

fleets of England and France, in 1673, gaining one of those great but hard-earned victories which have immortalized his name.

I left the Hague much pleased with the city and its environs, taking trekschuyt for Leyden, where I arrived in about three hours. The canal affords charming views, in consequence of the cultivated state of the country; but that part of it which passes through Voorburg, being the direct road from Delft to Leyden, is more delightful still. Along the side of the canal is the post-road with its avenue of trees, and country is bright and gay, consisting of meadows and pastures, and sprinkled over with farm houses and country seats. Voorburg itself, which is supposed to be the ancient Forum Adriani, is a beautiful village, seemingly made up of country seats, and surrounded by verdant fields. The general style of these dwellings were much alike. A barn of neat construction, often fanciful, sometimes elegant, stood back among the trees, with its appropriate out-buildings. The grounds were curiously laid out, but always with verdant hedges, sometimes trained up to the height of ten feet, at others, clipped down to two or three, sometimes shaved perpendicularly to resemble a thin fence, and occasionally cut off on the summit, and made thick and heavy like a wall. In the gardens and across the fields, were walks laid out in various tastes, generally gravelled, and having small seats or benches here and there under the shade. Oftentimes beautiful villas rose among princely groves and gardens, with long avenues of trees and shrubs opening a magnificent vista to the canal. In almost every case, a summer house stood on the very edge of the canal, showing the strong attachment of the Dutch to the water, which leads to their construction upon the sedgy border of their canals, instead of in the recesses of a grove or a shrubbery. These little summer houses are fanciful in form, frequently an octagon, with a Chinese roof, and generally having the name of the estate painted upon them in conspicuous letters, such as 'Mei Vleit,' 'Blyten Rust,' 'Velden Vaart,' 'Zomer Lust,' and other names in the same taste of prettiness, near akin to affectation.

The weather being mild and delightful, with a bright sun and element sky, on many of the estates were seen persons amusing themselves in their tranquil way. Little parties sat in the open summer houses; or under the trees, eating, drinking coffee, or smoking, or strolling in the smooth and shady avenues. Ladies were sometimes angling in the canal with their long fishing rods, sometimes reading or sewing at the windows of a fantastic little pagoda. Meanwhile the canal itself was busy with life and industry. Here the neat trekschuyt, with its animated freight, glided quickly along, greeted continually with salutations from the shore, and occasionally stopping for an instant to take in or land a passenger. Little boats now and then shot across the canal from a farm-house to bring home the master, not seldom rowed by the thrifty vrouw herself. Nay, repeatedly did I meet a humble packschuyt, slowly dragged along, not by a weary horse, but by the *shipper*, by his vrouw, and more than once by a small girl and boy, one before the other, tugging at the boat rope by means of a leathern strap passed over the shoulder and around the waist: while the canal was quite as lively with boats as it had been from Rotterdam to Delft, the shores were much more tasteful and picturesque, owing to the number and variety of the villas, and the shrubs and trees which adorned them, in this the heart of Holland.

In fact, I had now arrived in that district of the country which is called Rhyndland, being so highly famed for its fertility as to be considered the garden of Holland. It forms an extensive district, of which Leyden is the centre, being intersected by the old or genuine Rhine, which passes through the midst of the city itself, but is here a small secondary stream. It presents on all sides the most agreeable views, the richest cultivation, the finest farms, in short, the perfection of agricultural industry. It is here that you find the best bread, and above all, the sweetest milk and butter, the largest and most productive cows. Having been the original seat of the ancient Catti and Batavi, and afterward one of the great stations of the Romans, who founded the Lugdunum Batavorum on or near the spot where Leyden now stands, it abounds in antiquities, at the same time that it exhibits all the fruits of early and long-continued cultivation, in the state of the soil and the quality of its productions. A large portion of this territory was reduced to the state of a sunken morass in the ninth century, in consequence of a tremendous tempest, which heaped up the sand on the coast, and completely dammed up the bed of the Rhine. Thus it remained for many centuries, until the persevering Hollander, who had warred against the sea so successfully on other occasions, and redeemed from its ravages the richest of their provinces, at length undertook to drain this unfortunate region. To construct a canal from the Rhine to the sea, which should effectually drain the inundated territory, would be easy; but as the canal would be considerably below the level of the sea at high tide, and subject to violent shocks in bad weather, it required great ingenuity, and more boldness, to effect the junction of this canal with the ocean. It was finally accomplished by means of a triple set of flood-gates constructed at the village of Katwyk-op-Zee, and of such solid materials and workmanship, as to bid effectual defiance to the waves. At ebb tide the gates are opened, and suffer the water to pass off; and at flood, they are closed, and protect the canal from the inroads of the sea, ranking among the most important works of the kind in Holland.

