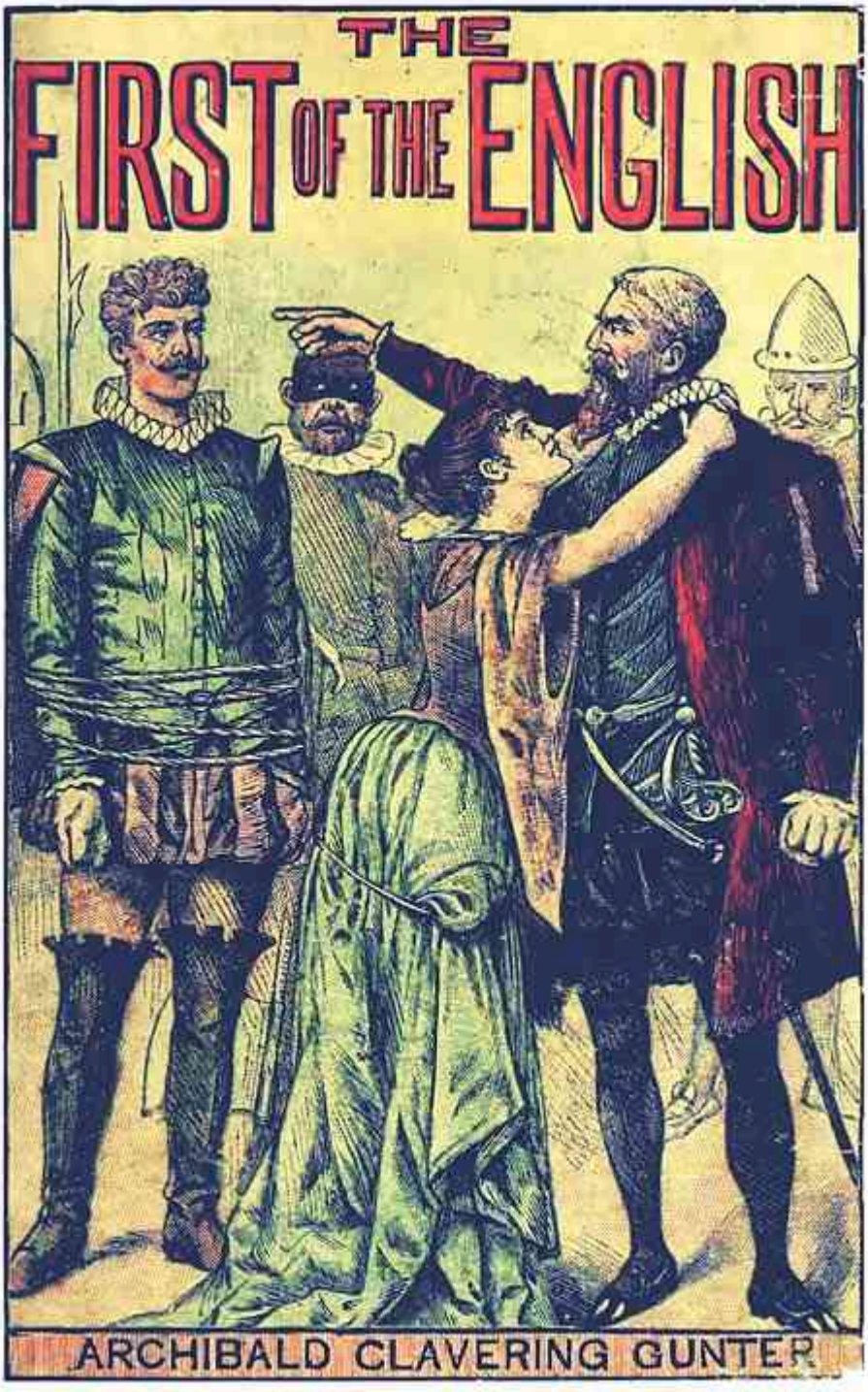

THE
FIRST OF THE ENGLISH
ARCHIBALD CLAVERING GUNTER

The Project Gutenberg eBook of The First of the English: A Novel

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: The First of the English: A Novel

Author: Archibald Clavering Gunter

Release date: April 9, 2022 [eBook #67804]
Most recently updated: October 18, 2024

Language: English

Original publication: United Kingdom: George Routledge & Sons Limited, 1895

Other information and formats: www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/67804

Credits: Jeroen Hellingman and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at https://www.pgdp.net/ for Project Gutenberg (This file was produced from images generously made available by The Internet Archive/American Libraries.)

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE FIRST OF THE ENGLISH: A NOVEL ***

[Contents]

[Contents]

THE FIRST OF THE ENGLISH

[Contents]

By ARCHIBALD C. GUNTER.

Uniform with this Volume.

MR. POTTER OF TEXAS.
THAT FRENCHMAN!
MISS NOBODY OF NOWHERE.
MR. BARNES OF NEW YORK.
MISS DIVIDENDS.
BARON MONTEZ OF PANAMA AND PARIS.
A PRINCESS OF PARIS.
THE KING'S STOCKBROKER.

[1]

Original Title Page.

The First of the English

A NOVEL

BY

ARCHIBALD CLAVERING GUNTER

AUTHOR OF 'MR. BARNES OF NEW YORK'

COPYRIGHT
LONDON
GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS, LIMITED
BROADWAY, LUDGATE HILL
MANCHESTER AND NEW YORK

1895

(*All rights reserved.*)

[3]

[Contents]

CONTENTS.

BOOK I.

A STRANGE TRIP TO ANTWERP.

PAGE

CHAPTER I.—The Flood in the Schelde, 5

II.—The Lady of the Barge, 16

,,

III.—The Six Drunkards of Brussels, 35

,,

IV.—The Patriot Painter, 48

,,

V.—"The Lion's Jaws Gape for Me!" 59

,,

VI.—The Drinking Bout at the Painted Inn, 70

,,

VII.—Love—By a Coup de Main, 85

,,

VIII.—"The Ungainable!—But I'll Gain Her!" 101

,,

BOOK II.

TWIXT LOVE AND WAR.

CHAPTER IX.—"No Provisions, no Water, but Plenty of Powder!" 112

X.—The Secret of the Statue, 123

,,

XI.—Major Guido Amati has a Spree, 131

,,

XII.—"Get Your Daughter Out of Antwerp," 143

,,

XIII.—"Good Heavens! What an Introduction!" 155

,,

XIV.—The Providence of God, 165

,,

XV.—The Battle on Skates, 175
” XVI.—The Berserker Oath, 185
” XVII.—Advanced Womanhood in 1573, 194
”

[4]

BOOK III.

THE DUKE’S UNLUCKY PENNY.

Chapter XVIII.—“Is it a Dream?” 205
XIX.—The Daughter’s Dower, 220
” XX.—“Papa’s Coming! I’ll—I’ll Do It,” 228
” XXI.—“My Lord of Alva,” 235
” XXII.—“Oho! The Fox at Last!” 249
” XXIII.—“It is an Affair of State,” 258
”

[5]

THE
First of the English.

BOOK I.

A Strange Trip to Antwerp.

[Contents]

CHAPTER I.

THE FLOOD IN THE SCHELDE.

“First officer, where’s the boatswain?”

“Forward, sir, seeing the best bower cleared,” returns Harry Dalton, the ranking lieutenant of the *Dover Lass*.

“Very well, pass the word for the boatswain. He has the best nose on board this ship,” shouts Captain Guy Stanhope Chester.

“Aye, aye, sir!”

This being done, the young skipper, for he is hardly twenty-five, shaking the spray and sea water out of his tarpaulin, gropes his way to the binnacle, the lantern of which is shaded, partly to protect it from the weather and partly to prevent its light giving indication of the vessel’s whereabouts through the darkness of the night.

Taking the course of the vessel he glances at the two men lashed by the tiller to prevent their being washed overboard by the waves that have been chasing the ship ever since she left the white cliffs of England, and remarks: “Better cast yourselves loose lads, we are in [6]quieter water now. There’s a bit of Flanders between us and the worst of the gale.”

A moment after the boatswain makes his appearance, a weather-beaten old tar of England; one of the new class of deep-water sailors that are being made by Drake and Frobisher in voyages to the Spanish Main and far Pacific. Plucking a grisly lock, this worthy, who would be all sea dog did he not wear a battered, steel breast-plate, salutes his captain, who says:

“How long since we passed Flushing, Martin Corker?”

“About four bells, your honor.”

“Two hours! I make it the same. Could you distinguish the place with your eye, boatswain?” asks Guy, clutching the mizzen rattlings of the *Dover Lass*, as she lurches before the northwest gale and rising tide.

“Not on this dark night, sir; but I made out the soundings by my lead, the land with my eye, and the slaughter houses on the shore with my nose.”

“So did I,” laughs Captain Chester. “You and I, Martin, have been up the Schelde often enough to nose out the channel on as dark a night as this, though the cursed Spaniards have torn up every buoy on the river.”

Then the young skipper, leading the first officer aside, continues very seriously and with knitted brows: “No chance of our meeting any of Alva’s galleys out in this chop sea on such a night as this.”

“No,” growls Dalton, “these Spanish lubbers are fair weather sailors.”

“Besides, in such a gale,” adds the captain, “the *Dover Lass* would make a fool of the bravest and biggest Spanish galleon that ever wallowed through the ocean;” and he looks with the pride and love of a sailor at the trim little ship, upon whose quarter-deck he stands, as she dashes through the waves of the Schelde estuary, tossing the water that comes over her bow gracefully into her lee scuppers, with the South Beveland on her lee and Flanders on her weather quarter.

But the night is so inky and the spray so blinding, Guy Chester’s sharp eyes can only discern half of his trim little vessel of about a hundred and thirty-five feet long, and two hundred and fifty tons burden, rigged in [7]a fashion peculiar to the times of Queen Elizabeth of England, with three masts, the main and the fore square-rigged, and the mizzen felucca-like, with a long lateen yard, from which would be expanded a fore and aft spanker, were not the vessel under storm canvas.

Below this top-hamper the *Dover Lass* shows on her decks as pretty a set of snarling teeth as any vessel of her size that sails from the shores of merry England—six long demi-culverins throwing nine-pound balls, on each broadside; four minions on her quarter-deck, three falcons as murdering pieces on her forecastle, and half a dozen serpentines mounted as swivels at convenient places on her bulwarks, which are unusually low for a vessel of that day. In this matter of cabins and bulwarks the *Dover Lass* is rather an anomaly, carrying no high poop nor forecastle, and consequently able to beat to windward with much greater facility than the ordinary ships of the sixteenth century.

Round the butts of her masts in racks are quantities of cutlasses, boarding pikes and battle axes; the arquebuses and pistols being kept by the armorer in the forecastle or in the captain's cabin.

Her crew, some hundred and twenty-five of as jovial sea dogs as ever cut a throat or scuttled a ship, are out of their hammocks to-night, every man Jack of them; lying in as comfortable places as they can find between the guns on the weather side of the deck and cracking sailor-jokes with each other in a manner unusual to a government cruiser.

Altogether the *Dover Lass* has the appearance of a man-of-war, though not its absolute discipline; and is evidently one of those vessels fitted out by private individuals to trade if they could, fight if they must, and plunder the "Dons" everywhere and all the time; similar to the ships that, under Drake and Frobisher and old John Hawkins, were a greater terror to the Spaniards than any of the Queen's vessels themselves.

"This is rather different to a week ago," mutters the first officer, "when you, Captain Chester, were flaunting it with court beauties at Shene and Windsor."

"And you were making love to every pretty lass in Harwich," laughs his superior.

These remarks, though intended to be whispers, are [8]really shouted, each man with his mouth at the other's ear, for the screeching of the wind through the rigging and the smacks of the combing waves as they lash the vessel would almost drown the voice of old Stentor himself.

A moment later the boatswain touches his grisled lock and calls out to the captain: "Hadn't I better get the second bower clear also?"

"Yes, we may need it with this sea," assents the captain; while the first officer caustically remarks: "By old Boreas Bill, this is a rip-roarer of a night!"

"Aye, worse on shore than at sea," answers Guy, bringing his tarpaulin close around him with one hand and with the other trying to keep on his head his sou' wester, from under which a few Saxon curls blow out in spite of his efforts. All the time the three are stamping savagely on the deck, shaking off the water that comes flying over the rail, and restoring circulations that have been impaired by the searching northwester which has been beating upon them all this awful night.

And it is an awful night; one of those nights that impresses itself upon the memory of suffering mankind by the widows it makes and the orphans it leaves; a night in which the sea drowns the land; a night in which the dykes go down before the dash of the ocean, which, tearing huge sluices in them, rushes through to make the unprotected meadows and growing orchards the beds of roaring torrents and deep salt seas that drown awakened farmers and affrighted peasants with their flying wives and children, in Flanders, Brabant, Zeeland, Friesland, and the islands and polders of both the Hollands; a night that brought up another wail from the Netherlanders, rich and poor, noble and *bourgeoisie*, who had been undergoing the tortures and burnings and flayings of Philip II. and Alva, his viceroy, for five long years; a night when the long-continued northwest gale blowing in from the German Ocean upon the unprotected dykes of Holland, supported by a tide of wondrous strength and height, sweeps in upon the defenseless

Netherlands to remind them of that great flood shuddered at for centuries—that of the first of November, All Saints' night, of 1570—though this one is [9]nearly two years afterwards, in the early spring of 1572. Evidences of the misery of the land soon come out of the darkness of the night. Lights move about hurriedly on the South Beveland shore, and the cries of a hundred drowning peasants come shrieking on the gale.

"By Saint George, there's a dyke gone!" cries Chester to his lieutenant, then he mutters: "God help the poor wretches, we can't!" as the ship speeds by, the gale now a little upon her starboard quarter.

A minute later he commands hurriedly: "Call two quartermasters and heave the log."

This being done, he suddenly mutters: "Ten knots—and the tide four more! Two hours! We must be abeam of the Krom Vliet; the Drowned Lands are on our lee bow," then cries hurriedly to his lieutenant: "Go forward and see both the anchors are ready. We must bring up under the lee of South Beveland, in the slack water where the tide coming up the East Schelde meets the current of the main channel. If we get into the main river with this wind and tide our anchors will hardly hold us this side the Fort of Lillo, and that means capture and death to every man, *Alva's death*—you know what that is!"

To this the lieutenant shortly mutters, "I know!" and goes hurriedly forward, where he can be seen directing the men who have been summoned by the boatswain's call. Chester, standing beside the tiller, cons the vessel himself, giving his orders to the two helmsmen.

Half a minute later Martin Corker, the boatswain, comes staggering aft over the ship's slippery deck and hoarsely whispers: "Boats ahead!"

"How do you know? you couldn't see them to-night."

"Lights!"

“Ah! the lights of Sandvliet.”

“No, boats! pistols firing—arquebuses! I saw the flashes of their guns three points on the lee bow, in the slack water under the shore of Beveland!”

“Then I can catch these boats,” whispers the captain.

With this the nature of the man comes suddenly out; his wonderful rapidity of thought and action. He cries: [10]“Order all hands to stand by to wear ship. Send twenty men aft to handle the lateen sail! See the two anchors stoppered at thirty fathoms! Tell the starboard division to arm themselves with pikes, cutlasses and axes—only steel. I want no noise about this business! Order three men to stand on the weather bow with grappling hooks.”

A minute later he sees the flashes of firearms a cable’s length ahead broad upon his larboard bow.

“Helm a starboard!” he cries to the men at the tiller. “That’s enough; steer small, I tell you. Set the spanker!”

A minute after they are just passing the boats, and nicely calculating for the drift, which is tremendous, he suddenly wears his ship, giving his orders by speaking trumpet. “Hard a starboard—slack away the lee braces. Haul taut the weather fore and main braces!” And as soon as the vessel comes round bracing his fore yards very sharply and jibbing his lateen sail, which, though nearly blown from its bolt ropes, drives the vessel hurriedly into the slack water formed by the current of the East Schelde meeting that rushing in by the main estuary.

The next minute he has ranged up alongside two boats, and his starboard division, taking tow lines in their hands, have sprung into the boats, boarding them and capturing them.

These are soon swinging alongside of his lee quarter, protected from the sea and the wind, while he is dropping anchor in the slack water formed by the South Beveland flats and marshes.

There has apparently been no contest in the boats, as his men have taken their occupants too much by surprise.

A minute later the boatswain clambers back on board the *Dover Lass* and reports: “We’ve got ’em both!”

“What are they?”

“One’s an enemy and one’s a friend.”

“Who’s the friend?”

“Dirk Duyvel and his band of Sea Beggars; and Dirk’s thunderin’ mad and swears he is being badly treated.”

“Who’s the enemy?” [11]

“A Spanish pleasure galley or State barge, judgin’ by the fol-de-rols and awnings.”

“Who are on board her?”

“Rowers, who are begging for their lives, and two or three women, all of ’em fainted but one. There was an Italian, Spaniard or something, but Duyvel and his band when they captured the boat tied a rope round him, threw him overboard and towed him, and I guess he’s drowned by this time.”

“Very well, pull the Italian up and bring him on board. Also send Dirk to me.”

A minute later a stalwart-looking Dutch sea-dog comes over the side, stamping his heavy boots and uttering a curse with every stamp.

“Come here, Dirk, what are you growling about?” laughs the young captain.

“What am I growling about? *Donder en Bliksem!* I’m growling about YOU! What have you come between me and my prize for? Who are you, anyway?”

“You don’t recognize me, Dirk? Come this way.”

The captain throws open the door of his cabin and motions the Dutch seaman in. There is a flickering candle or two and a swinging lamp hanging from the skylight transom that give a subdued and melancholy glow to the scene, though the darkness of the night has been so intense that both the Dutchman and Englishman blink their eyes as they enter.

A second later Dirk cries: “*Bij den hemel!* I didn’t recognize the voice. It’s Captain Chester, *the First of the English*!”

This nickname that he gives to Guy is one the Hollanders had bestowed on him upon his first making his appearance among them as secret scout, envoy and general agent of Queen Elizabeth; though England, being nominally at peace with Spain, his sovereign has publicly disavowed the acts of this man who has been risking his life for her interests day by day, and night by night, off the coasts of the Hollands, watching the unequal fight the Netherlanders are making against the power of Philip of Spain, and the frightful cruelties, ravages, burnings, flayings, killings and torturings of Alva, his viceroy. This soubriquet, *De Eersteling der Engelschen*, the First of the English, has apparently been [12]given in the faint hope of his not being the *last* of the English; that others will come over after him and help them fight for freedom of thought, and that they will be, if not openly protected, at least secretly supported, by the power of the daughter of Henry VIII., whom Philip has sworn to crush, as well as them, in the interests of his religion. For, utterly defeated at Jemmingen, and out-generaled and dispersed at

Friesland, their Staatholder and Prince now in exile in Germany, the adherents of William the Silent have no hope, save in the active intervention, or at least covert assistance, of England.

On recognizing the Saxon the face of Dirk Duyvel assumes a sleepy smile, though he mutters savagely: “Captain Chester, your act is not the act of a Beggar of the Sea.”

“Odds, herrings and turbots! You know I am one of you just the same,” laughs the young man, exhibiting a medal which is strung about his neck, from which hang two or three Beggars’ cups in metal, and on which is inscribed: “*En tout fidelles au Roy!*” and an armed bust of Philip II. of Spain.

“It’s a curious emblem for an English subject to wear,” continues Guy, “but since I joined and became one of you, for the purposes of the one who—who sent me here,” he hesitates a little over his words, “I have acted to you as a brother *Gueux*, and abided by the principles of the Beggars of the Sea—if they have any. Have they, Dirk?” he jeers. “Answer me, you sea robber. Didn’t you steal your own brother’s vessel last year?”

“Well, there’s two sides to that story, captain,” guffaws the Dutchman. Then he goes on anxiously: “But you’re not going to steal my prize?”

“No, only to help you take care of it. And you need my aid to-night; for in this wind, without me, you would never get back to your vessels. Where are they?”

“About four miles down the East Schelde, round the point.”

“Then your boat would never make them. You would be blown into Sandvliet or past the forts and into Alva’s grip, unless you landed on a dyke and took [13]the chance of being shot off-hand by his Spanish mercenaries. You couldn’t anchor your boats here, they’d be swamped; without the lee of my vessel you would be in the arms of the mermaids in ten minutes, or in Alva’s hands in two hours. Which would be worst?”

“I think Alva would be worstest for me and for *you*! He hates the ‘First of the English’ more as even he does us rebels,” grins the Dutchman. He shivers though, at that name, dreaded by every Netherlander, and more than all by those he had made outlaws, and forced for very livelihood to become, under the name of *Gueux* (Beggars of the Sea), half way pirates and robbers, though still apostles of freedom under William of Orange.

“Now, what have you captured? Tell me all about it,” breaks in the Englishman, who has bright, flashing steel blue eyes and dancing, gallant, wavy chestnut hair, in strong contrast to the Hollander, who has a quiet, sleepy, soft countenance, embellished with a contented grin—one Dirk Duyvel never changed, whether saying his prayers, looting a ship, or cutting a Spaniard’s throat.

“Well, we drifted down here,” he answers. “The gale wasn’t as high then, or we wouldn’t have come. We saw a dyke burst down this side of Sandvliet and went over to take charge of the farmers’ goods, so if they came to life again we might return em. While doing this we saw a barge put off from a pleasure house that was being washed out, and it looked as if there might be plunder aboard. Well, we followed it. It was trying to get into the river to go to Antwerp, but we shot the sailors, and had just captured the boat and thrown an Italian overboard and were looking for plunder, and finding none, except the women, three of whom fainted when I talked to ’em and told what we were going to do with ’em, when you came alongside; and before I knew it I was down with two of your swash-bucklers on top of me with daggers at my throat, making remarks about my life.”

This dissertation is here interrupted by the entry of the boatswain, who touches his cap and deposits an inanimate and drowned form upon the cabin locker, [14]remarking sententiously: “The Italian’s come aboard, captain.”

“Let’s see if we can get life into him.”

But after a short examination Chester makes the sign of the cross and whispers: “He’s past revival. All the leeches, surgeons and blood-letters on earth couldn’t make his heart beat again,” placing his hand upon the man’s bosom.

Even as he says this he suddenly starts and exclaims: “There’s something in the breast of his coat; something sewn in.”

“*Duivelsch!* Is it money he’s got in his jacket?” screams the Dutch freebooter; then he continues sorrowfully: “And to think that we missed it when we searched his pockets before we threw him overboard. Is it money? If it is, it’s MY money.”

“It isn’t money, its papers,” remarks Chester, cutting away the Italian’s doublet and pulling out a packet carefully wrapped in oiled silk.

“Then if it’s only papers, you can have them,” observes the Netherland Beggar of the Sea generously. The Englishman is examining the documents that are disclosed to him.

A moment more of perusal and Guy appears surprised; then deeply impressed, mutters to himself: “I wonder—can it be?—I can’t make out the accursed Spanish cipher.”

Two minutes more of anxious inspection and a sudden flash comes in his eyes.

He turns to Dirk Duyvel and says shortly: “How much do you want for your capture? All of it! You have given me the papers, now what do you want for the boat?”

“The boat’s a fine boat!”

“But it’s no use to you!”

“And then there’s the three women. I might get a ransom for them.”

“From whom?”

“From their fathers or brothers or lovers; they wouldn’t like to know that they were carried off by the Beggars of the Sea, the champions of freedom,” says Duyvel with a hideous chuckle, “and one of ’em is very beautiful.” [15]

“Humph! how could you see this dark night?”

“I couldn’t see, I heard. Her voice is as sweet as the softest stop in the grand organ at Amsterdam, the one they call the ‘angel’s voice.’”

“What do you want for the whole lot?” asks the Englishman, trying to appear indifferent, and attempting the tone of a man making a bargain at a haberdasher’s.

“A thousand crowns.”

“Three hundred,” answers Chester, shortly.

“Five hundred crowns, anyway.”

“Three hundred in silver,” and the young captain opens a locker in his cabin and produces a bag of carolus guilders. “Better take this in hand,” he says, “than bargain on the shore, with the chance of being captured and strung up. Three hundred for the whole lot, women, boat, everything, and I take the goods off your hands!”

“What do you want to do with them?”

“That’s my business,” says the Englishman, looking once more over the papers he has taken from the dead Spaniard or Italian, for the dress and appearance of the dead man indicates that he is such. “And I’ll tell you what I’ll do,” continues Guy, “if this matter turns out as it may, I’ll make it two hundred more on my next return from England.”

“Well, the plunder is yours, only count the money down.”

This is soon done, Chester writing a receipt and quittance for the same, which the Dutchman signs. A moment later Captain Guy remarking carelessly: “Duyvel, you had better lie by us in your boat till morning, or you will never outlive this storm,” steps on deck, and taking his first officer aside, says shortly: “You will take command of this vessel, Lieutenant Dalton, until my return.”

“You are going to leave the ship to-night?”

“Yes, some information that I have just received makes it necessary that I go to Antwerp to-night.”

“To Antwerp! *Into Alva’s clutches*; INTO HIS VERY JAWS?”

“Yes.”

“How?”

“In that Spanish barge lying beside us.” [16]

“You’ll take some of your men?”

“No.”

“Your life won’t be worth a florin.”

“Oh yes it will. The cowardly rowers down there won’t give me any trouble. You know I learnt the Spanish lingo in Hispaniola, and speak it so well that I almost despise myself for it. I shall go as a Spanish officer, under the name used by me in my former visits to Antwerp, Capitan Guido Amati. I shall pose as the rescuer of that lady in the boat alongside; that is, if things turn out as I expect. Have the cutter off the nearest dyke down the river below Fort Lillo to meet me by to-morrow noon.”

“You are taking your life in your hands. You’re doing more than this, you are throwing it away,” objects the first officer very anxiously.

“I’d do both for my bonny Queen Bess, whose hand I kissed before leaving England,” whispers the young man. “Now I will see my prisoner.”

Seizing a rope he swings himself over the low gunwale and a moment after is standing among his men, who are still on guard in the Spanish pleasure galley—one second later Guy Chester hears the softest, sweetest, most coquettishly alluring voice he has ever heard since his ears opened to the sounds of man—or woman.

[Contents]

CHAPTER II.

THE LADY OF THE BARGE.

No tones have ever thrilled Guy Chester so before, though in the almost impenetrable gloom of the night its witchery has no assistance from graceful figure, fascinating face, nor flashing eyes. It is the voice alone that charms him. It says: “Señor, are you an officer? Have you authority among these wild men?”

The speaking figure has risen at the commotion made by Chester’s springing into the boat. Perhaps even in the darkness the lady notes the salute from his men by which he is received. The tongue in which the lady [17]speaks is Spanish, pure, refined; the exquisite Spanish of the Castilian.

“I have, *señorita*,” replies Guy, answering in the same language, though his accent and diction are almost barbarous beside her liquid idiom. The sound of the Spanish language seems to reassure the lady, who, stepping from beneath the awning that adorns and protects the stern of the boat, confronts Chester, and in tones that are part pleading and part commanding, says: “Tell me who you are?”

“A captain in Romero’s regiment of Sicilians. Not born in Spain, as you may note by my accent,” returns the young Englishman, adding, “My birthplace was in Hispaniola.”

“Ah! an officer of Spain,” cries the lady joyously; “then your ship is Spanish?”

“Certainly,” returns the Englishman, who, having made up his mind to deceive, does it with full hand and wholesome measure.

“Then,” replies the lady, her voice now growing strangely confident and commanding, “*Señor Capitan*, you will attend me at once to the city of Antwerp, guarding me on the way.” A moment after she continues: “And I hope you will have those wretched Hollander cut-throats, those insolent Sea Beggars, punished as soon as possible. They have murdered the captain and soldiers of my barge, they have drowned the poor secretary of the Marquis de Cetona, Chiapin Vitelli.”

At the name of Vitelli, Chester gives a sudden start. “Certainly, *señorita*,” he answers promptly. “Every ruffian of them shall be hanged to the yard-arm as soon as your barge is out of sight.”

“But *you* must go with me; I have commanded!”

“Your words are my orders,” says Guy gallantly, trying to keep down a smile, as he thinks that his fair captive assumes a strange authority. “The captain of the vessel will attend to the punishment of the marauders after we have left.”

“You will be ready to accompany me soon.” The tone coming to him in the darkness is that of one accustomed to command, though marvelously sweet and winning. [18]

“In fifteen minutes,” answers Chester with soldierly promptness; then he continues, a touch of gallantry in his voice: “May I not send you some supper from the vessel? The night is very cold.”

“No, I am well wrapped up. My attendants can chafe my hands, and we have some excellent Spanish wine and other refreshments in the locker of the barge. Only be quick, or we shall not be in Antwerp before morning.”

“As soon as possible I will return.” With these words Guy springs lightly out of the boat and clambers over the gunwale of his own vessel.

Then hurriedly drawing aside his first officer, who has been looking over at this colloquy, he says: “It has all turned out as I wished. Besides, I know a little more. This dead man in the cabin (whom you will throw overboard as soon as possible) is the secretary of that accursed Chiapin Vitelli!”

“The scoundrel who is aiding Alva in his plans against the life of our sovereign!” interjects Dalton.

“Yes. This thing makes it doubly important that I go to Antwerp. I may even stay there some days. Keep the boat off and on near the dyke below Fort Lillo, as I have commanded.”

“You are taking desperate chances,” mutters his subordinate, dissentingly.

“But they are chances I must take. In case anything happens to me, in case I—I do not come back, tell my Queen it was for her sake. Return with the vessel, Dalton, to England and utter to our Sovereign these words: ‘Be more on your guard of Spanish poison or Spanish dagger than ever. It is the last warning you will hear from your devoted liegeman, Guy Stanhope Chester.’”

With this the young captain steps into his cabin, and within ten minutes, as he re-opens the door, the dim light displays him as a different man.

No longer the weather-beaten sailor in tarpaulin and sou’wester, but as gay and debonnaire a young gallant as ever flaunted with the court ladies of Hampton, or ruffled it in the tennis courts of Windsor or Westminster.

A light blue velvet cap surmounted by two long [19]white plumes fastened by a diamond clasp is on his youthful head; round his neck a long Spanish collar of the lace of Venice; his velvet doublet slashed with silver and satin; his hose and trunks of the finest silk of France; his high Spanish boots of the softest bronze morocco leather. In this gallant garb,

with his blue, flashing eyes, and laughing lips and curly hair, Guy Stanhope Chester makes as brave a figure as even Dudley, Earl of Leicester, himself, when he charmed the Queen of England and her maids of honor.

Perhaps even more so, for his face is honest and his smile sincere, though there is a determined expression in his face as he steps out of his cabin and examines carefully the priming of the two long pistols he has in his belt, and thrusts his hand in his bosom to be sure that the long, keen poniard is in its place, and claps his hand on sword hilt to assure himself that his trusty long Toledo cut-and-thrust rapier is right to his hand. For the chances of this visit to the great city of the Netherlands, which Alva holds in his grasp, mean to him the chances of not merely success nor failure, but the chances of life and death. With the caution of common sense, Guy has given himself the appearance of Catholic and Spanish cavalier; he has discarded the medal of the *Gueux* and wears instead, quite ostentatiously, a rosary of golden beads and ornamented cross.

In making this change he has displaced from his bosom a miniature set in diamonds, a portrait of a girl of wondrous Castilian beauty, upon which he has cast eyes of longing and muttered these curious words: "My only prize from all of Alva's treasures I captured for my queen—if I could gain the original."

Altogether the gallant array of Guy Chester makes a sensation on his quarter-deck, even affecting the imperturbable sea robber, Dirk Duyvel, who sits just outside the cabin calmly counting his three hundred florins. This worthy remarks: "*Hel en duivel!* but she must be a pretty wench!" And his first lieutenant, aye, even the second, venture to crack a joke or two upon his appearance, Dalton remarking: "By the Four Evangelists! This foray means *love* as well as *blood*!"

And the second mate, who is hardly more than a [20]chunky round-faced boy, gives a wild guffaw as he whispers into his skipper's ear: "Take me with you, please, Captain Chester, for your cruise on shore. There are other ladies in the boat besides the one for whom you are arrayed!"

"My poor boy, the run on shore would be the death of you," remarks the captain, then he suddenly strides back into the cabin, muttering to himself: "By the Seven Champions of Christendom, that voice has nearly made me lose my common sense. I was going without any money; that would have been very dangerous."

With these words he empties into his pocket from one of the lockers of his cabin a small bag of Spanish gold, and thrusts into the other a loose assortment of Spanish florins, Dutch crowns and Netherland stivers. As he turns away, catching view of himself in a small mirror of Venetian glass that is set in the cabin side between the two stern port holes, Guy Chester suddenly ejaculates: "And I was forgetting my boat cloak also. That would have been comfortable in this nor'wester."

As he speaks he throws over his finery a long ample cloak of English wool, and the next second he is over the side of the ship into the Spanish barge, which, being cleared rapidly of his men, is now cast off from the ship.

At this he, going to the stern, takes the tiller in his hand and cries out in commanding Spanish: "Give way, ye dogs of rowers! The man who straightens his back or misses his stroke until we are at Antwerp dies by my hand." For he fears that the slightest fault of cadence in the stroke may put the boat broadside to the wind and current, which would be fatal in this chop sea, rapid tide and strong gale.

"You seem to be a seaman as well as a soldier," remarks the young Spanish lady, by whose side he is now seated.

“Yes, I have done a little of everything in the way of fighting, both by land and sea,” returns Guy, drawing somewhat closer to the alluring voice.

“I shall always look upon you,” murmurs the lady, “as my preserver of this night.”

Then she astounds and almost horrifies him, for she says patronizingly: “This has been a lucky night for [21]you. *Señor Capitan; for this I will have you made a Colonel!*”

This assertion is made by the sweet voice beside him as confidently as if it came from the Queen of Spain herself. Its very assurance sends a cold thrill down the Englishman’s back. “Who the deuce can she be?” he wonders. “I am putting my head into Alva’s very hand in escorting her to Antwerp.”

But to turn back is now impossible. The boat is already in the main current; both wind and tide are now sweeping them to Antwerp on the flood, that bears beside them the bodies of drowned men and cattle, giving evidence of the devastation the ocean is working upon the Netherlands.

“And whom am I to thank for this wondrous promotion?” Guy ventures insinuatingly, for he is now desperately curious to know the name of the lady sitting beside him.

“You may call me Doña Hermoine,” answers the fair one in a tone that indicates that she is sufficiently well known to be recognizable without any further description or attachment. A moment after she speaks to one of her attendants, who is kneeling beside her, chafing her hands, for the night is very cold, saying quietly: “That will do, Alida, try to warm yourself.”

“Yes, *Excelentisima*,” answers the girl.

This high-sounding title only adds to a curiosity that Chester can gratify no further. He is compelled to devote every faculty of his mind, every muscle of his body, to keeping the boat dead before the wind and current as it flies up the Schelde. A single false movement of the rudder might cause it to broach, and that would be destruction on this wild night.

He can scarce find time to direct the attendants of the lady to place tarpaulins at her back and to protect her as much as possible from the spray that is following them; every other energy is employed in keeping the frail boat safe in her race with the wild waters round them. He has no trouble with the oarsmen; they row as if they knew their lives depended on their toil.

So they fly on.

A dark lowering mass upon his right hand indicates the grim Fort of Lillo. This passed Guy knows he [22]is in the very hands of Alva, in the Spanish lines. But they dash ahead, passing ships that have broken from their moorings, and are drifting with the tide; others that have taken refuge in the various estuaries and coves of the Schelde. No boats are out this wild night; the storm has driven everything to shelter. No Spanish galleys patrol the river; but the lights upon the dykes show that the husbandmen are awake, trying to save their live stock and themselves.

A little later the lady, who all this time has been compelled to devote herself to keeping warm by many stampings of tiny feet and clappings of delicate hands, in which she has been assisted by her attendants, suddenly says: “Can you not take a little refreshment, *Señor Capitan*? Even a glass of wine? Your exertions for my safety have been untiring.”

“For God’s sake don’t take my attention from the boat!” mutters Guy between set teeth. “We’re running a bend of the river. The wind will be on our quarter. It is our lives that I’m fighting for.”

Then he settles himself again to the struggle, for the current and wind are not now exactly together, and it makes his task at the tiller even more difficult.

But after making this bend, which is just before they reach the water front of Antwerp, the wind, broken by the land, becomes less fierce, and the rising tide, which has almost reached its height, grows less violent and rapid.

"Thank God, we're over the worst of it," Guy says with a sigh of relief. "Now I'll thank you for a glass of wine, fair lady; the night is fearfully cold;" this last comes from between chattering teeth.

"Oho!" almost laughs the fair one at his side. "Silk, satin and velvet are not as conducive to comfort, *Señor Capitan*, as your storm clothes and tarpaulins when you first boarded my barge. It is necessary to suffer in order to be beautiful. Your fine raiment is, I presume, for some fair lady of Antwerp, *Capitan mio*."

"Yes, for a *very* fair one," mutters Guy, whose boat cloak has blown from his shoulders, and whose lace cuffs have brushed the lady's wrist, as he holds the silver goblet to his mouth and permits the very finest old Spanish wine that has ever trinkled down his throat [23]to revive his circulation and reanimate his chilled form.

The elixir seems to bring his spirits back again, and he laughs.

"Another goblet, please, which I will drink to the fair lady's health!" And this being given him, Guy says, with sailor audacity and youthful ardor, "To *you*!" looking with all his eyes at the fair one ministering to him, hoping that their flash will even pierce the darkness. For he has touched the hand that has tendered the goblet, and it is wondrously soft and dainty, and the whole bearing and demeanor of his fair companion is that of bright, vivacious, joyous youth; the youth that age may envy but never simulate; the youth the gods give but once; the youth that even inky darkness cannot hide.

Besides, thrown by a quick lurch of the boat, she has been close against his bosom—*once*; but in that fleeting touch he has discerned the figure of a Venus and the agile graces of a Hebe.

“Who in the name of all the saints can she be?” he wonders.

At his audacious toast the lady draws herself away quite hurriedly, with a subdued ejaculation, partly of surprise, partly of hauteur. A moment after she laughs the laugh of youth, enchanting, bewitching; and remarks: “Such toasts will draw upon you the wrath of my duenna.”

“Your *duenna*! She is not here!”

“Oh, yes. She has been present during our whole journey. My awful duenna lies on the seat immediately in front of you. The smell of powder always makes the Countess de Pariza faint. She always becomes insensible when her ward is in greatest danger. At the first fire by the Beggars of the Sea she fainted comfortably away, and has been insensible ever since. When we arrive at Antwerp she will probably have her sharp eyes open.”

“Then before they *do* open tell me about yourself,” whispers Guy gallantly, for he can now devote a little of his time to the lady, into whose face he would look with admiring eyes did the darkness permit.

“First tell me about *yourself*,” she answers a little hurriedly, a tone of interest in her voice that pleases [24]the young gentleman. “The more I know about you the better I can aid you to become a colonel. What is your name?”

“Call me Captain Guido,” murmurs Chester in his tenderest voice.

“No other name?”

“I cannot give you my other name. I am absent from my regiment without leave.”

“Then it will be very difficult to promote you,” laughs the lady. Next she says: “But since you will not trust me with your name, tell me something about your former life.”

This Guy does, inventing a story of birth in Hispaniola, various combats by land and sea for the glory of the flag of Spain in Italy and the Netherlands, giving the lady beside him an idea that he is devoted to the Spanish cause, body and soul, a grand hater of all enemies of Mother Church, and weaving about himself a web of romance and a tissue of falsehoods that some day may rise up to strike him down; for his fair companion thinks him a true soldier of Philip of Spain and his viceroy, Don Fernando Alvarez de Toledo, Duke of Alva and Huesca.

“Ah!” she murmurs, “a gallant soldier. I *must* make you a colonel!”

“And the full name of my benefactress?”

Perchance she would answer this; but at this moment the lights of Antwerp come into view. The whole city’s front is illuminated by moving lanterns, vessels are being transported to safe anchorages; the immense shipping of the port is on the alert this night to save themselves from the flood. The merchants of this, the richest city in all Europe, are busy on the quays trying to preserve the merchandise of the Indies and the produce of Northern Europe from damage and wreck from the rising tide that is sweeping over the half-submerged quays and docks of this great emporium of sixteenth century commerce.

“Where will you land?” says Guy hurriedly.

Her answer is such that it almost makes the strong man beside her tremble. She says nonchalantly: “I think you had better take me to the Citadel.”

“The Cit—a—del,” stammers Guy. [25]

“Yes, Sancho d’Avila, its governor, will be proud to make me welcome to-night.”

“You can pass the sentries? You know the passwords of the night?” mutters Chester, feeling himself growing cold at the thought of entering Alva’s very garrison.

“Certainly. They sent me the words of to-night.”

“Give them to me, please, so that I may pass you through the guard.”

“That of to-night,” she says, “is Jemmingen.”

“And the countersign?”

“*Santa Maria de la Cruz*. You may need it, being an officer without leave,” she whispers; then adds with a slight laugh, “I have, perhaps, saved you from arrest. That is a little earnest of my gratitude.”

They are now speeding past the main town. The English quay is already behind them, and they are opposite the great middle dock, the huge warehouses of which are all alight, while gangs of men with waving torches are on the adjacent wharves and ships, trying to moor the vessels safe from the rushing flood and to salvage their cargoes, many of which are already half unloaded. A few Spanish war galleys are in motion, their slaves toiling at their immense oars towing to places of more secure anchorage some of the sailing galleons, now helpless in this heavy gale.

Above all this turmoil and commotion the shouts of sailors, the curses of captains, the screams of the galley slaves under the lash, the flashing lights of the town and harbor, for all Antwerp is up this night, come the silvery chimes of the grand cathedral, whose tower sounds the quarter of the hour before midnight.

As they pass they are hailed by a patrol boat, but giving the word of the night, Chester steers his barge upon its course unimpeded and unstayed.

So they fly past the city proper, skirting a further line of wooden wharves and quays, behind which can be seen the city walls and gates—not as strongly built, nor as elaborately fortified as those protecting the land side of the town, but still garrisoned and guarded, and their Spanish sentries on the alert, for this night of storm and flood has roused not only the burghers of Antwerp to save their wares and chattels, but the Spanish [26]garrison of the place, to see that no outbreak occurs during this commotion produced by wind and tide.

A few moments after, beyond the Esplanade, or parade ground, that separates the citadel from the town, can be seen the flickering lights of the two river bastions of the vast fortification built by Alva, not to protect, but to dominate and crush this great commercial city which is now within his hands.

Gazing up the flood, Chester's quick seaman's eye discovers the danger of approaching the massive walls that line the moat. With the tide running as it does, and the wind blowing as it blows, their boat will be smashed like an eggshell against the stonework. He speaks hurriedly: "Is there not some other watergate? If I try to make the landing on this side it is death. Speak quick, for God's sake—answer me!"

"Yes! A small sally-port beyond the second bastion." The liquid voice beside him is nervous and agitated. The waves of the Schelde are foaming against the masonry of the Spaniard.

"That's it!" cries Chester, and steering the boat with rare precision into the deep moat that surrounds the citadel, which the flood now makes a rushing torrent, they fly past the great somber Bastion of the Duke, and a moment later that named after Alva himself. Here, sheltered to a great extent from the wind behind the massive walls of this stronghold of Spanish power, the boat makes landing at a small sally-port situated on a little artificial island in the middle of the moat, and connected by a light, movable bridge with the main citadel between the huge bastions of

Alva and Paciotto, the latter named after the great engineer who planned and built this great frowning pentagon with its five massive redoubts, considered the strongest fortress of its day.

