

ing before he went; and made a dash on the occasion. "He came," and he went in a storm—he went in the night—he came whence, and he has gone nobody ought I know, he has gone to sea, and may land to both sides of the world! Though," added he, "if he has gone, that he had not left his own

St Nicholas preserve us!" cried Peet, "I should have had that sea-chest in the ship; I'll warrant he'd come racking and making a haunted house of it, and is going to sea in his chest, I need to Skipper Onderdonk's ship in Amsterdam. The boatswain, so they wrapped him up in his own sea-chest, and threw him neglected, in their hurry, over him; and the storm raged man ever, and they saw the dead chest, with his shroud for a sail, the ship, and the sea breaking in sprays, like fire; and there they

after day, and night after night, went to go to wreck; and every dead boatswain, in his sea-chest, with them, and they heard the blasts of wind, and he seemed to mount high, after them, till he saw the ship if they had not put it so it went on till they lost sight of Newfoundland, and supposed, and stood for Dead Man's Island, and a man at sea, without saying

which had hitherto detained them to an end. The cuckoo-clock in the room every one pressed to depart, but at the late hour of the night trespassers. As they sallied forth, the storm once more serene. The storm obscured them had rolled away, fleecy masses on the horizon, lighted by the crescent of the moon, which looked over lamp hung up in a palace

presence of the night, and the darkness made, had left a superstition behind. They cast a fearful glance at the buccaneer had disappeared, almost sailing on his chest in the darkness, trembling rays glittered along the placid; and the current dimpled as he had gone down. The passengers a little crowd as they repeated, particularly when they passed a lone

had been murdered; and even

exton, who had to complete his journey alone, through accustomed, one would think, to ghosts and goblins, yet went a long way round, rather than pass by his own churchyard.

Wolfert Webber had now carried home a fresh stock of stories and notions to ruminate upon. These accounts of pots of money and Spanish treasures, buried here and there and every where about the rocks and bays of these wild shores, made him almost dizzy. "Blessed St Nicholas!" ejaculated he, half aloud, "is it not possible to come upon one of these golden hoards, and to make one's self rich in twinkling? How hard that I must go on, delving and delving, day in and day out, merely to make a morsel of bread, when one lucky stroke of a spade might enable me to ride in my carriage for the rest of my life!"

As he turned over in his thoughts all that had been told of the singular adventure of the negro fisherman, his imagination gave a totally different complexion to the tale. He saw in the gang of red-caps nothing but a crew of pirates burying their spoils, and his curiosity was once more awakened by the possibility of length getting on the traces of some of this lurking wealth. Indeed, his infected fancy tinged every thing with gold. He felt like the greedy inhabitant of Bagdad, when his eye had been greased with the magic pintment of the dervise, that gave him to see all the treasures of the earth. Caskets of buried jewels, chests of ingots, and barrels of outlandish coins, seemed to court him from their concealments, and supplicated him to relieve them from their untimely graves.

On making private inquiries about the grounds said to be haunted by Father Red-cap, he was more and more confirmed in his surmise. He learned that the place had several times been visited by experienced money-diggers, who had heard Black Sam's story, though none of them had met with success. On the contrary, they had always been dogged with ill luck of some kind or other, in consequence, as Wolfert concluded, of not going to work at the proper time, and with the proper ceremonials. The last attempt had been made by Cobus Quackenbos, who dug for a whole night, and met with incredible difficulty; for, as fast as he threw one shovelful of earth out of the hole, two were thrown in by invisible hands. He succeeded so far, however, as to uncover an iron chest, when there was a terrible roaring, ramping and raging of uncouth figures about the hole, and at length a shower of blows dealt by invisible cudgels, that fairly belaboured him off of the forbidden ground. This Cobus Quackenbos had declared on his death-bed, so that there could not be any doubt of it. He was a man that had devoted many years of his life to money-digging, and it was thought would have ultimately succeeded, had he not died recently of a brain-fever in the almshouse.

Wolfert Webber was now in a worry of trepidation and impatience, fearful lest some rival adventurer

should get a scent of the buried gold. He determined privately to seek out the black fisherman, and get him to serve as guide to the place where he had witnessed the mysterious scene of interment. Sam was easily found, for he was one of those old habitual beings that live about a neighbourhood until they wear themselves a place in the public mind, and become, in a manner, public characters. There was not an unlucky urchin about town that did not know Mud Sam, the fisherman, and think that he had a right to play his tricks upon the old negro. Sam had led an amphibious life, for more than half a century, about the shores of the bay and the fishing-grounds of the Sound. He passed the greater part of his time on and in the water, particularly about Hell-gate; and might have been taken, in bad weather, for one of the hobgoblins that used to haunt that strait. There would he be seen at all times, and in all weathers; sometimes in his skiff anchored among the eddies, or prowling like a shark about some wreck, where the fish are supposed to be most abundant. Sometimes seated on a rock, from hour to hour, looking, in the mist and drizzle, like a solitary heron watching for its prey. He was well acquainted with every hole and corner of the Sound, from the Wallabont to Hell-gate, and from Hell-gate even unto the Devil's Stepping-stones; and it was even affirmed that he knew all the fish in the river by their christian names.

Wolfert found him at his cabin, which was not much larger than a tolerable dog-house. It was rudely constructed of fragments of wrecks and drift-wood, and built on the rocky shore, at the foot of the old fort, just about what at present forms the point of the Battery. A "most ancient and fish-like smell" pervaded the place. Oars, paddles, and fishing-rods were leaning against the wall of the fort; a net was spread on the sands to dry; a skiff was drawn up on the beach; and at the door of his cabin was Mud Sam himself, indulging in the true negro luxury of sleeping in the sunshine.

Many years had passed away since the time of Sam's youthful adventure, and the snows of many a winter had grizzled the knotty wool upon his head. He perfectly recollected the circumstances, however, for he had often been called upon to relate them, though, in his version of the story, he differed in many points from Peechy Prauw; as is not unfrequently the case with authentic historians. As to the subsequent researches of money-diggers, Sam knew nothing about them, they were matters quite out of his line; neither did the cautious Wolfert care to disturb his thoughts on that point. His only wish was to secure the old fisherman as a pilot to the spot, and this was readily effected. The long time that had intervened since his nocturnal adventure, had effaced all Sam's awe of the place, and the promise of a trifling reward roused him at once from his sleep and his sunshine.

The tide was adverse to making the expedition by water, and Wolfert was too impatient to get to the