Amid the dead level of the surrounding country, the verdant

ramparts of Leyden, the groves of trees around and within it, and especially the dark mass of buildings overtopped by the tower of St. Peters, and the ruins of the castle of Altenburg, all conspire to give to the city a distinguished and striking aspect, as you gradually approach it, and at length reach the head of the canal just without its gates. It contrasts the more strongly with the level meadows you are passing through, from being itself slightly elevated in some parts, so as to give its buildings a greater relief; for except the dykes raised by human industry, and the small sand-hills on the sea-shore, the whole district seems as flat as the surface of a lake. And here the canals have for so many ages flowed tranquilly in their level bed, that the banks are grown up with shrubs, thick grass and sedge, as if Nature herself, unaided by man, had created the verdant channel. Frequently, also, the water is nearly covered with a small floating pond weed, making a deep green surface in those small canals where there is no boating, and by the sides of the larger ones, which are constantly traversed. Indeed, there is more or less of this floating weed on all the canals, although it is closer in proportion as the water is more completely deprived of movement. Intermixed with this, are the larger water plants, including the pond-lily, with its full white flower, in appearance resembling ours, but destitute of its exquisite fragrance. Such are the general features of the famous district of Rhyndland, and particularly of the immediate vicinity of Leyden.

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### THE WHITE MOUNTAIN TURNPIKE HOUSE.

BY S. B. BECKETT.

We had been wandering all day among the wild and magnificent crags of the Kiasarge mountain, and at night, weary and hungry, were spurring our jaded steeds towards the mountain inn, when a tempest overtook us. The chilly wind, accompanied with a pelting rain, rushed in sudden gusts through the gorges of the hills, and soon we were drenched with rain and shivering with cold, although it was then midsummer; and right glad we were when we came in sight of the turnpike house. The old toll gatherer, who dwells here with his wife and about a score of children,—rosy girls and rugged urchins, almost a fortune in these wild districts,—offered us a hearty welcome; and the good dame bustled about to make us comfortable, and sent her sons for more fuel, although the immense fire place was almost filled with huge logs and flaming brands. No sooner had we got snugly seated by the fire, than our cortege received an accession in the person of an antiquated pedlar, whose merry look and roguish eye, and the ease with which he esconced himself into the good wife's arm chair, to the exclusion of its lawful tenant, marked him as one from whom we might derive amusement. The genial warmth of the fire, and a repast of coarse bread, jerked bear's meat, berries and milk, soon made us comfortable, and a merry time we had of it, while without all was tumult and commotion. The black, conglomerated clouds were spread from hill to hill like a pall; the wind roared among the scraggy spectre-pines, and the earth trembled to the sound of the thousand torrents that, swollen by the sudden rains, were working themselves to wrath and foam along their rocky channels. Often were we startled by the thunder of some rock that the storm had undermined, or the crash of some huge tree that had been uprooted and hurled far down the hills by the frantic winds; and the wreck of many a noble oak and pine floated on the turbulent bosom of the Saco, that rushed by in one broad sheet of foam. Our little tenement rocked to its foundation; but it was closely and compactly built, and had for years withstood the wild storms of the hills, so that we had no fear. Snugly ensconced around the fire, we whiled away the evening, by telling anecdotes, and, among others, our grey-headed pedlar related the following, which he dignified by the title of

#### THE STORY OF THE BLACK FIDDLER.

I am an old man, said the pedlar, as you may see by my grey hairs, and by the crow's feet on my forehead. I have lived in and about these parts for the matter of sixty years. When I first came to this section of the country, I settled in the town of Greenfield. The town was then but thinly populated—never a mill stood beside its fair streams, and only here and there was the density of the woods broken by the clearing of some hardy farmer. But the whole region was infested with wolves—long-limbed, gaunt, bleary-eyed, savage devils—nothing could withstand their rapacity. Their dismal howlings were heard through the long, dreary winter nights, sweeping from the black pine forests, and often have I seen them, when night had scarcely in, stealing along the edge of the woods, or galloping in single file across the snowy open fields. Many was the tale that reached us of horses and oxen, and sometimes even men have been torn to pieces and devoured by them.

But frolic and pastime were followed in those days as they now are. We had to work hard—but then we had our huskings, our skating frolics, and our quiltings, our apple-bees; and I do believe that people were happier then than in these enlightened times! On the long winter evenings, when the moon was hanging aloft in the clear cold sky, without a cloud to intercept her light—when the roughness of the country was concealed by a clear, broken mantle of white, and myriads of glittering icicles depended from the dark forest pines and broad-armed leafless oaks, did the lads, and sometimes the elder folks, seek the frozen streams and lakes for a bout at skating, and of times were the farm houses vacated by old

and young, lad and lass, for some far-off merry making. Ah! these were happy times, continued the old man, would that it were now winter, and that these stiff limbs had the flexibility to skim over the frozen stream, amidst the lone and silent scenes of the days of my youth.

