years many have wanted me, but I lacked confidence and, still more, love, for I shall never have anything to do with that."

"Until it finds you," replied Maria. "It was wrong to speak of such things with you, it excites you, and that is bad."

"Never mind; it will do me good to relieve my heart. Did you love no one before your husband?"

"Love? No, Henrica, I never really loved any one except him."

"And your heart waited for the burgomaster, ere it beat faster?"

"No, it had not always remained quiet before; I grew up among social people, old and young, and of course liked some better than others."

"And surely one best of all."

"I won't deny it. At my sister's wedding, my brother-in-law's friend, a young nobleman, came from Germany and remained several weeks with us. I liked him, and remember him kindly even now."

"Have you never heard from him again?"

"No; who knows what has become of him. My brother-in-law expected great things from him, and he possessed many rare gifts, but was reckless, fool-hardy, and a source of constant anxiety to his mother."

"You must tell me more about him."

"What is the use, Henrica?"

"I don't want to talk any more, but I should like to be still, inhale the fragrance of the lindens, and listen, only listen."

"No, you must go to bed now. I'll help you undress and, when you have been alone an hour, come back again."

"One learns obedience in your house, but when my preserver comes home, bring him here. He must tell me about the English riders. There comes Fran Babetta with his decoction. You shall see that I take it punctually."

The boy returned home late, for he had enjoyed all the glories of the fair with the doctor's children. He was permitted to pay only a short visit to Henrica, and did not see his father at all, the latter having gone to a night council at Herr Van Bronkhorst's.

The next morning the fair holidays were to end, school would begin and Adrian had intended to finish his tasks this evening; but the visit to the English riders had interfered, and he could not possibly appear before the rector without his exercise. He frankly told Maria so, and she cleared a place for him at the table where she was sewing, and helped the young scholar with many a word and rule she had learned with her dead brother.

When it lacked only half an hour of midnight, Barbara entered, saying:

"That's enough now. You can finish the rest early to-morrow morning before school."

Without waiting for Maria's reply, she closed the boy's books and pushed them together.

While thus occupied, the room shook with rude blows on the door of the house. Maria threw down her sewing and started from her seat, while Barbara exclaimed:

"For Heaven's sake, what is it?" Adrian rushed into his father's room and opened the window.

The ladies had hurried after him, and before they could question the disturber of the peace, a deep voice called:

"Open, I must come in."

"What is it?" asked Barbara, who recognized a soldier in the moonlight. "We can't hear our own voices; stop that knocking."

"Call the burgomaster!" shouted the messenger, who had been constantly using the knocker. "Quick, woman; the Spaniards are coming."

Barbara shrieked aloud and beat her hands. Maria turned pale, but without losing her composure, replied: "The burgomaster is not at home, but I'll send for him. Quick, Adrian, call your father."

The boy rushed down-stairs, meeting in the entry the man-servant and Trautchen, who had jumped hastily out of bed, throwing on an under-petticoat, and was now trying, with trembling hands, to unlock the door. The man pushed her aside, and as soon as the door creaked on its hinges, Adrian darted out and ran, as if in a race, down the street to the commissioner's. Arriving before any other messenger, he pressed through the open door into the dining-hall and called breathlessly to the men, who were holding a council over their wine:

"The Spaniards are here!"

The gentlemen hastily rose from their seats. One wanted to rush to the citadel, another to the town-hall and, in the excitement of the moment, no sensible reflection was made. Peter Van der Werff alone maintained his composure and, after Allertssohn's messenger had appeared and reported that the captain and his men were on the way to Leyderdorp, the burgomaster pointed out that the leaders' care should now be devoted to the people who had come to the fair. He and Van Hout undertook to provide for them, and Adrian was soon standing with his father and the city clerk among the crowds of people, who had been roused from sleep by the wailing iron voice from the Tower or Pancratius.

CHAPTER XIX.

Adrian's activity for this night was not yet over, for his father did not prevent his accompanying him to the town-hall. There he directed him to tell his mother, that he should be busy until morning and the servant might send all persons, who desired to speak to him after one o'clock, to the timber-market on the Rhine. Maria sent the boy back to the town-hall, to ask his father if he did not want his cloak, wine, a lunch or anything of the sort.