As the boat makes its landing the sentry stationed there challenges, and receives as answer from the Englishman the word of the night. At this the drawbridge is let down and lights from flaming torches flash upon them, causing Chester to discover what darkness has heretofore concealed from him, that the boat he has been piloting all this night is evidently a State galley, whose fittings and awnings are decorated in exquisite [27]art and ornamented with Spanish stamped leather bearing the arms of the Viceroy himself. But he has no time to speculate upon this.

“My duenna,” says the lady hurriedly. “We must rouse her for the sake of etiquette, *Señor Capitan*, we must rouse the Countess de Pariza!”

This is easily done, for the court dame has apparently been reviving for some little time, and a couple of goblets of the same Spanish wine that had cheered the young sailor bring almost immediate speech to the chaperone. She ejaculates, looking round with wild eyes: “Holy Virgin! I am alive. *Santa Maria!* The citadel of Antwerp. I am saved!”

Then this sentinel of etiquette and punctilio rises and puts a pair of haughty patrician eyes upon the Englishman, and exclaims hurriedly: “Who is this man?”

“The gentleman who has preserved us from the Beggars of the Sea,” answers the young lady of the barge.

On this Chester, not wishing further discussion as to his identity, suddenly offers his arm to the fair one, who is still cloaked and hooded, and who, as the lights have flashed upon her, has drawn over her face a Spanish veil. A moment later Guy feels a little thrill as his offer is accepted, and a tiny hand is slipped within his arm.

Another second and he has assisted her from the boat and is passing with her across the drawbridge, followed by the two attendants supporting the duenna, who is apparently not yet very strong upon her feet, and is in a state of semi-hysterics.

Just as they get to the last of the drawbridge Guy hears a sudden wild shriek behind him, and desperate as is his situation, before the very citadel of Alva, the open gate of which is waiting to engulf him, he cannot refrain from an hilarious chuckle as he discovers that the Spanish duenna has slipped upon the wet drawbridge and is now being pulled half drowned from the waters of the moat. As her attendants somewhat unskillfully assist her, the countess, falling into a wild rage, throws etiquette to the winds and, with chattering teeth, and mouth full of water, stammers that the two attendant hussies shall pay for their awkwardness. [28]

But Chester's laugh dies away as the sentries at the gate bar their passage by crossed pikes, and their ensign says hoarsely: "The countersign, señor!"

"*Santa Maria de la Cruz*" whispers Guy.

The pikes drop as the officer waves his sword, and they step past him through the heavy Gothic archway. At this moment a light flashing from a flambeau stuck into a niche in the heavy masonry falls upon the lady, outlining her figure more strongly. Catching sight of this the Spanish officer doffs his steel cap, and bowing to the very ground, says: "Had I known it was you, *Excelentisima*, my challenge would not have been so peremptory!"

"You but did your duty, señor," says the unknown. A second later she has left Guy's arm and having taken the young officer aside, who stands before her with uncovered bended head, is whispering something to him in Spanish very rapidly.

A portion of the ensign's answer comes to Guy's ear: "No, *Excelentisima*, he has not arrived from Brussels."

"Then papa will not be anxious for me this night," says the lady quickly. Retaking Chester's arm she says to the young officer: "You will attend us to the quarters of the Countess of Mansfeld."

A moment later, preceded by the Spanish ensign, they pass through the gateway to the main parade ground of the Citadel, and passing between piles of cannon balls and all the vast implements of attack and defense of the great fortress, move towards what are apparently the officers' quarters. From the windows of one of these, evidently much larger and more commodious and elegant than the rest, come the lights of festival and the music of the dance. Situated immediately in the rear of the bastion of Paciotto, the distance to this is quite short, and Guy has little chance of conversation with his companion, being compelled to speed by the storm, which is still cold and biting, and causes the lady to hug her wraps very tightly about her.

They enter at a little side door of the house, a man servant in gorgeous livery receiving them and immediately bowing to the earth.

"The countess expected me?" remarks Guy's charge hurriedly. [29]

"Yes, *Excelentisima*, the *fête* of this evening is in your honor. You have been detained? It is now near midnight," answers the servitor, again bowing.

Any reply the lady might make to this is stopped by the entry of her dripping duenna, who says querulously: "What are you standing here for, Doña Hermoine? You are keeping the Countess de Mansfeld waiting upstairs and me dripping with water and chilled to the bone down here." Then she cries: "Up, hussies, and help me change my raiment!" This last is emphasized by a fearful chatter of her teeth and a ferocious wave of her hand to the attendants, who scurry past the young Englishman and his immediate charge.

Under the lights of the hall Guy notes that the maid servants are young girls of lithe figures, pale olive complexions, and Moorish features, perhaps slaves, as was common in Spain in those days. A moment after these proceed up a little stairway with the Countess de Pariza, all punctilio having apparently been entirely washed out of this dragon of etiquette by the salt water of the Schelde, for she leaves Guy standing with her charge without further remark.

Then he turns his eyes on his companion, hoping her face will now be visible, but the heavy lace veil still guards her countenance, and her wraps are still drawn tightly about her, giving outline to an apparently exquisite figure beneath. While noting this the young Englishman also observes that the lady's mantle is of the very finest royal sable, and fastened by jeweled ornaments of exceeding value.

"Had Dirk Duyvel known this," cogitates Guy, smiling, "it would have taken more than three hundred Carolus guilders to have bought that cloak alone!"

But introspection is cut short; the sweet voice, even more beautiful now, mixed with the cadence of the music of lutes and stringed instruments from the adjoining part of the mansion, says: "My duenna has apparently forgotten hospitality, but I have not." Then she commands the servitor: "Show Captain Guido at once to a refreshment room. Not the one of the *fête*, as he is evidently not arrayed for festivity."

She laughs a little, and Chester can see a roguish flash in eyes too brilliant to be entirely shaded by the [30]lace, as she glances at his long cloak that is draped around him, and murmurs: "Accept my hospitality; I have a missive to give you."

Then with light graceful movement she sweeps up the stairs and is gone, Guy thinking complacently: "She does not guess my brave array; I have a surprise in store for this lady."

“This way, *Señor Capitan*,” murmurs the soft-voiced flunkey, and the Englishman is shown into a private reception room, the regal luxury of which astounds him, for its tapestried walls and inlaid Flemish furniture excel those of his own Queen at Hampton Court and Westminster. Here in a few minutes is placed before him as dainty a repast as ever hungry sailor did justice to. The table is covered with snowy linen, massive silver and fairy Venetian glass, and the viands are oysters from the Schelde, cold partridge, a delicate salad of fresh lettuce with just a suspicion of garlic, and a bottle of the royal wine of Xeres itself.

“Egad, this costume *à la* Leicester will make my lady open her bright eyes,” thinks Guy, as he throws off his long boat cloak and displays himself in the gallant attire that he has assumed before leaving the ship. Though his handsome morocco boots have suffered somewhat from the sea water, the rest of his costume has been pretty well protected.

Altogether Master Guy Stanhope Chester is very well pleased with himself, as he sits down and makes short work of the repast in front of him, pouring down the wine of Xeres into his benumbed frame from a huge silver drinking beaker, and finding himself silently and deftly waited upon by the man servant. Thinking to discover more of the lady he has rescued, Chester suggests to the lackey, “A fine *fête* your mistress gives this night!”

“Yes!” answers the servitor, proud of the grandeur of his house. “We have for the entertainment of our guests, *rederykers* from Ghent who will give us declamation and farce, two gipsy girls imported from Andalusia, our own court fool to make us merry, also the daughter of the ex-burgomaster, who will dance for us in her father’s highest-priced silks. I shall contrive to get into the hall to see her prance; the Flemish wench has very [31]pretty ankles, and the airs of a countess,” guffaws the fellow.

But he says naught of the lady of the barge, and, the meal being finished, the table is cleared by several flunkies in gorgeous liveries, the resources of the house being apparently princely.

“Odds doubloons!” soliloquizes the young man, watching the last of the lackeys disappear. “The Countess de Mansfeld’s hospitality is very taking!”

Then a sudden coldness flies through his veins, in spite of the generous wine, as he remembers that he is eating the salt of the Spaniard in the Citadel of Antwerp.

But now suddenly the cold jumps from his body; he springs up with a start, his eyes gazing for one moment in rapture and admiration, and the next in a kind of dazed surprise, his hand seeking his breast feeling something beneath his satin doublet as if to be sure that it is really there.

For a girlish form of wondrous beauty and grace, with the fair skin and deep, lustrous, languid, but vivacious eyes, peculiar to the purest blood and highest loveliness of Castile, arrayed in evening dress, of velvet court train and shimmering silk and lace stomacher, that shows ivory shoulders and arms, stands before him, and the soft voice that has charmed him all this night in a mixture of coquetry and shyness says: “I thought you might like to see the face of her whom to-night you saved from the Dutch pirates!” Then she laughs lightly and murmurs: “If they had only known who I was I suppose the Flemish outlaws would have cut my throat,” giving a little gesture across the white ivory column that supports her lovely head, “before even you could have recaptured me.”

“Who under heaven can she be?” gasps Guy to himself, clutching again at his bosom. “She is the lady of the miniature, but who—WHO?”

But surprise and admiration are not all on his side.

As he rises the lady standing before him sees a gallant, well-knit figure of six feet in height, stalwart shoulders, strong arms, active, lithe body; above all this a face of manly determination, bronzed by weather, [32]giving almost the appearance of a brunette to a fair Saxon cheek, though this is contradicted by light chestnut hair, blue, but determined eyes, and a fair drooping mustache, which conceals a mouth remarkable for its firmness. Altogether a manly man—one fitted to make a woman's heart beat a thousand to the minute; one fitted to love like a troubadour and fight like a paladin for what he wanted in this world, and standing a very good chance to get it; one who, at all events, for this evening, makes the blood of the lady who faces him rush very warmly through her veins, and brings even a greater brightness to her eyes, though these were bright enough before.

Not that she has never seen handsome men, for most of the Spanish chivalry of her age have bowed before her. But this new type, this Anglo-Saxon manliness, this wealth of brawn, these great big honest English eyes, this boy's forehead and man's face, make her heart beat a little differently than ever dark-eyed Spanish grandee or soft mustachioed Italian cavalier or knight of France or stolid Netherland noble had made it beat before.

The same motive seems to actuate them both—involuntarily their hands clasp.

But astonishment is too great in Chester—he forgets the Spanish salutation, and the lady, laughing lightly, draws her hand away, murmuring: "*No* kiss? You—you slight me!"

"Slight *you*! Is *that* a slight?" And in a second the lady utters a faint cry of astonishment, perhaps even of terror, for Guy Chester, forgetting the Spanish form of salutation, has given her a good, whole-souled honest English kiss, such as the son of the squire was wont to bestow on the fair lips of maids as they stood under the mistletoe bough at Christmas tide.

"*Madre de Dios!*" cries the girl, blushing with almost a ruby light, "I meant my *hand*. Holy Virgin! what a mistake. If the Countess had seen it"—then, in spite of herself, she laughs, though she droops and turns away her head.

Of this Guy takes advantage—for her beauty is of a kind to make men crazy. In an instant he has taken the soft, exquisite, patrician fingers in his, and [33]has rectified the mistake of Anglo-Saxon fervor and impetuosity.

But just the same, this kiss on the lips has done his business, and also that of the lady, though at present she doesn't know it. She says hurriedly: "I have told the Countess de Mansfeld of your service to me. She would have begged your attendance at the *fête*, but I had presumed you were not in the costume of ceremony. I see my mistake. You are gallantly arrayed. Will you not join in our festival?"

"I beg you not," answers Guy more hurriedly, for he knows in the glittering throng he will have no such chance of a tête-à-tête as he has now.

"Ah, you fear your being absent without leave from Romero's Sicilians. They are quartered at Middelburg, I believe. That accounts for your coming by ship. But," the lady goes on earnestly, "I have thought about that. If you are questioned in Antwerp, say that you have come as their *Eletto* from the officers to demand when their back pay and arrears shall be made good. For since the Queen of England stole from us eight hundred thousand crowns, you know no soldier in Brabant, Flanders nor Friesland has had pay. Make such a statement as that, and it will probably save you from any further questioning on the subject of written leave of absence from Romero."

"Egad!" thinks Guy, "I wonder what she would say if she knew I had had a great hand in stealing that eight hundred thousand crowns." But he goes on very earnestly, for the lady has apparently forgotten her

embarrassment and her eyes are looking straight into his: “Many thanks for your kind suggestion, Doña Hermoine. I will remember it if questioned by provost marshal. But,” here his eyes make hers droop before his, “I am more pleased than you can imagine at your suggestion —not that it may save me from arrest, but that it shows me that while away from me you had mind of me.”

“In that case permit me to show you that I thought of you more than you even now imagine,” answers the girl, blushing at the admiration with which the young gentleman is regarding her. “I also wrote a missive— this. After you have rejoined your command, at the [34]first convenient opportunity present this at headquarters, and I think it will insure you a colonelcy.” With this she hands him a note, at which he starts astounded, for it is addressed to “Don Fernando Alvarez de Toledo, Duke of Alva, Viceroy of Spain.”

“Who the devil can she be?” thinks Guy, but he has no time to waste on queries; surprises come fast upon him. The girl says hurriedly: “The Countess de Mansfeld and her guests await me. This *fête* is in my honor;” then adds in a faltering tone that gives Guy one great gasp of hope: “To remain longer would invite comment,” touching a silver hand-bell on the table.

And he, hearing this knell of parting joy, knowing that it may mean death to him to see her more, and dominated by that wild passion which comes but once in a man’s life-time, and makes him know that she, of all the beings of this earth, is the one for whom, if necessary, he would die, mutters agitatedly: “Then there is but time to thank you with my whole heart for your kindness to an unknown one; to tell you—” but his eyes are speaking faster than his lips, and with an affrighted “*Madre Mia!*” she draws fluttering back, as he, made desperate by approaching footsteps, whispers three words: “*I love you*!”

To which she gasps: “No! no! you don’t know who I am!”

And he, dropping on one knee, whispers: "WERE YOU THE QUEEN OF SPAIN I'D TELL YOU THAT I LOVED YOU!" and presses on her jeweled hand the kiss of truth and devotion eternal.

But the servitor is entering, and she speaks, haughty and commanding, as if she were the Queen of Spain: "Order an ensign to escort Captain Guido with all due honor from the Citadel."

A quick rush of silk and flutter of laces and she is at the door of the room, but turns as if regretful of her going.

And he, gazing at her, his heart in his eyes, sees a picture that he never forgets; for the girl stands in graceful attitude of fairest youth, arrayed in laces, silks and glittering gems, with bare white neck and snowy maiden bosom; one little Andalusian foot in [35]fairy web of Brussels and tiny slipper of velvet advanced from under her short petticoat of lace and silk, and one white hand draping the tapestry of the door above her, the other motioning farewell.

He makes hurried steps towards her and whispers: "Is it eternal?"

"Eternal? How solemn!" she tries to laugh, "Remember me by *this*!" and, taking from her white finger a ring set with one bright flaming ruby, drops it into his astonished hand, and flits from view.

And as he turns away he gives one great, deep-drawn breath of hope. For in her eyes has come something that has answered to his words: "WERE YOU THE QUEEN OF SPAIN I LOVE YOU!"

[Contents]

CHAPTER III.

THE SIX DRUNKARDS OF BRUSSELS.

A moment after, as Chester presses the ring upon his little finger, a young Spaniard, almost a boy, with dark fiery eyes and ornamented by an incipient mustache that he attempts to curl fiercely, in full uniform with breastplate and plumed steel cap, enters the apartment and says briskly: “I am the officer deputed to escort you from the Citadel, señor. Permit me to present myself as Ensign José de Busaco, of Mondragon’s Arquebusiers.”

“And in return,” answers Guy, throwing on his boat cloak and preparing to follow the young man, “I beg to announce myself as the Capitan Guido Amati, of Romero’s Musketeers.”

“Of the Middelburg garrison, I presume,” remarks the ensign, as they leave the house together. “I suppose you have run up for a little roistering at Antwerp. Middelburg is a desperately sleepy place; I was quartered there three years ago. Brabant is slow also now since we smashed Louis of Nassau up at Jemmingen. I cut ten German throats there,” adds the boy very fiercely and very proudly. [36]

“*Diablo!* You are a fighter,” mutters Guy.

“Pooh! these German burghers and townspeople were nothing against us Spanish veterans,” replies Ensign de Busaco. “We killed eight thousand, you remember, and lost only eight men. That was Alva’s generalship. He has put up a big monument to himself over there,” and the boy points across the great enceinte of the citadel through which they are passing on their way to the main gate leading to the city.

Following his gesture in the gloom Chester can see the pedestal of that great statue made of the cannon taken at Jemmingen, which the pacificator and ravager of the Netherlands is erecting to his own honor

and glory, greatly to the disgust of Philip of Spain, who does not care to have his generals too famous.

“Jake Yongling has made a great figure of the Viceroy. It is sixteen feet high, and with the pedestal nearly thirty. Here’s the last one of the arms,” continues the boyish warrior, giving a careless kick to the representation in iron of his general, lying on the ground. Then he whispers mysteriously: “They say this statue has a secret. What does the Duke with his tenth penny tax, eh; where does he put the money?”

But, passing this, they are soon at the great military causeway that leads to the drawbridge across the moat that gives egress to the Esplanade of the city. Above the massive archway of its heavy gate, chiseled in stone, is a shield with a royal castle with three towers, on each a raven, and each guarded by a wolf—the arms of Alva; beneath, the collar of the Golden Fleece, from which hangs, as if in mockery of this country conquered by blood and fire, a representation of the Lamb of God. This decoration is easily revealed to Guy as he passes by flaming flambeaux, some of which are held in the hands of the guard and others stuck in the niches in the wall.

The military etiquette of the place compels Chester’s attendant to report to the officer of the day.

To do this they enter a guard-room, well lighted by a dozen burning candles, and while the young ensign is making his report and receiving order for the lowering of the drawbridge, Chester carelessly looking over a [37]number of military placards on the dingy wall, sees one that, sound as are his nerves, causes him a quiver, for it reads as follows:

LARGESS!

THREE THOUSAND CAROLUS GUILDERS!

> Whereas, a certain Englishman named Guy Stanhope Chester, and better known among the inhabitants of these Netherlands as *De Eersteling der Engelschen* (The First of the English), who has been disowned and disavowed by his Queen, Elizabeth of England, on March twenty-first of the year 1571, resisted arrest by our own armed Spanish galley, *Santa Cruz*, and has since been acting against the weal of these provinces of Spain, killing and murdering the soldiers and sailors of Philip *Rex*, this will be warranted for any governor of our towns or garrisons to make payment of the above sum to any one delivering the body or head of said named Guy Stanhope Chester, whom we hereby proclaim as pirate and outlaw, by order of
>
> (Signed) ALVA, Viceroy.
>
> (Countersigned) JUAN DE VARGAS, President of the Council.

This is posted up among various military orders pertaining to the Citadel, and one or two other proclamations of outlawry or taxes. After the first emotion Guy reads it calmly, and is relieved that the description attached to the proclamation is faulty in several particulars.

"All right, Captain Guido! I've got the order!" says the young ensign, clapping him on the shoulder. Then he continues: "Ah! you're reading about the First of the English," and as they turn away together he runs on vivaciously: "Three thousand Carolus guilders! That would be an addition to my pay. Wouldn't I like to get my hands on him! Three thousand guilders! We'd have a banquet, wouldn't we, *Señor Capitan*, bought by the pirate's head!"

Here the young Spaniard is cut short in his speech by the necessity of giving the countersign and passing himself and his companion through the gates, as the drawbridge [38]is lowered. This is easily accomplished, as a strong detachment of the garrison are under arms, and a portion of the troops have just moved out to reinforce the Spanish guard in the town and to give as much assistance as possible in protecting the

property of the government that is endangered upon the wharves and quays of Antwerp by the flood, which is apparently still rising; the town being still lighted up and the church bells still ringing out their alarms.

“Here I must leave you,” says De Busaco, after they have passed the drawbridge and the last line of sentries; “What inn will you lodge at? the Red Lion? That has the best wine, I think.”

“No,” answers Guy shortly, for he has considered this point; “I shall rest at the Painted House. It is more quiet.”

“Is it?” laughs the young man. “You don’t know what’s going to happen there to-morrow. *Par Dios!* half the burghers of the city will be there to see it, and half the officers of the garrison. You have not heard the news? The great painter, the Raphael of the Netherlands, Frans Floris, has accepted the wager of the ‘Six Drunkards of Brussels’ that he will drink them all under the table at one sitting. *Sapristi!* from stories about him, I believe he’ll do it. I shall come in to see it; I pray I may meet you there!”

“Very well, come in and drink a flagon with me!” says Chester, thinking that being seen with this Spanish officer will be additional passport to him in this city of his enemies, with a price set on his head. At this young De Busaco, for the two have chatted together quite jovially as they have passed along, and have grown to be rather *en comrade*, remarks: “You see your way across the Esplanade; the street of the Beguins is straight ahead of you!” and with a friendly salute marches back to the Citadel.

For one second the Englishman turns after him, a question that has been on his mind every instant since he left her, is now full upon his lips. The next moment he pauses, thinking, “No—to ask from the officer in whose charge she placed me the name and station of my—my *love*—” he rolls the sound in his mind as if it were a very sweet morsel—“would be too dangerous. I at [39]least should know the lady I have escorted to Antwerp.”

So he strides across the Esplanade, which is kept free of trees and all other impediment to the fire of the guns of the Spanish Citadel, that dominates this Flemish town. Cogitating upon this being of his dream, Chester mutters: “That painter can tell me, he knows,” and quickens his pace.

A moment after the Englishman finds himself at the entrance of the great street of the Beguins, which leads into the heart of the city. Here, clapping his hands several times, he calls out: “Link boy! Light! Link boy!” which in the course of a little time brings to him a wandering urchin of the street carrying a flaming pine torch.

“Which way, your nobleness?” asks the Arab, for Guy’s manner and bearing are patrician.

“To Wool street! The house of Jacques Touraine.”

“Oh! The blood-letter and barber,” answers the boy. “I know his painted pole.”

So skipping along ahead of the young Englishman’s rapid strides, they proceed down the street of the Beguins, lighted occasionally by lamps hanging from the gable ends of the houses of the burghers, and pass by the imposing Church of our Dear Lady of Antwerp, now known as the Cathedral Notre Dame, from which the chimes come every quarter of an hour, silvery and sweet upon the midnight air. Then they dive into the labyrinth of narrow streets filled with the mediæval filth that still clings to them even to this day, making toward the northern end of the town.

A few minutes of struggling through close alleys and they stop at a long pole painted in alternate stripes of red, blue and white, that distinguishes the house of Monsieur Jacques Touraine, the little French leecher, surgeon, blood-letter and barber.

Late as it is there is no need to knock and rouse him, for this gentleman is in front of his door, talking excitedly in his Gallic way to several of his neighbors. He has a little child of some seven years of age by the hand, and is saying nervously: "*Mon Dieu!* if the tide reaches here!"

"*Drommelsch!*" answers one of his companions, "The [40]devil himself couldn't make the flood run up this hill! The mark of the deluge of 1300 is fifty feet below us." Then he gives a hideous laugh and jeers: "How you French hate water."

Breaking in upon this colloquy, Guy beckons the barber to one side and says to him: "Is the painter who lodges with you, Antony Oliver, in to-night?"

The answer he gets is discouraging: "No, he is in Brussels."

"Ah!" assents Guy, the corners of his mouth drooping at these words, for it is this Oliver he has braved so much to see, and he dares not remain long in Antwerp. Then he asks anxiously: "Do you know when he will return?"

"To-morrow. He will come with his master, the Duke of Alva, to-morrow. He is herald and under-secretary to the Viceroy."

"Yes!" cries the little boy, "I'm so glad of it, because when Monsieur Oliver comes we have so much pigeon pie. I like pigeon pie—don't you?"

"Desperately," laughs Guy, relieved at the knowledge of the painter's quick return.

"Then I hope you won't ask Monsieur Oliver for *my* share of pigeon pie," babbles the child. "Perhaps, though, we won't get any—a man carried so many pigeons away to-day."

"Well, here's a stiver to buy pigeon pie for yourself, my little man," laughs Chester, giving the child a coin. Then he says to the father: "You are sure about your information?"

“Oh, I think so. You can make absolutely sure by asking his great friends, the Bodé Volckers. They will certainly know. He is a nice man, this Oliver, and a great painter—at least, he thinks himself a great painter. He has my son Achille as his student—my youngest is the little Maredie, the one who likes pigeon pie,” babbles the Frenchman, who has apparently been relieved from fear of the flood and pleased by Guy’s douceur to his child. Then he queries suddenly: “Haven’t I seen you before? You came to visit Monsieur Antony six months ago.”

“Yes,” answers the Englishman shortly, and to prevent [41]further interrogation queries: “Can you tell me where the Bodé Volckers’ live?”

“Oh, every one knows that; he is our ex-Burgomaster, the merchant prince, Niklaas Bodé Volcker, who lives on the Place de Meir.”

“Ah, the Place de Meir, thank you, *señor*,” answers Guy. He turns away, and calling the link boy again, says: “Bodé Volcker’s!”

“That means two stivers more,” cries the urchin; “anyone that would visit a burgomaster’s could afford two stivers.”

“Four, if you take me there quickly.”

“FOUR? *Pots dit en dat!* you must be a count,” cries the delighted child, and, skipping vivaciously before his patron, he soon guides him back past the cathedral to the magnificent residence where old Bodé Volcker, merchant prince of that day, whose argosies sailed to the Indies, the Baltic and the Mediterranean, lived in great state and pomp and wealth, but for all that was still only a merchant, trader and burgher; and to the haughty nobles of that day nothing more than the dust of the earth—unless they wanted to borrow his money. But as has always been the case, great financial success has prompted social ambition. Niklaas Bodé Volcker’s family is even now knocking at noble and aristocratic doors.

Evidences of this comes to Guy almost as he reaches the portals of the merchant.

The house is pretentious, being built of cut stone around a large courtyard, the archway to this permitting a carriage to drive in, and acting as the entrance to the mansion itself, which is lighted up, one portion more brilliantly than the other. This is apparently the counting and sample room of Niklaas Bodé Volcker himself. From out its open doors several clerks and half a dozen porters are passing, and big vans of goods are arriving loaded with what are apparently cloths, silks and satins from the flooded water-front. Everyone seems to be on the alert.

"I must see Heer Bodé Volcker for a moment," says Guy to a bustling apprentice.

"*Must* see Heer Bodé Volcker to-night?" gasps the [42]man; "the night in which his warehouses are all flooded?"

"I must see him. Do you hear me, fellow? Quick!" mutters Chester, who, being of gentle blood, is accustomed to command merchants, burghers, tradesmen and the like.

"That's impossible, unless you go to the docks," returns the apprentice. "Heer Bodé Volcker is seeing to the removal of his perishable merchandise at his big warehouse below the English quay."

Baffled in this direction, our adventurer turns his steps from the counting room and going to the principal entrance of the house finds a voluble servant girl in conversation with a man who is apparently the family coachman, the horses and equipage being drawn up in front of the house. They are evidently discussing the inundation of the city, for the girl is interspersing her periods with a good many excited "*Och Armes!*" and "*Groote genades!*"

As there are lights in the front windows of the house Guy immediately addresses the girl, saying: "Is it possible for me to see any of the members of Niklaas Bodé Volcker's family?"

"I'm not sure," is the answer. "If *Mijn Heer* would step in I'll ask."

She emphasizes this with a respectful courtesy, as Guy's ready hand puts a few stivers into hers. His manner is commanding, his appearance aristocratic, his hand is generous, and the girl is anxious to do his bidding.

Turning toward the right she shows the way into a large vaulted room hung with Spanish stamped leather, the furniture and appointments of which have all the indications of wealth, even luxury, as it has tapestries upon its floor, and many of the articles of its furnishing have been imported from Italy, Spain, and even Turkey itself, some of the rugs being from the looms of Ispahan and Bokara. The apartment is illuminated by a handsome swinging candelabra full of lighted wax candles. From this room a carved oaken stairway leads apparently to the upper apartments of the house.

"Wiarda Schwartz!" cries the girl; "Wiarda!" clapping her hands. Receiving no answer to this she says: [43]"I'll be back in a minute," and running lightly upstairs returns in a few minutes followed by a bright, vivacious, dark-eyed lady's maid, whose attire indicates she is the favorite of her mistress, and whose short muslin skirts and white, high Friesian peasant's cap denotes the soubrette.

In answer to the girl's rather off-hand courtesy, Chester remarks: "I am the Captain Guido Amati, of Romero's foot. Can I see *Vrouw* Bodé Volcker for a moment?"

"Not unless you go to the other world," answers the girl pertly. "*Vrouw* Bodé Volcker has been dead four years."

"That is going further than walking to the warehouses for her widower," smiles Guy. Then he asks: "Can I see the mistress of the house?"

"Oh, you mean *Freule* Wilhelmina Bodé Volcker," says the girl. Next adds majestically: "*Freule* Wilhelmina Bodé Volcker is at present at the *fête* of the Countess de Mansfeld."

Remembering the Countess Mansfeld's lackey's slurring remarks about the daughter of an ex-burgomaster dancing in his highest priced silks for the entertainment of the company, it is difficult for Chester to fight down a chuckle. However, being very anxious for information, he suggests: "Then, perhaps, you can answer my question. Do you know when Antony Oliver, the herald of the Duke of Alva, is returning to Brussels?"

And this ruins Captain Guido Amati in the estimation of Wiarda Schwartz, maid in waiting to the ex-burgomaster's daughter. She says with pert arrogance: "Well, I never! That good-for-nothing, beggarly painter? I know nothing about him. I had supposed *Mijn Heer* Captain was acquainted with the nobility!"

As Guy passes out of the house without information, he sees Mademoiselle Schwartz's pert nose very much up in the air and Mademoiselle Schwartz's red stockinged ankle and shapely foot patting the floor in jeering gesture.

"There is nothing but to be quiet and sleep until morning. I might as well get some of that," cogitates [44]the Englishman. "God only knows what to-morrow will bring to me."

So getting hold of the link boy again, who has evidently loitered about in hopes that Guy's visit at the Bodé Volckers' will be short, Chester gives him his orders, and is conducted to the inn known as "The Painted House," celebrated for its wine and beer, and situated on the Shoemarket opposite the Place de Meir. It is but a few steps from the residence of the merchant, and can be easily distinguished, Guy notes as he approaches, by its high, painted gables, which give it its name.

Lights are showing from its lower rooms, the pentice or wooden awning in front of it is ornamented by evergreens and shrubs and illuminated by swinging lamps; chairs and tables are under these, on which lounge

several of the better-to-do burghers of the town, a couple of Spanish officers, and half a dozen travelers. Late as it is the sound of revelry comes from the main inner room.

He is welcomed at the door by mine host, the obsequious Herman Van Oncle, who is making a fortune out of his famous supper parties and weddings, for this is the house of festivity *par excellence* of the town. *Den Rooden Leeuw* ("Red Lion") may be more aristocratic, but for wine bibbing, beer drinking and gorgeous wedding festivities that last three days at a time, "The Painted House" of Antwerp easily holds the vantage.

"Welcome to the Painted House!" cries the voluble innkeeper. "Welcome señor—colonel?"

"No, captain," says Guy.

"Welcome to anyone who is in the employ of the State, civil or military."

"I would like a room and bed."

"Impossible!"

"Impossible?"

"Yes; my house has been crowded all day."

"You must give me a cot."

"Well, a cot over the stable. My house has been full—you have heard the news! The great drinking bout takes place to-morrow between our celebrated artist, Frans Floris and the Six Drunkards of Brussels. People have come from the neighboring places to see [45]it. A delegation is here from Brussels itself. It is rumored that the Duke in person will arrive to-morrow. Perhaps he will honor me—perhaps he will come to see the greatest drinking bout that has ever taken place in Flanders, Brabant or Holland! I shall have twenty barrels of Rhine wine on tap."

“Twenty barrels for six drunkards?” laughs Chester.

“Oh no; all the town will be here, all the town will get drunk also!”

“I wish the town would be more quiet,” says Guy, who thinks he will have little chance of sleep, judging by the convivial sounds that come to them from within.

“Hush!” whispers the innkeeper nervously, as they enter. “Don’t disturb them. They are,” and his eyes expand in admiration, “they are the Six Drunkards of Brussels taking supper!”

“Apparently the Six Drunkards of Brussels,” remarks Guy, who is unimpressed by the sounding title, “are not holding themselves back much for to-morrow. They are doing pretty well now.”

“Yes, that is the beauty of it,” says mine host, waving his Flemish hands in admiration. “That is the reason they are called drunkards; nothing will ever make them drunk. They have finished six gallons of wine and are just commencing. They have a lovely pigeon pie in front of them; I made it myself from birds furnished by Señor Vasco de Guerra himself. He is the leader of the Six Drunkards, though the betting is still two to one on our Netherland painter, the greatest artist of his day, the Raphael of the low countries, our honor, our glory, our debtor (for he owes me four thousand Carolus guilders), but still the pride of Antwerp! Will you not have bite and sup, *señor Capitan*, before retiring to the attic over the stable?”

“Yes, a quart of Rhine wine will be enough for me,” says Guy. “Or, rather,” he suggests, “as you are celebrated for your beer, I will take some of that,” the Englishman upholding his national beverage.

“The finest in all Flanders. And then we have some malt from London.”

“That’s it!” cries Guy, forgetting his Spanish character, “English malt for me!” then checks himself and mutters: “I’ve been drinking Rhine wine all day.” [46]

His host departing, he lounges about while his meal is being prepared, tracing figures with his toe on the white sand of the floor, and reading among other placards on the walls of this, the wine room of the inn, one announcing the grand drinking bout between Frans de Vriendt, nicknamed Floris, and the six most celebrated topers of Brussels. This is placarded side by side with Alva’s generous offer of three thousand carolus guilders for the Englishman’s head.

A moment later he finds himself placed at a table near the one occupied by the six champions of Brussels. Carelessly he gets interested in them, for they are six of the most remarkable looking people his eyes have ever rested upon.

During their conversation he catches their names.

Vasco de Guerra, apparently the leader of the party; Tomasito, called by his companions the one-eyed, an ensign of De Billy’s Waloons, who lost an optic at Aremburg’s defeat, and Pablo Mendez are Spanish officers, and apparently, from their conversation, consider themselves nobles of rank and distinction. The other champions are more modest in their self-assertion, except as regards the amount of liquid that they can consume. Two are addressed as Alphonse de la Noel and Conrad de Ryk, both Netherlanders, one of Brabant and the other of Holland; the last member of the party is a sneaking little Italian, designated as Guisseppi Pisa, a dealer in perfumes and women’s powders from the capital.

Having nothing better to do as he drinks his beer, Guy Chester listens to their conversation in a languid, dreamy way, as the exertions of the night have made him very tired.

"*Par Dios!*" remarks Vasco de Guerra, who is tall and has big, opaque, fishy eyes, and a long drooping mustache which has in it that single lock of grey which is generally considered proof of extreme dissipation, "I see our adversary Floris has painted a caricature of us."

"*Diablo!* Is it insulting?" cries Tomasito, the one-eyed, a little Spaniard of diabolical disposition, famous as well for his cruelty on the battle-field as for his dissipation in the banquet hall. [47]

"No," says Mendez, laughing, "only he has painted us all under the table."

"*Sapristi!*" chuckles the Italian Pisa. "He may *paint* us under the table, but he can't *drink* us under the table." Then he calls: "Pot-boy! another stoup of strong Rhine wine. I must get in training for to-morrow's bout. Marietta is coming from Brussels to do honor to my drinking powers." This is emphasized by a hideous wink and a leer at his companions, who cry: "Brava! the health of Marietta, the prettiest light of love in Brussels!" and pour down great flagons of wine in compliment to wicked little Guisseppi, whose powders and laces have captured the leader of the *demi-monde* of the capital.

While this is being brought Mendez exclaims: "*Caramba!* there are no more pigeons in this pie," withdrawing a knife with which he has been exploring the open pasty before him, and licking his fingers regretfully in the absence of a napkin. "You only gave us six pigeons, Captain Vasco."

"That was all I shot with my cross-bow," answers De Guerra.

"*You* shot pigeons with your cross-bow?" jeers Conrad de Ryk.

"Certainly!—to-day—here!"

"Bah! your hand trembles, Vasco, as if you were paying over the five hundred guilders we have wagered against the painter!" sneers De la Noel.

“Notwithstanding, I shot them,” returns Vasco, a strange light coming into his fishy eyes; “and I not only killed the six pigeons, but I shall kill—*another*! We’ll have a banquet when I get my reward for *his* head!” He grinds his teeth at these words.

“His *head*?” cries one.

“The reward of three thousand caroli for the Englishman’s caput?” shouts another, pointing to the placard, and making Guy’s hand involuntarily seek his sword.

“Bah!” chuckles Vasco. “Do you think I am going on the briny deep to get seasick and have that English pirate cut my throat? No, there are rewards nearer home, when I kill my *seventh* pigeon we’ll have more pigeon pie and a carouse with a little of the money.”

This rather equivocal promise is greeted with cheers [48]and a clattering of beakers and flagons. The Six Drunkards of Brussels seem to like pigeon-pie as well as the little son of the surgeon and blood-letter, Jacques Touraine.

But Guy’s attention is called from the scene of conviviality. The host, bowing before him, says humbly: “*Señor capitan*, your bed is ready, the sheets are clean, nobody has slept in them for three days!”

Following Van Oncle, who carries a wax candle, Chester is escorted to a loft over the stable, which is at least airy and well ventilated, as it has several open windows which nobody has taken the trouble to close.

A moment after he finds himself practically alone—the only occupant of the neighboring cots being in a drunken sleep, the others have not yet come in. Securing his valuables (and most carefully of all that which he deems the most valuable—the miniature of the lady whose name he does not know, but whom he now knows he loves heart and soul), Captain Guy Chester looks carefully to his arms, then goes to bed. Then taking a last dreamy look at the fair, delicate face and glorious eyes and red lips

that he has kissed once, but swears to kiss again, he goes to sleep calmly and peacefully in the city of his enemies, under the flag of Spain and Alva, while in the room below, the streets about him, and on the walls of every guard-house in Brabant and Flanders, are placards offering three thousand carolus guilders for the head of the “First of the English.”

[Contents]

CHAPTER IV.

THE PATRIOT PAINTER.

The sun is well up in the heavens when Guy opens his eyes. In contrast to the night before, the gale has died away and the sun is shining brightly as if to mock the farmers and peasants of the surrounding fields and polders, whose cattle are still drowning or starving, for the flood gives no signs of receding. A little of this Chester can see as he makes hasty toilet; [49]looking from his window he gets a glimpse of the river, which is still at its height, and upon whose bosom still float the carcasses of drowned sheep, cattle, hogs, and even human beings.

But the city seems now to pay little heed to this. The gale has gone down, ships are preparing to sail out of the Schelde for the Indies and the Mediterranean; the merchants have removed their wares to places of safety; mediæval commerce stops no more its battle of trade and bargain, for the disasters of humanity—than that of to-day.

The hum of traffic comes floating up to Guy from the neighboring Shoemarket and Egg streets. All the guilds of Antwerp are at work this day, and seemingly happy, save that of the Butchers, which has lost many fat beeves that have been pastured on the great meadows running out to the big Kowenstyn dyke.

As it is late in the morning most of those who have occupied the surrounding cots during the night have departed on their way. Consequently Guy, having, after the manner of sailors, slept ready to go on deck, slips on doublet and cloak uninterrupted save by the snores of a toper who is still in drunken slumber.

Then going down to the wash-room of the house, upon the lower floor, the Englishman makes hasty ablution, succeeding by the bribe of a stiver in obtaining an unused towel for the purpose.

This being done, and feeling very bright, vivacious and cheery, notwithstanding he catches glimpses of the placard in the wine room offering a reward for his head, Chester passes out and makes his way rapidly through the dirty alleys of the lower portion of the town to Wool street. Remembering his unsuccessful inquiries at the Bodé Volcker mansion, the Englishman has concluded that he will see if he can obtain further information from the French blood-letter and barber about the arrival of his lodger. For speed is vital to the business that has brought Guy into the clutches of his enemies, and every moment that he stays in the town of Antwerp adds to his danger of recognition and arrest; too many Flemish traders from Zeeland and the islands of Holland journey to this great commercial city, some of these know the [50]"First of the English" quite well by sight, and a few of them, for three thousand carolus guilders would sell anything upon earth, including themselves.

Arriving at the barber's pole of Jacques Touraine, Chester receives a pleasant surprise. The voluble little Frenchman darts out to meet him, crying: "He is anxious for you; I told him you had asked for him!"

"He—who?" gasps Guy.

"Why, my lodger, the painter, Antony Oliver. He came in from Brussels this morning. He is as eager to see you as you are to see him."

But the last of this speech is lost upon the Englishman, who has darted up two flights of stairs to the top of the house, where, under the tiled gables, amid the swallows' nests, is the lodging room and atelier of Antonius Oliver (familiarly called Antony), geographical map maker, herald and *pursevant*, and at times assistant secretary to Alva, Viceroy of the Netherlands. This gentleman's salary is not great; his position, while partially confidential, is not very exalted; though it often brings him into direct contact with the great Duke himself. For Oliver has striven, with all his might and main to gain the confidence of his master.

He is a native of Mons, near the French border of the Netherlands, and is partly of Flemish and partly of Gallic extraction. At present he is apparently washing the dust of travel from his face, as he makes his appearance minus his cloak and doublet, towel in hand, and answers the Englishman's smart knock on his door.

"Ah!" he cries, his face full of sunny smile, "I am delighted to see you, my friend, my Guido!"

"And so am I, Antony, my boy," answers Chester, with hearty outstretched hand. For a few weeks of supreme mutual danger have made these two men as good comrades as years of ordinary friendship.

"So glad to see you," goes on the Fleming, "and yet sorry." He whispers: "You know of the reward for you?"

"Yes, I've seen it," answers Guy, shortly.

"Ah! at your inn?"

"No, in the guard-room of the Citadel." [51]

"*Mon Dieu!* You have been arrested and examined," the painter gasps, anxiously.

"No, I went as cavalier to a great court lady!" laughs the English sailor. "For it I am to be promoted to a colonelship in Romero's musketeers!"

"Impossible! Tell me your story!"

"I will," says Guy, "it contains the business that brought me to Antwerp."

"Yes," answers the other, meditatively, "your business must be of the greatest importance to make you again take this risk."

"It is for the same old reason—my Queen!" whispers Guy; "Is there no one about?"

“No; Achille, my apprentice, I have sent out on a long errand, as I expected your coming and wanted to have private converse.”

“What long errand?”

“I sent him out to buy wine, bread, provisions, cheese, beef, *on credit*. Achille is an active boy, if I had given him the money he would have been back in half an hour.” Then carefully barring the door and drawing a heavy curtain over it, Oliver says: “Tell me your story.”

