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the boy who was afraid of Tibe, just because he tried to play to bite off the button on the back of his cap."

I stood still and watched the others reviewing their change, putting their bits of silver together to make up the sum decided upon, as small money is always at a premium. I did not add my mite to the fund, for I knew what would happen in the end.

Finally, Phyllis was chosen as emissary for the party.

"Good-by again," she said sweetly to our late guide. "Here's something for your little brothers and sisters to remember us by; and will you ask your companions to buy themselves some sweets with the rest?"

But in a second the Siren was transformed into a harpy. Her blue eyes turned to steel, and shot lightning. The children, understanding the situation, stood by looking like little sharks, and the handsome friends suddenly assumed the air of fierce wild birds in the Zoo, just tame enough to eat out of your hand if you offer what they like, but hating and scorning you in their cold hearts—the bright-plumaged things; ready to bite your finger to the bone, should you tease instead of feed them.

Our guide held up a hand with all her fingers spread out. "Five! Five!" she demanded shrilly. "Every one of you give one guilder. All this you gave is to my friends. Not enough for me. I have more. I always have more. One guilder every person."

"Nonsense," said I in Dutch. "Here's another guilder. Take that and go away. It's twice too much for you."

I hung her the money, and she clutched it; but she had not finished with us yet, nor had the others. Surprised and horrified at the sudden change in the pink and white angels, the ladies turned away, and hurried toward the boat. For an instant the creatures were abashed by my knowledge of Dutch, but it was only for an instant. The mother of nine, standing in the doorway of the green bandbox house, baby in arms, shrieked encouragement to her daughter. The Siren clattered after us with angrily ringing sabots, raging for money; the children cried; the friends shouted frank criticisms of our features, our hats, our manners. I would have gone away without rewarding their blackmail with another penny; but in desperation Starr turned and dashed four or five guilders at the crowd. The coins rolled, and the bright beings swooped, more than ever like a flock of gaudy, savage birds in their greed.

Thus we left them, and I saw that the ladies were thankful to be safe aboard "Lorelei" again.

"Fiends!" gasped the Chaperon, gazing shoreward in a kind of evil fascination. "And we called them angels and cherubs! I think you are good, Johk-beer, not to say, 'I told you so.'"

"They're terrible—beautiful and terrible," said Starr, "like figures that have been brought to life and have sprung at you out of a picture, to suck your blood—in answer to some wicked wish, that you regret the minute it's uttered."

"It was a shock to be undeceived, just at the last!" sighed Phyllis. "My nerves are quite upset."

"I shall dream of them to-night," said Nell; "so don't be surprised, everybody, if you hear screams in the dark hours. Still, I'm glad we went; I wouldn't have missed it."

"Nor I," added the Chaperon. "I feel as if we'd paid a visit to some village of the Orient, and been repulsed by savages with great laughter. And—I wasn't going to mention it if they'd stayed nice, it would have seemed so treacherous; but did you notice, in that wonderful little waxwork house, there was no visible place to wash?"

"They don't wash," said I, "except their hands and faces. Most Dutch peasants consider bathing a dirty habit. They say they are clean, and so, of course, they don't need to bathe."

"That makes them seem more like birds than ever," exclaimed Nell; "their clothes are only plumage. I think of them as real people living real lives. It's true, Marken's a theater, three thousand meters long and a thousand meters wide, and you pay the actors for your seats. The harbor itself isn't half as picturesque as Spaakenberg, with its



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crowding masts and brown haze of fishing-nets; but the people are worth paying for."

"Tourists like ourselves have spoiled them; they were genuine once," I said. "Probably Spaakenberg, which is so unsophisticated now, will be like Marken one day; and even at Volendam, though the people have kept their heads \*which shows they have a sense of humor\*, they're not unaware of their artistic value."

"They look down on the islanders as theatrical; but it's partly jealousy. Marken has a history, you know; it was once connected with the mainland, but that was as long ago as the thirteenth century, and ever since the inhabitants have prided themselves on proud of the length of time they've dared to be Protestant; and no Marken man would dream of crossing to Papist Volendam for a wife, though Volendam's celebrated for beautiful girls. Nor would any of the 'fierce, tropical birds,' as you call them, exchange their island roost for the mainland, although Marken, in times of flood, is a most uncomfortable perch, and the birds have to go about in boats. But here we come to Volendam, and you'll be able to make up your mind which of the two fishing-villages is more interesting."

We had crossed the short expanse of sea, and passing a small lighthouse were entering a square harbor lined with fishing-boats. Stoutly built, solid fishing-boats they were, meant for stormy weather; and their metal pennons, which could never droop in dearest calm, flew bravely, all in the same direction, like flags in a company of lances in an old Froissart picture.

"Is Volendam celebrated for tall men as well as beautiful girls?" asked Nell, as we drew near enough to see figures moving. "There are several there, but one is almost the tallest man I ever saw—except my cousin Robert."

"He looks singularly like your cousin Robert," added Starr, not too joyously. "I think it is your cousin Robert," said I.

"I'm sure it is your cousin Robert," murmured Miss Rivers.

"But why is your cousin Robert here?" inquired the Chaperon. "Could he have known you were coming?"

"I didn't write to him," said Nell. "I didn't," said I.

Nobody else spoke; but Miss Rivers blushed.

(To be continued.)