There was a negro, who, odd as it may seem, generally took the lead in all our diversions. However, we did not think so much of colour as we do now. Congo was the most noted character in the settlement, he knew the art of dancing to perfection—could play on the violin, and had a powerful voice for singing. A merry fellow was Congo, with a phiz as black as the wing of a raven—with hazle eyes—and a nose that took so conspicuous a stand in his frontispiece, as to completely crowd out of countenance those usually important appendages to the human face divine, denominated cheeks, and with a mouth that, when distended to let out one of his broad laughs, showed ivory almost from ear to ear. But then every body loved him for his good nature, and no merry meeting was deemed complete without him. I have been thus particular in describing him, as he is the principal subject of my story.

But to go on; one night, about the first of December, one of our neighbours, who lived about five miles distant, was to have a husking. All the neighbours were invited, and, as usual, Congo and his two stringed fiddle were engaged. He appeared in due time, acquitted himself manfully in husking the corn and eating the supper, after which he took his station in the huge, yawning chimney place, with a few flourishes on his stringed instrument, announced to the youngsters that he was ready for the dance. Here let me observe, that a Yankee husking frolic in those days was much after the fashion of those described in these times. First, the corn had to be divested of its natural clothing—all the red ears being the perquisites of the girls, to be redeemed by kisses from the lusty farmers' sons. Then came the supper, when the boards groaned under the load of edibles they had to sustain—baked beans and Indian puddings, fowls, and meats, roasted broiled or boiled—pandowdies, pumpkin pies, and mince and apple; and for drinks, there was sometimes coffee, and always switchell and sling; bounce and cider. After which came the dancing—double and single shuffles, reels in every sense of the word, and jigs; and sometimes an ambitious Orlando aspired to a hornpipe. This brought the frolic generally to a late hour, and it was time to separate. Well, at the husking of which I have been speaking, Congo, having run through the whole of the above items, and received in payment for the glee some discourse of his viol, a leg of veal—for provisions and produce were the lawful tender in those times—began to adjust his skates to depart for home by way of the river. It was in vain that the host urged him to stay until morning, and spoke of the danger of the wolves being lured by the scent of the meat, Congo was not afraid of the wolves! Taking his fiddle in one hand and the veal in the other, he swung away on the blue ice, and was soon lost to view far on the surface of the river.

On he sped. It was a lonely tract—the ice glanced and the snow sparkled to the round moon—the dwarf birches on the banks bent under their accumulated burdens of snow, and the tall pines in the distance grew up grim and shadowy, but there was never a house nor building of any kind in sight; and but for the sound of his skates, scouring the ice, an ominous silence kept watch over every object around.

A long, low howl, far in the forest, suddenly woke the echoes of solitude! Another and another followed. Congo felt the perspiration starting from every pore in his body, and he quickened his speed. The yells grew nearer and more distinct, until a long-legged monster, with a tremendous bound, broke from the thicket that skirted the river's banks, scarcely a furlong's distance from the negro. Others followed, until scores of the monsters were on the ice in pursuit of him; and their yells almost froze the blood in his veins. Now was the time for him to try his skill. He almost flew along, and the ice being very glazy, the wolves could scarcely do more than hold their way with him.

At length he came in sight of a building—he knew the place well—and aimed for it. It was a dark and desolate fabric, and had once been occupied as a schoolhouse, but being at a distance from the main settlement, it had been vacated. The chimney had been taken down, but a ladder was left, reaching to the square hole in the roof, from which it protruded. Thitherward Congo sped. He reached the bank of the river, a few leaps in the snow brought him to the door, and seeing the ladder, he mounted to the roof, and pushed it down after him. On came the wolves at full speed, yelling like fiends, and sprung into the door pell mell, just as the negro had snugly seated on the roof. There was many a crack and crevice in the old building, through which the wind found free access, and no sooner had the wolves entered than a sudden gust slammed to the door; the latch caught, and the monsters were thus completely entrapped. Congo looked down through the hole, and rubbed his hands with much satisfaction. He could see their dim forms moving about like spectres in the dark, and ever as they looked up towards him, their eyes gleamed like balls of fire. But he soon began to feel that his situation was not so comfortable after all. It was a stinging cold night, and the sudden transition from the heat and perspiration which his strenuous exertions had created, to inactivity, caused him to feel the rigour more forcibly—and then how was he to be relieved from his thralldom?

At length he thought of his fiddle—a happy thought! He touched the strings, and launched away into his quaint old reels with