“Then can you interpret these letters bearing, I think, upon the welfare, yes, the life, of my sovereign?” whispers the Englishman. And producing the packet wrapped in oiled silk which he had taken from the body of the drowned Italian the evening before, Guy tells the artist the curious story of the preceding night. His recital is punctuated by vivacious exclamations of surprise, deep interest, and several times by uproarious laughter from his Flemish listener.

As the Englishman finishes the painter takes up the conversation.

“Ah!” he exclaims, looking carefully at the documents, “you took these from the body of the secretary of Chiapin Vitelli.” Then he adds: “I am one of the few men who could read them. They are in the private cipher used by the secret correspondence bureau of my master, my benefactor, he who pays me my stipend, the man whose hand I kiss—he of Alva!” A strange light coming into his eyes as he speaks of his benefactor. [52]“The reading is very simple when you know the key, which I have memorized and have in my head—I dare not keep it anywhere else.”

“Then give me the meaning of these letters!”

“Certainly,” says the artist. “You can amuse yourself with my sketches as I look over them.”

This he does hastily, while Guy passes the time examining a number of studies in charcoal upon canvas and panels, apparently the work of the young Fleming. At one side of the apartment is a marble slab used in grinding colors, upon it a number of brushes, a palette, and some little bladders of ground paint, such as were used by the artists of that day. Upon an easel stands an unfinished picture of a fair haired, blue eyed Flemish girl of great beauty, though it is of almost the peasant style. This has been sketched after the manner of the Venetian school upon what was known then as the red ground. At the back of the apartment is a large curtain, apparently concealing some more important work, as it is quite large, covering the whole rear of the garret floor of the house.

"Don't peep behind," says the painter, looking up as Guy's footsteps approach the curtain. "I have a surprise for you there, I think," and pausing in his reading, he looks up with a quizzical expression at the Englishman. "Something you will be interested in, I imagine; you could not see the face of the fair one of the barge!" For Guy, in his description of his evening's adventure, has omitted, with the instinctive delicacy of the gentleman and the lover, any account of his interview at the house of the Countess de Mansfeld, with the lady he rescued.

"What do you mean?" asks Chester, eagerly. "Wait for a moment," and a muttered exclamation of surprise calls Guy to the painter's side, who has apparently become greatly excited over the cipher letters.

Here he stands, impatient, awaiting the outcome of the Fleming's inspection of the documents.

A minute later Oliver looks up and remarks: "I can now tell you in rough form the contents of these letters."

"What are they?" inquires Guy eagerly.

"These are two letters, written by Chiapin Vitelli, [53]Alva's confidential officer, and evidently given to his secretary—such is their value—to deliver in person to one Ridolfi, an Italian, who is a banker in London."

“Ridolfi? Yes, I’ve heard of him. He has a great many dealings with Italy; he is a goldsmith as well as banker; his place is on Cheapside,” mutters Chester. “What about him?”

“Well, this is apparently a letter of a series, some of which must have been answered, in which Alva is arranging with Ridolfi, who is apparently the agent of the Duke of Norfolk, the man who would marry the Queen of Scots, now in Elizabeth’s hands, for the poisoning of the Queen of England!”

“The poisoning of my sovereign! Good God!” gasps Guy. A moment after, forcing himself to calmness, he continues: “Yes; rumors of this or of a similar plot have been brought to the notice of Lord Burleigh, Secretary of State. You know it is to investigate such matters that I am sent over here and disowned by my sovereign, who wishes at present to appear at peace with Alva, but who, in her time, will have her reckoning—and an English reckoning at that—with your Netherland tyrant!”

“I know that. That is why I aid you,” mutters the painter. “Elizabeth is the only hope of the Netherlands. We have been crushed and butchered at Jemmingen, the Prince of Orange is now in exile, a fugitive in Germany, France distracted with her own affairs, Coligny and Condé at swords points with the league, can give us but uncertain aid—England is our only hope. As such I have welcomed you as the ‘First of the English’ to come to aid the Flemings. You will not be the *last*—I know it! But”—here the light of patriotism comes into the painter’s face, “we must do our part. As such I have condemned myself to live under the most terrible suspense that can be put upon a man—a traitor in the very household, at the very writing table, of the Spanish Viceroy, so that I may give information of his movements to Louis of Nassau and William the Silent. Discovery means—you know what!”

Then he laughs a ghastly laugh and whispers: “What would Alva, who burns people alive slowly for eating [54]meat on Friday; who beheads women for sheltering their own husbands; who permits his troops to

burn, outrage, pillage and ravage defenseless burghers and peaceful citizens; what would he do with a discovered spy in his own retinue? Are there enough racks, thumb-screws and faggots for him?" he shudders; then adds determinedly: "But all for my country!"

"And I all for my own," answers Guy. "A price set upon my head as a pirate, and all for my Queen. Elizabeth smiles on me at court, calls me her valiant freebooter, yet tells the ambassador of Philip of Spain that I am here on my own account, and disowns me; though she knows it is for her interests, to guard her life, to discover such damnable plots as these, that I take my life within my hand! Besides," he goes on, his eyes beginning to blaze, "I don't love the Spaniards."

"Personally," remarks the Flemish painter, "I have found some very pleasant gentlemen among them; though among those who flock here to Alva's banner are scoundrels innumerable. But it is for my country that I live a life of suspense, each breath almost an apprehension."

Looking at the painter, Guy sees that this is true. He is rather small of figure, though well-built and agile; but has dark soft eyes, singularly delicate, mobile lips for a man, and a high, intellectual forehead. As Chester gazes, he is sure Antony Oliver is a brave man. At the same instant he knows he is a man with such a terrible fate hanging over him that his nerves are unstrung by constant and never-ending apprehension.

However, he speaks to the point.

"I hate every Spaniard, gentleman or no gentleman, peasant or noble, because I have a brother in the prisons of the Inquisition at Hispaniola."

"Poor fellow!" mutters the painter, with a little shudder. "In Hispaniola! That's a long way off."

“Not for an English sailor. Seven years ago Dick and I, full of youth and ardor, sailed with Captain Ned Lovell to the Spanish Main, and traded there with the Dons of Hispaniola, and as we were Catholics, lived quite comfortably in the town of Haytien, accumulating wealth. Then I, with my doubloons and pieces [55]of eight, returned to merry England, leaving Dick to turn the rest of our merchandise into gold and follow after. A year passed. Then no Dick; but word was brought me by Hawkins coming back from his third voyage, that Dick had fallen in love with a Spanish girl; that his rivals, for revenge, had denounced him as an English heretic, and the—the Inquisition—.” The Englishman’s voice is broken, there are tears in his eyes, though they burn fiercely. “Then I was ready to hate the Spaniards and do Queen Elizabeth’s work,” mutters Guy, after a moment’s pause, “the work that gave me this miniature.”

“Can you tell me,” he says suddenly, producing the likeness, on ivory set with diamonds, “the name and title of the lady whose face is here?”

“Oho!” chuckles the painter, a twinkle in his eye, “I had been expecting some such question ever since you told me about the lady of the barge. Did she give you this? Has she also been smitten by Cupid’s dart?”

“What do you mean?” growls the Englishman, blushes showing beneath his sun-burned skin.

“I mean,” laughs Antony, “that you are a man very deeply in love. In your tale of last night every time you mentioned the ‘divinity of the barge,’ the ‘fair unknown,’ the ‘graceful creature of the shadow,’ the ‘fairy-like form the gloom could not conceal,’ the ‘voice soft as an angel’s,’ your manner betrayed that even the darkness had not prevented your falling in love with the lady you rescued from our Sea Beggars; that though she had been your captive, you really were hers. Did she reciprocate enough to give you this?”

“No,” returns Guy, “I believe I’ve been in love with this picture ever since I captured it three years ago.”

This answer astounds the painter. He murmurs: “I never supposed you English a romantic race, but you prove to me that the Italians are as beggars to you islanders in impetuous passion. *In love with a picture?*”

“Yes, it came to me under peculiar circumstances,” answers the Englishman, a little sulkily perhaps, for the artist’s tone is somewhat bantering. “Towards the end of ’68 I was playing tennis in a London court. Elizabeth of England and her prime minister, Sir William [56]Cecil, now Lord Burleigh, sent for me. The Queen’s exchequer was empty. Five Italian vessels bearing a loan from the bankers of Genoa to Alva, and loaded with eight hundred thousand crowns in silver, on their way to Antwerp—”

“Yes,” interjects the other with a chuckle, “I know—the money with which the Duke intended to pay his troops—”

“Had been driven into the harbor of Southampton by privateers commissioned by the Prince de Condé, who had been on the lookout to seize this treasure. The Spanish ambassador had appealed to the Queen for naval protection. Being at peace this must be accorded him, but Elizabeth’s exchequer was empty, and harassed by milliner’s bills and other feminine expenses, she had determined to have this silver for her own. Cecil had sent for me, as he knew I spoke Spanish, and thought I was the man for the business. They had already notified the Spanish ambassador to make arrangements for the transport of the treasure from Southampton to Dover by land, so that the Queen’s vessels could meet it there. But while he was making his preparations I received the following curious commission: I was to go down and offer ten thousand crowns to the French privateers not to leave their position outside of Southampton water, so the Genoese vessels dared not sail. Meanwhile the Queen investigated and found the money was loaned by Italian merchants. ‘If

they can loan to Alva, they can loan to me,' she thought. Under the private directions of the Queen of England I seized the eight hundred thousand crowns of silver."

"And that nearly drove Alva crazy! I can see him now," laughs the painter, "the morning he received the news twisting both his long pendants of beard in impotent rage. Since then he has hated your Queen and you who forced him to put this tenth penny tax on the Netherlands to pay his troops. But what has the theft of Elizabeth of England to do with your miniature, my marauder?"

"Only this," answers Guy. "On board the Genoese vessel, when I made the seizure, the only spoil I took for myself was this likeness. Judging from the direction [57]on the packet that contained it, that the lady whom it represented must be living in the Netherlands, I was very happy to accept Queen Elizabeth's private commission to come over here and turn sea rover in her cause, knowing that I took my life in my hand, but also knowing it was my one chance of meeting in the flesh the face that I have loved from that day to this. If that's romance, make the best of it! Who is she?"

"Ah!" says the painter, "In reply may I show you another picture?"

"Of whom? What do I care for pictures except this one? You artists are always thinking of art—I think of flesh and blood, which beats art."

"Does it beat THIS?" laughs Oliver, and drawing away the curtain from the rear of the room he discloses an enormous altar piece, unfinished except the central figure, the Madonna, at which Guy looks and gasps, for it is the picture of the woman whose lips he had kissed the night before, whose miniature he now holds in his hand, gazing alternately from it to the magnificent altar piece figure, the Mother of God, on the canvas. It has apparently been a work of love. The Englishman grows red in the face, then deathly pale, and mutters: "You love her also!" scowling at his supposed artistic rival.

“No,” answers Antony, “I do not love the lady; though I love my picture. You need not be jealous my dear Englishman, the woman I love is a much more flesh-and-blood being—Juffer Wilhelmina, daughter of the ex-burgomaster Bodé Volcker. Her blonde picture is on that easel. I don’t hesitate to tell you my secret, as I have yours. But *this*,” he looks affectionately at the canvas, “is a work of love, love for my art. It is my one hope to leave a name in the world. If I can finish my altar piece before the time comes when the hand that is forever over me crushes me in its iron grasp, I hope to be remembered—not as the patriot, but as the artist!”

“And, by heaven! you will be,” cries Guy, who would certainly give this picture of the woman he loves the post of honor and the wreath of fame, “for you have painted not only a Madonna, but a goddess, fit to be the mother of God.” Here he crosses himself devoutly [58]and looks lovingly at the picture again, which well merits his admiration, not only for the loveliness of its model, but for the originality of its effects and richness of its coloring.

Unlike the picture on the easel, this altar piece is sketched upon a pearl gray background, the only completed figure in it being the central Madonna, the likeness of Guy’s love.

The girl stands posed in virgin beauty; her white, blue-veined feet rest light as a fairy’s on a rainbow of softest sunlight; her form, outlined with all the beauty curves of woman, but full of maiden grace and lightness, draped by robe of softest clinging white, and decked with floating azure mantle. Above the ivory throat is the face of exquisite brunette beauty, those soft though shining eyes, those lips of coral red, those cheeks of changing lilies and roses that made Guy’s heart beat so madly before, and make it beat so madly now.

The whole, deified by the grand soul that shines out from the lovely face, backgrounded by and floating upon sun rays, and full of those wondrous effects of golden light and deep warm shadow peculiar to the school of

the Venetian Tintoretto, makes Guy very eager; for it is the breathing, speaking portrait of the woman he loves, yet still is not equal to her.

For this is but one view of her mobile loveliness, and the night before she had given him a different effect, a varied expression, a new rapture, each time he had gazed upon her changing, vivacious, yet always noble beauty.

He cries impatiently to the painter: “You don’t answer my question. You only show me what makes me more hungry for her name. Tell me who she is?”

The answer that comes startles him, dismays him. “She is,” says Oliver, sighing his words, “the only thing upon this earth that Alva loves!”

“No, no, I’ll not believe,” gasps Chester.

“You must! She is the only thing he adores, the only being to whom the Viceroy of Spain ever gives the loving ‘*thou*’.”

“I can’t believe you,” cries the Englishman, clenching [59]his hands in agony. “She is too pure to be the love of any one, least of all of that fiend.”

“She is not too pure,” says the painter slowly, “to be his *daughter*.”

“His DAUGHTER? Saints above us!”

“Yes, Hermoine de Alva is the Duke’s natural daughter. Her mother, the Countess di Perugia, an Italian lady, of great beauty, died four years ago. Since then the Duke has given Doña Hermoine his own name. She is the purest, sweetest, noblest flower that Spain has ever sent to the Netherlands. Her mind is as bright, her intellect as strong, as her father’s, but her heart is as tender as his is cruel. Still, she is the daughter of Alva, and as such, my Englishman, I fear your love is hopeless! Beware! Your brother loved a Spanish girl!”

To this Guy answers nothing. In a flash he feels the truth of the painter's last crushing remark. But a moment after Anglo-Saxon pluck springs up again in him, and he mutters:

"By heaven! what a triumph to pluck the thing Alva loves most out of his hands; to make his own daughter that he prizes the most of anything on this earth the bride, the honored bride, of the man upon whose head he has placed three thousand carolus guilders reward—the sea pirate—'The First of the English.'" and he bursts out into mocking, triumphant, but loving laughter.

[Contents]

CHAPTER V.

“THE LION’S JAWS GAPE FOR ME!”

“Bravo!” cries the Fleming, “Bravo! But first she must love you.”

“I’ll make her love me,” exclaims Chester, looking at the ruby ring upon his finger that seems to him not the red light of danger, but the beacon of Cupid.

“Well, I’m glad you are so confident. I wish I were equally so.” the painter sighs; then goes on energetically: [60]“But now to business. You cannot linger over your love-making. Queen Elizabeth must be warned of the plots against her life, and of Ridolfi, the Italian banker in London.”

“Oh, we’ll take good care of him,” says Guy, savagely. “I must join my ship this evening and sail for England, and to do this I must get the words of to-night so I can pass the gates of the town after sunset.”

“Why not leave at once?”

“Because,” answers the Englishman, “you have not yet given me the translation of those letters. That will take you some time.”

“No, it won’t.”

“Why not?”

“Because I shall not make the translation; I shall simply give you the key to the cipher, then they can be interpreted in England, and any other letters of this correspondence that may come into your hands will be equally readable by Queen Elizabeth and her ministers. It will save you many dangerous visits here.” With this the artist sits down and writes in a few minutes the explanation of the cipher.

Then saying: “Place that with the letters,” he gives it to Guy, smiles at him, and murmurs: “Now I should think you would be in a hurry to leave, with that price upon your head.”

“I’m not going until to-night,” answers Chester, almost surlily. “The evening tide will serve as well for my vessel—it will not delay me much. Besides—” here he catches sight of the painter’s face in quizzical smile, and cries out: “Gadzooks, man! you don’t think I’m going to leave Antwerp without seeing *her* again.” He waves his hand toward the divine beauty of the face upon the canvas lighted up by the morning sun, and shining upon him not only with heavenly, but with earthly, love—at least so this audacious young man imagines.

“Ah! going to ask papa for the young lady?” jeers the painter.

“Not yet, though I have a letter of introduction to him,” remarks Guy, piqued into producing the billet given to him by Doña Hermoine the evening before, the one addressed to Alva, Viceroy of Spain. [61]

“And you haven’t opened it?” queries Oliver, examining the missive.

“Certainly not; it is sealed.”

“Ah! my boy,” rejoins the painter, “you have too difficult a game to play to be over scrupulous. You must know how you stand with this lady before you attempt to see her again.” Then he horrifies Guy, for he says: “You have powerful rivals; General Niorcarmesis looked upon not altogether unfavorably by the lady’s father, in whose confidence that officer stands very high.”

“A rival?” falters Guy.

“A rival? A host of rivals! Do you pay your beautiful inamorata so poor a compliment as to think she has charmed no other man than you? Every one is bowing down to the beauty and the wit of the Countess Hermoine de Alva—generals and nobles.” Then he continues commandingly: “You

must open this letter. The game you are playing forces you to use *every* card. It is apparently not a confidential communication, and must apply to you, for she told you to deliver it with your own hand."

While he is speaking, and before Guy can interpose, Oliver has rapidly lighted a taper, passed the letter over it with the deft hand of one accustomed to such business, and is presenting it, seal removed, open to the inspection of the Englishman.

"Read it you must," he says. "Your life might be the forfeit of too strained an honor. *Read it!* Some day you may be compelled from the exigencies of the case to deliver this to Alva. In your position you should know what it contains. READ IT, or I have no further communication with you."

"Why not?" mutters Guy, who, though desperately anxious to see the handwriting of his sweetheart, still holds out.

"Because," says the painter, solemnly, "this is a game in which both you and I have put up our lives as the stake; and I play everything in my hand. You must do the same, for my sake as well as yours. If I communicate with you, if I am seen in your company, and you are arrested, perhaps I fall with you. Besides, we owe it to our countries to use every weapon that God throws into our hands. READ!" [62]

While saying this he has opened the delicately scented billet, which has only been held together by its seal, and is suspending it before the eyes of the Englishman, which become radiant with hope as they read this short but pithy note in the very prettiest of feminine handwriting:

> "*Dear Papa*:
>
> "Please make the bearer of this, Captain Guido, of Romero's foot, my rescuer from the Beggars of the Sea (though he is too modest to give me any other name) a Colonel as soon as possible, and then give him a chance to make himself a General, and oblige, your loving

Hermoine."

Rapture and pride are too great in the Englishman for him to avoid showing this note to his friend and mentor.

"By Saint Denis!" cries Oliver, inspecting the missive, "I believe she does love you. If you have hit her heart you're the first, and she has had half of Spain at her feet, I'm told." Then, looking over the young man, he adds contemplatively: "It must be your peculiar blonde ferocity that has done it. If you had been a brunette Adonis, I wouldn't have given a stiver for your chance. Dark eyed dandies about here are as plentiful as windmills."

"With this in my hand can I fail to make the attempt to see her before I go?" says Guy stoutly, securing the missive with a lover's care in the breast of his doublet.

"Apparently you will not, no matter what I say," smiles the artist. Then he goes on earnestly and solemnly: "But let me give you a little advice. Under no circumstances; no matter how much she loves you; no matter if she swears to you she adores you better than all else in this world, do you tell her your secret."

"You think she would betray me?"

"No! A thousand times no!"

"You think it might destroy her love for me?"

"Not if she loved you before. Hermoine de Alva once true, will be forever true."

"Then why should I fear to tell her?"

"For this reason. She knows how much her father loves her. She has no fear of the human tiger; to her his claws are always velvet. By this note you can tell that Doña Hermoine thinks her word is law with the

[63]dictator of the Netherlands. So it is in little things!—a diamond necklace, a dozen new dresses, even the discarding of a suitor; for if she says no, that is the end of the gentleman with her father also. But in matters of State policy she has never run against him. She does not know that in affairs of government, in upholding his own laws, edicts and proclamations, Alva is ice and iron together. What I fear is that you may one day be persuaded to go with her and tell the dictator your story, and she will tell papa that she loves you, assured that he will spare you and pardon you and put you up on high for her sake; but for God's sake don't ever deceive yourself about Alva's mercy. If you do, you are lost. Her tears, her prayers, will never save you. Remember that, my Guido, who are in love with the tiger's cub!"

"Why should you call her that?" cries Guy savagely.

"I should not call her that," returns the painter sadly. "She has been all condescension and kindness to me; she has permitted me to take her beautiful face and put it on my canvas, to give me a chance for fame and immortality."

"Ah! she has granted you sittings *here*?"

"Yes, with her duenna present."

"Then arrange an interview for me this afternoon here."

"It would do you no good. She would not come without attendants. Do not think that Hermoine de Alva will forget any point of etiquette, even though she adores you—of which you seem to be very confident."

"But I must arrange a meeting. I'll kill two birds with one stone. She will know the words of the night. From her I can obtain them. She will come to me, I know," says Guy very confidently. "You can gain admission to her as the under-secretary of Alva. Do so to-day. Give her this ring;" he takes the beautiful ruby from his finger and puts it into the painter's hand.

"*Mon Dieu!* You have exchanged rings—did kisses go with them?" laughs Oliver; and as a flaming blush appears upon Guy's face, he mutters: "*Parbleu!* I believe they have. Talk about Italian passion! It is as ice to you wonderful English." Getting no answer from Chester he continues: "I can arrange an interview to-day, [64]but it cannot be here. The duenna would stand in the path of any tête-à-tête between you. The only way I can think of private word for you with your love, you fortunate young man—you *un*fortunate young man—is at the house of the man I hope one day to call 'papa.'"

"The burgomaster, Niklaas Bodé Volcker?" exclaims Guy.

"Yes. On the plea of rare bargains in silks that have been slightly damaged by the flood Doña Hermoine can bring her duenna into the town. At the merchant's you can speak privately with Doña de Alva."

"But the duenna—the infernal duenna?" growls Chester.

"The duenna will be made blind and harmless in the next room inspecting bargains. If we arrange to have Bodé Volcker's stock low enough, the Countess de Pariza is good for an hour of rapture and bargains. Besides, they will probably be coming in to-day to learn the talk of the town, about the great drinking bout between"—here the painter flushes with indignation—"between the man who disgraces his genius and his art, by intemperance, and the Six Drunkards of Brussels. You have seen it placarded on the walls of the inns and wine houses, bearing the name of the greatest artist the Netherlands has yet produced, the Raphael of the North, the man whose disciple I was, the man whose altar piece in the great Church of Our Dear Lady would have made him renowned forever had it not been burnt by the Iconoclasts four years ago, when they threw down all the images of the church, and destroyed innumerable masterpieces of art, in blind rage at the Inquisition. I and another old pupil of Floris's saved that night one picture of his, a smaller one, 'The Fall of the Angels;' it is not his best

work; in fact, it is very much beneath his genius, but it is the one thing of his that will go down to posterity, for now he has become a sot and a drunkard," and Oliver sighs.

"Very well," cries Guy, breaking in upon the artist's indignant rhapsody, during which he has remembered he has not eaten since he has risen. "Now having finished our business, perhaps when Achille returns with the provisions you will give me a little breakfast, [65]perchance a little pigeon pie, eh?" and he playfully pokes the painter in the ribs, for Antony's remarks about Hermoine de Alva have made this audacious young man very jovially happy.

It is a laughing remark, but the laugh dies away as Guy sees its extraordinary effect upon the Flemish painter. At the words "pigeon pie" Oliver's face grows pale. He turns and says suspiciously: "What do you know about pigeon pie?"

"Only what I heard last evening from little Marvedie, son of Touraine the barber."

"What did he say about pigeon pie?" asks the painter, whose manner begins to impress Guy, as he mutters; "Speak quick—our lives may depend upon it!"

"Only this," says the Englishman, "that when you were here he had plenty of pigeon pie. He asked me if I liked pigeon pie, and then afterward—I think, yes, I am almost positive, he said perhaps he wouldn't have so much pigeon pie now, as a man had taken away so many pigeons."

"A man—taken away so many pigeons—from *here*!" falters Antony. Then he suddenly exclaims: "That explains why there were no letters from Louis of Nassau in my cote above—no pigeons bearing them. I thought it was curious; I was nervous. My God! I must know."

Just then a rap coming upon the door he draws aside the curtain and opens it, confronting his apprentice Achille, a bright-eyed French youth, who says discontentedly: “I can’t get anything without *the cash*. Our great artist, Frans Floris, owes so much money that no other artists can buy anything for *credit*.”

“Very well, put down your basket. I’ll see if I can get you some money,” says Oliver meditatively. Then a sudden idea seems to come to him, he cries: “Achille, where is little Marvedie? Bring him up, and we’ll send out and get some pigeons, and have some pigeon pie for him,” affecting great lightness of manner, though with evident effort.

“All right. Marvedie is death on pigeon pie, and so am I,” says the youth, and flies downstairs.

“I must question him,” murmurs the painter. “If [66]this is true, the sword suspended by the hair is about to fall.”

A moment later and the laughing voices of childhood are heard on the stairs, Achille and his little brother bound into the room, crying: “Pigeon pie! pigeon pie! Hurrah for Monsieur Oliver’s pigeon pie!”

“Yes, pigeon pie,” cries the painter, “pigeon pie. But what has become of my pigeons? Have you taken them, Achille?”

“No!”

“Were there any flying about the cote? Not those in the coop, but in the cote—around in the air flying?” The artist’s voice has become hoarse—his eyes terrible.

“Oh yes, a good many, for the last day or two,” answers the boy. Then noting his master’s manner, he screams out: “But I have not taken them, I swear to heaven, Monsieur Oliver, I have never taken any from the cote. On the word of an honest boy—do not discharge me!”

“No, he didn’t take any,” cries little Marvedie; “a big tall man with nasty black eyes took them away.”

“When?”

“Yesterday.”

“Did you see him? How do you know?”

“Oh, I remember him because he laughed and seemed very happy, and gave me two stivers to get him a bag to put them in.”

“Can you tell anything about him? Do you know his name, little Marvedie—little pigeon pie Marvedie?” gasps Antony, attempting a grimace, with a face that is like a death mask.

“No, but he was ugly and had nasty eyes, eyes that looked like the codfish they sell in the market.”

“How many pigeons did this man take away? Did you count them, little Marvedie—little pigeon pie Marvedie?” and the painter achieves a ghastly chuckle.

“Yes, there were six, with bunches on their beaks and eyes that looked back and front. The kind whose necks you wring when you give me pigeon pie,” says the little child.

“And where was your brother?” The painter’s voice is low and stern. [67]

“Oh, I was out trying to sell one of your pictures,” says Achille. “At least I think I was. That’s what I’ve been trying to do ever since you went away, but they’re all here yet. The Duke’s tenth penny is ruining everybody. No body has any money to spare, at least not for works of art.”

“Very well,” sighs Antony, “here’s a florin. Yes, get the pigeons!” he laughs dismally. “We’ll have the pigeon pie.”

The two boys run away. The painter's face is white as his own chalk, and he falters. "At last it has come. Some one has my secret."

"What secret" mutters Guy, half guessing.

"The letters brought to me by carrier pigeons from Louis of Nassau, with whom I am in correspondence for the benefit of the Netherlands. Of course they are in cipher, they cannot be construed in a moment; but the hair has been cut, the sword is descending, I am no better than a dead man; worse than that—I am a tortured man! Oh, my God! think of the rack, the faggot, that await me!" and the Fleming's eyes become bloodshot, his cheeks gray, and his lips blue.

"If we could discover the man who has your secret," says the Englishman, prompt to action, well knowing that danger to Oliver now means danger to himself.

"Ah! but how? When Alva arrives the man will surely give him the information; it would be very valuable, warning of a traitor in the Duke's own corresponding bureau. I—I had been anxious all the morning. When I—I arrived here I expected to find the pigeons with the letters tied to their tails from Louis. Now I know—the reason. Six! Six letters—each one of them enough to send me to the slow fire!" moans the painter, striking his hands together till his finger nails are blue.

"Six! *Six* pigeons!" echoes Guy. Then he suddenly cries: "Do you know a man with dark, fishy eyes, such as the boy described, and a black mustache with one single, whitish gray lock in it?"

"My God!" cries the artist. "I do. He—you have told me who—Vasco de Guerra—my enemy! He has—has my letters!—What gave you the clue?"

"Only this, that Vasco de Guerra, at supper last night, [68]gave to the Six Drunkards of Brussels, who have come here for the drinking bout with Floris, a pigeon pie containing six pigeons which he asserted he had shot

with his cross-bow, but he spoke of the seventh, declaring for the head of the seventh he would receive such a reward that would enable him to give a great banquet to his comrades."

With this Guy tells the astounded Oliver what he saw and heard at the carouse of the Six Drunkards of Brussels in the Painted Inn the night before.

"Yes, that's proof enough, proof that he has my secret—he of all men, he who is sure to use it—this Vasco de Guerra is my enemy. He is a miserable scamp, disreputable enough to be cashiered from the Spanish army—think what that must be, when soldiers are permitted to beg, steal, murder, torture and ravage without one word of rebuke from their officers. What must a man be who is cast out from such troops as this? He is a drunken fortune hunter; he seeks the hand of Mina Bodé Volcker, who loves me. He has her maid, Wiarda Schwartz in his pay."

"Aha!" returns Guy. "That is the reason she treated me so cavalierly when I asked for you last night."

"Wiarda? Yes, miserable little paid soubrette. But we must think—we must act—and that quickly," returns the painter, who seems to have regained composure, now that he knows his betrayer. "Vasco must guess the value of these letters, for he must have been upon my scent for weeks. He will try to decipher them himself, for he will not wish to trust the information to others who might obtain the reward for it. He can hardly act to-day. He doubtless keeps them on his person."

"In that case we must kill him at once," says Guy. "That's what we've got to do. We must kill him for both our sakes. At all events, we must have the papers. Send for him, get him here, and I will do his business with a dirk. Then we can carry him out and toss him into the flood. He'll float away to the ocean. There are plenty of drowned carcasses like his, so it will not be noticed."

“No,” says the painter, “that might bring suspicion upon us. Perhaps I can suggest a better way,” and [69]begins to think, racking his subtle Flemish brain as it has never been racked before. Ten seconds and he cries out, hope in voice, joy in his eyes: “At the drinking bout Floris is sure to win. Floris will drink every one of the Six Drunkards of Brussels under the table, insensible, inert, lifeless. In the confusion we can assist the insensible Vasco from the table, take him to a room apparently to revive him, and steal from him the letters he has stolen from me.”

“But if Vasco wins?”

“Impossible! I’ve seen Floris drink more wine at one sitting than any other human beast on earth, I think, can hold and live.”

“But we must be prepared in case he does not,” says the Englishman; then he adds slowly: “Perhaps I can aid you; I have here,” he produces from his breast a small glass flagon of Venetian manufacture, this is protected from breakage by golden filigree work and its stopper carefully sealed, in it is a colorless, limpid fluid.

“What is it? Poison?” asks the painter. “The poison of the Borgias?”

“No, the poison of the Antilles. This is the juice of the Manchineel tree, prepared by the Indians of the Carrabees, after some secret process of their own. You know the wonderful properties of the tree; to sleep under it even for the night is death. It is peculiarly volatile, therefore I keep it sealed. I have carried this with me in case I should be captured and given over to the rack, to make me sleep so that my tortured lips can tell no secrets of my Queen. If it should happen that the painter doesn’t drink Vasco de Guerra insensible and inert, a few drops of this in his flagon will make the Spanish spy sleep forever.”

“Then if Frans Floris doesn’t succeed—the poison of the Antilles,” mutters the painter. “It is his life or ours.” After a second’s thought he continues: “I must kill mine enemy Vasco anyway. Were he only made insensible, even did I recover the letters of Louis of Nassau, he would

still suspect me. Some day he would get other proof. If I don't kill him now I must fly at once, and William the Silent will have no spy at Alva's elbow. For my country's cause, I stay here. [70]At the drinking bout Vasco de Guerra dies. The lion's jaws gape for me. By heaven, they shall not close!"

"That's well said," returns Guy, briefly. "Put a dose of this into the Spanish spy."

He presses the flagon of Manchineel poison into the painter's hand, but suddenly looks doubtful, and asks anxiously this pertinent question: "How, by all the saints, will you get this into Vasco's drinking cup and not into the flagons of the others?"

[Contents]

CHAPTER VI.

THE DRINKING BOUT AT THE PAINTED INN.

This question seems to stagger the artist. He mutters feebly, “How?” then says: “Let me think. I know the customs of this country,” and meditates with knitted brows.

A few moments thought and he cries: “I have solved the problem.”

“How?” asks the Englishman eagerly.

“How? Why, it is the usage at these drinking bouts when the banquet is at its height for friends of the combatants, for the honor of Bacchus, to send huge drinking beakers full of the finest wine with their compliments to the various contestants. Vasco de Guerra is a suitor for the hand of Mademoiselle Bodé Volcker, the fair Mina that I love. That shall be his destruction. After the tenth round, it would not be prudent before—perhaps in his case I had better make it the fifteenth huge goblet that he drinks—I shall send to him a flagon of wine containing this, the poison of the Antilles,” he taps the vial the Englishman has given him, “with the compliments of Wilhelmina Bodé Volcker. De Guerra will not refuse a wine cup with such a message as this, and then—, then—you and I,” he whispers this last, “my dear Guido, in some quiet, happy, peaceful country would be called murderers; but here we are simply playing out the game of life and death. Now to business.” [71]

The two now go to mapping out their plan with the cool precision of men who, having made up their minds, act rapidly upon their resolutions.

“The drinking bout will take place at twelve. It is now ten o’clock. I don’t think De Guerra has yet risen,” says Guy, “but I’ll watch him to see that he doesn’t leave the inn to give your secret to any one. If he makes any

effort toward this, by some means I will detain him; while you, my dear friend, go to the Citadel, get word with the lady Hermoine, and arrange the meeting that is necessary, not only to my safety but to my love."

Then, while Chester secures upon his person the cipher letters of Vitelli and the key furnished by the artist, and perchance with even greater care deposits in his bosom the miniature and letter of his love, Antony Oliver arms himself with sword and pistols and looks carefully to the keen Italian stiletto he always wears ready to his hand.

This done, the two go out together, Oliver leaving word with the barber that his sons can get their meal for themselves when they return, but that Achille is to meet them at the Painted Inn at the hour of noon. Then striding through the narrow alleys into which the sun is but now finding its way, the two pass to the pleasanter portion of the town.

Here the painter takes leave of the Englishman, whispering: "Don't lose sight of Vasco."

"While you will do my errand?" suggests Chester wistfully.

"Certainly. I have a good excuse for my interview with Doña Hermoine. Her father only leaves Brussels at noon to-day. Alva will not be here until late this evening, and would wish word of this given to his daughter," answers Oliver, and takes his way toward the Esplanade, beyond which lies the Citadel.

Going once more to the Painted Inn, Chester discovers that it is now the scene of unusual animation.

The wine room is crowded so that he can hardly get a seat to order his breakfast, appetite having by this time obtained temporary ascendency over love. By some deft questioning and pumping of the waiter who attends him, the Englishman soon learns that the man [72]he is in search

of only left his late carouse at three o'clock in the morning, and has not yet arisen; probably thinking that retirement will best fit him for a supremely great feat at the shrine of Bacchus.

The conversation at the neighboring tables naturally turns upon the drinking bout. The room is full of burghers and artists, some of whom have come to enjoy the artist's triumph, others to sorrow at the genius that is being killed with wine. There is also a goodly delegation of his creditors, who are here with anxiety in their hearts and on their lips, for Frans Floris's life is worth a large sum to them on account of the paintings his facile brush creates; but Frans Floris dead is of very little use to them, and they fear that some day he will kill himself by the enormous quantity of wine he may imbibe in his effort to place his competitors beneath the table.

"Ah, *Mijn Heer* Dirk Coornhert, this is a sad day," remarks a fat, adipose citizen, whose smell of the malt-house proclaims the brewer.

"Yes," replies a man evidently of artistic tastes and education. "Have you seen the poem I've printed to warn Floris of the danger of his dissolute habits, not only to his genius but to his life? I read it to him last night. It was an inspiration in which I depicted a dream wherein the spirit of Albert Durer appeared to me and spoke in melancholy and ghostly tones of the spirit sadness that was brought to him even after a hundred years in the other world by an artist of Floris's ability becoming a drunkard."

"And did it reform him?" jeers the other.

"Reform him!" cries Dirk Coornhert. "No, he swore he'd drink the health of Albert Durer's ghost to-day, and laughed in my face: 'When I'm drunk, I'm happy; I forget my creditors. When I'm sober my creditors don't let me forget them.'"

"*Verdomd!* And I'm one of them," growls the brewer. "Two thousand carolus guilders for malt beer consumed at his house. A painter building the greatest palace in Antwerp! Above its portal that drunken conceit

he's painted: himself standing brush in hand and the muses flying from all over the heavens to crown him. And out of it he drives each day with four white [73]horses in state, everybody doffing their hats to him, his creditors bowing most humbly of all. If I didn't think the populace would mob me, I'd have him in the debtors' prison. And then his wife! Faugh! her dandy airs—as if she were a countess."

"Yes, she has ruined him," murmurs the painter. "A woman's ambition to flaunt it with the noblesse, which a painter cannot do, though some of our burghers seem to think it an easy task. There's poor Bodé Volcker! Have you heard of his daughter? They say the fair Wilhelmina aspires to consort with the nobility, and has been taught to shake her feet under the rod of a French dancing master and play on the harpsichord and spinet, and sing with rare shakes and quavers and high-screeching notes like a lewd Italian masquer. Ah! the days of Antwerp are changing. What would her poor mother say? But old Niklaas is up in arms, and swears his daughter shall go into his shop and sell his silks and satins behind his counter, as her mother did, though they say he's worth a million crowns or more."

"*Donder en Bliksem!*" growls the brewer, "what's a million crowns, or two million, either, now—it's only so much more for the accursed tenth penny tax to eat up."

"Yes, God help every one," assents the printer. "The tenth penny tax will in time take all we have."

Then the brewer shakes his head sadly over a mug of strongest Flemish ale and the printer sips his Rhine wine in silence; for Alva has just levied his celebrated tenth penny tax, which decrees that every transfer of merchandise in the Netherlands shall yield one-tenth of its amount to the royal treasury, each and every time it is bought or sold. This, of course, on active business means ultimately complete confiscation and absolute ruin to the great trading classes of Brabant, Flanders and Holland.

This tenth penny tax does not make the crowd very loving to the smattering of Spanish and Italian officers of the garrison, who stride about with jingling spurs and clattering swords and armor, caring very little whether they tread on burghers' toes or not, and burying every now and then their fiercely curled mustachios [74]in flagons of Spanish wine, mine host and his assistants serving them with greatest deference and humility; for Antwerp writhed and groaned, but still lay prone under the iron heel of Spanish military rule—from noble to peasant, from merchant to fisherman.

Among these military gallants none swagger more proudly than Ensign de Busaco. Seeing Guy, this ferocious little dandy strides over, and, slapping the Englishman cordially on the shoulder, cries: "What do you wager, *Capitan* Guido, on the drinking bout? I am offering even doubloons on the Drunkards of Brussels."

"That's hardly fair," says Guy, "six drunkards to one drunkard. But sit down, and remember your promise of last night to join me in a friendly beaker."

"*Gracios, Señor Capitan*," murmurs the young officer, and soon he and Chester are chatting over the juice of the grape.

"You have come, I suppose, from the Middelburg garrison," remarks the Spaniard, "to see about your back pay. We haven't had a stiver here, one of us, for a good many months, and I imagine you are no better off. But the tenth penny, my boy, will open up the paymaster's department of the army If it doesn't—" he looks savagely round, "we intend to take things into our own hands. This is a rich city, eh, for looting; the spoils of the Indies and Peru right here within our grasp. Some day we'll make mincemeat of these burghers and take their goods and chattels and wives and daughters into our keeping for a day or two, eh! Booty and beauty!"

“God help them,” thinks Guy, looking round the place, and into his mind coming a vision of that awful “Spanish Fury” that broke forth on Antwerp a few years afterwards. But he turns the conversation, murmuring: “Of course we haven’t been paid, but still I have a few doubloons in my pocket!” then cries: “Boy, another flask of wine!”

This the two discuss together, the Spaniard telling the Englishman that, though Floris is owned to be the greatest wine bibber in the world, it is thought that the Six Drunkards of Brussels have some extraordinary plan for defeating him, at least so it is whispered about, and [75]that if he has any money to venture on the game, to put it against the artist.

“They’ll win, my boy,” he laughs. “I’ve seen little Tomasito himself drink eighteen flagons and never flinch a hair. Fancy what he will do when stimulated by the magnificent banquet that is going in there,” he points to the great wedding room at the rear, “and with the chance of winning five hundred guilders and side bets as well. Besides, De Guerra has been strangely happy for the last day, and he is never chuckling except when he sees the ducats ahead. But I think I can get a bet from Valdes, of our regiment. He has seen Floris drink, and swears that no man under heaven is his equal. Excuse me on this little matter of business,” and Ensign de Busaco rises and joins a group of Spanish officers at the other end of the room, much to Guy’s pleasure, for he sees that the painter, Antony Oliver, has returned and is anxiously looking at him.

As the Spaniard turns his back the Flemish artist is by Chester’s side whispering: “I have done your errand.”

“She will come?”

“Yes, but I had great difficulty. She was as chilly as an iceberg at first, asking how I dared bring such an audacious message.”

“And then?” queries Guy eagerly.

“Then I gave her the ring and told her that it was necessary for your safety that she meet you; that you had periled yourself coming to this town for her escort when you were absent from your garrison without leave.”

“What next?” says Chester.

“Next she said nonchalantly: ‘I shall be at the house of the burgher Bodé Volcker at three o’clock this day. My duenna, the Countess de Pariza, thinks she would like to see the merchant’s daughter dance again.’”

“Anything else?” mutters Guy, discontentedly.

“Oh, yes, she also remarked that her duenna would probably spend some of her time, as she usually did, cheapening the silks, laces and velvets in the merchant’s stock, while she would remain in the burgomaster’s house and enjoy herself with the arts and graces of *Señorita* Wilhelmina. ‘Where you will be, too, I suppose?’ [76]she laughed, ‘Señor Oliver, and, perchance, the gentleman whose messenger and envoy you are. Have you transferred your service from my father to the *Capitan* Guido?’ At this,” says Oliver, with a slight chuckle, “I had the audacity to remark, ‘Perhaps it may be all in the family,’ and left her as red as the ruby ring she was holding in her hand.”

This makes Chester flush with delight, and the room which had been dark and gloomy to him at the painter’s first words, is very sunny and bright.

A moment after it is brighter still, as Oliver remarks: “I never saw Hermoine de Alva blush at the mention of a human being before. Neither do I think, my audacious gallant, there is a man in this world, saving her own father, to whom she would accord a meeting. But you’d better stop drinking,” he adds, “or you’ll be considered one of the Drunkards of Brussels yourself, and we’ve something more than a drinking bout on hand. Come, they are going in, I see my enemy and

know he has my fate in his hands." He looks anxiously across the room, for there stands Vasco, surrounded by his five fellow topers, all bearing the arms of Brussels on their doublets.

As De Guerra's eyes meet those of Oliver a smile of cruel triumph lights them up, and, with one quick, perchance unconscious, gesture, his hand goes to his bosom, as if to reassure himself that something very precious to him is still safe and ready.