The boy fulfilled this commission with great zeal, for he never had felt so important as while forcing his way through the crowds that had gathered in the narrower streets; he had a duty to perform, and at night, the time when other boys were asleep, especially his school-mates, who certainly would not be allowed to leave the house now. Besides, an eventful period, full of the beating of drums, the blare of trumpets, the rattle of musketry and roar of cannon might be expected. It seemed as if the game "Holland against Spain" was to be continued in earnest, and on a grand scale. All the vivacity of his years seized upon him, and when he had forced a way with his elbows to less crowded places, he dashed hurriedly along, shouting as merrily as if spreading some joyful news in the darkness:

"They are coming!" "the Spaniards!" or "Hannibal ante portas."

After learning on his return to the town-hall, that his father wanted nothing and would send a constable if there was need of anything, he considered his errand done and felt entitled to satisfy his curiosity.

This drew him first to the English riders. The tent where they had given their performances had disappeared from the earth, and screaming men and women were rolling up large pieces of canvas, fastening packs, and swearing while they harnessed horses. The gloomy light of torches mingled with the moonbeams and showed him on the narrow steps, that led to a large four-wheeled cart, a little girl in shabby clothes, weeping bitterly. Could this be the rosy-cheeked angel who, floating along on the snow-white pony, had seemed to him like a happy creature from more beautiful worlds? A scolding old woman now lifted the child into the cart, but he followed the crowd and saw Doctor Morpurgo, no longer clad in scarlet, but in plain dark cloth, mounted on a lean horse, riding beside his cart. The negro was furiously urging the mule forward, but his master seemed to have remained in full possession of the calmness peculiar to him. His wares were of small value, and the Spaniards had no reason to take his head and tongue, by which he gained more than he needed.

Adrian followed him to the long row of booths in the wide street, and there saw things, which put an end to his thoughtlessness and made him realize, that the point in question now concerned serious, heart-rending matters. He had still been able to laugh as he saw the ginger-bread bakers and cotton-sellers fighting hand to hand, because in the first fright they had tossed their packages of wares hap-hazard into each other's open chests, and were now unable to separate their property; but he felt sincerely sorry for the Delft crockery-dealer on the corner, whose light booth had been demolished by a large wagon from Gouda, loaded with bales, and who now stood beside her broken wares, by means of which she supported herself and children, wringing her hands, while the driver, taking no notice of her, urged on his horses with loud cracks of his whip. A little girl, who had lost her parents and was being carried away by a

compassionate burgher woman, was weeping piteously. A poor rope-dancer, who had been robbed by a thief in the crowd, of the little tin box containing he pennies he had collected, was running about, ringing his hands and looking for the watchman. A shoemaker was pounding riding-boots and women's shoes in motley confusion into a wooden chest with rope handles, while his wife, instead of helping him, tore her hair and shrieked: "I told you so, you fool, you simpleton, you blockhead! They'll come and rob us of everything."

At the entrance of the street that led past the Assendelft house to the Leibfrau Bridge, several loaded wagons had become entangled, and the drivers, instead of getting down and procuring help, struck at each other in their terror, hitting the women and children seated among the bales. Their cries and shrieks echoed a long distance, but were destined to be drowned, for a dancing-bear had broken loose and was putting every one near him to flight. The people, who were frightened by the beast, rushed down the street, screaming and yelling, dragging with them others who did not know the cause of the alarm, and misled by the most imminent fear, roared: "The Spaniards! The Spaniards!" Whatever came in the way of the terrified throngs was overthrown. A sieve-dealer's child, standing beside its father's upset cart, fell beneath the mob close beside Adrian, who had stationed himself in the door-way of a house. But the lad was crowded so closely into his hiding-place, that he could not spring to the little one's aid, and his attention was attracted to a new sight, as Janus Dousa appeared on horseback. In answer to the cry of "The Spaniards! The Spaniards!" he shouted loudly: "Quiet, people, quiet! The enemy hasn't come yet! To the Rhine! Vessels are waiting there for all strangers. To the Rhine! There are no Spaniards there, do you hear, no Spaniards!"

The nobleman stopped just before Adrian, for his horse could go no farther and stood snorting and trembling under his rider. The advice bore little fruit, and not until hundreds had rushed past him, did the frightened crowd diminish. The bear, from which they fled, had been caught by a brewer's apprentice and taken back to its owner long before. The city constables now appeared, led by Adrian's father, and the boy followed them unobserved to the timber-market on the southern bank of the Rhine. There another crowd met him, for many dealers had hurried thither to save their property in the ships. Men and women pressed past bales and wares, that were being rolled down the narrow wooden bridges to the vessels. A woman, a child, and a rope-maker's cart had been pushed into the water, and the wildest confusion prevailed around the spot. But the burgomaster reached the place just at the right time, gave directions for rescuing the drowning people, and then made every, exertion to bring order out of the confusion.

