

MERRY CHRISTMAS

Meantime Christmas had turned toward me a questioning eye, in which, however, there seemed to revive some little gleam of merriment.

"Have you, perhaps," he asked, half-timidly, "schnapps?"

"Schnapps?" I repeated.

"Aye, schnapps. A glass of it to drink your health might warm my heart again, I think."

"Ah!" I said, "something to drink?"

"His one failing," whispered Time, "if it is one. Forgive it him. He was used to it for centuries. Give it him if you have it."

"I keep a little in the house," I said, reluctantly perhaps, "in case of illness."

"Tut, tut," said Father Time, as something as near as could be to a smile passed over his shadowy face. "'In case of illness!' They used to say that in ancient Babylon. Here, let me pour it for him. Drink, Father Christmas, drink!"

Marvelous it was to see the old man smack his lips as he drank his glass of liquor neat after the fashion of old Norway.

Marvelous, too, to see the way in which, with the warmth of the fire and the generous glow of the spirits, his face changed and brightened till the old-time cheerfulness beamed again upon it.