"See that movement?" whispers Guy to Antony. "That's to be certain of the letters that are your ruin if you don't get them now!"

"And will," gasps the painter, though his hand trembles slightly, as he feels to make sure on his part that he has the poison of the Antilles.

With this the two join the surging throng that is now squeezing into the great painted room at the rear of the inn, in which the grand weddings of Antwerp are celebrated. This is now set apart for the banquet which is to test the drinking powers of Antwerp's genius and the Brussels' society for the prevention of intemperance—by drinking up all the liquor in the world themselves. [77]

A minute later there is a wild cry—"He has come!" the people turning from the dining-room and rushing toward the entrance of the house to see De Vriendt, the artist, riding up upon his white horse, followed by six of his pupils.

This gives Guy and Oliver an easier entrance to the banquet room, of which they take advantage, finding themselves in a high, heavily studded apartment, with beautifully carved balustrades and roof beams, the walls decorated by paintings and frescoes, some of them from the brush of the contesting artist himself.

In the center is a large oaken table, with seats for seven, covered with everything that can increase the thirst and appetite for wine—salt fish, caviare, and viands steeped in oil, which is supposed to develop the

capacity of man for liquor—all these decorated and arranged in highest style of Netherland garniture; for there are flowers on the table, and a wreath of roses with which to crown the victor. The whole is a horrible hurly-burly of art, mediæval luxury and barbaric vice.

Six seats about the board are occupied by the Drunkards of Brussels, Vasco de Guerra sitting at the foot of the table as manager and captain of his band of topers. Each man has before him an immense silver frankforter or beaker glass holding a quantity of wine that would put a temperance society in convulsions of righteous indignation.

The seat at the head of the table is reserved for the one man who contests against the many; the glory of Antwerp; the great genius who is going to drown it in drink; the great toper who, in honor of his city and a wager of five hundred guilders, is going to drink these six other topers under the table; while all around this board dedicated to gluttony and to Bacchus stands a melange of the masculine society of the town, from Spanish General Vargas to little Ensign de Busaco; from the fat merchant prince to the brawny representative of the Butchers' Guild—even to little Achille Touraine, who comes crawling and sneaking in between the legs of the assembly to reach his [78]master, getting viciously kicked and spurred in this business by several dandy officers whose uniforms he disarranges in his transit.

"I am here as you directed, Monsieur Oliver," he pants. "That is, part of me—one of the officer's spurs lanced me like my father does his bleeding patients, and my face has been scraped as papa does his shaving customers. But I—I couldn't get here before, it took so long for Marvedie and me to eat the last of the pigeon pie."

Here the boy's voice is drowned by the buzz that greets the entrance of the painter; as De Vriendt comes striding in, his pale Flemish face and mild blue eyes lighted with a convivial smile, while tossing his hat on high he cries: "Welcome, brother junketers of Brussels!" taking his seat at the head of the table.

This is responded to in kind, little Tomasito remarking: “Greeting, brother pig of Antwerp.” A sally of mediæval wit, that makes the crowd roar with laughter, though Floris’s pale face grows red with humiliation —for one moment.

The next he has forgotten all save the pleasure of the wine cup, for a serving man places before him an immense Frankforter of strongest Markobrunner, and in the love of the liquor he forgets his love of the esteem of his fellows and townsmen. Rising from his chair he calls out: “Let us begin, Drunkards of Brussels. The terms of the wager are settled. I drink every one of you under the table, and leave you all there.”

“Those are the terms, Señor Floris,” murmurs De Guerra, a snicker in his voice, and the six topers stand up, each man in his place, and each with flagon in his hand, filled to the brim with the same strong wine that faces De Vriendt.

“Then DOWN!” cries Floris, and each man tosses off his ration with a smack of delight, at which the crowd cries bravo.

But the contestants have hardly seated themselves and got pick at caviare or salted herring or potted anchovy, when the attendants have refilled their beakers, and Floris shouts: “AGAIN!” [79]

With this they rise once more, and down flies the Rhenish wine; then take to eating—for with drunkenness goes gluttony.

So the drinking bout goes on, viewed with varying faces by the crowd, the excitement growing higher; but none have faces like Guy Chester and Antony Oliver, for none, not even the greatest gambler in the town, has so high a stake at risk upon this battle of giants at the shrine of Bacchus.

All the time the crowd gets greater, and dogs creep snarling in—they have scented the feast, and hope for bones and pickings—and the dresses of women can be seen in the great balcony used by musicians at the

wedding banquets, that stands at the further end of the hall; and friends commence to send flagons of wine with their compliments and good wishes to the various contestants.

But the drinking is even, flagon for flagon, each man tossing off his goblet at the same moment with the others, and then calling for another —though sometimes the brand of wine is changed to stimulate their appetites by varying flavors. Rothenberger has succeeded Markobrunner and been displaced by Hochheimer.

It is the tenth round. Seven immense silver mugs of strongest Rhine wine are just passing the lips and sizzling down the gullets of the contestants.

“At the fifteenth,” whispers Oliver.

“Why not do it now?” says Guy in his ear.

“No, it wouldn’t be prudent before the fifteenth,” returns the painter. “No one would believe that ten goblets would be the death of him.”

A minute or two and the twelfth turn has passed, and after drinking this one of the contestants, the little weazened Italian, Guisseppi Pisa, attempting to rise from his chair—staggers, and goes down quietly under the table.

“Do it now,” whispers Guy.

“I dare not—not yet,” returns Oliver.

The thirteenth round is quaffed amid laughter and cheers, and as De Guerra takes the goblet from his lips, Oliver’s face grows white and drawn, and Guy’s also, for to their horror they see the man they intended to [80]poison at the fifteenth round, reel and fall insensible beneath the table.

“Too late! My God, he’s escaped me,” falters Antony.

“We can get the documents anyway, from his insensible carcass when the bout is over,” mutters the Englishman, recovering first.

“Yes, but that is only postponing my destruction. Vasco’s suspicions are aroused—the torture chamber gapes for me. I shall have to fly. I can no longer do the work I had laid out for myself.” This is sighed from white lips.

But another shout goes up from the surrounding crowd; at the fourteenth round two of the remaining Drunkards of Brussels have gone down. Two more are left for the painter to vanquish, but these are very tough ones. De Vriendt smiles in triumph; his Flemish face, though red and flushed, appears mocking now; but his legs are a little shaky.

Thus four more rounds pass; another of the Drunkards of Brussels joins the company of those beneath the table. Now only one, little Tomasito, is standing up for the ducats his friends have wagered upon him, and the honor of the capital; when suddenly (for Guy has turned away his head, only awaiting his opportunity at the finish of the bout to rob De Guerra of the papers, and cares but little who wins the contest) the Englishman feels his sleeve plucked, and looking up, sees Antony’s eyes blazing.

“He’s recovering!” whispers Oliver.

“Who?”

“Vasco! See him! He is staggering up to his feet again. He will win the bout. It’s a trick—a trick to gain the advantage of so many flagons over De Vriendt.”

This is the feeling of Floris’s friends; and when De Guerra, staggering up, shouts: “Another stoup of Rhine wine for the Drunkards of Brussels,” they interpose and engage in angry altercation.

But De Vriendt says: “I give him the advantage of five flagons, I will finish him up also.”

Another round is quaffed. Before it little Tomasito goes down as if struck by a cannon ball, leaving only [81]De Guerra and Floris standing fronting each other, looking in each other's faces, one with the smile of the Fleming, the other filled with that curious rage peculiar to the Spaniard, who, when excited, becomes savage in everything—savage in war, savage in play, savage in love.

Each pours down another beaker, and Floris is reeling.

"Now's your last chance," whispers Guy.

Calling a waiter Antony says: "A flagon of your strongest Rhine wine at once."

While De Vriendt and the Spaniard are appetizing themselves for another bout, one eating caviare savagely and the other lovingly dallying with some pickled cod's livers, to give him greater thirst, is the opportunity of Oliver.

The waiter, pouring the wine from the flask into the flagon, goes his way, and a moment after, with a hand that has become deft by using the delicate brushes of his art, the hunted artist skillfully unseals the little vial and drops unnoticed a portion of its subtle poison into the beaker.

"Be sure you give him enough," whispers Guy, who has been standing in front of his friend to screen him, though the crowd is so great and the excitement so intense, bets being offered two to one on the Spaniard, it would have been unnoticed had no precaution been taken.

At this suggestion Oliver pours a double dose into the flagon. Then, handing it to Achille, who has been devoting his time to sucking the oranges thrown from the table by the reeling and unsteady hands of the contestants, he whispers: "Take this to the Spaniard, Vasco de Guerra."

"Yes!"

"Be sure! The one with the black mustache with the single gray lock!"

“Certainly, the brunette, I’m not a fool!”

“Give it to him with the compliments and good wishes of Mademoiselle Wilhelmina Bodé Volcker. Quick! get it to him at once!”

As the two contestants rise and confront each other for another round, the Spaniard standing up more [82]strongly, for his tactics have given him a great advantage, the boy Achille glides to De Guerra, gives him the beaker prepared for him by the hand of the hunted one, and whispers words into his ear that makes a flush of delight run over the drunken redness of his face.

Tossing aside the goblet that was to his hand, Vasco de Guerra cries: “This is old red Rhine wine; I drink this, my reeling Floris, to *the beauty of Antwerp*!”

And clapping the flagon to his lips he pours down the whole stoup in one long continued, triumphant gulp. Then looking at his rival the joy of winning comes into Vasco de Guerra’s eye, for the painter, having drunk his flagon, can scarce keep his feet.

“Malediction!” whispers Oliver, “The drug does not work.”

“Wait,” answers Guy.

Then, too anxious to speak, their faces distorted with suspense, the two gaze on while the contesting topers sink into their chairs and fortify themselves with condiments for the next round.

As the Spaniard eats he smiles on the painter, whose hands seem scarce able to do their office.

But their goblets are re-filled, and the two rise once more, Floris supporting himself with one hand, as his feet need help now.

“Drink!” says De Guerra, and the painter manages to get his portion down, his competitor standing firm, erect and mocking.

“Now see *me*!” and Vasco raises his flagon lightly, easily, triumphantly, his backers giving a shout of joy.

But just as he gets the goblet to his lips a kind of dazed expression comes into De Guerra’s face, his hand falls nerveless by his side, and the beaker, dropping from it, goes clattering to the floor, then clutching with both hands at his throat as if for breath, he sinks down, senseless and inert, upon the bodies of his companions, who lie there in drunken stupor, while a cry of triumph goes up from the assembled backers of Floris.

A moment after De Vriendt, staggering, reeling, surrounded by his friends, gets to the fresh air of the street, which gives him new strength. Assisted by his six pupils, who will take him home and put him to bed and nurse him after his drunken bout, he cries: “Ho! [83]for another stoup of Rhine wine, strong Rhine wine, landlord of the Painted Inn!” and putting one foot in the stirrup, quaffs down a mighty libation to his defeated ones. Then he rides reeling to his palace on the street named after him, surrounded by happy creditors, who think if Floris lives he will paint more pictures and pay some of his debts.

The crowd, as it surges about, gives very little attention to the Drunkards of Brussels, save one who indulges in a sly kick or two at the recumbent forms that have lost him his money; but almost as he fell Guy and Oliver have taken De Guerra, who is breathing heavily, and borne him to an adjoining room.

Here hastily opening his doublet the painter slips his hand in, and sewn between the linings of his garments he feels a little packet.

Ripping this out, he whispers, as he examines it, “Thank God! the six letters from Louis of Nassau!”

A moment after, Guy, putting his hand upon the breast of the Spaniard, mutters: “The spy is dead.” And a great, deep-drawn breath of relief comes from the Fleming—this one of his many dangers has died with

Vasco de Guerra.

The color has returned to his face, and he laughs: “It was your lucky coming and the pigeon pie that saved me—for a little while—my friend, my Guido!”

The two go out together, and on the street Oliver again looks serious and mutters: “Alva! Here *before* his time. He was not to arrive till evening. What has brought him so suddenly from Brussels?”

For a cavalcade is prancing up the street; thirty horsemen armored in steel with long lances bearing the pennon of Vargas. Before these, upon a strong Andalusian charger, rides a man of spare but very tall stature, in complete, glistening, gold-embossed Milan armor. Over the gorget about his neck is the ribbon of the Golden Fleece upon which hangs the Lamb of God, the insignia of that Order. This is covered by a long sable, silvered beard that falls in two peculiar pointed locks upon his breast, his dark hair cut short, is likewise grizzled; so is his mustache, which drapes peculiar lips, the upper thin, firm and determined; the lower sensual—but determined also; his forehead high, [84]pale, blue-veined and strangely intellectual, that of the military mathematician; his nose aquiline and of rare beauty, keen cut, precise, immovable, his cheeks sallow and pallid—altogether a face cold as death, lighted by two blazing, sparkling, unflinching, serpent’s eyes, and yet at times in certain features so like the woman that made Guy’s heart beat with love the night before that he knows it is her father, and murmurs: “Alva!”

The Duke is talking quietly to Alfonso de Ulloa and Pedro Paciotto, his great military engineer, who ride immediately behind him. All are covered with the dust of hasty travel.

As they pass the Painted Inn the Viceroy’s piercing eyes look haughtily upon the crowd that stand upon the steps and throng the pentice of the hostelry with doffed hats to do him reverence. Suddenly reining up, he

cries: “Oliver! Antonius Oliver!” and the painter, stepping forth, bows before the Duke of Alva’s charger.

“It is fate I have got word with you so soon. Find for me at once one Vasco de Guerra, ex-Captain in Ladroño’s Musketeers. Tell him I will hear his tale within the hour, and bring him with you to the Citadel at once,” commands the captain-general.

“Under favor, your—your Highness,” returns Oliver, “the—the man you ask for—”

“Yes, speak quickly. What are you stammering about?” says the Viceroy, for the sudden demand for the man he has murdered has staggered the painter, tactician though he is—for a moment.

“I was about to say, your Highness, that this Vasco de Guerra, who is one of the Six Drunkards of Brussels, now lies stupefied from his potations at the drinking bout.”

“What, with that rattle-brain artist Floris!” says Alva; then he suddenly remarks in tones that send a tremor through the frame of Oliver: “And that drunkard thought I would reinstate him in his rank in the army! Some communication he would make to me to-day—something upon which the safety of the realm perhaps depended—something that brought me to Antwerp four hours ahead of my time! Take word to the captain of the provost guard to arrest De Guerra at once. I will speak with him in prison when he recovers [85]his senses—this fool, this drunkard, this wine-bibber. And yet—I wonder what he had to tell me? Forward, gentlemen!”

And the Duke rides on, leaving the painter standing almost as breathless as the corpse inside the Painted Inn; for Oliver knows the hand of death has been almost as near to him as to the dead, and mutters, as he rejoins Guy; “Ehu! truly the lion’s jaws had nearly closed!”

[Contents]

CHAPTER VII.

LOVE—BY A COUP DE MAIN.

"Yes, just in time," whispers the Englishman, drawing a long breath also. Then he takes a hasty look at the tall Dutch clock ticking lazily away in the wine room.

Noting this the painter laughs. "The sight of the father makes you impatient for the daughter, eh? But you've another half an hour to wait, my impulsive gallant. Besides, I haven't eaten to-day. The provost marshal must wait until I get a bite. Join me in—in my dinner."

So giving order to an alert serving man, the two sit down to a very hasty, yet comfortable meal, seasoned by peace and contentment, for these young men are so accustomed to danger that any little breathing spell in their struggle with sudden death seems to them a calm, quiet and contented time.

As he eats and drinks Guy looks lazily up and down the street; crowds of people are passing along the Shoemarket. This throng is made picturesque by a smattering of the costumes of most of the nations of the earth; for at this time Antwerp is the mart of Northern Europe, and the greatest commercial emporium of the age.

Ships are taking cargo at its river front for the Indies, East and West, for even the distant coasts of Peru and the Cape of Good Hope, and others are unloading [86]from the Baltic and the Mediterranean: consequently seamen and visitors from all known portions of the globe increase the vivacity of the scene.

Curiously enough, there are no English walking the streets of Antwerp to-day, for since Elizabeth stole Alva's eight hundred thousand crowns, the Duke has forbidden any commerce with Great Britain, and has sequestered all English property and driven out all English merchants

living or doing business in Antwerp, of which before this there have been a great number, the English wool trade being one of the great sources of revenue of the city. Just now Antwerp is at its very zenith, from which it is about to go down under the exactions, taxes and tyranny of the Spaniard into a fourth-rate commercial town.

But the burghers, though gloomy and oppressed, do not anticipate, and the merchants still laugh lightly upon the street, thinking themselves princes upon the throne of a commerce that can never be destroyed.

This absence of English blood and English feature would make Guy conspicuous, were not several Danish officers of De Billy striding about the street, and some of these have fair hair, blue eyes and Saxon blondness.

“Now I must carry Alva’s orders to the provost marshal. Fortunately his office is not far from here. Wait for me, I will return in quarter of an hour. You need not look so impatiently at the clock,” remarks Oliver.

But Guy is not looking at the clock. His eyes are fixed upon a man in the costume of a South Zeeland trader who is carefully wiping a pair of tortoise-shell rimmed spectacles and inspecting the placard offering reward for the head of the “First of the English.” As the Zeelander turns the Englishman knows that he has seen him before.

A moment after Chester thinks this man recognizes him, for, though he turns away his head, he keeps one eye upon this gentleman, and notes this gentleman has one eye on him.

“Take me to the provost marshal’s with you,” he whispers to Oliver.

“You—want to go *there*?” gasps Antony, opening his eyes very wide. [87]

“Yes,” returns Guy. “There’s a gentleman here who recognizes me, and has also made himself acquainted with the value of my head. If he follows me I’ll astonish him.”

As the two rise, Oliver's face very serious at this, they are joined by little De Busaco, who comes striding up to them to be rather effusively welcomed by Chester, who thinks that apparent intimacy with Spanish officers may remove the suspicions of the man who is watching him.

"You're in good company, I see, Amati," says the little ensign. "Introduce me to the honor of the acquaintance of the Duke's under-secretary."

And this being done the young Spaniard says: "Where are you going?"

"To the provost marshal's office."

"Then I'll go with you," remarks De Busaco. "I've business there myself. I wish to get leave to remain in the town this evening. A little Flemish girl, you understand!" he strokes his mustachios knowingly.

As they walk along the street together, De Busaco, who apparently has joined them for this purpose, goes to questioning and pumping Oliver as to what prospect there is of a near pay-day for the garrison of Antwerp; if he knows anything of the Duke's plans; how the tenth penny tax comes on, etc., etc., his losses at the drinking bout having apparently made him anxious on this subject.

Guy, however, pays little heed to this. Eye and ear are intent to discover if he is followed by the Zeeland trader. The Shoemarket is so well peopled that this is difficult to determine, but after they have walked from it to Kammer street, past the Inn of the Red Lion, and turned into the network of narrow alleys that lead to the main watergate of the town, where the provost marshal's office is situated, the crowd grows less and Chester, turning slightly, catches sight of the man whom he fears.

This personage dogs them straight to the city gate, but stands gaping in astonishment as Guy and Oliver, accompanied by the young Spanish officer, enter the office of Alva's provost marshal, the very door of which [88]is placarded with the reward of three thousand Carolus guilders.

“De Busaco,” remarks the Englishman, pausing at the door, “do you see that man in South Zeeland dress?”

“Yes.”

“Do you want something that will save you anxiety about your back pay?”

“*Santos!* yes!”

“Then take a couple of men and get *him*. He lives in the disaffected provinces at Flushing. I think the Council of Troubles are looking for him.”

“A reward!” cries the little Spaniard, then flying into the guard room and unheeding military etiquette he calls out, “Some men with me, quick—there’s money in it!”

Two Spanish soldiers, springing up at his bidding from the crowd lounging about the guard-room, he starts with these hurriedly for the street, and is soon in hot pursuit of the trader from South Zeeland, crying: “*Heretico fugitivo!*” and other words of rage and fury which make that gentleman quicken his steps to so good a purpose that apparently knowing the town well, he dodges into some of the blind alleys in this densely crowded portion of the city, and escapes from the little Spaniard, whose jack boots are not conducive to extreme fleetness of foot.

“I couldn’t catch him,” remarks De Busaco, five minutes afterward, returning breathless, “but I’ll keep my eye open for him.”

“Very well, his reward will make you forget your back pay,” remarks Guy, as Oliver returns from the inner office, where he has been closeted with the captain of the guard, and says the necessary orders have been given for the arrest of De Guerra.

“I don’t think,” laughs Chester, as he and Oliver walk along the street together (for they have left the ensign at the provost marshal’s) “that that gentleman from South Zeeland will be anxious to report himself at any of the guard-houses of this town to give information about me. And now, after danger—” the look on his face tells his meaning to the little painter, who murmurs: “Love!” [89]

So the two stride up Kammer street again, and along the Shoemarket to the Place de Meir, where the great house of Bodé Volcker is situated, and going in, find themselves very shortly *en rapport* with the family of a merchant of that day.

As they reach the arched passageway leading to the courtyard, seeing no signs of equipage, the corner of Guy’s mouth droops.

“Don’t be impatient; it is better to be first, then I can arrange our little scheme of bargains before the arrival of the duenna Countess and her charge,” says the artist.

Leading the way with the familiarity that denotes a friend of the house, Oliver raps upon a side door situated at the further end of the courtyard, and almost immediately is admitted by the servant girl of the evening before; the lady’s maid, Wiarda, she of the haughty nose, apparently being engaged elsewhere.

They enter directly into what is the living room of the house. Here the family of Bodé Volcker, consisting of himself, Jakob, a boy of sixteen, who has just left school for the counting room, and the daughter, Wilhelmina, whose soft blonde curls and merry blue eyes have induced Oliver not only to put her upon his canvas but in his heart, are apparently engaged in a family discussion that is becoming highly flavored.

The old gentleman, an energetic but fat Fleming, with commercial expression and commercial eyes, is evidently excited. His cheeks are red and angry. The young lady’s blue eyes are equally angry, though they are

slightly dimmed by latent tears, and one of the corners of her dear little mouth is twitching nervously. The boy, like most cubs of his age, is seemingly enjoying some dispute between papa and sister, for his blonde German face has a suppressed snicker in it. If he dared he would laugh.

“Ah, Oliver,” cries the merchant, rising with outstretched hands, “back from Brussels! A short trip,” and welcomes the painter with the easy familiarity of a friend of his house.

Miss Wilhelmina, on the contrary, greets Antony in haughty Spanish style, extending white fingers for her sweetheart to kiss. [90]

The cub merely snickers; “*Hoe maakt je ’t*?”

“I’ve taken the liberty of bringing a friend, Captain Guido Amati, of the Middelburg garrison,” remarks the painter.

“A friend of yours, Oliver! Welcome—welcome to everything in my house,” says Niklaas with Flemish hospitality, giving Guy cordial greeting.

“Captain Amati is known to the Doña Hermoine, and as the Duke’s secretary—”

It is unnecessary to say more; at mention of the Viceroy’s daughter Miss Wilhelmina most affably seconds her father’s hospitality and extends her white fingers for Spanish welcome. These Guy, making no mistake this time, kisses, perhaps lingering a shade too long over the soft, fair hand for the pleasure of his friend Oliver.

Then the merchant cries out suddenly with Flemish primitiveness: “Chairs, Wilhelmina; chairs for the gentlemen!”

“Father!” remarks the young lady haughtily, “you forget we have lackeys in the house,” and, ringing a hand bell, orders the serving man to place seats for the cavaliers.

“Oh, ho! more foreign airs!” jeers the old gentleman snappishly, apparently taking up a discussion that has been dropped. “Don’t forget Flanders simplicity, my daughter. Though your father is called a millionaire, perhaps he won’t be a millionaire long, with that accursed tenth penny tax,” adds Niklaas, grinding his teeth.

“You come from Brussels, Señor Antony,” interrupts the young lady, adopting the Spanish style of address. “While there I presume, as the Duke’s under-secretary, you met the Duchess of Aerschot. She arrives in Antwerp to-day, and gives an entertainment to-morrow evening. You will be there, I presume, Captain Amati, also Señor Oliver?”

“Unfortunately I leave Antwerp this evening,” answers Guy.

“And under-secretaries and heralds are not invited,” remarks the painter, apparently by no means pleased at the idea.

“You’ll go, I presume, *Freule* Bodé Volcker?” suggests [91]Guy, persuasively. “Your dance, I believe, is much admired.”

“Of course,” murmurs the young lady, nonchalantly.

“Of course *not*!” cries the Flemish father with the air of a Roman one.

“Papa!”

“*Verdomd!* Do you suppose I’ll have you, my young lady, keep my carriage horses out again as you did last night, so that they went to sleep in the goods van this morning! The Countess of Mansfeld’s yesterday and the Duchess of Aerschot’s to-morrow and you not up until dinner to-day. My servants eating me out of house and home; you haven’t kept your household accounts for a week! Don’t answer me, miss, I have looked at your market book, not written up—not written up—no commercial ideas! But let me tell you,” adds the old gentleman, “if this

happens again, down you come at eight in the morning and attend to women customers in the wareroom," he points toward the commercial end of the house. "Remember that!"

And bottling up his wrath, Papa Bodé Volcker makes adieu to Guy and Oliver, remarking that he must attend to business if none of the rest of the family do, but dragging off the snickering boy Jakob.

"Papa is very eccentric. This sort of discussion always begins with the tenth penny tax," remarks the young lady solemnly. Then she half sighs, half laughs: "We have this every week or two, though not generally *in public*. He'll be coming back again in a minute," giving a little horrified snicker as the old gentleman fulfils her prophecy by popping his head in at the door and crying:

"And that French jumping-jack, who teaches you to sling your feet about! I flung him out, waistband and neck ruff, this morning!"

But this news is too much for the fair Wilhelmina's complacency. She springs up with a scream of horror, "Oh, papa! Poor, dear little Monsieur de Valmy!" and there are tears in her eyes.

"Yes, and the music master, that spinet playing fellow, goes also. No more flipping the heel and raising the toe; no more semi-quavers and high Italian [92]screeches," jabbers the ex-burgomaster. "Remember the tenth penny tax! Some day I will be a music teacher myself," and with this extraordinary prophecy Bodé Volcker darts for his counting room.

But this astounding prediction is too much for every one. They go into laughter, which Miss Wilhelmina leads, ejaculating: "A music teacher, indeed! Screeches and semi-quavers!"

Tossing herself into a chair in front of a near-by spinet, she gives out smilingly a little Provençal *chançon* with such unaffected ease and grace that both Guy and Oliver declare it would be a shame if the music master should be suppressed, tenth penny tax or no.

This seems to put them all at their ease, Miss Bodé Volcker regaling the gentlemen with an account of the grand *fête* of the Countess Mansfeld in honor of Doña de Alva the night before, mentioning the names of the Signeurs de la Noircarmes, D'Avila, Mondragon, Gabriel de Cerbolloni, and other officers and nobles as being present, as well as the younger Countess Mansfeld, the aristocratic Baroness d' Ayala, and the beautiful Doña Anica de la Medrado, just come with the latest Madrid fashions. "I was the only one *from the town*," she adds innocently, "but my dancing was greatly admired."

A moment after they have proof of this.

There is a clatter of hoofs in the courtyard and four prancing Spanish mules come clattering in dragging a coach of state, their outriders and lackeys in the glittering liveries of Alva.

A second after Doña Hermoine, robed in priceless furs, her glorious head shaded by jaunty Spanish hat and long white plumes, her face brilliant with brunette radiance, her eyes growing, perchance, more brilliant, as they look upon Guy Chester's well-knit form, enters the apartment. Behind her comes the attendant Countess de Pariza, duenna-like aspect on her formal face.

Though Guy and Oliver rise quickly to greet rank, title and beauty, Miss Bodé Volcker is before them at the door welcoming the ladies who do her and her house so much honor.

"It is so condescending of you, Doña de Alva, so kind of you, Countess de Pariza," she murmurs, "to [93]honor me in my own home," and courtesying to the ground, kisses Hermoine's hand, which that young lady, daughter of the Viceroy of Spain, courteously permits,—then steps immediately across the apartment to allow the two gentlemen, bowing before her, the same privilege.

The Countess de Pariza does not extend her formal, thin, severe hand, as the daughter of the ex-burgomaster courtesies to the floor before her, but says rather brusquely: “We have called, *Juffrouw* Bodé Volcker to see you dance again. It pleased me greatly last night.”

“To see me dance—*here*?” says the young lady, pouting, as the Countess uses to her *Juffrouw*, the title of the middle classes, with little more ceremony than she would to a serving girl. “I—I am not in costume. Besides, these gentlemen—.” Miss Bodé Volcker looks embarrassed, as the request has the form of a command, that will make her seem more like a dancing girl than a young lady of society to Captain Guido Amati.

“To be sure. You can put on your costume. Run upstairs, and deck yourself at once. Those pink silk stockings become you,” replies Señora de Pariza. “As for these gentlemen,” she turns her argus eyes upon Chester and Oliver, who are in conversation with Doña Hermoine, though as her father’s under-secretary, Antony has stepped slightly behind the Englishman, who is a military swell under his title Captain of Musketeers, “they must be relatives, you converse with them alone, *Juffrouw* Bodé Volcker. It’s a very bad habit for girls of your age to adopt. Lines of propriety are drawn at brothers; cousins are very dangerous. So trip upstairs and put on the costume of Hungary, which became you so well last night. I will call in one of my Moorish girls who plays the spinet.”

With this the duenna would stride to the door to summon an attendant, but Doña Hermoine, noting the embarrassment the order causes the aspiring Mina, with that unaffected condescension which very great rank permits the potentates of this world to make those below them in station easy and happy, suddenly cries;

“Dancing, Countess? then I’m your young lady!” [94]and tossing off with one graceful gesture her furry wraps, with another sweeps up a trailing silken skirt and stands a picture before them, laughing: “Castanets, and I am an Andalusian gipsy!”

But the duenna, suddenly drawing herself up, utters a horrified ejaculation: “Before these gentlemen, Doña de Alva?”

“Why not, if I can dance well enough to please them? Captain Guido has placed me last night under obligations that permit me to do anything for his benefit and pleasure, and Señor Oliver is one of my father’s household, and as such very near to me.”

Here Oliver winces. He could betray the tyrant father, but the thought that this being of goodness and kindness will one day think him a traitor and ignoble brings with it twinges of remorse.

“Dance! The daughter of the Viceroy tossing her feet about?” ejaculates the duenna.

“Pooh!” laughs the girl archly. “Have I not posed for Señor Oliver’s Madonna—in *bare* feet too. Some day I am to make Señor Antony celebrated, or, rather, he will make me worshiped by his genius and his altar piece.”

“You posed for your foot” murmurs Guy, casting an enraptured glance at the exquisite member the girl displays as she still holds the Gitana attitude.

“Yes, I hope he painted them small enough to please you,” laughs the young lady. “But sit down at the spinet, Señorita Mina, and play for me so that I may enrapture the Countess de Pariza by dancing,” adds Doña Hermoine, looking archly at her duenna, who seems to have lost her appetite for Terpsichore.

To this, the dragon says sharply: “Since *Juffrouw* Bodé Volcker is indisposed to repeat for me the pleasure of last evening, I will go into her father’s shop and see if there are any bargains to-day in Lyons silks and velvets and the lace of Venice.”

“There should be,” remarks Oliver, suggestively. “*Great* bargains! The damage from the flood must have cheapened everything.”

“Bargains! Come, let me see,” and La Pariza would call her two Moorish attendants, but Guy, who has been wishing her God-speed in his heart ever since [95]she has entered, very politely opens the door for her departure across the courtyard to the warerooms of the merchant.

Doña Hermoine has apparently not come on a shopping expedition, at least not for laces and dress goods; she does not accompany her duenna, but remains standing, a picture of grace, in the attitude she has taken for the dance.

“You don’t care for new costumes, Doña de Alva,” remarks Guy dreamily, the beauty of the girl’s pose enchanting him, as well it may, for the young lady wears some soft clinging costume of southern Spain with Moorish effects in it, that outlines her lithe graceful beauty in every curve, and, swept up by one dainty hand, permits a suspicion of ankle so exquisite in proportion and symmetry that poets would dream over it—but this audacious sailor simply loves it.

“No, why should I? I have dozens I never use, and papa would give me a thousand if I were foolish enough to want them,” replies Doña Hermoine, resigning Gitana attitude and sweeping her Moorish jupe upon the floor again. “He gives me *everything* I ask for.” Then she remarks naively: “You have discovered my name—that I am the daughter of the Viceroy, Captain Guido *Amati*. You—you see I have discovered your name. Or rather I should say, *Major* Guido Amati.”

“*Major?*”

“Yes; promoted since noon!”

“But your father—?”

“Oh, I told him nothing about it. You are absent without leave. Neither did I tell Sancho d’Avila, who is colonel of your regiment in the absence of Romero in Spain. But there was a vacancy, and it was easily granted to Captain Guido Amati, who, I am informed, is the bravest officer in the army, or one of the bravest. That is all that can be said for any man under Alva.”

“Major in Romero’s foot!” gasps Guy, who, during this speech, has been gazing at her in a dazed, startled way.

“Yes, I took the muster-roll of the regiment myself, and saw that Captain was altered to Major.”

“The muster-roll!” murmurs Chester, not believing his ears. [96]

“Yes, there are duplicates at the Citadel.”

“The muster-rolls at the Citadel,” he stammers, stunned by surprise. Then suddenly it flashes through him that amazement will betray him, that gratitude is the only way he can receive this astounding communication; a gratitude that is very pleasant to him. Taking advantage of the young lady’s position, for she has extended a hand toward him in happy, gracious gesture, he imprints one kiss of obligation upon it and two more of rapturous love, and Miss Brunette’s lilies become roses.

This is effected without undue publicity, as Oliver has taken the fair Mina into the next room, and is whispering into her ear: “Look in Doña Hermoine’s eyes. Don’t you see a request, you foolish girl? She saved you from the embarrassment of the dance; do something for her. Please your father. Go in and be a saleswoman. Show the Countess de Pariza every bargain in your store. Furthermore, *make* them bargains. Cut the price of everything in half.”

“Cut prices *one-half*! Great heavens, my father!”

“I’ll pay the balance, or rather Captain Amati will.”

“Oh, I see,” laughs the girl. “But what will *her* father, the awful Duke, say?”

“He’ll never know if you give Countess de Pariza bargains enough to keep her busy. Do it—for *me*.”

“Oh, you—!”

For the painter has emphasized his “for me” by a lover’s salute.

Thus urged, and catching Hermoine’s bright eyes *with* a request in them, Mina runs away under Oliver’s promptings to make a bargain counter of her father’s whole store, and to cut prices in such a way that would rouse the old Bodé Volcker to madness were he present; but fortunately Heer Bodé Volcker has gone down to the quay to see about the unloading of a ship.

A minute later Oliver has sauntered to the extreme end of the great banqueting room. Though theoretically he is present, practically he sees nothing, hears nothing, and the daughter of the Viceroy and Guy Stanhope Chester are alone together.

“You see,” says the young lady, archly, “I’ve been inquiring about you. Oh, don’t be afraid. No one [97]knows that you are here—absent from duty. They wouldn’t have made you Major, perhaps, if they had. But it has been whispered to me that you are even more than *Major* Guido Amati. You are Major Guido Amati de Medina, son of Hernandez de Medina, once Viceroy of Hispaniola, and have sworn never to assume your exalted family name until you are a general, which you soon must be.”

Then she cries out suddenly, clapping her hands, “Why, since you’re a Medina, you must be a cousin to the Duke of Medina Cœli.”

“Only—only *third* cousin,” stammers Guy, who thinks his ears are playing him false, though he knows his eyes are doing very good work, indeed.

“Well, anyway, you have the blood of the grandees of Spain, and as such your family is *equal* to mine,” murmurs the girl, a curious emphasis on the last remark. “As such, of course, you may sit by my side,” and the young lady sinking upon a Turkish sofa, a dream of vivacious grace, motions Guy to the familiarity of equal social station.

As she looks on the Englishman a great wave of color flies over Hermoine de Alva’s face, and in response Chester’s heart gives a big jump or two as he sees what must have been the drift of the girl’s mind.

“I am glad that you know so much about me,” he says, laughingly, then goes on grimly: “Glad that what you have learned has not displeased you.”

“Oh, I don’t know altogether that,” remarks the young lady; then she says, archness in her tone, but a quiver on her lip: “It was also whispered that *Captain* Guido Amati was a very wild young man. I hope that *Major* Guido Amati will be more circumspect. But still, they said you were the bravest officer in the army.” And the girl looks at him joyously, radiantly, proudly.

She has apparently been conjuring up some dream, some vision of her imagination, the center of which has always been Guido Amati; it brings a light into her eyes that adds even to her beauty, for at times were it not for womanly graces, vivacity and emotion, her brilliant intellect would, perchance, give too great coldness to Hermoine de Alva’s exquisite face. [98]

But, fired by the latent romance of her nature, her delicate face is as inspired—it would put glow into a saint: but with a sailor—.

And what she says gives golden opportunity. She has held up the ruby ring and whispered, “You returned this to me?”

“Only that I might see you again,” and Guy is seated beside her.

“Then if you wish to see me once more, take the ruby from me—*quick*!”

“Never!”

“*Never?*”

“NEVER, unless on your finger, you wear this, one of my spoils of Hispaniola.” And the Englishman has taken from a chain about his neck a ring bearing a single brilliant.

“Oh, *Santos*! What are you doing?” falters the girl.

He has got possession of her fair hand now, and her eyes look into his for one great glance, then turn from him, and droop; their long lashed lids falling upon flaming cheeks. The next instant the diamond sparkles on the taper finger and Hermoine de Alva, the daughter of Spain’s Viceroy is only woman—loving woman—before this man, who has not wooed her heart, but has seized it.

“Take the ruby—now you’ve given me the diamond,” she murmurs. “*You —you know what this means?*”

“Please God, I do! You are my plighted bride. Mine—mine now forever!” And his audacious lips give lover’s greeting, not as the night before, the kiss of hasty mistletoe effect, but the long rapture of clinging hearts.

“Beware! I—I am the Viceroy’s daughter,” murmurs the lady. She hangs her head, then suddenly raises her eyes to his and goes on firmly, distinctly: “My Guido, you are audacious!”

“Yes,” he whispers, “Were you the Queen of Spain, I’d love you.”

“Then you could not win me!”

“But as, thank God, you are Hermoine de Alva,” answers Guy sturdily, “I will win you and wear you, daughter of the Viceroy though you be, for my beloved [99]wife. You hear the term!”—for she gives sudden start at this new title. “*Wife!* And every time you say to me, ‘I am the daughter of Alva,’ or ‘Beware the Captain General of the Netherlands!’ your lips that do the deed shall pay the price, two for each word.”

“*Madre Mia!* How impulsive you are,” cries the girl panting and struggling under the penalty exacted. For Guy Stanhope Chester is half mad with love and rapture, and though he respects this captive of his masculine bow and spear, still he woos her in a free and easy sailor manner which enthralls but astounds this daughter of the Viceroy. “Holy Virgin! you—you are so—so *different*.”

“From whom?” cries Guy in jealous tones.

“From—from the other suitors, who come bowing to the earth, mincing compliments and fawning for the honor of my hand.”

“And they have dared?” snarls this gallant, who now regards all this brunette loveliness, these drooping, melting eyes, these lily and rose tinted cheeks, these ivory shoulders, this exquisite form, half girl’s, half woman’s—in short Hermoine de Alva—as his very own.

“Dared!” pouts the young lady; then laughs, “Why not? Am I so *very* ugly?”

“No, no! *too* beautiful.”

“Then why should not grandees of Spain and generals in the army and Hidalgos of twenty-four quarterings aspire in humble tones and modest manner for an honor you take, my audacious Guido, as if heaven had given you title to me, the daughter of a Viceroy!”

“And so it has, and love likewise, *thy* love,” and Guy has her in his arms again, murmuring: “You spoke the words ‘the daughter of a Viceroy!’ Beware the penalty.”

“Take it, tyrant,” whispers the girl, and with this name that women love to give to those whose domination commands their love, she puts her soul upon her lips and gives it to him.

And this game might go on indefinitely, the two seeming to like to play it very well, did not the sound of Oliver’s rapid footsteps announce his coming from the banqueting room.

He steps to them, and bowing before the young lady [100]says: “Doña de Alva, I have the honor, as your father’s herald, to announce his coming!”

“Papa! Here!” and with these words the girl is up.

“Yes, the Duke’s cavalcade is already in the Shoemarket, doubtless he is in search of you. I will tell the Countess de Pariza.”

As Oliver on his errand closes the door Guy knows his time is very short, for Hermoine is dallying with her furs and whispering: “Away from your garrison without leave, papa had better not see you. I will meet him in the street.”

Then as Guy is wrapping the cloak about her, each touch a caress, she adds significantly; “I shall spend a month or two in Brussels, but if Major Guido Amati de Medina asks for leave from the Middelburg garrison, he will doubtless get it. Though don’t, for sight of me, neglect the duties of your post. Remember, my Guido, that every step you take in the army brings you nearer to the church door where a bride awaits you—whom you have made forget she is the daughter of a Viceroy!”

“Penalty!” mutters Guy, and takes this kiss very solemnly, for already the murmur of the approaching crowd tells of the coming father.

At this the young lady says, with a delicious *moue*: “How doleful! One would think you an unsuccessful suitor! But your message by Oliver spoke of danger,” and there is a tremor in her voice.

“Yes, I must have the word of the night to pass the sentries. I must leave this evening.”

“Of course to be in Middelburg when your commission arrives. I have thought of that and brought it with me.” With this she hands him a little paper.

It reads:

THE WORD IS “SANTA CRUZ.”
COUNTERSIGN “DON FREDRICO.”

As he glances at this, she smiles in his face: “I’ve half a mind not to give it to you—not to let you go. What brought my rash young officer to Antwerp without leave?”

“*You*.”

“Oh!”

“And for you I’d come again a thousand times. I [101]was going to the Drowned Lands duck shooting, when, by the blessing of God, I saved you from the Beggars of the Sea, my own—my prize.” And knowing that every chance of this earth is against his wearing as his bride this sweetheart he has won, Guy’s face is drawn and contorted with the agony of a parting that is to him like death. Sadness is catching as well as love, and the girl gets to sighing and sobbing under his farewells that are so solemn—though she can’t guess why.

But Oliver, with rattling door-latch, cries: “The Countess de Pariza is already in the carriage. Quick!”

Then Guy, seeing his time has come, though his sweetheart would linger longer, and begins to cling to him with little sighs of love, hurriedly assists her to the carriage and puts her in.

Half turning round, his affianced holds up her white finger to him. Upon it glistens the ring of his love.

The postilions crack their whips, the state vehicle flies through the arch, and all that he has to remind him of the woman who was but now in his arms, is the memory of her kisses, her ruby ring upon his finger, and a little document that bears the talisman that will make him safe from her father's sentries at the gates.

[Contents]

CHAPTER VIII.

“THE UNGAINABLE!—BUT I’LL GAIN HER!”

“Look,” says the painter, leading the way to a window opening on the street.

And Guy, from the curtains of Bodé Volcker’s house, sees the man of the death’s face, before whom the crowd cower and tremble, bow to his saddle-bow before the coach of his daughter, his face illuminated by the proud eyes of father’s love.