The constables were commanded to admit fugitives only on board the vessels bound for the places where they belonged; two planks were laid to every ship, One for goods, the other for passengers; the constables loudly shouted that---–as the law directed when the alarm-bell rang---–all citizens of Leyden must enter their houses and the streets be cleared, on pain of a heavy penalty. All the city gates were opened for the passage of wheeled vehicles, except the Hohenort Gate, which led to Leyderdorp, where egress was refused. Thus the crowd in the streets was lessened, order appeared amid the tumult, and when, in the dawn of morning, Adrian turned his steps towards home, there was little more bustle in the streets than on ordinary nights.

His mother and Barbara had been anxious, but he told them about his father and in what manner he had put a stop to the confusion.

While talking, the rattle of musketry was heard in the distance, awaking such excitement in Adrian's mind, that he wanted to rush out again; but his mother stopped him and he was obliged to mount the stairs to his room. He did not go to sleep, but climbed to the upper loft in the gable of the rear building and gazed through the window, to which the bales of leather were raised by pulleys, towards the east, from whence the sound of firing was still audible. But he saw nothing except the dawn and light clouds of smoke, that assumed a rosy hue as they floated upward. As nothing new appeared, his eyes closed, and he fell asleep beside the open window where he dreamed of a bloody battle and the English riders. His slumber was so sound, that he did not hear the rumble of wheels in the quiet courtyard below him. The carts from which the noise proceeded belonged to traders from neighboring cities, who preferred to leave their goods in the

threatened town, rather than carry them towards the advancing Spaniards. Meister Peter had allowed some of them to store their property with him. The carts were obliged to pass through the back-building with the workshops, and the goods liable to be injured by the weather, were to be placed in the course of the day in the large garrets of his house.

The burgomaster's wife had gone to Henrica at midnight to soothe her fears, but the sick girl seemed free from all anxiety, and when she heard that the Spaniards were on the march, her eyes sparkled joyously. Maria noticed it and turned away from her guest, but she repressed the harsh words that sprang to her lips, wished her good-night, and left the chamber.

Henrica gazed thoughtfully after her and then rose, for no sleep was possible that night. The alarm-bell in the Tower of Pancratius rang incessantly, and more than once doors opened, voices and shots were heard. Many tones and noises, whose origin and nature she could not understand, reached her ears, and when morning dawned, the court-yard under her windows, usually so quiet, was full of bustle. Carts rattled, loud tones mingled excitedly, and a deep masculine voice seemed to be directing what was going on. Her curiosity and restlessness increased every moment. She listened so intently that her head began to ache again, but could hear only separate words and those very indistinctly. Had the city been surrendered to the Spaniards, had King Philip's soldiers found quarters in the burgomaster's house? Her blood boiled indignantly, when she thought of the Castilians' triumph and the humiliation of her native land, but soon her former joyous excitement again filled her mind, as she beheld in imagination art re-enter the bare walls of the Leyden churches, now robbed of all their ornaments, chanting processions move through the streets, and priests in rich robes celebrating mass in the newly-decorated tabernacles, amid beautiful music, the odor of incense, and the ringing of bells. She expected to receive from the Spaniards a place where she could pray and free her soul by confession. Amid her former surroundings nothing had afforded her any support, except her religion. A worthy priest, who was also her instructor, had zealously striven to prove to her, that the new religion threatened to destroy the mystical consecration of life, the yearning for the beautiful, every ideal emotion of the human soul, and with them art also; so Henrica preferred to see her native land Spanish and Catholic, rather than free from the foreigners whom she hated and Calvinistical.

The court-yard gradually became less noisy, but when the first rays of morning light streamed into her windows, the bustle again commenced and grew louder. Heavy soles tramped upon the pavement, and amid the voices that now mingled with those she had formerly heard, she fancied she distinguished Maria's and Barbara's. Yes, she was not mistaken. That cry of terror must proceed from her friend's mouth, and was followed by exclamations of grief from bearded lips and loud sobs.

Evil tidings must have reached her host's house, and the woman weeping so impetuously below was probably kind "Babetta."

Anxiety drove her from her bed. On the little table beside it, amid several bottles and glasses, the lamp and the box of matches, stood the tiny bell, at whose faint sound one of her nurses invariably hastened in. Henrica rang it three times, then again and again, but nobody appeared. Then her hot blood boiled, and half from impatience and vexation, half from curiosity and sympathy, she slipped into her shoes, threw on a morning dress, went to the chair which stood on the platform in the niche, opened the window, and looked down at the groups gathered below.

