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The House of a Thousand Terrors.

(‘Friendly Greetings.’)

More than three hundred years ago, the city of Rotterdam awoke one autumn morning to find a squadron of Spanish warships floating upon the broad bosom of the Maas.

The enemy had come! Like an electric spark the tidings flashed through the city, startling the inhabitants out of their usual quiet routine of duty. The enemy had come! Women turned pale and clasped their children

There tumult reigned. Terror, not uncalled for, blanched the face of the boldest, and indignation found vent in a storm of protest. Presently the voices hushed, for the grave Burgomaster stood before them with uplifted hand.

In a calm manner, which of itself had a soothing effect upon the excited multitude, the chief magistrate told them that their fears were needless. In his hand he held a letter, received that morning from Admiral Bossu—a letter written with the express purpose of allaying any groundless alarm. In spite of this

his hearers that might was on Bossu's side. His request denied, he would certainly assault the town, and no mercy could then be expected. This danger a courteous reply might avert, and why should they doubt the Admiral's honor? Bossu, although serving the Spanish king, was yet a fellow-countryman, and therefore had a claim upon their respect.

The discussion which followed was less vehement in character. The policy of concession gained ground; for none could deny that the city was in no condition to offer a successful resistance to such troops as Bossu had at command. Moreover, the honest burghers had no wish for war. Most of them were shopkeepers, with instincts commercial rather than martial. In defence of their rights they could, and would, fight valiantly, but they preferred peace while peace was possible.

A vote of agreement was accordingly passed, permitting Bossu and his men to march through Rotterdam. To satisfy the prudent minority, however, the Burgomaster added a condition to the warrant. Only one corporal's company at a time was to enter the town. To this document the Admiral set his seal.

The citizens dispersed, each to his home, his shop, or his warehouse, satisfied that all was well.

But one man was not satisfied. A prosperous burgher, who lived at the corner house of the great square, went home ill at ease. He, for one, had no faith in Bossu's specious promises, and his heart thrilled with anguish as he thought of the women and children in the houses he passed. What a fate awaited them!

Compassion born of true benevolence ever bears fruit. Before he reached home, he had determined to do what one might to rescue these helpless lambs from the fierce wolves of Spain.

His good wife entered heartily into his scheme, which was neither more nor less than the turning of her well-kept, spotless home into a general House of Refuge. It was no light trial to the careful Dutch housewife to submit to the spoiling of her dainty furniture and the scratching of her polished floors; but the sacrifice was cheerfully offered.

To make more room, all the furniture which could be moved at such short notice was bundled out into the back yard. The shutters were also closed, and the windows broken, in order to give the house a wrecked appearance. Then they invited their neighbors to take shelter beneath their roof—an offer no less than a thousand women and children are said to have accepted.

Meanwhile, by order of the Burgomaster, the city gates were thrown open, and the Spaniards entered; not only a corporal's company, but the entire troop; not peacefully, for each man had a drawn sword in his hand. The gatekeeper, terrified at the sight, attempted to reclose the gates, and was at once cut down and slain by Bossu himself. On they swept, the wicked admiral at their head, his sword red with the blood of the murdered gatekeeper.

A general massacre now began, and a long, wild shriek of agony arose above the doomed city. Alas for the men who, with misguided



IN SEARCH OF THE FUGITIVES.

to their breasts, and men rushed forth into the streets by one common impulse.

Hitherto Rotterdam had escaped the fate which had befallen so many other towns in Holland. Now their time was come. The Spaniards had stolen upon them unawares, and rumor whispered that the city gates were to be thrown open to the foe.

The town was astir from one end to the other. Pale faces looked through every window, and the streets were thronged with stern-faced men, who gathered for a moment in groups, and then sped on to the Town Hall.

warlike array of ships and men-at-arms, the Admiral's intentions, it seemed, were peaceful. All he asked was permission to march through the town, in order that his troops might join the main body of the army. If the good burghers would grant this favor, he pledged his word of honor that no harm should befall them.

Once more a storm of eager voices filled the great hall; some, in the strong reaction of relief, voting for acquiescence, others, more prudent, fearing treachery.

Again the Burgomaster spoke. He reminded