“Egad! I think I’ve run up my account with him,” mutters the Englishman. Then he turns suddenly to Antony and says: “A word with you. On my first visit here, for my safety you invented for my use the name of Captain Guido Amati, of Romero’s foot. [102]There is another living Guido Amati, Captain of Romero’s foot.”

“Certainly there is,” returns Oliver, and astounds Guy. “I took the name from the roster of Romero’s regiment. It was then quartered in Friesland, two hundred miles from here, the most distant of all the Netherland provinces, and I thought it better to give you a name that could be verified. But what does this matter?”

“Matter!” replies Chester glumly. “Only this, that I have just learned that Guido Amati has been promoted on my account to Major in his regiment; that *Captain* Guido Amati of Romero’s foot has been behaving in some wild, reckless kind of manner, apparently with ladies, and that *Major* Guido Amati has just been severely cautioned to behave himself from this time forth most circumspectly. Zounds!” he goes on savagely, “if this gentleman I am christened after doesn’t take good care he’ll have an account to render to me, who have now his sins on my shoulders!”

Then he bursts into a laugh in which Oliver joins, and says more complacently: “But I’ve also got the reputation of being the bravest man in the army. Besides, I am the third cousin of the Duke of Medina Cœli, and, I imagine, entitled to keep my hat on in the presence of Philip II. of Spain.”

“Very well, my grandee,” returns Antony smiling. “Here is the bill the Countess de Pariza has run up against you—two hundred guilders! That’s your half of the affair. If his Highness of Alva hadn’t chanced along I imagine she’d have bought all in Bodé Volcker’s warehouses.”

“A—ah,” sighs Guy, passing over the money, “I’d give everything I have for another *tête-à-tête* with my—my promised wife,” he struggles with a tear as he thinks of the beautiful being whose love he has captured by a *coup de main*.

“YOUR PROMISED WIFE!” gasps Oliver. “*Morbleu!* you have been making hay,” next shortly says: “By heaven, if Alva ever puts hand on you and knows this, dread the reckoning, my audacious Englishman. Besides, you’ll have to be quick about this matter if you ever get her!” [103]

“Why so?”

“Alva will not remain in the Netherlands much longer. The country is crushed (pacified he calls it), though the embers are smouldering. He’s collecting the tenth penny tax, but not paying the troops. Some of the money he sends to Spain—just enough to keep Philip quiet, but the balance—God knows what he does with it, though I guess it is for transmission to Italy or to Spain, to make him equal in wealth to many a king.”

“By St. George, if I could get my hands on it,” answers the Englishman, the instinct of the sea rover coming up in him. “That would be a fitting dower for his fair daughter.”

“As far as my information goes,” says Oliver, “no living man has put his eyes on where he keeps this treasure, though I have a suspicion. The great statue that he is erecting, the one that will be undraped next week, in the enceinte of the Citadel here, has something peculiar in its dimensions. Its pedestal is enormous. The workmen employed upon its base have been brought from Italy, and are under the direct personal supervision of Paciotto, his engineer. These having finished the pedestal, have all been reshipped, bountifully rewarded, to their native country. Not one has been permitted to remain in the Netherlands. There’s a secret in that statue!”

Further consideration of this is suddenly broken in upon by the entrance of the ex-burgomaster and his daughter. The old gentleman seems pleased.

“You’ll stay and sup with me, gentlemen, I hope,” he remarks. “I am happy to announce that my daughter Mina has been an obedient little girl this afternoon, and sold goods for me in my shop—four hundred guilders worth, to the Countess de Pariza, two hundred paid in cash, something that never happened to me before in my dealings with the nobility. But then,” he chucks Mina under the chin, “my little girl is a very sharp business woman. Some day she’ll be as valuable as her poor mother was.”

“Father,” says the young lady, taking advantage of the circumstances, “can I go to the Duchess of Aerschot’s?”

“Humph! Well, you’re young, you shall be happy; [104]but don’t keep the horses out all night; you know I use them in the goods van in the morning. Gentlemen, remain, and I’ll show you my little girl is not only a good saleswoman, but a cook and housewife.”

“Father!” ejaculates the young lady very sternly, “Remember that we have a Frenchman-cook in the house!”

But Guy does not stay to test the cuisine of the Bodé Volcker mansion. Having had his *tête-à-tête* with brunette, he gives Oliver a chance of interview with blonde, and goes off to the Painted Inn, where Antony promises to join him early in the evening.

It is now dark, and seating himself in the wine room, which is illuminated by oil lamps and flickering candles, the Englishman orders a bounteous supper, knowing that he may be up all the night returning to his ship. Success has given him appetite, though he scarce knows what he is eating, for his whole meal is a succession of recollections, each one a rapture. These rhapsodies are suddenly and disagreeably broken in upon.

A man, apparently from his dress and demeanor the captain of some trading vessel, strides into the room followed by a burgher, and with a muttered oath slaps himself into a chair at the table next to Chester. "*Voor den duivel!*" he growls, "not permitted to pass the city gates to go to my own ship. What'll become of my cargo, half landed. The mate and drunken crew will be having a fine time!"

"Calm yourself, Captain," says his consignee in soothing tone. "The regulation is very unusual. You will doubtless be permitted to pass through the gates to the quay at daylight."

"Yes, giving me the expense of a berth at an inn, and my comfortable cabin unoccupied. Another guilder wrung out of me in this port of Antwerp. If this thing goes on, the commerce of this place will be damned forever."

"But it will probably never occur again," says the merchant. "Such a thing has not been heard of before for a year." And the two go into conversation discussing the why's and wherefore's of this unusual vigilance at the gates.

Guy gets to meditating upon this also. He had noticed [105]before, during the early part of his meal, this same captain, apparently the guest of the same merchant at supper at one of the tables. Half an hour before this they had gone out; they have now returned, the captain having evidently been unable to pass the guards. If such orders have been issued the word of the night is probably useless. What can have caused it? Can it be some suspicion of his presence in the town?

Even as he meditates, Oliver enters, a very serious look on his face. Stepping up to Guy's table he seats himself by him and whispers: "Come with me."

"Why?" This is a whisper also.

"Orders have been given for nobody to pass out of the gates of Antwerp to-night."

"The reason?"

"I don't know, unless they suspect your presence in the town. Come to my lodgings with me."

"No, I shall remain here," replies the Englishman firmly.

"Why?"

"For two reasons. First, I won't put further jeopardy upon you. Second, if orders are given for no one to pass the gates, I expect they will very shortly come to the quick ears of a young lady who is interested in one Major Guido Amati de Medina, an officer of Romero's foot, absent from his post without leave. Incidentally to-day I mentioned to her that I stopped at the Painted Inn. This is the place where she would send to find me. But don't stay with me, Oliver. My seizure in your company might bring suspicion on you—sit at another table!"

"I won't leave you, when perchance I can aid you," says the generous artist. Then he mutters suddenly: "By heaven, perhaps it has come now!"

And it has, though not as Antony fears, for little Ensign de Busaco, swinging through the door, takes one glance about the room and strides up to the Englishman.

"I want you," he says, while Guy's hand quietly seeks the dirk in his bosom. "I want you to take one of the state barges down to Sandvliet to-night."

"Ah!"

"Yes, I was unable to obtain leave to remain out of [106]barracks to-night at the provost marshal's office, and went to the Citadel to get it. While there I was summoned to Doña de Alva. She remarked to me that Captain Amati, who had brought her barge up so successfully last night, was just the man to take it down this evening. It goes on some errand of the young lady. She charged me to give this note to you, and to conduct you through the Citadel to the place of landing the night before, where the rowers and a new crew will be ready—I believe the Beggars of the Sea killed the last."

With this he presents a sealed letter to the Englishman in the handwriting that he loves.

Breaking the seal of Alva, Guy hastily reads:

> *My Dearest Guido.*
>
> I can't help calling you that. It is, perhaps, rash, but that is how I think of you.
>
> It is just now known to me that the gates of the city are closed to egress to-night, information of some daring pirate or outlaw being concealed in Antwerp having reached headquarters. Knowing the necessity of an officer absent without leave reaching Middelburg before his commission, I am despatching my galley to my country house at Sandvliet to bring up

some articles left behind in the hasty retreat of last night. Will you not be kind enough to steer the boat down the Schelde as successfully as you steered it up?

Ensign de Busaco will pass you through the Citadel.

Praying that God will watch over you and bring you back to me with as much love in your heart as I have for you in mine, I am, as I ever shall be, your

HERMOINE.

"You look happy," laughs De Busaco, "at an order for a long night boat journey?"

"I am always at the orders of Doña de Alva," remarks Guy. "Come!"

"Quick," replies the little Ensign. "I've got my leave to stay out of barracks this night. The sooner we get through with this the sooner I am free for my affair."

So, Guy hastily settling his score, the three leave the Painted Inn and making their way to Beguin street, stride rapidly along that thoroughfare to the Esplanade, where Oliver, in low tones, and with hearty grasp, says: "Good-bye."

"God bless you!" mutters Guy. [107]

And though they speak it not, as their hands clasp they mean friendship and brotherhood.

A few minutes after Chester and De Busaco are at the Citadel, where, passing over the drawbridge and through the great gateway, Guy learns that the word of the night has been changed and is now "San Sebastian," countersign "Corpus Christi."

From here they pass through the enceinte right by the statue of Alva, De Busaco remarking parenthetically: “They’ve got his arm up to-day. They’ll be all ready to show him off next week. *Caramba!* that means the trouble of a dress parade. And no pay day yet. Some day we may dig out our arrears from this hollow pedestal. Alva is cunning, but his troops have their eyes open also!”

Going across this great fortification, they come out at the little sally-port in the moat where Guy had landed the night before. Here they have no difficulty of exit. The same galley that the Englishman brought up is waiting for them; the rowers in place with a new crew, to whom De Busaco introduces him as the officer who will take charge of the boat to Sandvliet; then goes on his way with a hasty “*Adios, Señor!*” for the little ensign is behind in his appointment with some young lady of the city.

Just as the boat is casting off, for Guy does not waste much time about this matter, a waiting maid, one of the Moorish handmaidens of the night before, comes running over the little drawbridge crying: “Stay!—one moment—stay!”

Then, as Guy stands up in the barge, she whispers to him, holding out a belt of heavy leather: “Buckle this round your waist, *Señor Capitan*, my mistress charges me to tell you to be careful of it. It is the one you left in the boat so carelessly last night.”

“Oh—ah, yes,” says the Englishman, to whom lies this day have become easy. “I was looking for it. I didn’t know where I’d left it,” and buckling it about him, wonders what the deuce is in it.

“Egad, it’s not a life preserver,” he thinks. “It would send me to the bottom like a shot.”

Anyway, whatever it is, he is enraptured to get it from the hands of Hermoine de Alva. [108]

But he has not much time to think of this; he has called to the rowers and the boat is now under way and gliding through the moat that surrounds the great bastions of the Spaniard.

Five minutes after they are in the open river, and, though the tide is against them, they are *en route* toward Sandvliet and safety. Keeping well across by the further bank of the river they pass unchallenged, though Guy can see the lights of several guard and patrol boats moving among the shipping on the city's edge.

"Give way, my lads," cries the Englishman enthusiastically, "and I'll stand a cask of wine when we reach Sandvliet."

Thus adjured the men bend to their oars, while the cockswain of the barge gets into quite friendly chat with Chester, telling him that this place they are going to is a beautiful summer chateau used sometimes by Alva himself, but mostly by his daughter, to enjoy the fresh sea breezes blowing up the Schelde estuary during the hot months of summer.

"We came down very early this year," he says, "the weather was so pleasant. Fortunately I was in Antwerp last night, otherwise I would have been done to death with poor Antonio and the rest by those murdering Beggars of the Sea."

The conversation of this man whiles away the time, and in three hours, the wind aiding them a little, they are off the Fort of Lillo.

Here four guard boats are on duty, one of them stopping their barge. As the *Costa Guarda* comes alongside, her commander recognizing a state barge of Alva, and Guy giving him the new words of the night, which have apparently been sent hurriedly down to Lillo, the captain of the boat wishes Chester God-speed, remarking: "Take care of yourself. It is reported that the First of the English is somewhere down below. Two galleys, the *Santa Cruz* and the *Holy Trinity*, go down to see if they can capture this pirate to-morrow morning."

“Thank you for the information,” replies Guy, as his boat dashes on its way.

At the last dyke left standing by the flood below Fort [109]Lillo, Guy sees three lanterns displayed in line and knows his boat is awaiting him. He suddenly says: “I’ve piloted you through the worst of the journey. You are now within a mile of the country place. What is it named?”

“Bella Vista,” replies the cockswain.

“Very well, take the galley to Bella Vista and perform the errand you are charged with. Here’s two doubloons for the wine I promised you and the crew. Land me upon the dyke. A boat is awaiting me there. I am going duck shooting on the Drowned Lands; if my men row fast enough I shall get there for the morning flight. I have arquebuses and a cross bow in my skiff.”

The two doubloons making the men very happy, they quickly land Guy upon the dyke and depart on their way.

A few minutes after the Englishman, getting to the three lanterns, waves them.

Continuing this some little time, the splash of oars is heard, and a boat comes very cautiously through the darkness, feeling its way up to the land, apparently fearing ambuscade.

“Ahoy!” shouts Guy.

Then he hears Martin Corker cry: “Give way, lads! That’s the captain’s voice,” and with three or four sturdy strokes the boat glides up to the dyke.

A moment after Chester, pulled by English arms, is driving as fast as oars can take him towards the *Dover Lass*. The little ship is difficult to discover, as she has no lights out; but the boat, giving flash signals, the vessel hangs up a lantern to show them where to find her.

Upon his deck Chester receives report from his first officer:

“I’m glad you’re here,” says Dalton. “We would have been attacked to-morrow, I think. I am sure a patrol boat came down the river to see if they could discover us.”

“We’ll not be attacked to-morrow,” laughs Guy, and taking speaking trumpet, he gives orders to break ground with the anchor and to hoist the head sails.

“You’re not going to fight the Spaniards?”

“No, run away to England. I have such an important [110]communication for my Queen it would be treason if I risked losing it.”

Then, his vessel being handy, and his crew numerous, the *Dover Lass* is very quickly under way, driving down the Schelde for the open ocean.

And in the cabin is Guy Stanhope Chester, securing under lock and key the spoils of this strange trip to Antwerp.

These are: a package of letters in cipher touching the assassination of Elizabeth of England, and the key by which to read them; a ruby ring that tells him he has won the love of the Viceroy’s daughter, and two letters in her handwriting.

“Egad, I’ve done pretty well,” thinks Guy. Then he looks at the miniature he has carried with him for over three years and mutters: “Marvelous that I at last should find and win her. Who says romance died with the troubadours? Egad, I feel like a troubadour myself. Ta-la-la!”—and taking troubadour step, he suddenly mutters: “Gadzooks! I have also something else,” for the heavy belt about his waist reminds him of the last thing Doña de Alva has sent to him.

Inspecting it he finds it is really a strong leather bag, made to buckle on securely.

Opening it he growls: “Pish!” for it is laden with golden doubloons, but a moment after pounces on a little packet that he has swept out with the coin. Then he suddenly laughs: “Egad! She didn’t know I had one of her before,” for another miniature of his fair Castilian sweetheart greets his devouring eyes. A little note is folded up with the portrait. It reads:

> “*Dearest*:
>
> “I have taken the liberty of sending you my face to help you remember it. It is not the living image for you to carry with you; God knows I wish it were. But some day when Major Guido Amati de Medina becomes a General, I’ll make it the real one—oh God! what happiness!
>
> “I have taken the liberty of enclosing with this a hundred golden doubloons. The officers in the Middelburg garrison have not been paid for over a year, and I would wish a gentleman who is one day to wed the daughter of Alva to live in suitable style, appointment and equipage. If you hesitate to accept this I shall not think you love me as I want you to. It is but a little first payment in advance on the dower of
>
> “Your future spouse,
> “Hermoine de Alva.”

[111]

“My future spouse she shall be,” cries Guy. Then in that wildness passion brings to young hearts he puts the two miniatures of the exquisite beauty who has just signed herself his future wife before him, and chuckles: “Behold my *old* love—the unfindable that I have found! See my *new* sweetheart, the ungainable, that, by heaven! I will win and wear as my wife, though she be the daughter of Alva, mine enemy.” [112]

BOOK II.

Twixt Love and War.

[Contents]

CHAPTER IX.

“NO PROVISIONS, NO WATER, BUT PLENTY OF POWDER!”

On the morning of the second day after this, Chester lands at Sandwich, and by relays of horses travels as fast as is in man and beast to London.

Arriving at the capital, he learns that his sovereign and her court are at Hampton, and to his joy discovers from popular tongue that the Queen is enjoying the best of health. He is in time to prevent any attempt at Borgia business with the hope of the realm.

For at that time all true Englishmen, Catholics or Protestants, feared that by some underhand, insidious Italian plot, Elizabeth of England was in some way to be done to death and the kingdom given to her legitimate successor to the throne, Mary Queen of Scots, who was a prisoner in Elizabeth’s hands; one ambitious noble of Catholic faith, the Duke of Norfolk, being not only anxious to liberate the beautiful Mary and put her on the throne of England, but also to marry her and reign as Prince Consort. This would have placed Britain thoroughly under the influence of Philip II., of Spain, and have opened the way for his pet scheme, the establishing of the Inquisition in England, with all its horrors of burnings, flayings, and torturings as practiced in the Netherlands under similar circumstances by Alva, his Viceroy and lieutenant.

Better Englishman than bigot, Guy Chester, though a moderate Catholic, is exceedingly anxious for the safety of his Protestant Queen. [113]

All this makes Guy in desperate haste to give her warning of her danger at the hands of Ridolfi, Alva’s agent in London.

So, taking horse again, though thoroughly tired by his long ride from Sandwich, the young Englishman finds himself in the early evening at the palace of Hampton Court. There getting quick audience with Cecil,

Lord Burleigh, he gives him the cipher letters from Vitelli to Ridolfi, and also the key furnished by Oliver.

Upon Guy's hastily mentioning the purport of these letters, his lordship, with a very serious face, says: "You have done a great service to the State. But I imagine you have been riding all day. I will see that you have supper and refreshment," and summoning a lackey, gives order to this effect. "By the time you have finished making yourself comfortable, I and my under-secretary will have translated and transcribed these letters for the Queen's private eye. These you shall present in person to your sovereign, as is your right."

This arrangement is very satisfactory to the young man, who has been in the saddle twelve hours and has partaken of but hasty refreshment on the road.

So an hour afterward Guy, his body made comfortable with food and his spirits heightened by wine, accompanies Lord Burleigh, who now holds England in his grasp, having the favor and confidence of his sovereign, to Queen Elizabeth's waiting room, where they are received in rather off-hand style by Her Majesty of England, who is in great fashion of jeweled stomacher, above which her white shoulders glitter with necklace of pearls and diamonds. Very vain, as she has a right to be, as daughter of Anne Boleyn, the beauty of her father's court, she stands in kirtle and long train covered with aglets inlaid with precious stones and high-heeled Spanish shoes, making a great show of vanity, sprightliness, dignity and domination. In short, she is good Queen Bess, at her best and bravest—at thirty-five—at her zenith—before age gets the better of her beauty and her temper.

"My good Burleigh," she says, "what a hasty man you are. I have but just received your communication [114]saying time was important, and have omitted five courses of my supper and sent my tiring women where their prying ears will not catch private conference. And you, Master Chester,

my robber of the sea, have you discovered another eight hundred thousand crowns of Alva's money within my jurisdiction and government?"

"No," answers Burleigh, as the two bow before her, "Master Chester has simply discovered a plot of my Lord of Alva against your life. These letters from Vitelli, his maréchal de camp and confidant to Ridolfi, the Italian banker of London, prove it."

"Oho! in cipher," says the Queen, looking at them.

"Yes, but thanks to Master Chester's being willing to risk his life for Your Majesty again, he has obtained the cipher in Antwerp. These letters are now transcribed into English."

"Quick—let me see!" And Elizabeth, sitting down and hastily glancing them through, cries out: "So they would poison me, and put that traitor Norfolk on the throne as consort to the lady whom I hold in my hand. *That settles Norfolk!* He was yesterday condemned for high treason by the Lords. These letters, my Burleigh, are his death warrant. With the lady I'll reckon afterwards, and as for Ridolfi—"

"Orders have already been given to have Ridolfi seized, Your Majesty," interjects Burleigh.

"Very well," replies Elizabeth, "then there is nothing more to do for the present, though I shall change my cook; except"—here Her Majesty's eyes light up—"except to reward this young gentleman whom we have outlawed for matters of State policy: but then, we love pirates! There is our Francis Drake, who thinks no more of despoiling a Spaniard and turning in ten per cent. of his booty than he does of eating and drinking. There's old John Hawkins, who'll steal blackamoors on the coast of Africa to sell them to the Dons and cut their throats while trading with them—all for the glory of England! In fact, I think, Burleigh, pirates are my best subjects. But since I have dismissed my own mummers this

evening on your account Master Chester, I ought to have some compensation. Tell me the tale of your adventures in the Netherlands." [115]

This Guy doing, Her Majesty listens with open ears and one or two little chuckles and slaps with her fan upon Burleigh, though at the mention of Doña de Alva they give earnest attention, especially at that portion of Chester's story which refers to his various interviews with that young lady. And Guy, getting warmed up to his subject, his eyes brighten once or twice in mentioning the beauty of the girl.

"Odds bodkins!" cries Elizabeth, as he closes. "This is a story as romantic as the troubadours tell of Amadis de Gaul saving maidens from giants, as you did Miss Minx of Alva from the Sea Beggars. Egad, I'm afraid she has disturbed his loyalty, my Burleigh. When speaking of his Spanish wench, Master Chester looks at his sovereign of England in a manner that the Lords might condemn as high treason."

"Ah, Your Gracious Majesty," replies Guy, who is courtier as well as pirate, "if love is high treason, then every young man who gazes upon his sovereign of England is a traitor."

His ardent glance emphasizes his speech, which is easy, as Elizabeth is in the zenith of her beauty—a beauty that is hardly understood now, most of her portraits having been taken when she was fifty and upward. But as Chester looks at her she is only thirty-five.

"And I will punish this audacious gallant," she says, laughing, "though he is no traitor. Give me your sword, Guy Chester."

The young man is about to unbuckle the weapon.

"No, naked, as you use it on my enemies!"

Drawing it from the scabbard and sinking on one knee, Guy, a sudden hope of unexpected glory coming to him, hands it to his sovereign.

“He is of good birth, Burleigh, I hear?”

“Your Majesty,” says Cecil, bowing, “on his mother’s side he has the blood of Lord Stanhope of Harrington. His father is cousin to the Stanleys and High Sheriff of Cheshire. His grandfather was belted knight.”

“Then,” says the Queen of England, “he shall be knight also!” And administers with dainty hand the accolade, saying: “Rise up, Sir Guy Chester!”

But Sir Guy does not rise before he does homage to [116]the fair hand that has knighted him so gallantly that Her Majesty gets red in the face, and cries out: “What new science in hand kissing has this Spanish girl taught him?”

Next the young man standing before her she tenders him his sword, holding it by the naked blade, the handle toward his hand, saying: “May you as belted knight use this as you have before to the terror of the enemies of England; especially he of Alva—do not spare him for his daughter’s sake.”

“No,” returns Guy, “for every blow I strike against the father brings me nearer to the daughter.”

“Odd stale fish!” jeers Her Majesty, “what does this new made popinjay of Chester think to do with the daughter of a prince?”

“To *marry* her, by God’s will and Your Majesty’s most gracious permission,” cries Guy, and retires with Lord Burleigh, leaving the Queen of England in very good humor with her new knight.

But notwithstanding Chester’s information has, perchance, saved the life of his Queen, Elizabeth, great sovereign as she is, has a strange parsimony in affairs of State, and though Guy petitions for money to refit his vessel and pay his crew, it does not come. So, being desperately

anxious to get to the Netherlands again, he uses the hundred doubloons, the present from his sweetheart, to fit up his vessel against her father, devoting half of them to the embellishment and ornament of the cabins of the *Dover Lass*, making her staterooms so fine in woodwork and appointments that Harry Dalton, his first lieutenant, ejaculates: "By saucy Poll of Plymouth, one would think he meant this for a wedding cruise!"

But despite the hundred doubloons Chester soon finds himself without money sufficient to provision and make his vessel thoroughly effective, and goes up to London from Sandwich to make a final appeal to his parsimonious sovereign.

Expecting to do this through Burleigh, who possesses more than any one the royal ear, and who has always stood his friend, Chester is shown into his Lordship's private cabinet one afternoon late in March, to find that nobleman in a brown study. [117]

"You're just the man I wish to see, Sir Guy," he remarks. "Tell me all about the *Gueux*, these Sea Beggars of the Netherlands."

"That, my lord, I can do in very few words," replies Chester. "They are men of all classes from Brabant, Flanders, Friesland, Holland—everywhere that Alva rules, driven by cruelty and persecution to take to the sea, for to live on the land means execution by fire, with torture additional. They have been outlawed on account of their resistance to Spanish tyranny. In it are men high in the councils of the Prince of Orange, who has attempted to regulate them by granting commissions, one of which I have the honor to hold, and the medal accompanying it I wear," and he exhibits his badge of the *Gueux* to Lord Burleigh. "In it are all those driven from land to ship, from the Chevalier Van Tresslong and William de la Mark, the Lord of Lumey to Dirk Duyvel, whose name proclaims him a free and easy pirate. But why do you ask me about the *Gueux*?"

“For this reason. Twenty-five vessels manned by them are now in the harbor of Dover. They appeal to us for protection, provisions, water. Van Tresslong, and their admiral, De la Mark, are in London to ask assistance. We are nominally at peace with Spain and Alva, but I don’t like to refuse them hospitality.”

“Twenty-five sail—’tis a fleet! You must refuse them hospitality,” returns Guy.

“Why?”

“Please let me explain this to the Queen. Take me to her; I must have money for my ship.”

“Which I’m afraid Her Majesty will not grant very readily. She’s had a dozen new dresses this month—millinery bills in the female mind have the preference over naval equipment,” laughs Cecil; but orders his carriage.

So the two proceed to Westminster, where the Queen has summoned Burleigh, to obtain his advice before receiving the envoys of the *Gueux*.

“Zounds!” cries Her Majesty, “My Lord of Burleigh, I see you have brought another *Gueux* with you. Is he their ambassador also?” With this she looks at Guy frowningly, for the *Gueux* have bothered Queen Elizabeth’s mind for the last day or two. They are hungry [118]people, and she does not care particularly about feeding them; they are thirsty people, and she does not desire to diminish her exchequer to buy drink for them; but they are enemies of Alva, and she would like to succor them.

“No, Your Majesty,” replies Guy with sudden inspiration, “I do not appeal for succor for the *Gueux*. *Don’t give them any!*”

“Why not?” asks Queen Elizabeth, who is unaccustomed to being advised so freely outside of her Privy Council.

“For these reasons: If you give them provisions and drink, they will stay here, and be your guests and pensioners as long as your hospitality holds out.”

“Out on the lazy rascals they would eat me out of castle and kingdom,” grumbles Her Majesty.

“Twenty-five vessels are a fleet. They have left the Netherlands, that leaves Alva’s hands so much more free to deal with you.”

“Then you would refuse them food?”

“Yes,” replies Guy. “Not a barrel of provisions.”

“But they have no water.”

“Not a barrel of water. Provision them and water their ships, and, though they be ordered from England, they will not go back to the Netherlands. The Spanish Main, where booty is thick for bold hands like theirs, will perchance be more to their liking than Alva’s hard knocks. *Give them nothing but powder and ball.* Then they must sail to near-by port. They dare not go to France, they must go back straight at Alva’s throat, and twenty-five vessels of them are a power that may change the whole course of military events. They have been weak before because they were never banded together. Now there is unity. Give them powder, Your Majesty, give them powder and ball for him of Alva!”

“Ho! ho! Make ’em fight for their dinners! Gadzooks!” cries Her Majesty. “My Sir Guy Chester, uses not only his sword, but his head. What say you, Burleigh?”

“Say?” replies the English statesman, who is great enough and generous enough to admit the wisdom of [119]another, “I say he has given you the wisest advice you have ever received. You make the Spanish ambassador happy by telling him you will refuse admission or succor to the *Gueux*,

and by doing so you send a thunderbolt straight at Alva and Spain, stronger than you could unless you waged open war with England's powers at land and sea, for which we are not ready—"

"But it will come in good time, my lord," remarks Elizabeth. Then summoning a page, she says: "Give order for the two envoys of the *Gueux* to enter."

Then Van Tresslong and De la Mark enter to receive what they think is their despair, but in time will be their glory.

Her Majesty of England, standing upon a dais, receives very haughtily the two adventurers, whose doublets are shabby with hard usage, but whose swords are long, and whose gaunt faces give evidence of poverty and half rations.

"You are here, gentlemen," she says, "to petition me—for what?"

"Provisions to keep us from starving," answers the admiral.

"No provisions!"

"Good heavens! In the name of charity. We had supposed you enemy of Alva."

"I am the *friend* of Alva. NO PROVISIONS! What else?"

"And water—we have only three days' water in our vessels. Permit us at least that which humanity never refused to thirsty sailor—*water*!"

"NO WATER! Dare to land to take water from running stream or lake and I make war upon you!"

"And this is a Christian country?"

"Yes, Christian enough to keep its obligations and faith with Spain, a friendly power. If within twenty-four hours you have not sailed from our port of Dover our batteries and castle open upon you with bombard and

culverin."

"And drive us away without water, without food, upon the open ocean?"

"YES!"

"Then, Your Majesty," says Van Tresslong, "God [120]forgive your inhumanity. We have given up for our religion, which is yours; for our country that you have professed to love, everything we have on earth—save our lives. When the time comes we will give up them also. It must *now* be our lives. We must go back to death grip with Alva!"

"Heaven help us," sighs the admiral. "We have not even powder to fight with!" and the two, bowing together, retire in despair from the presence of England's sovereign.

She makes one step as if to stay them, then cries harshly: "God forgive me! I shall be called an inhuman woman. I shall dream of these poor, starving *Gueux* to-night. But they shall not go back without *ball* and *powder*!" With this she says to Chester: "Has your vessel sailed?"

"No, Your Majesty."

"Then you shall go also. Here are orders for you to have all the powder, arms, ball and ammunition you can carry. Take them. Sail from the port of Sandwich to-night. Meet the *Gueux* fleet off Dover. Arm them; ammunition them, give them plenty to fight with."

"But, Your Majesty," replies Guy, who now knows he will win what he wants, "I have no money to pay my crew."

"Here is an order on my treasury for twenty thousand crowns." And Elizabeth, sitting down to write, says suddenly: "But your crew is only one hundred and twenty-five men. Fifteen thousand crowns will keep your surly dogs from growling," and signs order to that effect, next almost tears it up, muttering: "I think *ten* thousand will be sufficient."

"No, Your Majesty, it will not, and the expedition will be cheap at fifteen thousand crowns, for by it you will set a band of cut-throats on Alva, who, while they may curse your inhumanity, will fight far better than your belted knights, for they will be fighting, not for country now, not for religion now, but for that thing that dominates all men's souls—EXISTENCE! *Besides, they do it free of charge!*"

"Egad, we have an orator here, Cecil," laughs Her [121]Majesty. "A regular sea lawyer. Some day, perchance, he may be—under-secretary of state, eh, Lord Burleigh?"

"Perchance, Your Majesty. You have had many of them with less brains."

"And less jabber," replies Elizabeth, who cannot forget that she has fifteen thousand crowns less in her treasury. "He talked me out of the money, he took advantage of my weakness, Lord Burleigh. Take him away from here before I take the treasury order back. But go after those two poor *Gueux* nobles, have them to dinner with you. Show them *you* have a heart if your Queen has not." Then the two go out from the presence of Elizabeth of England, Guy stepping quite rapidly. He fears Her Majesty may rescind the draft on her exchequer.

Burleigh accompanies him to the treasury, apparently nervous himself about this matter. But the money being paid over, he says to Guy: "Her Majesty said to see these *Gueux* well armed and well ammunitioned. Will your vessel carry enough?"

"For a campaign?—No!"

"Then," says Burleigh, "here is my order, Sir Guy Chester. Take with you four ships, fill them up with powder, arms and munitions of war, for which I will give you royal warrant on the Queen's arsenal at Sandwich, Harwich, or any other to which you may apply. This is not merely an engagement for which we send these men, but a war, long and continued, against Alva; for it is now his head or those of the starving Beggars of the Sea. Here is also warrant permitting you if satisfactory

charter cannot be obtained, to take the vessels you need for our purpose. But of course all this is private and privileged between us. England is at peace with Spain. So, God speed you."

So Guy, going upon his errand with all the expedition he can command, obtains possession of four large caravals in the port of Sandwich, and loads them to the gunwale with all the arms and munitions of war he can obtain, powder enough for many a battle and many a siege, and taking these with him sails on the morning of the next day through the Downs and lies off and [122]on between the Goodwin Sands and Coast of France. Here the *Gueux*, coming out of Dover, can't very well miss him, and he is very shortly overhauled and apparently captured by these desperate gentry of the sea.

"Elizabeth of England would not give you provisions, but here are arms and ammunition with which to take them from Alva," Chester laughs, as Tresslong's vessel ranges alongside of the *Dover Lass*.

And understanding this very well, the *Gueux* loot the four captured vessels in great style, leaving him of the *Dover Lass* hardly enough powder to defend her with, which causes Guy to put very hastily into Dover for ammunition for himself.

Word of this being brought to Queen Elizabeth she cries out very savagely to her counsellor, Lord Burleigh: "Gadzooks, man, you have ruined my kingdom. You've robbed my arsenal at Sandwich of munitions sufficient to defend the realm of England. Thou art a vile traitor!"

"Under favor, my liege," remarks Cecil, "you said to munition and arm the *Gueux* well and thoroughly. I have done so. The more powder I give them, the more ball I give them, the harder it will be for your friend of Alva."

"Very well," answers Her Majesty, "this I forgive you if you gave a good wholesome dinner and plenty of strong wine to those poor famishing officers of the *Gueux*, Van Tresslong and Lord de la Mark."

“Your Majesty’s orders in that respect were obeyed also,” replies Burleigh. “They had every delicacy of the season and wine of finest vintage. Oho! I can see them eat now. No such assault was ever made on provender and wassail since the time of giant Glutton himself. Your Majesty will know how they ate by the bill that is already with your treasurer.”

“The bill with *my* treasurer!” screams Elizabeth. “Out upon you for a miserable, thieving knave! Burleigh, you’re robbing me; robbing your sovereign, you vile caitiff traitor—and my gear women and millinery scores still due and unpaid. Look to your weazened head if the *Gueux* win not victory over Alva!”

And with these words the Queen of England strides from the room in anger and dismay. [123]

[Contents]

CHAPTER X.

THE SECRET OF THE STATUE.

This matter of ammunition delays Guy in England several days. But the fleet little *Dover Lass* soon makes the trip to the Netherlands, carrying every inch of canvas she can show, and early in April Chester finds himself once more off the mouth of the Schelde, and sighting the town of Flushing is astounded but delighted to see the yellow, white and blue flag of Orange floating over the place.

"Zounds!" he cries to his first lieutenant, "the *Gueux* have landed and taken Flushing! There are two vessels sailing in with the flag of Orange at their peaks. Overhaul them and get me the news, Dalton."

In the course of half an hour the *Dover Lass* comes alongside the vessels that are commanded by Captain De Ryk of Amsterdam. From him he learns that the *Gueux* have not only taken Flushing, but have taken Briel, a strongly fortified town upon the island of Voorne, where the Rhine estuary reaches the German ocean. Their success has been the spark to illuminate the patriotism of Holland and the Netherlands. Town after town is declaring for the Prince of Orange as the Staatholder of Philip Second, and against Alva, for curiously enough, such was the respect with which royalty was regarded at that time that Orange still announced himself as the vassal of the Spanish crown, though fighting against its sovereign with all his might of arm and strength of brain.

Curiously enough also the two vessels of De Ryk, having left England somewhat later than the rest of the *Gueux*, have on board five hundred stout English volunteers, who greet Guy with shouts of Saxon welcome. For Burleigh, pondering upon Elizabeth's remarks, is anxious for his weazened head, and is now giving every aid in his power to this raid of the Beggars of the Sea.

So the *Dover Lass* and the two *Gueux* ships are wafted by light breezes toward Flushing quay. Just as they make landing there, a great commotion arises in the town. Some quarter of an hour before this they have noted a small pinnace with single mast and lateen [124]sail headed from the south, Antwerp-way, pass to the dock before them. From this three gentlemen in very fine clothes and with Spanish appearance have landed laughingly, and strolled up into the town.

Even as De Ryk and Chester step upon the quay, these three come running hurriedly from out the center of the place toward the dock, pursued by such a motley mob as quiet Flushing never saw before. It is as if two hundred priests and nuns, drunk with blood, were after them, for all these monks and nuns are brawny pirates, some having hassocks and cowls upon them, others wearing the robes of nuns. Their leader, fierce Dirk Duyvel himself, is habited as lady abbess, and all are armed to the teeth with pistol and pike or sword and arquebus.

"Down with the murderous Spanish!" cry some. "Hang them up on high, quick!" yell others. "Into the sea with Alva's butchers!" is the shout of the rest, all this larded with fearful imprecations and terrible Dutch oaths.

Seeing their retreat to their boat cut off by De Ryk's men, the leader of these three Spaniards comes speeding ahead of his foremost pursuers, and bowing before De Ryk takes off from his finger a gaudy signet ring, and presenting it to the *Gueux* captain, pants: "I—I surrender to you. I—I did not know this town was in possession of the—the rebels. By this ring guard me from sudden death. I am noble. I can pay a large ransom. I am Alva's engineer." He says this anxiously and breathlessly, for the crowd are upon him.

Guy now recognizes him with astonishment, as Paciotto, Alva's great military engineer, whom he had seen at the Captain General's side in Antwerp.

"You know me?" Paciotto gasps.

“Too well!” cries the throng, who now have hands on him.

“Too well!” mutters De Ryk, “But I’ll save you from immediate damnation,” and he and Guy and one or two of his officers with drawn swords protect these three men, who in another minute would have been hacked to pieces by the Beggars of the Sea. For these sea rovers, having drunk victory at the Briel, are now drunk with blood also, having requited in kind upon the [125]Spaniard some of the butcheries of the last five years—one or two of the most ferocious eating Castilian heart with gusto and drinking Italian blood *con amore*. Every one of them has some butchered brother or murdered father or outraged wife to make him as inhuman as his foes. What chance has any officer of Alva’s with such a mob? Guy soon finds Paciotto has not even choice of his manner of death.

While De Ryk and he save the Italian from immediate violence a number of the *Gueux* have boarded the little Spanish sloop in which he came and butchered the hapless crew with wild shouts of joy and triumph.

A moment after the Italian is dragged to the *Raadhuis* where Van Tresslong, who commands, is in consultation with the Burgomaster, “*Schout*” and other officials of the town; most of his captains being with him.

“By our martyrs,” cries the Dutch vice-admiral, “this day is fortunate. Here is one of Alva’s very pets right in our hands—a court-martial for the Italian gentleman!”

“I beg for law of war, William de Blois, Lord of Tresslong,” says Paciotto, quite haughtily, though hope has left his face.

“The same law of war that Alva gave to my murdered brother, when he executed him with seventeen other nobles in the Brussels horse market,” answers the Fleming.

“Yes, justice and mercy,” jeers one of his captains. “The same justice that Alva gave to my father when he cried for quarter at Jemmingen. The same mercy that De Bossu, but two days since, gave at Rotterdam.”

“With such judges I am condemned beforehand,” sighs the Italian, as Van Tresslong and his officers take seats about a drum head.

Then as the court is being sworn the Dutch Vice-Admiral, who has a long head, remarks: “We must make the Burgomaster one of our court. That will nail him to our cause. He will hold Flushing, as he values his own head, against Alva.”

So the Burgomaster, *nolens volens*, is made a member of the court, and Paciotto is put upon trial for his life.

“Of what do you accuse me?” asks the unfortunate [126]officer. “Of being a loyal subject of your king, Philip of Spain? Of that I plead guilty.”

“Bah!” replies Van Tresslong, “you’re the pet and confidant of Alva, who butchers us. That’s why we’ll have your life. Also, with your Italian engineering art you built for him his stronghold, the citadel of Antwerp.”

“If that deserves death, then execute me,” murmurs the Italian, “but I pray you with the sword.”

“Hold!” cries Guy, who has English sympathy with the under animal in the fight, “As your military counsel I will defend you in this court.”

“Do not waste your words for me, *señor*,” says the Italian sadly. “These Flemish dogs are licking their chops already for my blood.”

But Guy, unheeding this, goes to pleading for this unfortunate officer of Spain, using at times, in his impulsive way, a vehement eloquence that is so uncomplimentary to Paciotto’s accusers that did the Englishman not wear the *Gueux* medal himself, and, above all, were he not the man who

had given to their hands the four ships loaded with powder and ammunition, Sir Guy Chester himself might not have come scathless from out this council of the Beggars of the Sea.

In spite of Chester's imprecations and implorings the *Gueux* officers make very short work of the affair, and in less than five minutes by the ticking Dutch clock that stands facing them in the hall, they condemn the Italian engineer not to death with the sword, but to the dog's death—by the noose.

And sentence being given, the Italian cries suddenly: "How long is it since Flushing has been in danger of falling into your hands?"

"About three days," says a *Gueux* captain. "But what does that matter to you, who are to die in three minutes?"

At this Paciotto, smiting his hands together and his eyes flashing with anger even above their despair, utters these astounding words:

"My God! Sacrificed. Holy Virgin! Killed for my secret!" And suddenly whispers to Guy: "You are the First of the English?"

"Yes." [127]

"Ask the Dutch officers that I may have ten minutes in which to make my peace with God, alone with you, who, from the rosary you wear upon your neck, must be of my faith."

This appeal is answered by Van Tresslong with a surly "Yes!"

Whereupon Paciotto, his hands even now bound with the ligatures of execution, is thrust into a little adjoining room from which there is no escape, and into which, moved by the Italian's pleading eyes, and, perchance, prompted by some latent curiosity, Chester follows him.

“Close the door,” the Italian whispers. Then he bursts out still under his breath: “You are the only one who has been my friend in this my last hour on earth. Behold my reward! I can give you a fighting chance to become one of the magnates of this earth.”

“How?”

But the Italian scarcely answers this, muttering: “Sacrificed! The shadow of death is over me—put there by him of Alva, who never spares what it is his interest to destroy. This town threatened—for three days! He knew of this outbreak of the *Gueux*—that Flushing would be a place of extreme danger, and sent me here ostensibly to complete the fortifications, but really that his secret should pass away—with my life. For I am the only man in the Netherlands who knows it.” Then he breaks out suddenly, whispering hoarsely: “You, I am told, are one who cares as nothing for his life. Would you, for enormous wealth, avenge me of my enemy, though at a desperate risk?”

“For enormous wealth I would risk my life—nay, almost my soul,” gasps Guy, whose great thought, since he has won the love of Viceroy’s daughter, has been to gain station, power and gold enough to give her Viceroy’s state and pomp.