No one noticed her, for the men who stood there sorrowing, and the weeping women, among whom were Maria and Barbara, were listening with many tokens of sympathy to the eager words of a young man, and had eyes and ears for him alone. Henrica recognized in the speaker the musician Wilhelm, but only by his voice, for the morion on his curls and the blood-stained coat of mail gave the unassuming artist a martial, nay heroic air.

He had advanced a long way in his story, when Henrica unseen became a listener.

"Yes, sir," he replied, in answer to a question from the burgomaster, "we followed them, but they disappeared in the village and all remained still. To risk storming the houses, would have been madness. So we kept quiet, but towards two o'clock heard firing in the neighborhood of Leyderdorp. 'Junker von Warmond has made a sally,' said the captain, leading us in the direction of the firing. This was what the Spaniards had wanted, for long before we reached the goal, a company of Castilians, with white sheets over their armor, climbed out of a ditch in the dim light, threw themselves on their knees, murmured a 'Pater-noster,' shouted their San Jago and pressed forward upon us. We had seen them in time for the halberdiers to extend their pikes, and the musketeers to he down amid the grass. So the Spaniards had a warm reception, and four of them fell in this attack. We were superior in numbers, and their captain led them back to the ditch in good order. There they halted, for their duty was probably to detain us and then have us cut down by a larger body. We were too weak to drive them from their position, but when the east began to brighten and they still did not come forward, the captain advanced towards them with the drummer, bearing a white flag, and shouted to them in Italian, which he had learned to speak a little in Italy, that he wished the Castilian gentlemen good-morning, and if there was any officer with a sense of honor among them, let him come forth and meet a captain who wished to cross swords with him. He pledged his word, that his men would look on at the duel without taking any share in it, no matter what the result might be. Just at that moment two shots were fired from the ditch and the bullets whizzed close by the poor captain. We called to him to save his life, but he did not stir, and shouted that they were cowards and assassins, like their king.

"Meantime it had grown tolerably light---–we heard them calling to and fro from the ditch, and just as Allertssohn was turning away, an officer sprang into the meadow, exclaiming: 'Stand, braggart, and draw your blade.'

"The captain drew his Brescian sword, bowed to his enemy as if he were in the fencing-school, bent the steel and closed with the Castilian. The latter was a thin man of stately figure and aristocratic bearing, and as it soon appeared, a dangerous foe. He circled like a whirlwind, round the captain with bounds, thrusts and feints, but Allertssohn maintained his composure, and at first confined himself to skilful parrying. Then he dealt a magnificent quarte, and when the other parried it, followed with the tierce, and this being warded off, gave with the speed of lightning a side-thrust such as only he can deal. The Castilian fell on his knees, for the Brescian blade had pierced his lungs. His death was speedy.

"As soon as he lay on the turf, the Spaniards again rushed upon us, but we repulsed them and took the officer's body in our midst. Never have I seen the captain so proud and happy. You, Junker von Warmond, can easily guess the cause. He had now done honor to his series in a genuine duel against an enemy of equal rank, and told me this was the happiest morning of his life. Then he ordered us to march round the ditch and attack the enemy on the flank. But scarcely had we begun to move, when the expected troops from Leyderdorp pressed forward, their loud San Jago resounding far and wide, while at the same time the old enemy rose from the ditch and attacked us. Allertssohn rushed forward, but did not reach them---–oh, gentlemen! I shall never forget it, a bullet struck him down at my side. It probably pierced his heart, for he said: nothing but: 'Remember the boy!' stretched out his powerful frame and died. We wanted to bear his body away with us, but were pressed by superior numbers, and it was hard enough to come within range of Junker von Warmond's volunteers. The Spaniards did not venture so far. Here we are. The Castilian's body is lying in the tower at the Hohenort Gate. These are the papers we found in the dead man's doublet, and this is his ring; he has a proud escutcheon."

Peter Van der Werff took the dead man's letter-case in his hand, looked through it and said: "His name was Don Luis d Avila."

He said no more, for his wife had seen Henrica's head stretched far out of the window, and cried loudly in terror: "Fraulein, for Heaven's sake, Fraulein---–what are you doing?"

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Hat is the sign of liberty, and the free man keeps his hat on Must take care not to poison the fishes with it

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