

and then, some worthy burgher as he wended his homeward way, content with the proceeds of his day's traffic, gave vent to his satisfaction in humming some Dutch melody. Now a thrifty housewife screamed to a gossiping neighbour across the street, and then silence again assumed its sway, until at intervals the rattling of a rickety vehicle, the challenge of a statue-like sentinel, or some other trivial occurrence broke upon the spell.

It was during one of these intervals, when scarcely a breath was stirring, that the houses by the water's edge were shook by a violent concussion, and then the report of a heavy piece of ordnance echoed through the town. Instantly every window which afforded the slightest glimpse of the harbour, was thronged, and multitudes hurried along the, until now, deserted streets. The wharves were peopled with the town's-folks, of whom not one could answer the oft repeated inquiry as to the cause of the alarm.

Ten minutes had elapsed from the first discharge, when a bright flash issued from a craft in the direction of Staten Island, and a second report rolled up heavily over the water; and at the same time a lantern rose from her deck to the mast-head, and another to her peak.

"Can'st make her out?" cried a dozen voices to a seaman who had mounted a hog'shead for better observation.

"Not yet," was the reply, "wait till she shoots into the moonlight, and then—"

"Looks she like a lugger?" interrupted a portly Dutch merchant, opening his mouth and puffing out a dense column of tobacco smoke, "I would give ten guilders were it the Frau-Van-hoore."

"Your guilders are safe," answered the seaman, "it is not your craft—Der Tytel! she's a beauty."

The moon which had now risen was shedding a rich column of silver light along the surface of the water, and across this path a beautiful swan-like

brig of matchless symmetry and exact proportions was slowly moving.

"Shows she no signal?" again demanded the merchant.

"Look sharp—a white ground with a blue ball, and—"

"I tell you no," interrupted the seaman impatiently, "such a pretty bird of the ocean can never belong to the house of Vanderheer and company. Are you in your senses, man, see you not that if occasion needs she is one that can run races with the wind, and the stiffest hurricane can never compel the swiftest lugger of your line to log more than two knots an hour."

A boisterous laugh from all who heard this sally, somewhat abashed the merchant, who shrunk back among the crowd and contented himself with speculating in his own mind upon the probable character of the strange vessel.

The brig whose appearance had caused this undue excitement on shore, was now slowly moving up to the town. She was of that class now known as hermaphrodite, of about a hundred and fifty tons burthen, a kind of craft but little known and still less used at that period; yet to those who were at all acquainted with the build of vessels it must have been obvious that a more convenient bark as regarded both sailing and carrying could scarcely have been constructed. Every part exhibited the most faultless symmetry. She sat upon the water like a swan. Her bow was sharp and tapered off to a clean run. Two slender and somewhat raking masts, crossed by slight yards at their respective distances, rose from her deck, supported by a set of standing rigging, strained as taut as a bow string, and the running rigging, ropes and lines hung from mast to mast and spar to spar, forming most graceful curves and festoons. Every sail was formed of snow white canvass, and as the distance from the town gradually lessened, one after the other was clewed up and bound to the yards, until when, obedient to her helm, she swung around at two cables' length from the wharf, not a rag of canvass was visible at any point.