“Then, First of the English, you are the man fitted for my *post-mortem* reckoning with Alva. The man who dared to visit Antwerp; I remember you there—looking straight in the Viceroy’s face—his proclamation for your head posted on the wall above you. You are the man to give me vengeance. Listen to the secret of Alva’s statue.” [128]

“Alva’s statue!” cries Guy, recollection of Oliver’s words coming to him.

“Hush! Don’t interrupt me. My time is very short. This great statue the Duke has erected to his honor is partly for another purpose! To protect the treasure he has gathered from his tenth penny tax, that he means to transport to Spain for his own use, honor and profit. The pedestal—”

“Ah, I remember. The pedestal of unusual size—it contains the booty of the Netherlands,” whispers Chester.

“Bah! No, Alva is too astute for that. The statue and its pedestal contain *nothing*.”

“NOTHING?”

“And yet,” says the Italian, “*the statue is the guardian of Alva’s treasure*.”

“How?”

“Hearken. While altering and rebuilding the Citadel of Antwerp, I, as chief engineer, discovered an old vaulted way made for purposes of sally. It ran from the great Bastion of the Duke under the moat to a place of egress in the city itself, a house just beyond the Esplanade. Under secret instructions from the Captain-General, I excavated at the Citadel end of this passage in the solid rock thirty feet under ground a chamber. This chamber holds the treasures of Alva. The earth and solid masonry of the great bastion of the Duke are heaped upon it. It would take weeks of labor to dig down from the Citadel to obtain it, and explosives enough to blow up the bastion. Therefore it cannot be reached from the Citadel. But from the town it is accessible, though impossible to one not knowing its secret, for it has been guarded by every art the mechanism of Giovanni Alfriedo, an ingenious Italian imported from Venice, could give to its defense. Yet it is easy and quick of access to those who have the secret, and I am the only man save Alva that knows it now—Giovanni himself being slain by pirates on his return voyage to Venice, perchance by order and design.”

“Thy time is up!” shouts Van Tresslong, thundering on the door.

“Ten minutes more for the soul of a dying man,” murmurs Paciotto. [129]

“Yes, time that he may die in his church,” cries Guy, desperate now for Alva’s secret.

So a few minutes more are given to them, not for mercy, but to find a hangman. For the town executioner is absent at Middelburg and word of this being now brought to Van Tresslong he raises his voice in the crowd in front of the town hall, proclaiming largess for a hangman.

But none wish to undertake this degrading office—save one man, who being told Paciotto is a Spaniard, cries: “I’ll do the job, I’ll hang the Spanish forever! Only I must have liberty to attack and kill anyone who scorns me for having been a Spaniard’s hangman,” and makes his preparations with noose and ladder.

While they are finding executioner for him, Paciotto rapidly whispers in Guy’s ear: “The entrance to the passage is from a house now occupied by an old deaf and dumb woman, Señora Sebastian. She knows nothing about it, the place having been rented to her at little stipend after the work had been completed. You take up four stones in the center of the cellar and it shows you the passageway. But this vaulted gallery at two places before you come to the moat, and one right under the fosse itself, is guarded by iron doors of strength sufficient to resist anything but barrels of gunpowder. Each of these doors is opened by ingenious locks. According to the device of this skilled mechanic, each of these locks requires three peculiar keys that must be used in a certain varying order. Employed outside of this rotation the locks will yield no vantage to the keys. Any attempt to blow down the iron gates with powder would destroy the passageway itself, and let the Schelde in upon and drown you.”

“But what has the statue to do with this?” whispers Guy.

“Ah! that is Alva’s cunning joke upon his turbulent soldiery. By the Captain General’s mystery in regard to it half the mercenaries of his Antwerp garrison swear that the statue itself is the storehouse of Alva’s

gold. This is by his design. He does not fear the citizens taking his treasure, but that his own soldiers, unpaid for years, may break into open mutiny. The first thing they would seize would be the booty of their commander. [130]Therefore the first thing they would break into for his gold would be the pedestal of his statue. That done, the vaulted passageway from the town would be impassable to anything save fish, for the statue is so contrived that if disturbed on its base a sluice gate is opened and the waters of the moat flood the only path to Alva's treasure. After that, even if they discovered the true hiding place of his gold, it would be a month before the mercenaries could obtain it by mining and blowing up the Bastion of the Duke. Within that month the mutiny would certainly be put down and the treasure saved."

"But the keys?" whispers Guy impatiently, for the rising murmurs of the crowd outside shows him time is precious.

"I have here—open my doublet and cut away the lining," whispers Paciotto, "for my hands are bound—drafts of each key with its number, from which you can have them made, besides an account of how they should be used; also a drawing of the excavation leading to the treasure of the Duke. Give me vengeance on him—you mean to try, I can see it in your face—if you succeed, a rare surprise for him of Alva. How he will rave when in his empty treasure house he finds no plunder. All his tenth penny tax gone; the thing for which he has imperilled his favor with the king, the thing for which he has crushed these Netherlands to the earth. No gold for Alva—no gold—ho! ho!—ha! ha!—he! he!" and bursts into hideous despairing chuckle—his last laugh on earth.

Even as Guy takes from him a small package carefully sealed up in parchment cover, the door is thrown open, and Tresslong, De Ryk, and the *Gueux* officers enter.

"It is time the gallows should bear its fruit!" cries the admiral.

"And you have no mercy?" says the Italian.

“None to the confidant of Alva. We give you your master’s mercy!”

Then they seize him and drag him out, he desperately crying: “Give me the death of a gentleman—not the gallows, but the *sword*. I am as noble as Egmont and [131]Horn—I will have death by the sword, the noble’s death.”

But this mention of Egmont and Horn, the two murdered chiefs of the Netherland nobility, produces rage not consideration, and Paciotto is forced out on to the square facing the town hall. Here he looks up at the ladder standing against the gallows, upon which already the two officers who had accompanied him dangle; then putting despairing eyes on Chester, murmurs: “Remember, avenge me!”

So, in the midst of all that laughing, jeering gang of Beggars of the Sea, some gazing at him from the crowded square, others for better view climbing the riggings of their ships, that are but half a hundred yards away, most of them habited as monks and nuns, in fantastic garments, the spoil of the nunnery at Briel, Pedro Paciotto, engineer and man of science, gallant and man of war, steps up the ladder, a crucifix upon his lips, and though he is hung like a dog, dies like a gentleman and a Catholic.

But Guy scarce sees the convulsed limbs and dying agony. His eyes have before them only the heaping gold of Alva, the taxes of the Netherlands, the mighty treasures of the father that he will make his daughter’s wedding dower.

[Contents]

CHAPTER XI.

MAJOR GUIDO AMATI HAS A SPREE.

Chester is not the man to long for Alva's treasure without desperate and immediate efforts to get them. He is soon on board the *Dover Lass*, and, locking himself in his cabin, makes examination of the packet he has taken from the doublet of Paciotto, who is now hanging, food for the crows, in the market-place of Flushing.

On carefully opening the parchment wrapping he discovers [132]drawings of three large keys to their exact size and dimensions, numbered, respectively, one, two and three. Beneath directions for their use:

> "For first door use in succession keys numbers one, two and three.
>
> "For second door, keys numbered three, two and one.
>
> "For third door, key number two, then number one, then number three.
>
> "Use exactly in the order noted. Any change in this rotation may injure locks."

Besides this there is a sketch showing the direction and length of the passage under the Citadel, also where the sluice gate connected with the statue of Alva opens into the vaulted passage, and how that can be made immovable so that even if the statue is destroyed the waters of the Schelde will not enter the passageway to drown those at work upon the doors.

These drawings and directions are upon the finest and lightest Italian paper, so as to be of very small bulk and easy of concealment.

Of these he makes an exact and careful copy, this he deposits in his strong box in the cabin of the *Dover Lass*. The original he carefully secures upon his person.

Then the Englishman goes to meditating. To gain this treasure it is evident that he must not only go to Antwerp for a sufficient time to have the keys manufactured by some skilled locksmith, but also have with him a vessel and crew, capable of conveying away the booty after he has obtained it. To visit Antwerp alone is an achievement of the greatest danger. To take with him any portion of his crew with a vessel and lie off the docks seems to him impossible.

But finally, after turning over the enterprise in his mind again and again (for he will not even trust the secret to Dalton, his first officer, who he knows is true as steel), the following simple yet ingenious plan comes to him: He will take the *Dover Lass* and with her capture Spanish merchantmen until he finds one the captain of which has never been in Antwerp, though consigned to merchants in that place. Having taken possession of this vessel he will dispose of the captain and crew so that they will never come to light again. He himself will assume, under disguise, the name and [133]post of the captain of the vessel. He will take, carefully selected from his crew, such men as most resemble Spanish and Flemish tars, and sail the vessel deliberately up to Antwerp, using his papers and clearings from the Spanish port, and deliver his cargo to the consignee of the vessel as if he were the very captain whose place he has assumed. While discharging his cargo he can probably (with the assistance of Antony Oliver, if he can but find him in the place) obtain possession of the treasure of the Duke, load his vessel with it, taking cargo in the meantime as regular trader for any port to which he may be consigned or chartered by Antwerp merchants.

Then, when once more on the open sea, he will sail to England and land his treasure with the same impunity that Drake and Hawkins and other English freebooters carry in their captured ingots from the Spanish main. In fact, he will assert Alva's gold came from a captured galleon and pay Elizabeth her ten per cent. upon the same, the usual impost on such plunder.

One hour after making these resolutions the *Dover Lass* is under way for the open ocean, and in the next few days his fleet little vessel overhauls and captures two or three vessels consigned to Antwerp. But none of these are exactly fitted for his purpose. Their captains he finds by close questioning and overhauling their logs have been in Antwerp before and are known there, or some of their crew have relatives or friends about the place, or there is something in their charters that make them unsuitable.

Therefore he sends these in and sells them for what they will bring, cargoes and ships, in the town of Flushing, which is now safe in the hands of the Prince of Orange, whose banner many more towns and cities in the Netherlands are hoisting at this time, some to their undoing and the butchery of their inhabitants—men, women and children.

The money received for these forced sales of stolen goods is hardly a tenth of their value, for coin is very scarce in the Netherlands under Alva's tenth penny tax, though it gives Chester a sufficiency to do what he wishes in Antwerp.

All this business takes time, and it is nearly a month [134]after he has possessed himself of Paciotto's secret that Guy Chester overhauls and captures the caravel *Esperanza*, commanded by one Andrea Blanco, whose log shows she has never been in Antwerp, having been employed chiefly in the West Indies. This Captain Blanco he finds by deft questionings, fearful threats, and a guess at his *patois*, comes from Hispaniola—in fact, the whole crew have never been in Flemish waters before.

The vessel is the one for his purpose, being a strong barque of something over three hundred tons, and Guy notes rather a fast sailor, though not to be compared with the *Dover Lass*, and is armed, having seven demi-culverins on each broadside. In fact, she has made some little show of resistance to the *Dover Lass*, which in these desperate times would

generally have insured the butchery of the crew, especially as it is now to their captors' interests to put them where they will never tell any tales upon the Antwerp docks.

Against his judgment, Chester cannot bring himself to in cold blood destroy them.

Therefore, summoning Dalton to him, he says curtly to his chief officer: "It is necessary that I in person take our prize, the *Esperanza*, act as her captain, and with thirty of my men sail her to Antwerp."

"Going to Antwerp!" growls his lieutenant bluntly. "Going to the devil! And who'll go with you into Alva's very jaws?"

"You would, if I asked you, Dalton," answers his commander. "Call up the crew."

And these coming aft to the mainmast, Chester looks over his hundred and twenty-five "Dover Lasses," devil-may-care's, from cook and cabin boy up, and says to them without palaver: "Now, my men, I've got the best job on hand we ever had—*more plunder in it*. To do it I must take thirty of you and sail our prize to Antwerp. If we don't succeed you know what Alva will do with us. It'll be fire, not water. If I win, it'll be twenty doubloons to every man of the crew of the *Dover Lass*, and two hundred to you, Dalton, and the other officers in proportion. But every man of the *Esperanza's* crew gets twenty doubloons extra for his risk, and it is a desperate one—therefore I ask for volunteers. [135]All willing to go with me to the devil step onto the quarter-deck."

Then every man jack of his crew with a rush is around him on the quarter-deck, Dalton crying: "For God's sake, take me with you, captain. I won't let you go alone."

But Chester says: "It is necessary that you take charge of the *Dover Lass*," and selects those to go with him very carefully, picking out such men as will appear most like sailors of a trading ship, and being

fortunate in finding twenty-seven of them who speak Spanish, having picked up more or less of the language about the West Indies and Mediterranean.

Therefore he only takes twenty-seven, headed by Martin Corker, who growls that he has cut enough Spanish throats to have picked up the lingo.

The preparations being finished, Chester takes his first lieutenant into his cabin and speaks very seriously: “These are my orders. Iron every man of the Spanish crew who are in the hold of the *Dover Lass* with double manacles, leg and wrist. Take no chance of their escaping. Make your trip with all despatch, and land them upon the west coast of Ireland.”

“What! among those murdering barbarians? I’ll have to be careful that we don’t get our own throats cut,” says Dalton. For at that time the west coast of Ireland was an *Ultima Thule* regarded with horror by all Jack tars, no wrecked sailor ever returning from it.

“Rendezvous,” he adds to Dalton, “at Flushing as soon as you have done your errand. Wait for me there.”

“But if you don’t return?”

“Then you’ll be captain of the *Dover Lass*. I shall come back, though. But don’t as you value my life, and the lives of those poor devils with me, let any of this Spanish crew, the captain least of all, get out of your hands, until you have consigned them to the O’Brien’s, O’Toole’s, or some wild murdering Irish chief, who’ll enslave them, and from whose savage clutches there will be as little hope of escape as blackamoors stolen from Africa have in the Indies!”

“Trust me for that. No garlic-eating Don of them ever sees his mother again. If there’s a chance of a [136]Spanish man-of-war catching me—over they go,” says Dalton, his gesture is very suggestive.

Then the *Dover Lass* shapes her course for the Hebrides, taking the northern route to Ireland to avoid any chance of encountering Spanish armed vessels.

While Sir Guy Chester, disguised as Captain Andrea Blanco, with his twenty-seven volunteers, all made as unlike English sailors as possible, upon the good ship *Esperanza*, and floating the flag of Spain, with Martin Corker at the helm, sails for the Schelde estuary.

Arriving there in early morning, he gets past Flushing by the narrowest squeak, being desperately pursued by some of his brother Beggars of the Sea, and early in the afternoon makes the Fort of Lillo. Here he finds three Spanish war galleys and great activity, and being boarded by a Spanish patrol boat he shows his charter papers and consignment to the firm of Jacobszoon & Olins, who do business on Wool street just off the English quay, Antwerp.

These being satisfactory, taking advantage of the tide, late on a bright May day, the setting sun gilding the beautiful tower of the church of Our Dear Lady, Chester drops anchor off the city front, and again passing satisfactorily the custom officials, takes his consignment papers and charter to the house of Jacobszoon & Olins.

"*Hoezee!* You escaped those plundering *Gueux*, my worthy Captain Blanco," cries the senior partner Jacobszoon, a florid, paunchy individual.

Jan Olins, a man of clean cut face and precise manner, remarks: "You must have handled your vessel very well. If the government doesn't put down these Dutch freebooters, good bye to the commerce of Antwerp."

Then the two invite their successful captain to supper. "Come with us," says Jacobszoon, "it will be my night away from home. We'll have a friendly bottle at the Painted Inn."

But Guy is not anxious to visit the Painted Inn, being exceedingly eager to put eyes upon Antony Oliver, and excuses himself on the plea that he must return to his vessel.

“Ah, you’ll sleep on board?” says the junior partner. [137]

“Probably,” replies the captain, “until I have my vessel alongside the quay.”

“Well, the Tower of the Angels is a very good inn not far from here,” suggests Jacobszoon. “It will also be convenient to your ship.”

“Thank you, I’ll remember it,” and getting away from the two gentlemen who seem to be greatly delighted at the arrival of their ship and are inclined to be effusive in their hospitality, Chester in the course of a few minutes’ stroll up Wool street, finds himself before the painted pole of the barber surgeon.

The night is dark, there is no lamp in the hall, and he is not recognized by the little blood-letter, who lets him in. So going up the three flights of stairs, he finds with unexpected joy that Antony Oliver opens the door in answer to his knock.

To his further delight Guy is himself unrecognized even by the painter’s sharp eyes. Antony has been working at his altar piece. The setting sun comes in upon and halos the glorious face and divine eyes of Hermoine de Alva. With lover’s rapture the Englishman strides toward the canvas. To Oliver’s quick and anxious remark: “What is your business?” he answers nothing, being rapt in contemplation of his sweetheart!

“Your business, señor?”

“Oh—ah! yes! Have you had any pigeon pie lately?” whispers Chester, waking up.

“*Morbleu!*” ejaculates the Flemish artist. “Captain—no *Major* Guido Amati!”

“Not this trip,” says the other shortly, closing the door, “but one Andrea Blanco, captain of the Spanish galleon *Esperanza*, with hides, tallow and Spanish wine, consigned to Jacobszoon & Olins, and discharging her cargo at the English quay.”

“But still, my Guido,” whispers the painter, and the impulsive Franco-Fleming throws his arms round Guy’s neck and imprints two tender kisses, one on each cheek.

“Is your infernal boy here?” mutters the Englishman savagely, who does not care for this kind of salute.

“Oh, I’ve dismissed Achille for the day. He is down stairs with his family,” says Oliver. “But what brings you here? Mademoiselle Hermoine?” [138]

“She is here—in Antwerp?” cries Guy excitedly, his heart beating wildly and a lover’s joy in his eye.

“No, fortunately she is in Brussels.”

“*Fortunately?*”

“Yes, because I can see you would take desperate chances to have an interview with her, and with five thousand crowns on your head.”

“*Five thousand?*”

“Yes—you’ve gone up in the market lately. Alva has heard how you sent the *Gueux* against him laden with powder and ball to fight for their breakfasts. No provisions, no water, but plenty of powder, eh? That was a glorious stroke. But Queen Elizabeth has disowned you once more, and Alva has proclaimed that your caput is worth *five* thousand crowns. *Parbleu!* how he hates you now. If he only knew”—and the painter bursts into laughter, then says very seriously: “What makes you take this awful risk again, my Guido?”

“Bar the door and listen,” whispers the English captain. This being done, he says under his voice: “On my last visit here I won the love of Alva’s daughter. On this visit I shall win all Alva’s tenth penny gold.”

“*Diable!* you’re crazy!”

“Harken to my story and see if I am,” and sitting down Chester tells his strange tale of Paciotto’s revelation and post-mortem vengeance upon the dictator of the Netherlands.

This wondrous story is listened to with exclamations of astonishment. As he closes Guy exhibits the drawings of the keys and tracings of the subterranean passage under the bastion, saying: “Now, do you believe?”

“Yes,” replies the painter slowly, “I do! Alva has made the troops think the pedestal of his statue is his treasure house. Alva did know that Flushing would be captured three days before it fell. Therefore he must have sent Paciotto there with design. I believe you.”

“Then,” says Guy, “take a third of Alva’s gold and help me get it.”

“With all my soul!” answers Oliver enthusiastically. “My share shall be devoted not to myself, but to my country. I’ll make war upon Alva with his own tenth penny tax. But you’re hungry.”

“No, I dined on board ship.” [139]

“Oho! a lover’s appetite.”

“Yes. How is she? You have been in Brussels—how is she?”

“Yes, I returned from there but two days ago,” replies the painter, sighing. “I wanted to have a last go at my altar piece before I ran away to the war.”

“You’re going to fight?”

“I must. With all the Netherlands rising up in arms, could I keep from the field? Besides, the hand is getting closer to me. Soon I shall have to fly. *Nom de Dieu!* that last was a narrow squeak,” continues Oliver, “the day the news came of the taking of Briel by the Sea Beggars.”

“How? Were you in danger?”

“Judge for yourself. You know this tax is crushing everybody. The bakers will not bake, the butchers will not slaughter, the people will not trade. Now this did not please His Highness of Alva, so he sent for the hangman and told him to make eighteen nooses and some twelve foot ladders and take his orders from Don Frederico to hang in front of his own door each of the eighteen principal bakers of Brussels, as a warning to their fellows to go to baking at once. That very night the news of the taking of Briel came and saved them, for the capital got excited over it and Alva having other matters to attend to forgot the bakers. In the morning I was sent for suddenly. ‘Oliver,’ says His Highness, ‘Find me the fellow who manufactured that.’ And he poked under my nose a caricature of himself looking eagerly about for his spectacles, and written underneath:

> “‘On April Fools’ Day,
> Duke Alva’s Briel was stolen away.’

“Briel you know is the Flemish for spectacles. ‘This horrible and audacious caricature’ went on His Highness ‘was found placarded near my palace. Find me the villain painter of it.’ ‘How can I, your Highness?’ I gasped. ‘You can better than any man. You’re an artist’ snarled the Duke. ‘Hang me if the fellow’s style of drawing isn’t something like yours. He must have studied under the same master. Find me the seditious dauber!’ So I went away, but my [140]knees shook—for I was the painter! But I can’t stand this dangling over boiling oil any longer, and I’m going to fight—and die perchance; but like a man with a sword in my hand, not like a criminal on the rack.”

“And Doña Hermoine,” interjects Guy, “how did it affect her?”

“What affect her?”

“The news of the taking of Briel.”

“I don’t believe she thought of it at all. Routs and *fêtes* occupy that young lady’s time,” replies the artist “not politics. Besides, she has an ardent admirer in General Noircarmes—”

“’S’death!—has she forgotten me?” mutters the Englishman.

“No I think it is because she remembers you.”

“How?”

“Well, for the first two weeks after you went away she was joy itself; no face so radiant, no eyes as brilliant, no wit as flashing, in the whole of Alva’s court, and there are many beautiful women in Brussels. And then —”

“Well, what then?”

“Then she grew sad, and for a month or so had a very hard time of it.”

“What caused her grief? Do you know?”

“Yes, I can guess.”

“What?”

“*You!*”

“*I!*”

“Yes. Word came from Middelburg that you had been behaving very badly, my boy,” says Oliver, with a little chuckle.

“I—badly?”

"*Very* badly!" guffaws Oliver. "The report was that on receipt of his commission Major Guido Amati went on a most prolonged and excessively hilarious debauch of joy."

"Good heavens! The infernal villain!"

"He is," assents Oliver. "It is said Major Guido Amati has the very handsomest mistress in Middelburg."

"Oh, God of heaven—a mistress!" shudders Guy. [141]

"*Parbleu!* How moral you seem to have got," jeers Antony.

"He'll—he'll ruin me! What an ingrate villain she'll think me! Damnation! to have my reputation hang upon this drinking debauchee," falters Guy. Then he cries out: "What shall I do? Advise me, Oliver. I must go to Middelburg and meet him hand to hand; I must kill this fellow before he ruins my every hope of happiness on earth."

"Don't," chuckles Oliver, "for if you kill Major Guido Amati, Hermoine de Alva will go in to mourning."

"Mourning for *him*?"

"No, for YOU. If I am not mistaken she loves you very deeply. But your conduct, my dear boy, has given her great unhappiness." Then in spite of himself the painter bursts into a laugh and jeers: "*Diable*, I see you doing penance for Major Guido Amati's sins at the feet of your lady love! But come to supper."

"I can't eat. Don't laugh at me."

"Oh yes you can. If fair Hermoine didn't have spasms of rage and despair each time she thinks Major Guido Amati is a very wild, reckless fellow, then it would be time to lose your appetite. When Doña Hermoine de Alva ceases to care for what Major Guido Amati does, then let Guy Chester despair."

“On this view of the case I’ll go to supper with you,” answers Guy heartily.

And the two go off, not to one of the great inns of Antwerp this time, but to the near-by Tower of the Angels, where they get a fearful meal, though Chester seems to have an appetite now—even for its unsavory cuisine and sour wine.

Coming back from this they fall to discussing the immediate business of Guy’s visit to this city of his enemies, and decide upon the following plan: Chester is to go to work unloading his vessel in sailor style. Oliver, from his knowledge of the town, is to make the necessary investigations and have the keys manufactured.

“It wouldn’t be safe,” he says, “to have them all made by one locksmith. I’ll make a copy of this drawing, placing the draft for each key on a separate piece [142]of paper. You keep the originals. I’ll leave a draft of key number one with a mechanic that I know, the drawing of number two with a locksmith in another part of the city. In fact, I’d better have the other two keys made in other towns, as their guilds bring workmen together and word might get about of our orders, for these keys are very curious in their design, and will cost a good deal of money.”

“As to that,” says Guy, “I’ve got plenty for the business.”

So it is finally settled that one key is to be made at Antwerp, one at the near-by town of Malines, and the other in the capital itself. Antony is also to investigate the house near the Esplanade and see if it is as described and kept by the old deaf and dumb Spanish woman. “I must go at once to Brussels to have the key made, leaving one on the route at Malines,” says Oliver.

“Let me take the journey,” suggests Guy very eagerly. “You have work to do here.”

“And haven’t you—unloading your ship. Besides,” replies Antony, “it isn’t to have the key made that you want to go to Brussels. It is to get word with Hermoine de Alva.” Then he goes on, sternly, “No matter what she may do, no matter what she may think, keep away from her for God’s sake, until this business is settled. Suspicion upon you now would ruin everything. Forget you are Major Guido Amati de Medina, a dashing soldier and lover of the Viceroy’s daughter; remember you are only Andrea Blanco, a common merchant captain, who cares but for grog and charter money; get to unloading your vessel to-morrow morning.”

“Very well,” mutters Guy, the painter’s advice being sound but unpalatable. “I’ll get on board at once.”

“You can’t. You’ve got to stay with me to-night. The gates are closed and you have no young lady to give you the word of the night or offer you a government barge to take you safely out of Antwerp!” laughs Oliver, then continues more seriously: “*Tête Dieu!* that was a narrow squeeze. They had report you were here. Nothing on earth but Alva’s daughter could have saved you. Remember that Hermoine de [143]Alva that night kept you and perhaps me from the faggot or the cord. And now five thousand crowns on your head,” the artist sighs.

Notwithstanding this gloomy suggestion, these two young men, so accustomed to danger, have a very pleasant night over a bottle of wine in the painter’s studio, discussing Antony’s altar piece, which is quite near completion, the beautiful eyes of Hermoine de Alva gazing from the canvas upon her English sweetheart, as if welcoming him once more, not to the city of his enemies—but to the city of his love.

[Contents]

CHAPTER XII.

“GET YOUR DAUGHTER OUT OF ANTWERP.”

The next morning each sets about the business he has given himself.

Chester goes down to the quay very early, fearing, perhaps, some indiscretion of his seamen, who are not much accustomed to mercantile ways, and warping his vessel up to the dock, begins to unload his cargo with a speed that pleases his consignees very greatly.

Jan Olins comes down personally to inspect the discharging of the vessel, and pats Guy upon the shoulder, saying: “You’re doing well,” then goes down into the hold and himself carefully inspects all its contents, rather to Chester’s surprise, but he, not being a merchant captain, puts it out of his mind, supposing it is the custom for traders to look thus carefully after their cargoes.

That afternoon Chester, still continuing his labor, suddenly bolts into his cabin and locks himself in. For he has seen the junior partner, Olins, approaching the vessel in company with Niklaas Bodé Volcker, and fears recognition by the father of the fair Mina, whose hospitality he has once enjoyed.

Fortunately they do not come on board, only inspecting the vessel from the gang plank, and very soon they go away. [144]

Shortly after this Chester goes up to the town to meet Oliver.

This gentleman reports as follows:

“There is a house as described and located by Paciotto, a tumble-down, ramshackle old affair, in by no means a good neighborhood. It is kept by an old deaf and dumb Spanish woman who goes under the name of

Señora Sebastian, but is commonly known by the sailors she takes as boarders (this house being near the docks) as ‘Mother Dumb Devil,’ referring probably to her temper.”

“That’s the place. I’ll put some of my men to lodge there at once,” says Guy.

“Not yet, not until we get the keys. Use your men in discharging your vessel as rapidly as possible. Key number one I have already ordered made from its draft. Number three I will take to-morrow to Brussels, leaving number two en route at Malines. Get your cargo out of your vessel as fast as you can.”

“How long will you be in Brussels?”

“Until the key is made, probably five days,” replies Oliver.

“So long? You know speed is vital. I shall have my ship unloaded by that time.”

“It can’t be done sooner. The locksmith says it will take him at least four days to finish the one ordered here. Consequently it must be five days before I return from Brussels with the keys. Besides,” says the painter, “I have had a carrier pigeon from Louis of Nassau to-day, which makes it necessary that I go to the capital to obtain a little information. Every town save Amsterdam is up in Holland, and—now an attack in the rear. I’ve had word they are ready to rise. It would be a shame that all the Netherlands were up in arms and Mons, my native place, still fly the flag of Alva.”

“Then you think Antwerp will rise?”

“No, neither Antwerp nor Brussels, their Spanish garrisons are too strong, but they are weakening them day by day. By the by, I saw our little friend De Busaco march out this afternoon with his company for the north.”

“Then some day Antwerp may have a chance.” [145]

“Pish! Antwerp thinks of nothing but trade. Trade destroys patriotism. All the burghers want is to be let alone with their commerce. But take my word for it, this place will suffer more than any other town in the Netherlands. Antwerp will be the man on the fence, and the man on the fence is always shot at from both sides. But I must go to Bodé Volcker’s.”

“Ah! The fair Wilhelmina!” laughs Guy. “I would go with you, but the debonnaire officer Guido Amati appearing as Andrea Blanco, captain of trading vessel, would make old Niklaas open his eyes. But you are anxious to visit him. So good night and—good bye.”

“Yes, I must have word with Mina. God knows what may happen to me in Brussels.” Then the painter adds suddenly: “But I must also take care of you. Promise me, Guido,” his tone is very anxious, “if you cannot sleep here, that you will at least come every night and every morning and see if carrier pigeon has brought message from me. I shall take six birds with me. You know how the little bell rings as they enter the cote. They may be of infinite importance to your safety—to your life, for God knows when Alva’s suspicion may fall upon me.”

So these two men wring hands together.

The next morning the painter leaves for Brussels, taking Achille with him, carrying six pigeons, and Guy goes to unloading his vessel as rapidly as possible.

This he does for three days, taking every precaution. No man leaves his ship at night. No liquor is drunk, for the men know their lives depend upon circumspection, and the hardiest of them shudders as he thinks of Alva’s death. Even Corker himself, tough old mariner that he is, tells his captain that he is nervous and cannot sleep nights.

“It seems,” says the old salt, “so much like havin’ a grip on your windpipe. Sometimes I feels as if I was chokin’, an’ Bill Chucksin scared us last night screechin’: ‘For God’s sake, don’t burn me alive!’ It’s had a bad effect on the men.”

“No, a good effect,” remarks Guy. “I’ve noticed they’ve been very careful all day.”

Then he turns to the boatswain and says: “Tell the [146]men from me that every Jack tar of them, if this is a success, shall own Portsmouth for three days, and shall make the Jews rich by each man buying two watches, one for each fob pocket. How are you getting on with the unloading, *José*?”

“Pretty well, *Señor Capitan Blanco*,” replies the tar with a wink. “The fore hold is empty and by to-morrow morning we’ll have cleaned out the aft and main holds and swept decks. But the consignee’s coming on board, *Señor Capitan Blanco*,” and with a few muttered Spanish words the boatswain strides forward, for he doesn’t like to encounter visitors.

Guy watches with cloudy brow his consignee come up the gang plank. It is the fourth day—he has not heard from Oliver, and he is very anxious.

“Do you generally sleep on board?” remarks Jan Olins, after the usual greeting to his captain.

“No, on shore. Sometimes at the inn you recommended, and sometimes with a friend of mine, an artist.”

“Well, to-night it will be a great favor to me if you will remain on the vessel. You can’t leave the town after the gates are closed at nightfall.”

“Certainly. What do you wish me to do?”

“Step into your cabin with me, and I’ll tell you,” replies the Fleming. And the two getting behind closed doors, Olins whispers. “Under the false flooring of this cabin, you know, you have twelve cases of goods that are

not in the manifest."

This Guy does *not* know, but he immediately assents to the same.

"These cases must be got out late to-night and not delivered at our warehouse, but where I shall personally show you."

"To-night, after dark?"

"Yes, late at night. The moon goes down at ten. Eleven will do for the hour. Tell your men it is two guilders apiece for each of them, and for yourself, Captain, the usual tariff."

"What is the usual tariff for smuggling in the port of Antwerp?" asks Guy.

"Hush! we don't call it that, we simply call it avoiding the tenth penny," mutters the merchant. "You'll [147]receive one hundred guilders for your share of the business."

"Then give me your hand on the hundred guilders, my hearty," replies Chester, knowing that to refuse to smuggle would simply be to acknowledge himself not up to mark as merchant captain.

"Very well, we can consider the matter arranged," whispers Olins, gripping Guy's outstretched fingers, and goes on shore.

Alone by himself, Chester laughs: "I think I'll see what I'm smuggling," and being a man of action, quickly has some of the false floor of his cabin up, and getting down among the cases opens one.

After examining its contents and refastening its cover very securely, the Englishman comes up again whistling softly, but with a great respect for Mr. Jan Olins in his heart.

Then he takes his way up to Oliver's studio, and getting in unnoticed, for the painter has left him his keys, draws the curtain away from Antony's altar piece and gazes upon the fair face that he longs to see. But even as he looks upon the beautiful eyes of Madonna Hermoine, the sound of wings above reminds him of his errand.

He goes hastily up, and examining the dove cote, is astounded to see all six pigeons in it and no letter upon any of them.

Coming away he ponders upon this matter very earnestly, finally concluding that by some accident the birds must have escaped from confinement and returned to their home.

Then Guy goes on board his ship and that night by the aid of Corker and some of his crew, under the personal direction of Mr. Jan Olins, conveys the twelve cases of goods upon which no duty is paid, very quietly and secretly to a large warehouse some distance nearer the main quay of the city.

In this they are entirely unmolested, but in leaving the warehouse, chancing to look up, Chester sees by the lantern Olins carries to guide their path, the name of Niklaas Bodé Volcker in large letters over the archway, and is further impressed by observing that gentleman's young son, the snickering Jakob, who has been [148]apparently waiting for the goods, have word of mouth with Burgher Jan Olins.

"Aha!" thinks the Englishman. "If I wanted a hold upon Bodé Volcker I've got one, though I don't see how he could help me at present."

Then they return cautiously to the *Esperanza* unnoticed and unmolested, though the guard boats are doing their duty outside the line of shipping, which is very dense, and in the shadow of which their boat glides very quietly, Olins himself going back with them and remaining on board the vessel, as he cannot enter the town until after daybreak.

This he does, leaving Chester asleep in his bunk, though somewhat disturbed in his early morning nap by the noise of his men holystoning and washing down the decks.

Five minutes after Sir Guy Chester wakes up to discover that he has need of somebody's aid in this city of Antwerp, immediate, imperative, to save his life.

"There's a boy come on board, Captain. He says he's got a letter to you particular," whispers his boatswain in his ear, "so I made bold to wake you up."

"Humph!"

"He says it's instanta."

"What kind of a boy?"

"A Frenchy."

"Achille!" And Chester, thoroughly awake, springing up from his bunk, orders: "Send him down *at once*!"

It is Achille with a note from Oliver.

"You're Captain Andrea Blanco?" asks the messenger.

"Yes."

"Then you're to read this at once," says the boy, handing his missive, which bears evidence of being written in great haste and agitation.

It has no address, but is in Oliver's hand, and reads:

> "Fly! Fly quickly—for God's sake—for your life, and if possible save the boy who brings this. He has been my servant—they'll torture him for evidence. The hand is descending upon me. I have only time to say God bless you. Good bye."

“How came you to bring this?” asks Guy, his lips trembling a little and his face growing pale. [149]

“He told me—”

“He!—who?”

“Monsieur Oliver; he told me to get a pigeon,” says the boy, “and I went to the coop and somehow—for he cried to me to hurry—I let the door open and they all got out and flew away. Then I went to him and told him.”

“And he?”

“I think he must be sick. He screamed ‘*Mon Dieu!* what have you done?’ Then he said to me, ‘You’ve let the pigeons go, you must take a letter—*Misericorde!* my friend!’ Then he gave me money to get a horse and told me to ride as fast as I could and to get here last night in time to get through the town before the gates closed and give this to Captain Andrea Blanco on the ship *Esperanza*. And then to do what he told me.”

“Then why were you not here last night?” demands Guy, in awful tones.

“The stableman cheated me in the horse, curse him—the beast was lame and I didn’t get to the Emperor’s Gate until just as it was closing, so I had to stay at home all night, but I brought it here as soon as the gates were open. But you’re not Captain Andrea Blanco, you’re Captain Guido Amati,” adds Achille, who has kept curious eyes on Guy ever since he came into the cabin.

“Both.”

“That’s funny.”

“Don’t trouble yourself about thinking whether it’s funny or not,” says Chester in a quarter-deck tone that astonishes the French boy. “Sit down!”

“I’d—I’d like to go home for breakfast,” mutters Achille nervously.

“Stay here, have breakfast with me, and do as I tell you. That’s what your master bids you do.”

Thus commanded, and a very savory breakfast making its appearance, Achille sits down and eats, though Guy does not join him, for he is thinking with all his soul what he shall do.

He can, perhaps, find safety himself in flight, but leave his men to be butchered or executed he will not. Every instinct of manhood compels him to stay with those whose lives he has put into such desperate jeopardy. [150]Besides this poor French boy who has unwittingly risked his life to save him. But one thing can save them all! That is to get them out on the open sea on the *Esperanza*. He has lost last night’s chance of preparation by the failure of Achille’s horse. But he guesses that suspicion will not fall upon him for the next few hours. Brussels is thirty miles away, and even after word arrives it will take some time for the Spanish spies to discover that Andrea Blanco has dined with Oliver the traitor twice and breakfasted once at the Tower of the Angels.

Altogether he thinks he is sure of six hours. So ordering the last few bales of cargo and hides to be discharged as quickly as possible, and bidding Achille to keep himself close in the cabin, he goes out hurriedly to the office of his consignees, which is just opening for the day’s business.

Here getting word in the private office with the senior partner, he says: “I have discharged my cargo. Can’t you give me consignment in ballast to some place?”

“Absurd!” answers the florid Jacobszoon. “Why should we send you with ballast when we can get charter money for you? Wait here until cargo is obtained.”

“You must give me a consignment in ballast.”

“Why?”

“Because the custom house officers are loitering about my vessel.”

“*Verdomd!* you been smuggling!” cries the senior partner. “If you’ve been getting us into trouble by your infamous sailor notions on that point, Captain Blanco, you can stay here and face it. I won’t help you.”

This answer is discouraging. It shows Chester that Jacobszoon knows nothing of his junior’s operations with the twelve cases of goods.

Guy goes out and loiters about the entrance of the office, determined to see Olins.

That gentleman is an early office bird, notwithstanding his vigil of the night before, and he encounters him coming down Wool street.

“I must have a word with you, *Mijn Heer* Olins,” he says. [151]

“Yes, come to the office.”

“No, in private, and not at your office.”

“Very well, this wine room,” answers Olins, looking hard at Guy, and leads the way to a place of refreshment with which apparently he is familiar, as the two get a private room together.

“Now,” he says, “is it the money for that smuggling business, Capitan Blanco? I’ll have it for you in a few minutes, if your crew is impatient.”

“No, it’s to demand that you give me an immediate consignment in ballast from this port.”

“Impossible!” cries Olins shortly; then whispers: “Why do you want it?”

“Because I’m suspected of smuggling.”

“What, that lace last night?” mutters the Fleming, his face growing set.

“No lace,” says Chester shortly.

“A—ah! You must leave Antwerp on the tide,” whispers Olins, a bead of perspiration on the center of his forehead. “But where can I send you?”

“Get me papers to Amsterdam.” This is the first place that comes into Guy’s head.

“Very well, they shall be obtained. But,” adds the merchant nervously, “without a charter it would look very suspicious!”

“I’ll get you the charter,” cries Guy, a sudden idea flashing through his brain.

“From whom?”

“From your fellow *patriot*, Bodé Volcker.” This is in his ear.

“Good God! You know—”

“Yes, arquebuses, packed in lace, that is not a fine—but death,” whispers Guy. “Fill out an order for charter to Amsterdam.”

And the merchant, sitting down to write this, Chester admires him—for patriot Jan Olins’ handwriting is as firm and regular as commercial copper-plate.

“Get the papers through the custom house at once,” whispers Guy.

Then hurrying to his ship once more he dives into his cabin to reappear a few moments after, rearrayed not as Andrea Blanco, merchant mariner, but as Guido Amati, the dashing soldier of Spain, for [152]he judges this the best guise in which to have his interview with ex-Burgomaster Bodé Volcker.

At the merchant’s warehouse he is disappointed to find that Niklaas is still at his home upon the Meir. Making his way there a sudden idea comes to him, that he can do this business better as debauchee

spendthrift than in any other guise. He will come apparently as spy for bribe; he will demand gold, but get charter papers.

Willing to play ignoble role for such result, he tosses about his hair, disheveling it, slouching his hat over his eyes and assuming the gait of partial drunkenness, he continues his way to the Bodé Volcker mansion and enters the business portion of the house.

A number of clerks are there, the general routine of the office is going on quite briskly. Here he is received most obsequiously by bowing clerk, who asks almost tremblingly his name and desires—for these Spanish soldiers of fortune were quick with blow of hand or knife to Flemish townsmen. Demanding word with Bodé Volcker, he is shortly shown into that gentleman's private office next his counting room.

Here, with well-assumed drunken leer and one or two suggestive hiccoughs, he closes and locks the door, the merchant gazing at him in astonishment, perhaps alarm, for Guy's appearance, with matted, tossed about hair, and rolling eyes, a strange excitement in them, brought about by his desperate situation, gives him the look of having just risen from a late and prolonged debauch.

"Yer know me—y'know me—I'm—I'm Major Guido A—Amati, o —er—Romero's foot," hiccoughs the pseudo Spanish roisterer.

"Yes, I—I had the honor of seeing you at my house once, Captain Amati."

"Major—*Major* Amati de Medina—don't you forget th' De Medina. Sit—sit down and—hic—sign this!" And Guy presses the merchant into his chair from which he has half risen, and slaps in front of him the charter paper.

"What—what is this?" stammers Bodé Volcker.

“It’s an article ’f charter—firm of Jacobszoon & Olins, for Cap’n Andrea Blanco—you know Cap’n [153]Andrea—Andrea Blanco?” he winks cunningly, “of—er ship *Esperanza*.”

“A charter *in ballast*?” cries Niklaas, commercial instinct rising in him. “What drunken nonsense is this? There’s no money in charter in ballast.”

“Not er charter in ballast, but charter to—convey twelve cases of goods—landed las’ night at yer warehouse—’bout twelve ’clock. See the pint, Bodé Vol—Volcker?” And this being emphasized with drunken leer and wink, Bodé Volcker sees the point with an awful gulp of terror, then gasps: “You—you’re accusing me of smuggling; that—that’s only a fine!”

“Yesh—fine of *your head*!”

“Smuggling lace—the fine of my head—you’re drunk!” replies the merchant, plucking up courage.

“Smuggling arquebuses—packed in lace—time of war—is *torture as well*.”

“Good God!” cries Niklaas, “arquebuses! I have been imposed upon—that villain Olins—arquebuses!” And Guy knows that Bodé Volcker is not a patriot, but only a smuggler.

“Jush th’ same—cost your—hic—your head,” hiccoughs Guy. Then he suggests, with drunken leer: “I couldn’t bear to have my future banker—th’ man who’s going to give me all—hic—the gambling money I want, pass out of the world. See the pint, Bodé Volcker!”

“How much money do you demand? I’m—I’m a poor man!”

“You’ll be a poorer man soon! See the pint, Bodé Volcker!” and avarice grins at fear.

“How much money do you want?” pleads the man of commerce.

“Lotsch; but we’ll talk ’bout that afterwards,” hiccoughs Chester. “Sign this charter—get vessel ’way first, then we’ll have bottle or two together, and I’ll draw a ducish big draft on you.”

“You’ll not betray me—you’re *sure* they’re arquebuses?”

“Call in custom house officers—open ’em and see!” cries Guy.

But this is too horrible for contemplation. Bodé Volcker signs with a palsied hand the charter paper of [154]the *Esperanza* to leave Antwerp forthwith for Amsterdam and other ports on general trade.

“As you love yourself, Bodé Volcker—my dear banker, Bodé Volcker,—get those goods on board at once,” whispers Guy, pocketing the charter paper, “and—and bring me a bottle of wine.”

“Yes, I’ll give orders instantly,” gasps the merchant.

But even as he rises to do this there is a whirr of wheels, a clack of whip outside, and a clatter of horses’ hoofs as a post chaise, apparently at desperate speed, dashes into the courtyard.

A moment afterwards all thought of drunkenness leaves with one flash the mind of the Englishman. A voice imperative but sweet; a voice that sets Guy’s heart beating more than the danger of detection, more even than the terror of death, says outside the door: “Announce to your master Hermoine de Alva!”

“Good heavens! Alva’s daughter!” mutters the burgomaster. “She must not see you. Leave by the back door!”

But Chester would not leave now for death itself.

“Oho! gay Bodé Volcker! ladies,” hiccoughs Guy in a feeble attempt to keep up his character. “I never desert ladies.”

“Quick!” whispers the old gentleman. “You must remain until this business is settled and I give you orders for the goods,” and hastily pushes Chester into a little waiting room just out of his private office, muttering: “The drunken fool—in the hands of a miserable, gambling debauchee. My God! poor Bodé Volcker!”

Then Guy’s heart commences to throb. The place he has been put into by Niklaas has a little lattice door, through it all sound in the sanctum of the merchant can be easily heard. It has apparently been constructed and used for this very purpose, to further chances of gain and vantage over his customers by the commercial Fleming himself.

Almost as Guy enters he starts astonished. For these strange words come to him in impressive but charming voice: “Señor Bodé Volcker, I have driven from Brussels post haste to bid you, as you love her, *get your daughter out of Antwerp*—INSTANTLY!” [155]

[Contents]

CHAPTER XIII.

“GOOD HEAVENS! WHAT AN INTRODUCTION!”

“This is a curious errand, Doña de Alva,” returns the old man, bowing to the earth. “Why do you wish my daughter out of Antwerp?”

“Because the order is even now speeding from Brussels to seize upon and confine your daughter in the Spin-House.”

“The Spin-House! *Lieve Hemel!* An honorable confinement there might do the minx good,” says the old man severely. “She has been headstrong and willful lately. Has she made some careless breach of city regulation. Perchance she has worn train longer than burghers’ daughters are permitted. We sometimes, Doña de Alva, send our headstrong daughters and even the wives of our bosom to the wholesome silence of the Spin-House in Antwerp.”

“Not the part of the Spin-House I mean.”

“Great heavens, you don’t mean—*the place for abandoned women*—the harlots of the town?” gasps Bodé Volcker.

“YES.”

“Merciful God! With the fearful scourging of welcome and farewell they give to those poor creatures?”

“Yes.”

“My Mina!” shrieks the old man. “My Mina!” wringing his hands in despair. Then he cries: “For what crime?—for what crime do they send my daughter to be disgraced and tortured—what crime?”

“She is the affianced bride of Antony Oliver, the traitor.”

“Oliver, your father’s under-secretary?”

“Yes. It is thought she must have known his sedition. Oliver fled from Brussels yesterday. Get your daughter out of Antwerp. I won’t have a woman, innocent or guilty, so degraded and debased,” goes on Hermoine, almost desperately herself, for the old man is sobbing and wringing his hands, and seems incapable of action.

But this stings the Flemish father into rage. His tears vanish. His eyes blaze. He rises before the [156]beautiful daughter of the man who would degrade his child and mutters: “But *your* father who does this thing, Alva, the tyrant, the coward, the oppressor—”

“You forget, burgher, you are speaking of the Viceroy to the Viceroy’s daughter.” The tone is commanding but sad. “I pardon your treason, for you know not what you say. But do not dare to criticise my father’s policy of State. In that even I do not interfere, though I am sick—sick of the blood, sick of the butcheries each day’s report brings from the army or the execution shambles in the Horse Market. Each day I pray to the Virgin to make my father’s heart more merciful. Each night I pray ‘No more blood.’ God knows I have importuned him to spare, but he will not. He says it is the policy of the government, that he is as merciful as God, the church and his King will permit him to be, and goes on executing. Every time I see a woman in black I fear it is my father’s doings. I am here to save your daughter. Get her away! If you cannot, I WILL.”

Seeing the old man appears so overcome that he can hardly walk, she cries out eagerly, “Get a boat—a ship, *quick*! It’s the only chance. Get her to some town or country where my father does not rule. Do you suppose he’ll forgive any one connected by love or by blood with this Oliver, who had his private ear, who ate the bread of his household, and who betrayed him? QUICK, GET YOUR DAUGHTER OUT OF ANTWERP! Stay, it is better that I do it. I shall be safe, you might be punished for saving your own child. Bring your daughter here. What your trembling limbs refuse to do I’ll do for you.”

Here sudden inspiration seems to come into the old merchant. He sobs: "God bless you! Though you are your father's daughter—God bless you! I know a man that can do it. There is a ship even now waiting for him."

"Whom?"

"A debauchee, gambler, blackleg—who's in the next room. If he's not too drunk he can get my daughter out of Antwerp. Speak to him, command him, he'll obey the daughter of Alva. He's one of your father's officers—Major Guido Amati." [157]

"*Good heavens, what an introduction!*" shudders Guy, his hair rising up as he mutters curses with white lips. If Bodé Volcker wishes revenge upon the spy who has caused his heart to flutter with fear of loss of life and loss of money, could he see the debauchee Guido Amati, he'd know he had it now.

Then the clanging of the door closing shows Niklaas has gone to his daughter.

A moment after there is a sigh, faint on the air, tender, almost despairing, and the rustle of soft silks and laces, as if a woman in agony had sank down bowed by mighty sorrow.

Blessing God for these sounds of agony and love, Guy Chester opens the door and looks into the office of Bodé Volcker. She is there, her head in her white, slender hands, suffering because she thinks him worthless. It is a sight of pleasure, not of pain. Did she not care for him would her beautiful form be convulsed with anguish at his debauchery? Did she not love him would she grieve if Guido Amati were roué and libertine?

With this thought Guy, with light steps, crosses the room and locks the door. He will have five minutes for explanation—for love!

Crushed by grief, the girl hears him not, but at the sound of clicking lock starts to her feet, and drawing her fair body up, puts haughty nose into air and remarks in cutting voice, though her white hands tremble and clench themselves: “Finishing the two months’ carouse with which you christened your new commission, Major Guido Amati de Medina?” then jeers in sneering tone: “Probably you’ll not grace your commission long. Desertion from your post at Middelburg in the face of the enemy, by which it is now attacked, without leave of absence—”

“Without leave of absence,” interjects Chester, “why do you think that?”

“I *know* it! I’ve had word from the Lord de Beauvois, Governor of Middelburg, that no leave of absence shall be granted to Major Guido Amati.”

“Then it’s to your influence,” mutters Guy, “the influence of the woman I once thought loved me, that Beauvois has constantly kept me within garrison and [158]prevented me from coming where my heart called me. You feared my presence by your side in Brussels.”

“Only after word was brought to me that you had forgotten me.”

“It was a lie.”

“A lie?”

“Yes, a lie; the same as all the other reports circulated about me, the same as that base one told you two minutes ago—that I was a drunken debauchee, too drunk to do anything you asked me. Do I look drunk now?”

She gazes at him. His handsome face bears no signs of dissipation. His eyes blazing, indignant, fiery but loving, gaze at her. He stands haughty and erect, and she cries: “No, no, you are fit to do any woman’s bidding.”

“Then if I’m sober now, when he said I was drunk, I was sober in Middelburg when they told you I was a dissipated *roué*. It was a lie, a lie furnished by some rival. Who is my rival? Is it Noircarmes?” and he strides up to her. “Tell me, have you had word of love with him, with my ring on your finger?” Then looking down, he starts and sighs: “Good God! it is not there!” next bursts out at her: “By this sign I am truer than you!”

And Guy, holding the blazing ruby up before her, she droops her eyes but looks so infinitely lovely that he could crush her to his breast. These orbs that sink before his, yet gaze on him, are not the eyes of the picture of the Madonna he has gazed upon, or of the miniature by which he has tried to assuage his hungry heart these many months, but passionate dazzling, *real* eyes—the eyes of Hermoine de Alva.

It is not her placid form upon the canvas he is gazing on, but the live loveliness of real flesh and blood and vivacious womanhood.

“I am the judge now, not you!” he cries. “Answer!” for she is blushing and paling and fluttering like a guilty one: “Forgive me!”

But knight of jealous heart answers “No!”

And princess of love and grace cries: “You *shall*!”

“And why?”

“For this.” Her tones are pleading now and very [159]sad. “I believed—I admit it now, my Guido, falsely believed that you were unworthy of me. When I, the Viceroy’s daughter—”

“Penalty!” cries Guy, almost from force of habit, and in a rush the pride of Viceroy’s daughter and the wounded heart of Hermoine de Alva, go down together before the decree of love. He has her lips again, the lips that he has longed for, her soft arms cling to him—the arms he prayed

for. And at this moment Guy Chester, surrounded by his enemies, feels that he will win, and no more dreads the hatred of the father, for he has the love of the daughter.

“Pish,” cries the girl, struggling from him, “what logic is in you! You call me faithless, and you will not let me open my mouth to defend myself.”

“What’s logic to your true eyes,” whispers Guy, “I want kisses from those lips, not words.”

“Not another kiss until I have explained.”

“Why not?”

“Because, though you kiss me as if—as if you loved me,” answers the girl, blushing very red, “still there’s jealousy in your eyes, and I’ll have no jealousy, my Guido, for you have cause for none. You went away bearing my heart with you. You had my present, my picture. Within one week after reaching Brussels it was rumored about the town so that it could not fail to reach my ears that instead of living so as to gain the rank that would make me thine, you had forgotten I—I had given my heart to you, and lived—not as—as a gentleman, but a spendthrift, as worse than that, as one who cared not for my love. What everybody said—I had only known you two days—made me doubt. Then I—as well as a young lady could about a young gentleman she was not supposed to know much of—caused inquiries to be made, and it was the same tale—“You were brave, you were reckless—*your life was an insult to my love*.” The eyes are blazing now, but very sad. “Then I, by my influence, got word to the Governor of Middelburg no leave of absence for Major Guido Amati, that he might not come to Brussels to again win me over and make me forgive—as you have done now! Holy Virgin, Guido! if you have deceived me; then....” [160]

“May I never win you,” cries Guy. “But I am true to you, have been true to you. Great heavens! do you think that I could forget such loveliness as this within a week, within a month, within a year—within my life? You

are the daughter of a Viceroy—"

"Penalty!" laughs the girl, but blushes and almost runs away from him.

"Oh, I'll pay it, ten times over." He has her in his arms again.

Here suddenly she says to him, her cheeks growing pale: "You're without leave of absence once more."

"Yes, thanks to you!" He says carelessly, but starts as he sees the stab he has given.

She murmurs with white lips: "Desertion from the army, with Middelburg surrounded by enemies—it will mean not the loss of your rank—but the loss of your head. My father is a disciplinarian."

"What did I care for that," answers Chester, "was it not my only hope of seeing you?"

This tortures her cruelly, but shows how much she loves him, for she grows pale and falters. "For my sake you have risked your life. Promise me you will never risk it thus again. Promise me to return to your post to-day," then adds, "I have a commission for you. While seeking safety yourself, give safety to this poor merchant's daughter. He tells me there is a ship which is at your service."

"As I am also at your service with my life!" answers Chester. "Leave this matter in my hands. Without your request I would have saved from degradation the sweetheart of my friend."

He cuts himself short at this, not wishing to discuss Oliver, but Hermoine, taking up his word, says: "Yes, this traitor was your friend!" then asks with anxious lips: "How was it you were so intimate with one untrue to Spain?"

“Your father trusted him, why shouldn’t I follow Alva’s lead,” returns the Englishman with ready tongue; but adds sadly: “I am sorry that after this my duty will compel me to run this Oliver through the body.”

Then with lie on his lips Guy turns suddenly away, for the Burgomaster’s rap is heard on the door. Opening [161]he speaks hurriedly to Bodé Volcker in a tone so sober that the old man stares at him in wonder and surprise.

“At the request of Doña de Alva I have taken your daughter’s safety into my hands. Send order for your twelve cases of goods to be put on board the *Esperanza* instantly.”

“It is already done,” mutters Bodé Volcker, gazing with astonished eyes on Chester; then he falters: “You’re—you’re quite sure you’re sober enough for this business?”

“*Diablo!* sober enough to bleed you,” mutters Guy, remembering his rôle of spendthrift and blackmailer. “Send down sufficiency of money with your daughter to the ship to pay her expenses—and mine too!”

And this bringing to the merchant’s mind the character of this Spanish officer, Amati, his reputation as a roisterer and libertine, Niklaas clasps his hands together and murmurs piteously: “I’m putting her in your charge. She is the daughter of my heart. For God’s sake remember you have my money, my life, if you want to denounce me, but spare her. Were it not for my desperate strait do you think I’d place my lamb in your wolf’s charge?”

At this complimentary remark Guy grinds his teeth and assuming the hauteur of *hidalgo*, claps his hand upon his sword and mutters: “*Maldito!* Have I not sworn to *her*, the daughter of the Viceroy, to deliver your wench in safety wherever you wish her sent? At what town declared for Orange and occupied by Dutch garrison do you want your daughter delivered? Name the place, and it is done.”

“Haarlem!” mutters the old man, “I have friends in Haarlem,” and in after months could have cut his tongue out for these words.

“It is done,” remarks Guy. “Bring your daughter to me at once.”

“I will. Mina is packing.”

“Packing, idiot! Do you suppose she’ll need fine raiment if they have her in the Spin-House? Fly, and save your daughter’s white back from the scourge. Quick!”

In terror at this picture the Burgomaster runs away, while Guy, chewing his mustache, knows he has [162]shortened an interview he would prolong though life and death are on its very brevity. He turns and takes a look at Hermoine de Alva.

She has her back to him, and in graceful pose and with twistings of lithe limbs is striving, without the loosening of bodice or stomacher, to clutch something that eludes her—some article she must treasure as it lies close to her beating heart.

As Guy closes the door she gives a little cry of success, and a moment after is in his arms again, murmuring: “That poor Bodé Volcker will be here in a moment, then you must go. *Ay de mi!* the time is very short. But I have this, now, upon my hand by which to remember you.” With rapture Guy sees again his brilliant upon the delicate finger of his love.

“Whatever they tell you,” he whispers, “swear to remember me by it as thy true knight.”

“Yes,” says the girl, “if it is whispered to me that you are untrue, I shall whisper to myself, ‘It is a lie.’ If they say you are a drunkard, as that old idiot Bodé Volcker told me,” she flashes indignant eyes against the door where the Burgomaster has made his exit, “I shall say, ‘My Guido proved it a lie once, it is a lie again.’ But,” her tone is piteous now, “you’ll come back to me. I know you must go to your command. There is but one

place when war is raging against the flag of Spain for the affianced of Alva's daughter, and that is where the battle flags are waving! There you may win rank high enough and glory great enough to claim my hand."

"Don't doubt me, I'll be where the fighting is," mutters Chester grimly, "and it'll be you I fight for, though perhaps Alva will not appreciate my efforts."

"My father always rewards bravery and conduct, remember that, Major Guido Amati de Medina—bravery and conduct. You may have the courage of a Paladin, but it will not give you promotion without brains. You have plenty of both, I think," she laughs, smoothing away the curls from Guy's determined forehead, then cries excitedly: "Why, you have the head of a chess player!"

"Yes, the game in which the *knight* takes the *queen*," whispers Guy. [163]

"Then he must be very gallant and tender and discreet to the captured lady," cries the girl, blushing, though there is languor in her drooping eyes. For the knight at his word has taken possession of the queen of his soul in a mad, delirious kind of way, as into his mind for one brief second has come the thought of carrying her off *instanter* by some wild *coup*.

A moment's consideration shows Guy that now he has no time to press his suit or make arrangements to that effect, or even to persuade Hermoine, for he would not take her unwillingly or bring discredit on the name of her he honors most upon this earth, and the Burgomaster is now rapping at the door.

"Remember—"

They both speak this same word at once, and each one's lips prevent the other's uttering more. It is their last lingering, torturing, farewell embrace.

Then, with the decision of the man of war and the man of affairs, Chester throws open the door and Niklaas enters, followed by *Juffrouw* Wilhelmina, who is in piteous plight and dressed hastily as daughter of a middle-class burgher, with none of her old-time finery about her.

There are traces of tears upon her cheeks that have grown very pale, but her eyes flash with nervous terror and excitement that give a strange, pathetic beauty to her face.

“Hurry! there’s a carriage at the door for you,” mutters the Burgomaster. “I’ve sent what little luggage could be gathered up in haste to the vessel. A maid servant goes with you.”

But this is broken in upon by Mina. She strides up to Hermoine de Alva, who is gazing at her sadly, and mutters brokenly: “Tell me of him!”

“Him—whom?”

“My Oliver. Is he safe?”

“For the present, yes.”

“Thank God!”

“Yes, the traitor Oliver fled from Brussels late last night. This morning word was brought us that with eight men he had captured Mons.”

“Eight men! Ah! That was a gallant deed. Eight men capture a garrison. But Louis of Nassau is [164]doubtless hurrying in his men-at-arms from France into the city. Your hero is safe now, little Mina!” cries Guy, forgetting his rôle of Spanish officer, in enthusiasm for his friend’s valor and glory.

“Yes, he’s safe, *for the present*,” murmurs Hermoine. “He is a gallant man and a great painter. I will look after his altar piece. But, oh misericordia!” she puts her eyes up to heaven and says piteously: “I pray God my father may never capture him alive.” Then turning to Mina she

says very solemnly: “If you ever have word with your lover again, pray him as he fears the pangs of Hades, *not to be captured alive*! It is a pity so gallant a spirit ate my father’s bread and yet betrayed him. Still, Major Guido Amati, I charge you, by your word of honor as a gentleman, to save this poor girl from my father’s wrath.”

“Quick, put her in the carriage,” mutters Guy to Bodé Volcker.

And the Burgomaster, taking his daughter out, Hermoine de Alva whispers: “See, I have faith in you. How little I believe that you are libertine and roué. This girl is beautiful. I have placed her in your hands, for I believe in you as maiden did in knight of old.”

“By Saint George and the Dragon! you may trust me.” Then Chester, bending his knee, puts his lips upon the *lips* held up to him, for he hears Bodé Volcker’s crying: “Haste!”

Passing out, the last look that Chester receives from the beautiful eyes of the lady of his heart is one of ineffable trust, and he knows that through good report and evil report Hermoine de Alva will believe in Major Guido Amati de Medina, of Romero’s foot, as her knight and champion.

At the carriage door the Burgomaster presses the Englishman’s hand and whispers: “Every arrangement has been made, drive straight to the ship,” then falters, “You have her in your hands. As you do by my Mina may God do by you. Quick! the tide is now just on the first ebb.”

Driving hastily to the *Esperanza* Guy, boarding the vessel, finds Olins ready with the clearance papers of the ship. Then exhibiting his charter to a custom house officer in waiting, and it being approved, the vessel [165]casts off hastily from the dock and spreading every sail to the breeze, for time is very precious now, the ebb tide bears them down the Schelde.

About an hour and a half after this the *Esperanza* has put the Fort of Lillo behind her and is making for the open ocean, upon which the sailors of Holland claim dominion over the mercenaries of Alva.

As he gazes over his quarter at the grinning bombards and culverins of the Spaniard, Chester draws a long breath of relief. He has escaped again from Antwerp; the treasure of the Duke is yet unscathed—though he has gained a hundred kisses—for every one of which he would have risked his life a hundred times. But his men have had no kisses, and guessing they have also gained no treasure, are disposed to grumble.

Soon after this to Chester comes the daughter of the merchant, and whispers: “God bless you, for saving me from degradation and the scourge.”

“You have perfect confidence in me, I hope?” murmurs the Englishman, looking at the beautiful girl, the fresh sea breeze having brought the roses back to Mina’s cheek.

“Yes! You are the friend of Oliver; you would not betray him. You are”—here Miss Wilhelmina stammers, but smiles—“the—the sweetheart of one to whom no one could be untrue.”

“*Par Dios!* who is she?” says Guy, biting his lip.

“Doña Hermoine de Alva. Dost remember the bargains I gave to her duenna, Major Guido Amati de Medina?” And the girl laughs quite merrily, though not being accustomed to the sea, laughing is just now becoming a hard matter to her.

[Contents]

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

A few hours after this Chester is at Flushing, now held very strongly by 't Zeraerts for the Prince of Orange.

Finding that the *Dover Lass* has not returned from Ireland, after some little trouble with the authorities, [166]who would make a prize of the *Esperanza*, did not Chester prove himself "The First of the English" and a brother *Gueux*, he very shortly leaves this port.

Anxious to acquit himself of his promise to Doña Hermoine and deliver his charge at Haarlem, Guy, hoisting the flag of Orange, anchors in the course of the next day at Zandvoort. Landing by boat upon the beach near that little Dutch fishing village, Chester, accompanied by ten of his tars as escort, makes a pleasant journey of five miles through the wooded dunes to the river Spaarne, upon which stream lies the pretty city of Haarlem, basking in the sunshine, its streets filled with bustling burghers, the bells of its great church pealing triumphantly Protestant devotion, the women laughing, the children playing about its neat Dutch homes and gaily colored pentices.

Coming in to the place by St. Jan's Gate, which is held strongly by burgher guard armed with arquebuses and cross bows, Chester is conducted to Captain Wybout Ripperda, commander of the city, and giving his name and business, he finds that the "First of the English" is very well known by reputation in this city of Holland as a friend of the cause. So very shortly thereafter Guy is permitted to conduct *Juffrouw* Bodé Volcker to her relatives, the family of her uncle, one Pieter Kies, who has made a fortune by his bleaching fields.

After spending the evening with the prosperous and hospitable Hollander, he leaves the fair Mina happy and contented, though very solicitous about the man she loves.

“If word comes to you of Oliver, you’ll try to let me know,” she pleads, then says, a tremble in her voice: “God bless you for taking care of the helpless. Oliver will thank you for it himself if he lives to meet you,” next smiles: “You are not what you seem to be. You are not the Spanish captain, you are a patriot, like my bachelor, and still,” here her eyes open, “you are the bachelor of Alva’s daughter!” Then seeing consternation on Guy’s face, she adds impulsively: “Trust me, I’ll keep your secret, for I know every kiss of Doña Hermoine is at risk of your life.”

Not altogether satisfied that another has his secret, Chester makes his way to the pretty little inn of the [167]Swan. There he spends a very comfortable night between clean sheets (for the Holland hostelries were very much better than those of Antwerp) mine host being a young, resolute looking Fleming named Hasselaer. He and his mother, a widow of about forty, keep the Swan in very good order.

The next morning, after a pleasant meal, the Englishman repairs to Captain Ripperda and demands passport for himself and his ten followers.

“Certainly,” replies the stout Dutch commander, “I am only happy to be of assistance to one who is such a friend to our cause. May you return to us in a happier day.”

“What could be happier than this?” answers Guy, looking at the pretty scene of bustling trade and thrifty commerce about him.

“*Drommelsch!* it is pleasant enough now,” says the Dutchman, “but God knows what may come of this war. We are quiet at present, but it is the quiet before the storm. Every town in Holland save Amsterdam is up in arms against Alva, and with this attack in his rear by Oliver at Mons, the news of which has just been brought to us, and with assistance from

French Huguenots, as Condé and Coligny promise us, perchance when the cloud breaks it will not contain so much thunder and lightning—but God knows!"

And God does know what Ripperda does not, for had that stout Dutchman guessed what was coming to him and his, how they shall soon be eating the grass in the streets to try to keep their souls in their bodies, and then only saving themselves ultimately for Alva's torturers and executioners, he and every man, woman and child that throng the streets of happy Haarlem would fly from it, leaving behind their household goods and their beloved homes as if they were accursed by God.

But everything is very bright and pleasant now, as Chester makes his exit through the St. Jan's Gate and returns to Zandvoort, where, signaling his vessel, a boat is sent to him and he is soon on board the *Esperanza* again, and returning to Flushing there meets the *Dover Lass*.

"You left every Spaniard of them safe in Ireland?" Guy says to Dalton.
[168]

"Yes, every mother's Don of them is safe with the O'Toole. They can speak Irish by this time," answers his first officer.

Chester is greeted with three ringing cheers by the Dover Lasses—cheers of joy and delight, for their commander has come back with his life—doubtless he has come back with the gold.

"Now for the treasure!" cries Dalton, heartily, but his weather-beaten face grows gloomy as Guy exclaims: "No treasure for the present!"

Likewise the men are disappointed also, for each of them, when he saw his captain alive, expected instantly the twenty promised doubloons in hand.

Failure makes trouble for Guy, who is compelled to sail to England to obtain money to pay his crew and to have the keys made.

In London, though he gets the keys of the Viceroy's treasure house manufactured by three very cunning locksmiths and has them carefully put away in his strong box on the *Dover Lass*, the treasure house of his country does not seem to open to him.

He cannot negotiate a loan with bankers and silver-smiths, for he will give no hint of where he expects to find the booty he speaks of, and most of them guess it is the West Indies—a long cruise with great risk of shipwreck and capture.

He cannot get aid from Queen Elizabeth, who claps her hands angrily on her pocket as he petitions for money, and says: "Sir Guy Chester, it is luck that I leave you with your head! Who robbed my arsenals of powder? Who but you and that weazen Burleigh? If those Hollanders were not making it unpleasant for my friend of Alva methinks it would have been high treason."

So Guy, not daring to tell his story of the Duke's treasure, finds himself in sorry plight, some of his crew leaving him for other captains who can pay them advance money. Finally growing desperate, he comes one day to Lord Burleigh and says to him: "You like money as much as any man."

"You're right," replies Burleigh, rubbing his hands.

"I can't tell you where I'm going to get this money, but there is a treasure box to be unlocked by a man [169]willing to risk his life. I am willing to risk mine. I know where the treasure is."

"Where?"

"That I shall never tell. But you have had my word before about certain matters and you have found my word was truth. In fact, I've made your name as statesman."

"You have made my name as statesman?"

“Yes, by my advice about the *Gueux*, you are now called the astute, the wise, far-seeing old fox Burleigh.”

“Yes, at the risk of my weazen head,” replies his lordship, glumly. “Nevertheless you want to talk to me about—money?”

“Yes! Advance me six thousand crowns and if I come back alive I’ll pay you sixty thousand—ten for one. You’d better make it ten thousand crowns, then you’ll have a hundred thousand. It is like dicing. I risk my life, you risk your money.”

“I value my ten thousand crowns more than you do your life,” chuckles his lordship, and sends him away.

But about this time Francis Drake, happening to come back from the Spanish Main, his vessel heavily laden with silver ingots from some captured galleon, and Guy having set report afloat that his treasure is also in the West Indies, his lordship, in the course of a few days, sends after Chester and tells him that he cannot advance the money himself, but for a commission he can get certain London merchants to advance ten thousand crowns at the terms of payment Guy has offered.

With a jump the young man accepts, and this sum of money being turned over to him, refits his vessel, fills up his crew to fighting strength, which is easy as most of his best men, headed by Dalton and Croker, have never left him, and sets sail for the Netherlands, notwithstanding it is wintry weather now, to arrive in Flushing early in December. Here he has hardly dropped anchor when surprises come upon him.

A boat boards him from the shore and Achille, who now acts as cabin boy, comes screaming down the hatch-way: “Monsieur Oliver! My master, the painter Oliver!”

In a jump, and with a shout of joy, Chester is on [170]deck, and Englishman as he is, permits himself to be embraced and kissed, even in sight of his grinning crew for it is Oliver, and he is as one returned from

the dead, as Alva has recaptured Mons and gibbeted most of its defenders.

“Come in the cabin and tell me your news. You’re no artist now, you’re only a fighting man,” mutters Guy with a mighty grip of the hand and watery look in his eye, as he gazes on Antony.

“Tell me *your* news—what of the woman I love?” cries the painter.

“Safe.”

“Thank God!”

“Come in, I’ll tell you.”

In the cabin, each gives to the other revelation that astounds him. Oliver tells of his capture of Mons, how he himself slew the gatekeeper on guard at daybreak as his eight men, concealed in vegetables, and drawn in market carts, passed into the town; how Louis of Nassau, who was in waiting in the wood outside with five hundred horsemen, each with a footman mounted behind, got in, Oliver and his eight heroes holding the gate against the Spanish garrison until they passed the drawbridge. Then the details of Alva’s siege against them; how they hoped for success, having been promised succor from France; next the news of the *fête* of Catharine de Medici, the awful massacre of St. Bartholomew, when all the best blood of the Huguenots flooded the streets of Paris, and no aid of the dead Coligny could come to them; how Orange was beaten in his attempt to relieve them; how finally he, Oliver, Louis of Nassau, and some others escaped from Alva’s clutches, who, now having no fear of France, with every Huguenot chief struck down, is gathering together a great army of Spanish mercenaries to make the conquest of Holland, intending to use Amsterdam as his center, it being the only town in his hands.

“By the by,” says Guy, “speaking of Spaniards, have you heard anything of our friend, Major Guido Amati?”

"*Colonel* Guido Amati."

"The deuce you say—*promoted*?" [171]

"Yes. You're a step nearer the Viceroy's daughter," laughs Antony. "Haven't you heard? When Mondragon a month ago raised the siege of Tergoes, Major Guido Amati, heading the Spanish infantry, marched at night across the flooded Drowned Lands of South Beveland, where one step from the path meant drowning, where one hour's delay in making that four hours' crossing meant death by the rising tide, and so came in the darkness to rise in front of 't Zeraert's soldiers as if by magic in the morning, crossing a place we thought passable by only fishes or birds. For that march Mondragon reported Major Guido Amati for promotion. It was immediately granted; it generally takes a year. So you see you have been doing very well. Probably Doña de Alva is very proud of you now."

"Thank God," laughs Guy, "my villain namesake has got to fighting again, and *I'll* probably behave myself," then says: "Have you heard of her?"

"No, except she is still as beautiful as ever, but more haughtily cold. Even Noircarmes, it is rumored, scowls and twists his mustachios when Doña de Alva's name is mentioned. Now tell me of my love."

On this, Guy, giving an account of his curious morning in Antwerp and how he had taken, by Doña de Alva's command, Mina Bodé Volcker from torture and disgrace, Oliver, with tears in his eyes, cries out: "God bless her and curse her father. How can so tender a heart have Alva for a father?"

A moment after he adds, somewhat anxiously: "Where did you take my Mina?"

"To Haarlem."

“HAARLEM!” This is a wailing shriek. “Good God, man, why did you do that?”

“Her father sent her there to her relative, Pieter Kies.”

“*Haarlem!*” The painter is transfixed with horror. “It is almost now surrounded!” he groans. “HAARLEM! it is the town Alva has sworn to let no living man, woman nor child escape from. Haarlem! Haarlem! My God! Is she still there?”

“I don’t know. I left her there, safe and happy waiting for you—her last words were of you.”

“Haarlem! we must get there. We must try to save [172]her. It is especially decreed that all refugees there shall have the torture as well as death. My Mina is a refugee. Help me, Englishman—you put my love into the fire—help me draw her forth!” moans Oliver, in almost unreasoning anguish.

“Don’t reproach me,” mutters Guy. “I did the best I could for her. But I’ll help you get her out—with my life I’ll help you get her out.”

“God bless you,” cries Oliver. “And your crew?”

“They follow me.”

“God bless them!”

Then forgetting his treasure and turning once more his back upon his love he hungers for, Guy departs with his painter friend, who has now become a warrior, upon their errand of rescue that to succeed must be immediate.

Dalton remarks to Guy as he receives orders to hoist the anchor and sail for the North: “This is hardly fair to those who assisted you with money, Captain Chester.”

“Friendship before commerce—my friend’s happiness before the fortune of English bankers and usurers!” answers his commander. “Dalton, you have a sweetheart in England; what would you do to save her from Alva’s troops?”

“Fight ’till I died.”

“Then, man, my friend has his betrothed in Haarlem!”

“Then I’ll fight for his sweetheart, too,” cries the rough lieutenant; and this story passing about the *Dover Lass*, the men sharpen their cutlasses and battle axes and give three cheers, singing in their cheery British way:

“We’re going to fight for Portsmouth Poll.”

The next day they make Delft, and find there is no chance of getting to Haarlem by way of Leyden. Here also they learn of the awful massacre at Naarden, five hundred burghers killed in the church, the rest of the inhabitants butchered by one means or another. The details are not complete, the affrighted peasants dare not visit the place from which comes up the wail of women and children heard three miles away. It is the [173]Dutch town in the hands of Spanish soldiery, given up to loot and spoil, murder and ravage; it is the same tale as Mechlen, as Zutphen, the same tale wherever Alva’s veterans conquer.

This makes Oliver desperate. He shudders at what he hears, but whispers with pale lips to Guy: “Our only chance is to get into the Zuyder Zee and by it into the Y and above Haarlem. That way is yet open.”

“Perhaps!” returns Guy, doubtfully, “But it’s taking desperate chances. Both going and returning we’ve got to sneak past Amsterdam, where Alva is with all his army and probably war ships besides.”

“*Mon Dieu!* You’re not going to desert her?” cries the Franco-Fleming pathetically.

“No, but I must be sure she is in Haarlem before I risk the lives of my men in such desperate service. It is December, the ice will shortly be forming.”

Making inquiries, Chester soon discovers the last man who has come in from Haarlem, a wild-eyed wretch, half dazed with fear, for he has just escaped several patrols of Spanish, who hang up or slaughter in some cruel way all they meet.

To their questioning he answers: “Yes, I was in Haarlem—but I’ve escaped with my life—you see—with my life. I saw the smoke of Naarden burning, I heard the wail—”

“But Haarlem!” cuts in Guy. “Answer my questions quick and I will give you money.” For the poor wretch is destitute and dependent upon public alms. “Do you know one Pieter Kies?”

“Of course, one of the town council.”

“Is he there?”

“Yes.”

“Is there staying with him a fair-haired girl, with bright blue eyes?”

“Oh, you mean the sweetheart of the patriot painter, the one they honor in the name of Oliver of Mons.”

This settles the matter. Oliver goes to screaming in his French way: “*Nom de Dieu!* there’ll be no mercy for her, Mina will be tortured because I love her,” then whispers hoarsely to Guy: “Save her, Englishman! If you call yourself my friend, save her.”

“I’ll do everything man can.” [174]

“Then quick! Hoist anchor and get under way for the Zuyder Zee! Speed is her safety.”

“For this affair I must make preparation,” answers Chester, who greatly doubts the wisdom of this move.

“Preparation? Have we not arms and powder! *Hurry*, as I love her! HURRY!” begs Antony.

Spurred by his friend’s despairing words, Chester makes quick but accurate provision for this trip. He first looks about for pilot knowing the inland waters in which he is to sail his ship, and quickly engages a harum-scarum Friesland freebooter called ’t Hoen (*Anglice* the Chicken). This man at once orders the *Dover Lass* to be lightened as much as possible.

“Six inches draught of water, more or less, may mean our lives over the Zuydergat,” says ’t Hoen, who, with all his wildness, is a calculating seaman.

So the *Dover Lass* is made flying light; provisions, water, ammunition, is all she carries.

Then, though the sailors jeer, ’t Hoen calls out: “How many of you skate?”

“Oho! this is a (winter) garden party with dames and wenches and lighted fires upon the ice,” jeers the boatswain.

Without giving answer to this ’t Hoen goes off and buys for every man that can perform upon them a pair of long, sharp Friesland skates. Bringing these on board the ship he says, “Captain Chester, we’ll run away with these if the worst comes to the worst,” which gives Corker a glum face, he not liking the idea of deserting ship even to save his life.

These preparations are made with such energy by Chester and his men that they are delayed at Delft scarce four hours.

Crowding sail upon the *Dover Lass* they the next day enter that ocean lake of Holland called the Zuyder Zee, and passing Enkhuyzen, get news that Alva is preparing to cut off Haarlem from succor and provisions.

That evening, getting off Amsterdam, they lie off and on, ready to sneak past the place in the darkness into the Y, and by the next morning would reach Haarlem before Alva and save the girl from the danger of the siege.

But that night the providence of God in numbing, [175]freezing weather and chilling breath just from the Arctic, is upon them. The placid water becomes ice. The breeze is not strong enough to give them headway to crush through it.

The next morning all about them is a vast sheet of deep blue ice, and imprisoned within it is their vessel and three others of the *Gueux*, fortunately all near together, perhaps bound upon a similar errand. They are now helpless, they cannot retreat, they cannot go forward.

THE CITY OF AMSTERDAM, FILLED WITH ALVA'S ARMY, IS LOOKING AT THEM, ONLY FOUR MILES AWAY.

[Contents]

CHAPTER XV.

THE BATTLE ON SKATES.

Oliver comes down excitedly from the masthead and whispers: “I can see the spire of the great church at Haarlem. We’re only twenty miles away from—the woman I love—hurry.”

“If the ice holds,” mutters Guy, “we’ll get to the next world before Haarlem. We can only stay here and die on our vessels. The Spaniards will come over the ice to attack us. We shall be overwhelmed by numbers.”

“We must have counsel with our brother *Gueux*,” says ’t Hoen. “Come with me. You can skate, First of the English?”

“Very well,” answers Guy. “Will the ice hold?”

“Yes, infantry now, by night accursed Spanish cannon.”

So buckling on sharp iron Friesland skates, the two fly over the smooth frozen Zuyder Zee, and in a few seconds are at the vessels of the *Gueux*. Here holding quick consultation, the captains decide to fight it out to the death together, no matter what force is brought against them; surrender would be suicide.

A few minutes more and they make up their minds just how to do this fighting, and electing Guy commander-in-chief, he takes action very quickly. In five [176]minutes not only the crew of the *Dover Lass* are on the ice, but the crews of the other *Gueux* vessels, amounting in all to about five hundred men, and are working for their lives with ice picks, crowbars, ice saws and any and every implement they can use, cutting a passage around the three *Gueux* vessels and a water lane from the *Dover Lass* to bring her up to them.

By almost superhuman exertions, in something like three hours they have not only got the *Dover Lass* in company with the other *Gueux* vessels, but have cut out the ice immediately surrounding them, making the vessels float as in a little inland lake, though surrounded by an impenetrable floe.

Next getting the four vessels in the form of a parallelogram, they lash them stem and stern all round—making the broadside of each ship one side of a floating citadel. Then putting out grappling irons and small anchors set in the ice, to which are attached cables they moor their ships strongly to prevent drifting against the ice and giving chance for boarding.

"*Pardieu!*" exclaims Oliver. "This is a new idea. They can't get at us."

"Not a man of them can board our ships if our cables hold so as to prevent drift and we can keep the ice broken," answers Guy.

At this work they all set themselves, toiling watch and watch and finding it tremendous labor, for the cold still continues, and the ice grows thicker and more resisting.

So they are all happy when the lookout from his chilly post at the masthead cries: "They're coming!" and gazing over the frozen field they see some fifteen hundred picked Spanish and Walloon infantry tramping their slippery path to give them death.

This seems an easy task to the attacking party—vessels imprisoned in the ice—they look for a cool, comfortable butchery of their crews. And they come on in that confident manner with which Spanish infantry always met the Dutch, until after ten years of hard fighting the Hollanders had made themselves as good troops on land as any infantry in Europe.

But on the sea the Dutch are at home; so with their [177]guns—demi-culverins, falcons and falconettes—loaded to their nozzles with arquebus bullets and nails and scraps of iron; with pikes and battle axes ready to

hand, they look quite confidently and eagerly from their wooden citadel floating upon this ice-bound lake.

This moat of ice cold water will give Alva's veterans more difficulty in escalade than the deepest fosse of any walled town they have stormed within the Netherlands. But not guessing what is before them, and the weather being bracing, the Spanish arquebusiers come on with a cheer, their commander apparently giving order for quick time.

"Thank God, these fellows are not going to keep us waiting long," laughs Guy, beating his mailed hands together, "a steel bodice and metal hose are not over comfortable this December weather."

This is Sir Guy Chester's first fight since he has been dubbed Knight, and he is in full panoply, helmet, plumes and visor, breast-plate and back piece, even to golden spurs, the badge of his order. This ice slippery deck is not as convenient for displaying his Italian armor as the back of dashing war-horse on a tented field, but the age of chivalry has not quite passed away—knighthood still means military nobility—the gilded spurs still indicate blue blood and 'daring do'—what youth could resist wearing its insignia—not Guy Chester. His crew cheer his gallant appearance, knowing well that underneath his Milan mail is a leader they can trust and follow.

"Oho!" screams Oliver, with sudden mercurial laugh. "See! The Spanish dogs are tumbling over each other. This will be a slippery affair."

"Yes, and a bloody one—for them," mutters Dawson savagely, sword in hand.

And it is!

The little fleet, not firing a gun, let their opponents come close to them. But as the Spanish infantry charge their front rank suddenly discovers that it is fighting in water instead of on the ice. Every man of them has to

drop his arms to swim for his life, which is rather freezing work this December day.

"We'll warm them up," cries Guy, as the guns of the *Dover Lass's* starboard battery open on the mass of [178]struggling, drowning men. So also the Dutch ships.

But Alva's Spanish infantry on land or sea are not to be defeated in a moment. The officer in command deploys a number of his men as skirmishers, and they, with their arquebuses, open on the ships. Soon balls are whistling over the bulwarks and through the rigging of the *Dover Lass* in stinging volleys, as well as scattering shots.

Others of the Spaniards crawling upon the ice try to get at the cables holding the vessels to cut them from their moorings, so they will drift to one side or the other of the lake and become accessible to escalade and boarding. Then Guy, going forward to the forecastle to direct his men to use their arquebuses defending their cables from attack, finds it is well that he is in knightly armor. Were it not for his steel breastplate some Spanish sharpshooters had done for him. Two bullets flatten against his armor and one sweeps the plume from his helmet.

But the cables are kept taut, and those who venture against them in this desperate service are all shot down and the broadside of the *Dover Lass* still thunders, scourging the ice with bullets.

All does not go so well upon the other side of the floating fortress; by great exertions and much loss of men the Spaniards at last succeed in cutting one *Gueux* cable; unable to withstand the additional strain another anchor pulls out of the ice, and the wooden citadel drifts against the solid floe.

Now is the Spaniards chance; in a moment they have their boarding ladders planted against the ship whose deck the *Dover Lass's* bow overlooks, for she is a smaller craft.

As the Spaniards swarm up the ladders to fight their way upon the Dutchman's deck—Guy calls his boarders and they spring to the assistance of their assaulted comrades—the other *Gueux* vessels sending detachments also to the deck of this vessel, which now becomes the focus of the fight.

Once by very force of numbers the Spaniards gain the quarter-deck of the Dutch ship, and shouting with triumph, think the day is theirs; but the murdering-pieces on the vessel's own forecastle and two from the [179]bow of the *Dover Lass* drown this cry with their reports as they cut lanes in the cheering mass. Then with a rush from the other vessels—the deck is regained, but only partially—as Alva's veterans fight as if they were never to be beaten—their leader bearing a charmed life.

Twice he and Guy have crossed swords, but have been swept away from each other by the surging tide of battle—which is again turning to numbers, and the Spaniards. The cannon of the boarded ship are now of little use, and the guns of the other vessels will not bear upon this side of the fight—the day is looking badly for the Beggars of the Sea.

But as Guy fights he thinks, and suddenly returning to his own ship, cries out: "Load up two demi-culverins with solid shot and get them on our forecastle."

This being done by Corker and some men, Chester directs these cannon not at the Spaniards, but at the ice upon which the Spanish boarding ladders rest.

The first discharge puts fifty men and their ladders in the water. "We'll drown them quicker than we'll kill them!" yell the English sailors—and a few more rounds settle the affair—the ice is destroyed under the very feet of the Spaniards, and floundering in the water's chilling grasp, a hundred veterans sink.

The others give back. This icy citadel is too hard a nut for them to crack.

Looking on the matter as a bad job that he can only make worse by continuing, the Spanish commander, apparently unwounded, gives the order to retire, and his veterans drawing off slowly and taking their slightly wounded with them, turn their faces toward Amsterdam.

Noting in their slippery path many of his enemies fall even as they trudge along the ice, 't Hoen, who is laughing at them, suddenly shouts: "We mustn't let a man of them escape. After them, on skates! After them on skates!" he cries to the Dutch captains of the other vessels.

This idea seeming to strike the Hollanders to a man, the English who are capable of executing manœuvers on the ice join with them, and in less than five minutes Guy puts on the glassy field by his boats a party of seventy-five from the *Dover Lass*, each man armed with [180]arquebus and sword or pike and battle axe, and each with Friesland skates upon his feet.

Even Oliver, who can hardly keep his head off the ice, accompanies them. The Dutch captains bring yet larger parties, all their men being proficient in this national pastime of Holland.

The Spaniards, totally unexpecting pursuit, are making their way slowly to the city, not even looking back, for the sight behind them of dead men drowned or butchered, and wounded comrades who are crawling, slipping and freezing on the ice, is not pleasant.

"These maimed cannot escape us," cries Maarten Merens, one of the Dutch captains, "we'll finish the wounded at our leisure. On for those who are not hurt," and the *Gueux* speed on like swallows in their flight.

So it comes to pass that the Spanish commander hears behind him suddenly a whirring sound as the irons cut the ice, and looking backward, skimming like birds, come four hundred Dutch and English, not half the number he is bringing back.

Turning his men he would form them to receive attack, but they are not quick enough. The rapid skates bear the Dutch and English upon them like charge of cavalry, the slippery ice impedes them, and in a minute the Spanish formation is dashed to pieces, the ice becoming the scene of hundreds of individual combats, the Hollanders and the English having the best of it, attacking whom they like, retreating when they please.

It is a funny affair, though blood flows like water, and men die shaking with merriment—the guffaws mingling with death shrieks. Guy himself, as he cuts down a man, laughs at the fellow's headless corpse turning a somersault upon the slippery ice. One Spaniard running, pursued by a Dutch skater, throws himself desperately upon the ice, and the Dutchman goes headlong over him, but being quick with his feet, gives his antagonist a lucky jab in the eye with his sharp Friesland skate, and the Spaniard is dead before the Dutchman recovers his feet.

After the first rush, Guy's eye is on the leader of the [181]Spanish troops, and the leader of the Spanish troops has his eye on him.

Till now the Castilian has fought very silently and very deadly; though not accustomed to the ice, his skill at fence is so great that two or three Dutchmen have gone down before him wounded, and one English sailor will never see his mother again, by force of his Toledo blade.

The Spaniard now cries: "Come on, I know you. You are the First of the English. Come on, and though you have wings, I'll clip them!"

This kind of a challenge is not to be ignored by English knight. It is a kind that prevailed in the days of chivalry, not quite faded out of England, and Chester accepts it.

Then the two come together, the Englishman's heavy sword giving play against the more subtle and delicate point of the Toledo, and were not Guy armored in steel this day would be the last of him.

The Spaniard has a wrist of steel and his sword's play is of the finest Italian school; but Guy makes his heels save his head. This angers the Spaniard, and he grinds his teeth—while Chester deftly "grinds the bar," a skater's trick that enables him to circle round the Castilian, giving him two cuts that even his skill of fence can hardly parry.

The next shoot round his enemy Guy gets his blade on his man, wounding him slightly. But carried forward in making a cut, one of Sir Guy Chester's knightly spurs catches in his skates and he were lost did he not by quick action drop sitting down on both skates and glide from his antagonist.

He is half a hundred yards away before he turns to find himself face to face with poor little Ensign de Busaco, who is having a hard time of it, being slightly wounded; his heavy Jack boots impeding his progress on the ice.

Chester is just in time to recognize the little Spanish ensign and save his life, as two or three Beggars of the Sea are almost upon him, and in another minute De Busaco would sleep with his fathers.

The instinct of comradeship born in Antwerp is in [182]Guy's heart, and his right arm knocks up two pikes that lunge at the little ensign, he crying to him: "Surrender to *me*; surrender to *me*, fool!" For the little Spaniard, with drawn sword, is striving to do his best for himself.

But just at this moment, taking lounge *en tierce*, the poor little fellow's legs fly under him and his head goes down with a tremendous crack upon the ice that would stun him were it not for his steel head-piece.

"He's mine!" says Guy, beating back the swords; "He is my prisoner. Surrender, you idiot Busaco!"

"I yield," says De Busaco, sullenly. Then he suddenly smiles and cries: "*Mon Dieu!* Captain Guido Amati! Yes, I surrender to *you*. What ransom shall I pay to save my life? You're not going to kill me, are you?"

“No, Busaco, you are safe. Twice you saved my life, and didn’t know it. Now I save yours.”

“Yes,” says the other; “that was curious, wasn’t it? Captain *Guido Amati*! From the flag flying at your masthead you are now called the First of the English?”

It is a foolish speech and nearly costs him dear, for the Englishman knows that this recognition, if reported at Spanish headquarters, means no more chance of Guido Amati’s interviews with Alva’s daughter. He says: “Yes, the First of the English, but no ransom from you.”

“No ransom,” mutters De Busaco, “I suppose you are going to kill me because I know your secret?”

“No! Swear to me by everything upon this earth you will never recognize me as the First of the English, were I to stand in Alva’s own hall before you. There’s five thousand crowns upon my head; but swear you’ll never know me as First of the English, only as Guido Amati.”

“I swear it by this cross my mother gave me,” says the little Ensign, putting crucifix to his lips. Then he laughs and adds: “The oath wasn’t necessary. I had known this before.”

“When—how long!”

“Ever since three weeks ago I met the *real* Colonel Guido Amati. You’ve been promoted, you know.”

“And you never mentioned this, even to Amati himself?”

“No—to no living soul!” [183]

“Why not?”

“*Santos!* it involved the secret of a lady.”

“God bless you,” says Guy, hugging his prisoner to his heart. “It did, perchance, involve the good name, but not the honor, of a lady.”

“Oh, every one knows that Doña de Alva is a saint. Funny, she should love *you*. Curious—”

But they have no time to discuss it further. Chester seizes the young man by the hand, drags him over the ice, and to ensure his safety goes with him almost to Amsterdam. In this, Guy almost endangers his own life, for Spanish troops come out to meet them; so he leaves his charge with a squeeze of the hand and a “God bless you. Remember!”

“Don’t doubt me. I’ve seen her look at you. I know she loves you, and no one would injure her heart—but look out, my men are coming!” cries De Busaco.

Turning back on his skates Chester makes for his ship, near which he finds Antony and two or three others bending over the body of the Spanish officer Guy had left so suddenly.

“They killed him after you went on,” remarks Oliver. “I have kept them away from his body because of you. He was a very gallant gentleman.”

“Because of me?” cries Guy. “Do you think I will gloat over a fallen hero. Still if accident had not come to me I should have finished him myself, I think, though he had a rare sword’s play in his arm.”

“That would have been horrible,” says the painter.

“Why?”

“You would have committed *suicide*.”

“Suicide! What do you mean?”

“I mean that there will be weeping soon from eyes you love, when your death is reported to her.”

“Buffoon! What do you mean?”

“I mean that this is Colonel Guido Amati, the man Hermoine de Alva thinks you are!”

“Good heavens!” says Chester, bending over the dead man.

“I’ve searched his person and taken his valuables; not for myself, but for transmission to his family,” adds the painter; “but this letter concerns you.”

Hastily looking at the document by the light of [184]the Northern sun that is sinking in the west, Chester gives a sudden start. It is in the handwriting he knows and loves, and has seen so little of, but does not forget, and reads:

> “God bless you, gallant one; you have become a Colonel. That promotion was quick, wasn’t it? That was my doing. A word of advice to you, my hero. Capture or slay the First of the English, and you are sure to be a general; that will bring you to the church door, where Hermoine awaits you.”

“Good God! This is horrible,” mutters Guy. “Sent by the woman I love to kill me. And now she will weep for him.”

“Yes, and the more she weeps for him the dearer she loves you. *You’re* not dead yet. Oh, wonderful transformation scene. Fancy Hermoine’s eyes when she sees the dead alive. Oh God! if I could look upon the eyes of my love who is over there,” Oliver points toward Haarlem. “Guy, help me to save her.”

A moment after Antony suddenly cries: “*Mon Dieu!* what’s the matter with you?” for the Englishman is leaning heavily on him, and is muttering: “A—a bullet must have got through my breast-plate!”

Tearing off the steel the painter finds it has, though the wound is not a deep one.

Continued loss of blood through all his violent exertions makes him faint and weak, and Chester is carried upon his ship.

The Dutch captains yet look very solemn; if this cold continues, the ice will still enclose their vessels and they must be attacked by the great army at Amsterdam, who will never forgive them now they have slain four hundred of the best Spanish troops.

“It will take miracles to save us now!” remarks ’t Hoen. “The tide must rise—the wind must come—the ice must melt all at one time. It has happened, but no man has ever seen it, so I suppose old Jan Veeder, our *dominé*, would call it a miracle—Jan Veeder, who will preach my funeral sermon next week!”

But that very night the providence of God that sent the cold, gives them one chance of escape, the last of that winter, for the miracle does happen. The strong wind and high tide and mild thawing weather come together and the tide is high enough for them to pass [185]over the Pampus. The wind blows the sea about smashing the rotten ice and bellies out their sails as the four ships, setting every rag they can carry, beat their way to the north, and the next morning are safe in their harbor of Enkhuyzen.

But Chester knows very little about this. He is raving with the fever of his wound.

[Contents]

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BERSERKER OATH.

In the course of time Chester recovers from Spanish bullet wound, though not very rapidly, the surgery of that day being crude, unscientific and quite often deadly. When he regains his strength he finds the *Dover Lass* frozen in at the harbor of Enkhuyzen.

Guy perceives they have made a terrible mistake in sailing to the northward. Had they remained at Delft they would probably by this time have got the girl out of Haarlem over the frozen lake.

Now, between them and the hapless city stands the great dyke along the Y, patrolled by Alva's soldiers, protected by Alva's forts, cutting off North Holland effectually from giving succor to the besieged.

His vessel will be useless for several months on account of the ice, and besought by Oliver, who has divided his time between nursing his wounded comrade and making desperate attempts to elude the vigilance of Alva's troops and get to Haarlem, Chester finally makes his way across Waterland to Egmont. Here Diederick Sonoy, who holds North Holland for the Prince of Orange, is getting together an expedition to attack the Diemerdyk at some vulnerable point and fortify it, cutting off Amsterdam and the Spaniards from supplies, as they have been cutting off Haarlem.

"*Pardieu!*" remarks Oliver, as they make the journey over frozen lakes and by villages half buried in snow, "if I had had my altar piece with me I could have finished it between skirmishes. I've done nothing [186]for my art, nothing—even for my love." He wrings his hands desperately.

"What have I done for mine?" mutters Guy.

"*Diable!*" says the painter, who guesses what is in his companion's mind. Alva's treasure will be undisturbed until the Duke leaves the Low Countries. Not even riot of unpaid troops will make him disgorge it. It is salted down for the winter.

"You are sure the Duke has no hint of your having the keys made?" interjects Guy uneasily.

"Certainly not—for I never had them manufactured—I felt I was suspected even when I reached Malines—so I gave no order about the keys, and before I fled from Brussels destroyed the drafts," answers Oliver. A moment after he adds, with a smile: "As for Alva's daughter, she is probably mourning for Colonel Guido Amati de Medina."

This idea of her grieving for his death makes Guy desperate, and he is crazy to get within glance of Hermoine's bright eyes. This is almost impossible until the ice leaves his vessel free.

To kill time he takes to killing Spaniards, joining the expedition Sonoy on the very first indication of spring gets together for the assault on the Diemerdyk.

This consists of a number of galleys and flat-bottomed boats filled with eight hundred soldiers, which moves soon after the frost of winter passes away and the inland waters become navigable.

The point of attack has been carefully selected where the dyke is narrowest and most susceptible of defense against troops coming from Amsterdam. On one side of the little narrow causeway are the waters of the Y, on the other is the Diemer Lake, cutting off Amsterdam from Muyden, and provisions and supplies coming from Utrecht and the South.

The attack is sudden and unexpected. The Spanish patrols, taken by surprise, are easily driven off, and Sonoy, cutting the dyke, strongly entrenches himself upon the narrow causeway, thinks the deed is done,

and goes off smilingly to Edam for reinforcements.

As for Oliver, joy is in his soul. He can see the spire of the Haarlem Groote Kerk not twenty miles away, and thinks he and his love will soon press lips again. [187]

But this cutting off of his supplies makes the Spanish governor at Amsterdam desperate. He forthwith despatches a great force of arquebusiers and pikemen together with two hand-drawn cannon along the causeway, and the Seigneur de Billy, a tried veteran of many campaigns, commander at Muyden, sends four hundred Walloon infantry to attack upon the other side.

These, together with a force of Spanish armed galleys and *bateaux*, unfortunately make the assault during Sonoy's absence. His troops, though brave, are without supreme commander. They are composed chiefly of the crews of the *Gueux* vessels, the commander of each one wishing to dominate the others. Thus disputing among themselves, they resist the attack without discipline and mutual support.

The consequence is that when the cannon open upon them they are not charged and captured as they must be, and soon solid shot smash the hastily thrown up defenses of the Dutch. Already some of the *Gueux* have abandoned the dyke and taken to their bateaux and flat-bottomed boats to defend them against the Spanish galleys, as well as to be ready to escape.

"We must charge the guns," cries Chester. And he and Oliver, followed by some fifty desperate men, make the effort. Getting over their breastwork they plunge into the Spanish spearmen, and with push of pike cut their way to one gun, and, were they supported, would be, perchance, successful, though every step costs a life. But they are not reinforced, and are finally driven back, losing a man at every foot of dyke, the Spaniards butchering the wounded.

From this melée Guy Chester drags out, stricken unto death, his friend the painter. Struggling to the entrenchment, he finds it deserted; all the men who should defend it having fled to near-by boats—save one, John Haring, from the town of Horn. Hero-like, he has planted himself in the narrowest part of the causeway before the coming foe and holds the place armed only with sword and shield, against a thousand veterans of Alva's army. Fortunately these can only get at him one or two at a time, as the dyke is very narrow and the deep water of the Diemer Lake is on [188]one side of it, and the rapid waters of the Y flow on the other.

Haring's defense gives Guy breathing time.

Bending over his friend, he mutters between clenched teeth: "Don't fear! These dogs of Spaniards shan't get you alive." Then he brushes the death sweat from his comrade's brow, and with great sighs looks upon the face he loves growing ashen and its lips becoming blue.

These open now in gasping, broken speech: "Save yourself."

"And you, too!"

"Save yourself!" Oliver's eyes have an agony in them that is not all the agony of death. "Save yourself to save my love. Swear to me, Guido, my friend, to save her!"

"That was done already," whispers Guy hurriedly; "What else?"

"Only—but you are—not an—artist. Ehu! I would have liked—to have finished my—altar piece. I see—*real*—angels—now—"

The last word is breathed upon the air in dying sigh, as Antony Oliver turns his blue eyes to heaven and his patriot soul goes where there are *real* angels and the *true* Madonna.

Then Chester raises his bloodshot eyes to find his strait almost as desperate as the dead man's. The Spaniards are charging them both front and rear. The Dutch bateaux have all been driven half a mile away;

on the Y side Spanish vessels intervene and cut off all retreat.

Guy gives one quick glance seeking chance of life, and finds it on the Diemer Lake. Some fifty yards from shore is a small shallop that, belonging to the Spanish patrol surprised at the place, has been cut from its moorings during the fight; it is the only boat on the Diemer side.

With the instinct of emergency he springs beside Haring, crying: "There's our only chance!"

Together they make one quick, dashing onslaught on the Spaniards to gain time for the plunge, then spring into the Diemer. As they disappear a shout of rage goes up from Alva's mercenaries, and Spanish arquebus balls splash the water all about them. But [189]rising from their dive side by side and stroke by stroke, they make the boat, and assisting each other, clamber in, and taking oars, are soon out of shot.

Then chancing to gaze at the dyke Guy shudders and turns away his head.

"They're cutting his head off," whispers Haring. "It's worth two thousand caroli at Alva's tent."

Guy knows whose head the Dutch sailor means, and his soul grows very hard and cruel to the Spaniards. But this only adds to his resolve to keep his vow to his dead comrade, even at the cost of life.

"It was a Berserker oath," he mutters, "but I'll keep it." And gazes at his foes who have done his friend to death with something of that noble madness that burned in the Berserker's veins, that rage to slay his enemies without thought of life, that exultation to kill, no matter whether he goes down or no, so long as he has his fill of slaughter and revenge.

But the Dutch sailor's voice brings fighting from the romantic to the matter of fact basis. He says: "Captain Chester, we're in a bad way. We're on the wrong side of the Diemerdyk. Without weapons we're in a bad way. We can't recross it to our friends, for the whole causeway is now lined by those infernal Spanish troops. But, we've sent a few of them ahead of us to-day, and will do for a few more before they do for us, though we've only got teeth and nails to do it with," the two having been compelled to throw away their arms to gain the boat.

"We're not on the wrong side of the Diemerdyk," Guy returns stoutly. "At least, I am not."

"Why?" asks Haring, opening his eyes.

"Because I go to Haarlem, and you're the man to take me there. You know all this country?"

"Every drop of water, every grain of sand in it. That's why I fight for it."

"Then you, perhaps, know some way by which we can get from here to the Haarlem Lake."

"Without arms?" says the Dutchman. "It'll be difficult; we can't fight, and I—I hate to run from Spaniards!"

"Fly *now*, sneak next, fight afterwards," mutters Guy, "and we've got to be quick about it." For the Spaniards are attempting to get a boat across [190]the causeway to pursue them. Fortunately there are two pairs of oars in their boat, which is a light one, and bending to these Haring and Chester take course toward the southwest end of the little Diemer pond, scarce two miles in length.

They are now safe from immediate pursuit, as the Spaniards, seeing them row away, have desisted in their efforts to get a boat over the dyke; so the two go into hasty consultation.

“It’s impossible to escape that way,” explains Haring, pointing to the east, where the Utrecht road borders the lake. “That’s too heavily patrolled. We may get out at the west where the lake joins the river Amstel. It’s only a mile south of Amsterdam; they have guard boats there.”

This is the direction in which Guy wants to go, and he eagerly assents to this proposition, suggesting: “In the waterways and lakes with which this country is covered is there not some route by which we can get ourselves in this boat to the Haarlem meer?”

“Yes, there’s one way,” replies Haring. “But the first six miles will be with our lives in our hands. The last twelve miles will be in the debatable land where we may meet enemies and have to fight them, or friends who will give us succor. If we had arms,” mutters the Hollander, “we would have a fighting chance to get to Haarlem Lake, and then a running one of dodging Alva’s vessels.”

“Arms!” mutters Guy, “you have your sailor’s knife, and I have got my poniard.”

“*Voor den duivel!* Then this affair goes with poniards and knives,” says Haring with a grim chuckle. “It always pleases me to get within stab of a Spaniard.”

Next the two examine the boat carefully; finding that she has a mast and sail stored forward, which pleases them, as there is a slight breeze that is favorable. Steeping this mast they hoist sail.

Then Haring, who is examining the lockers in the boat, suddenly gives a cry of joy.

“What is it?” asks Guy.

“Provisions! These rascally Spaniards have treated us well. Here’s a flask of Spanish wine that I love as well as I hate the men who made it, and plenty of rye [191]bread and salted herring, with oil to grease them. They’ll slide down beautifully. This is a lucky jump off.”

“Yes, and here’s a better,” cries Guy.

“What could be better than grub?” asks the Hollander.

“Arms!”

In the locker in the other side of the boat Chester has found four Spanish arquebuses with ammunition, a sword and a battle axe. So the two go to congratulating each other, for now they feel equipped for their adventure.

A quarter of an hour afterwards they near the place where the Diemer Lake joins the pretty little river Amstel, which comes flowing from the south. A guard-house stands at the point of junction, the flag of Spain floating over it. A couple of Spanish soldiers are lounging in front of it; but the day is balmy and sleepy, the boat under its sail makes no noise, and before Alva’s veterans exactly wake up the little shallop ranges within fifty feet of them.

“Now,” whispers Guy, “in memory of Oliver!”

With this come two reports, and the soldiers lie doubled up with arquebus balls between their ribs, as the little skiff enters the Amstel river. But there are five comrades of the two Spanish gentlemen who lie moaning out their lives in front of the guard-house. These hastily run to a boat, and with wild cries of rage and revenge are soon in pursuit of the murderers of their comrades.

“That was a good stroke,” mutters the Hollander. “I had expected to meet three or four guard boats here, but all the surrounding patrols have been weakened for the attack on the Diemerdyk. Push on, they are

coming after us." The two take to their oars, but it is hard work rowing against the current, and four men are pulling the Spanish boat, which commences to overhaul them.

"Row on, Haring, while I load the arquebuses. I'm a little quicker at it than you," says Chester. A moment after he adds: "Let them come now, we've got four loaded guns, two for each of us."

Dropping the oars the two await the approaching [192]Spanish patrol, who come on, thinking they will have an easy victory, as there are five men in the boat, two only rowing now, the other three blowing their slow matches and getting their guns ready.

But this does not suit the Englishman and Fleming.

Were one of them wounded the other would surely perish. They take to their oars again, and hastily round a little wooded point upon which the willows are just beginning to expand their leaves, forming a slight shelter.

Suddenly grounding the skiff behind the screen of the thicket, they spring on shore, each carrying two guns, and crawl across the point in turn to catch the Spanish boat just as she rounds it. From this ambuscade their four arquebuses discharged within twenty feet of their pursuers, puts one dead over his rowlocks and two others desperately wounded.

Saluted in this ferocious manner the Spaniards, with a cry of surprise and terror, turn their boat about down the river.

"Not one of 'em must go back to send cavalry after us!" whispers Haring.

"Then come on, and we'll nail the other two," answers Guy. Reloading their guns they fly to their shallop again, and after a desperate pull, overtake the Spaniards, who row for their lives, but are no match on the water for *Gueux* sailors.

Two or three shots and one of Alva's veterans cleft to the chin with battle axe, and the Spanish patrol boat floats down the river manned only by corpses.

"That was fortunate," says the Hollander. "There's now no one to give the alarm. Until we pass the guard-house at Ouderkerk we'll probably meet no Spanish troops. But they sometimes have a whole company there. We must get past it after darkness."

With this they turn about and keep on up the pretty little river, which flows with a quiet, sluggish current, and at five o'clock in the evening conceal themselves in a patch of willows, taking very good care that no one shall notice them. What peasants they have seen have fled from them. Here, not daring to kindle a fire, the two eat salt herring and oily bread convivially, and wait for approaching darkness. [193]

This comes deep and heavy over land and water; there is no moon this night. Haring and Guy, muffling their oars, row cautiously up the stream, and in half an hour see the lights of Ouderkerk. Then groping along upon the opposite shore, the Dutchman acting as pilot, and apparently knowing every sandbank in the stream, they would get past this place, which is only a small village, undiscovered, were it not for the barking of a few curs, which produces a challenge from the Spanish sentry on the river bank.

Not answering this, the two bend to their oars as silently, but as strongly, as possible, and after a little the dogs cease barking, and the sentry resumes his beat, apparently thinking, as he has seen nothing or heard nothing, that nothing has passed him. In fact, after they are beyond the place, they discover by the yellings of the curs that the Spaniard is apparently kicking them for having aroused him.

Nearly all that night they pass up the river, and by daybreak are happy to find themselves, having made their way there by a small connecting stream, in the Leg Meer, a long, narrow patch of water that nearly

reaches the Haarlem Lake. Passing along this in the early morning they are pursued and overtaken, and that would probably be the end of them, were it not friends instead of enemies who come upon them.

It is a small bateau patrolling this debatable water in behalf of the Prince of Orange.

From its captain they get the information that De Bossu has just put more galleys on the Haarlem Lake, and that they will have a hard time to get through the Spanish, as the Dutch fleet is refitting at the Kaag at the south end of the lake. “You had better not go,” suggests the Holland commander.

But Guy, confident that every day will bring more vessels of Alva’s upon the Haarlem Meer, making his course more difficult, insists upon going, and Haring is not the man to stay behind.

“Well, if you’ve made up your mind to it,” replies the Dutch captain, “We’ll help you on your way.”

His sailors assist Guy and Haring in getting their boat from Leg Meer across the polders by a water ditch [194]that runs beside a dyke and launch it upon the Haarlem Lake.

“Now,” says Chester, “what provisions can you spare. It were an outrage against humanity if we went into that starving town and took not one sack of meal to their hungry mouths.”

“You’re right,” answers the bateau commander. “We’ll give you three hundred pounds of flour, which is all your boat can safely carry.”

“Now you take your lives in your hands,” continues the captain. “You’d better go in at night. You’re safer at the south end. But as you get near Haarlem, look out! The Spaniards have two or three galleys always off the Fuik.”

Taking the advice of their friends, and getting from them a bottle of spirits that cheers the two greatly, Haring and Guy set sail and speed across the Haarlem Lake to two small islands on the western side some four miles south of Haarlem.

There they lie until the night sets in once more, and then in the darkness, though they have a narrow squeak of it from a patrol galley, get in to the Fuik and land at one of the small forts built there to keep open communication between the lake and the leaguered city.

Here they are welcomed by a crowd of gaunt, hungry but determined-eyed citizens, who, under the stress of siege, have become more enduring than veterans. For all history shows that when the citizen rises to defend home and wives and children, no soldier is so enduring of hunger, of thirst, of wounds, of torture, as he who battles within sight of his roof-tree and returns each night from the horrors of war to caress his wife and little ones, the sight of whom makes him go forth again more desperate, more enduring, and more heroic for their kisses and their tears.

[Contents]

CHAPTER XVII.

ADVANCED WOMANHOOD IN 1573.

Such a welcome is given Guy and Haring as only the besieged, despairing and cut-off give to friends from the outer world. [195]

“You bring news of succor?” cries one Dutch burgher on guard.

“The Prince’s fleet is almost ready,” whispers another with anxious lips. “We have word by a carrier pigeon that he is fitting out an expedition by land.”

“Tell me of my wife in Delft, Margaret Enkhuysen—you left there, didn’t you?” asks another.

But explaining their business and delivering over their three sacks of flour they are shortly afterward taken into the town by the Schalkwyker gate. Here Guy needs no word of mouth to tell him that he is in a town stricken by wounds and death, by siege and famine. The streets are dark, no lights burn save in the great church, now used as a hospital, and in the town-hall, where Ripperda, the Commandant, is busy with his officers.

The place is unnaturally silent. There are no barking dogs, nor even yelling cats; these have been eaten. The only sounds in the streets are the tramp of patrols relieving each other, or companies of men marching to duty on the walls. The voices of the sentries are hollow and weak with hunger.

Guy, leaving Haring at the Swan Inn, before which sit no happy burghers, and within which all is dark, makes his way to the great ravelin between the St. Jan’s gate and the Kruys gate, where he is informed that Pieter Kies is on guard, and gets interview with him.

“Why didn’t you send the daughter of Niklaas Bodé Volcker out of the town when it was besieged?” Guy asks indignantly.

“Because we had use for her.”

“Use for *her*? How? She is a woman, a non-combatant.”

“Women are not non-combatants here. Were it not for women we men would hardly hold this town.”

“You don’t mean to say that Mina fights?”

“No, she fills sand bags and sews them up, but there are plenty of women who do fight. Fight as well as men. Women are men here! no, they are more than that, they are angels of mercy—angels of death; nursing the wounded one day and killing the Spaniards the next, with their own hands. There’s the widow Kenau [196]Hasselaer, the Spaniards fly from her faster than they would from any man in the garrison.”

“Nevertheless,” says Guy, unheeding this tribute to the advanced womanhood of the sixteenth century, “I have promised my friend, this girl’s lover, to take her safely out of Haarlem.”

“How can you get her out?” queries the burgher grimly.

“That will be my business if she will take the chance.”

“You’ll have to see Commandant Ripperda. If he says so, well and good. If not, I’ll not let you take the responsibility of trying to get Mina out of this town. She’s safer here. Do you believe we’re going to surrender? Not while we have anything to eat.”

With this Guy goes away. But Ripperda, the commandant, is busy and cannot be seen; so Chester, going to the Swan, there meets Haring, and finds the inn as clean as it was before; in fact, too clean, for there is

nothing to dirty it with—nothing to eat save a porridge made of grass taken from the streets. Therefore the two, having taken the precaution of bringing their provisions with them in a bag, fall to upon their own.

But the smell of strong salt red herrings is so great that the children congregate about the door, and the widow Hasselaer, who has just come in from active duty, and is putting aside her breast-plate and head piece, cries out savagely: "Dolts! what are you doing? Luxuries are for the wounded!" With this she sweeps the Spanish wine, spirits, bread, herrings, and every morsel they have, away from them to carry out to the Kerk hospital, though her lips water at the sight of such unknown delicacies, and the children follow her, sobbing for "a little herring—just a taste, just a *smell*!"

But Kenau Hasselaer is made of sterner stuff and the wounded get even the herring *smell*.

Guy and Haring look glumly at each other. "To-morrow morning," says the Englishman, "we'll report ourselves and get rationed. It's half a pound of mouldy bread, I believe, made of rye husks and ground oats."

"*Voor den duivel!*" growls the Dutchman. "We must get out of here while we have strength. If that infernal woman had only left us the spirits!"

[197]

Then the two go gloomily to bed and fall into the deep sleep of tremendous fatigue, having toiled with their boat all the night before.

From this they are awakened by the awful din of arms, the clang of all the bells in the Groote Kerk and the lesser churches mingling with the clash and boom of bombard and culverin and saker.

Besides this *Vrouw* Hasselaer's sturdy hand is upon them, shaking them out of their slumbers.

“Wake up, sluggards!” she cries, “and fight for your lives! Up! I’ll show you the way.”

Knowing that if the Spaniards take the town they will certainly butcher them, Guy and his companion hastily seize their arms and run with the widow through dark streets that are now full of men turning out to fight for their desolate homes.

Arriving at the wall just east of the Kruys gate, which has been made into a block house, the two, used as they are to scenes of battle, find themselves in such a fight as they have never seen before.

For they are in the woman’s department.

“*Hel en duivel!* There’s not a *man* here. We two can’t hold this long work,” cries Haring.

“*You* can’t?” exclaims Kenau Hasselaer, “but we’ll do it for you. Women of Haarlem, show these Springalds how to fight!”

This they do with all the might, potency and viciousness of the advanced womanhood of the Sixteenth Century, almost shaming Haring, who is a hero, and Chester, who is as sturdy a Captain as ever England sent forth, by deeds of prowess done by Kenau Hasselaer and her sister Amazons that night.

“*Weerlicht!* Cats are nothing to them!” gasps Haring, as he sees the way they handle the Spanish veterans, who come on thinking the town is already in their grasp; for this attack has been a surprise and nearly succeeded.

To make preparations for the great sortie that is to be combined with Orange’s attack from the lake, word of which has been brought into town by carrier pigeons, the guards had been weakened upon the outer

ravelin, the great work just behind the moat running between the Kruys and the St. Jan's gates, [198]and immediately facing Don Frederico's headquarters.

This ravelin having been crumbled down and breached under the unremitting fire of the heavy Spanish batteries; during the night the moat had been quickly bridged by pontoons thrown across by Vargas. Crossing this the veterans of Romero, De Billy and Vargas had ensconced themselves quietly at the foot of the ravelin.

Then taking breath, their advance had crawled up the breaches and before the Dutch sentinels, worn out with watching, fatigue and hunger, knew what they were about, had killed a good many of them and got possession of the work the Spaniards think the key to the town.

Besides this, they have gained the great block house at the Kruys gate, and Romero has captured the Jan's gate.

"Cut in! Slay, kill—Haarlem is ours!" is the cry that reaches Don Frederico's happy ears as he orders up reinforcements to make his success certain.

But even as the Spaniards spring over the ravelin to drop down right into Haarlem, they find they have not captured it.

As the batteries, week after week, have crumbled the ravelin, the besieged, chiefly the women and children, have erected directly behind it a great *demi-lune* of sandbags and earth, stronger against cannon and quite as difficult of escalade as the ravelin. This, masked from sight, is unknown to the Spanish until they mount the first fortification to see the second confronting them.

As Alva's soldiers look on it, this *demi-lune* is being manned by the hastily alarmed people of the neighboring streets. A moment after they are joined by the German troops of the garrison—with a shout, the Spaniards come on—the fight begins.

The weakest spot in Haarlem wall is that immediately next the block house of the Kruys gate, the one now held by Vargas's veterans. This intrenchment is held by Kenau and her lady militia. This has been their post of honor, and Ripperda, commander of the city, knows that into no hands (and he has veterans of many wars, and eight hundred gallant Scotchmen now reduced to one-half, and the French company under [199]Courie) could he so well trust this point of weakness as to those unto whom he has given it.

For these women are fighting not only for all that manhood values, but in addition to all that their safety from *defilement*. Every one of them, maid, wife or widow, shudders as she thinks of Spanish mercy in a stormed town to hapless womanhood.

Alva's veterans come confidently on. They have conquered one rampart, why not the other?

Up the slope they surge with cries of "Philip!" and "Don Frederico!" to find a cordial welcome from *Sorosis* at the summit.

Behind the rampart is a great fire and a mighty cauldron full of boiling brine. First comes a volley to make the enemy give back for one fatal minute, each woman firing her musket in the faces of the coming foe, who hesitate under the carnage.

"Wash out these Spaniards!—pass the water up!" cries the widow, and seizing the first bucket-full of boiling stuff, she swashes it in the face of an Italian captain, whose tried armor is not proof against this cruel scalding. As he screams in agony she cuts him down.

Then with the deft hands of the washtub her women deluge with boiling brine the Spaniards, who shriek and scream and writhe in agony.

But others from behind press on; at these the women go with broadswords. Caring naught for death, they carry no shields, but swing the big weapons with both arms. Against the weight of such a blow no

skill of fence from single arm is potent.

“Pikemen to the front!” screams De Billy, but a moment after he is wounded and carried from the fray and the pikemen do not come soon enough, for Kenau Hasselaer, heading her women veterans, charges down the *demi-lune* and sweeps every living Spaniard into the block house by the Kruys gate.

With this she laughs hoarsely: “We’ve got it full. Now, *Vrouw* Jannaps—thy work!”

And a woman who has been waiting quietly on the top of the *demi-lune* springs down and coming back a minute later cries, “I’ve fired the mine!”

This is reported almost at the same moment by the mine itself and the great block house of the Kruys gate, [200]that has been prepared for its Spanish visitors with some twenty barrels of gunpowder, goes up into the air, and with it some hundred Walloon infantry of De Billy and a detachment of Vargas veterans.

Then they pelt the last unwounded Spaniard back across the little bridge and though Romero holds with his company the St. Jan’s gate on the other side of the *demi-lune*, the fire from the gabled houses near by, and two or three small cannon and sakers that have been brought up, is so fierce, that not one of the sentries can put his head outside its masonry and live. From this reception, Romero having had an eye shot out leads back his men—those that can get away;—for now comes the greatest horror of it all.

Taught by their adversaries’ many deeds of hideous cruelty, the Dutch sally forth and slowly and in cold blood as butchers do their work, dispatch the Spanish wounded, who cry in vain for quarter.

In all this fight Guy and Haring have stood side by side with Kenau Hasselaer. Where the women have charged they have charged with them, and she coming back laughs and pats them on the shoulders,

crying: “Good boys, you did well, almost as well as if you had been women! You have the courage to fight, will you have the courage to starve with us?”

But this starving matter is neither to Haring’s nor Guy’s liking; besides this, they are there for a special purpose. So getting word with Ripperda, who stands on the rampart surrounded by his officers, Guy broaches his errand to him, asking permission to take Bodé Volcker’s daughter from the place.

“I am right glad to see you again, First of the English, and supposed you had come to stay with us,” answers the Holland commander.

“Oh! you don’t need fighters, men nor women,” returns Chester. “You’ve got too many eaters in the town now.”

“You don’t think they’ll capture us?”

“Not by arms,” says the Englishman. “Therefore I say the fewer mouths to feed the safer you are. A provision train or a few boat loads of flour are worth more to you than a thousand veterans.” [201]

“You are right,” responds Ripperda, his face growing gloomy. “But I and those with me are here to stay, even with these horrors—*Look!*”

Daylight has now broken, and peering forth from an embrasure for fear of Spanish arquebus balls, Guy sees the picture of a Dutch town leaguered by the Spaniards. Before him is the *demi-lune*, its face dotted with dead, its ditch filled with them. Opposite stands the other rampart, the one won by the Spaniards and still occupied by them. Behind this the moat fed by the Spaarne river, commanded by the Spanish batteries of bombards and breaching cannon.

Then come clumps of trees to the left, and the Leprosy hospital; beyond that and all around circling the view are the tents and huts of Alva’s besieging army, cutting off this hapless town from friends and food.

To Chester's ears come faintly on the morning breeze the clang of arms and moving companies and reliefs marching to the intrenchments.

Scattered over this scene are half a dozen windmills, and in front of them another erection, which makes Guy, soldier as he is, bite his lips.

It is a huge gallows upon which twenty bodies dangle, some by the necks, others by the feet.

And now, horror of horrors, the Spanish executioner, comes with his assistants quite early to his morning work. With him on hurdles are despairing wretches bound hand and foot. So getting to their business, they take down the *dead* to hang up the *living* who here, in sight of their friends and townsmen, shall occupy it with their dying agonies this day.

There is a cry of rage and anguish from the walls—these tortured ones are neighbors they had talked with the day before, prisoners taken during a sortie. And one woman screams: "Oh, merciful God, I see him—they are hanging up my Klaas!" and falls down moaning.

"We'll do the same," says Ripperda, "head for head! Call the Provost Captain!"

Soon some twenty Spaniards dangle from the walls in hideous reply to savage challenge.

Enraged by this Alva's soldiers on the neighboring ravelin toss something into the Dutch *demi-lune*. [202]

It falls almost at the feet of Guy and Ripperda.

The Dutch captain bending down inspects this, then mutters suddenly to Guy: "This head is placarded 'Captain Oliver, of Mons.'"

"Good God!" and with eyes filled with anguish Chester sees once more, for the last time, the face of his dead friend.

“You knew he was dead?” asks Ripperda.

“Yes,” mutters Guy, “but I couldn’t tell of it here; his betrothed would learn.”

“Yes, the girl Mina was to marry our patriot!” sighs the commander. Then he says hoarsely: “Take her away if you can get her forth alive. Take her away *quickly*; don’t tell her until you get her from the horror of this. Good bye, my English friend. If we meet again Haarlem will be free from Spanish butchers.”

And the two make their farewell with mutual respect.

From this Guy, going to Pieter Kies, says: “I have the Commandant’s orders. Take me to Mina Bodé Volcker!”

Getting word with the girl, who is very pale from famine and anxiety, she sobs to him: “You have come to take me to Antony. I know it. I see it in your face.”

“Yes,” mutters Chester.

“Where is he? How was it Oliver didn’t come with you?”

“Oh he—he came part way,” falters Guy, and goes with Haring to make arrangements for their journey.

The only chance to get the girl out is by the lake. To do that they must escape at night.

Taking Mina down through the Schalkwyker gate by the little line of intrenchments and fortifications along the left bank of the Spaarne, by which the besieged still keep communication open with the lake, they get to the fort upon its shore over which the flag of Orange flies, and preparing their boat, wait for nightfall.

This comes, but scarce soon enough, they are so very hungry. But with it also comes something that aids their enterprise.

Five Spanish galleys are guarding the Fuik. Sails [203]are seen to the southeast. Four of these spreading their canvas, go out to reconnoiter, and by night have not returned. There is now but one galley to avoid, though she puts out two patrol boats.

“I think I can give a good account of those cursed bateaux that keep provisions from us,” mutters the Holland commander of the fort. Forthwith he prepares three boats to attack the patrolling ones of the Spaniards at nightfall.

As these go out to make attack, Chester and Haring set sail upon the little skiff, and, dodging the galley, which is now engaged with the Haarlemers, are soon out upon the open lake, scudding to the south before a fair wind.

Before daylight they are at the Kaag, and passing from there to Delft; the next evening, Guy finds himself acquitted of his oath.

Having placed his charge in comfort and retirement in the inn called the Gilded Tower, Chester strolls into the wine room of the hostelry to meet astonishment. A wild-eyed creature on seeing him rises up, his teeth chattering as he mutters: “*Hel en duivel!* It is a dead man!”

It is the merchant Bodé Volcker, who has been at Delft for months beseeching the Prince of Orange to save his daughter.

“Not at all,” whispers Guy. Then he adds savagely: “Shut your chattering teeth till you hear,” and seizing Niklaas’s arm leads him to private converse.

“So you recognized me?” the Englishman says under his breath.

“Yes, but you are dead. The news came months ago to Antwerp that Colonel Guido Amati was killed at the battle on the ice in combat with ‘The First of the English.’”

“No, I’ve recovered from my wounds!”

“Then, unfortunate man, if they discover you, a colonel in the Spanish army, here, you’re no better than dead. But I will not betray you,” mutters Bodé Volcker. “You saved my child once, to take her where she is worse off.” Then he cries, wringing his hands: “Save her again, my Mina! She’s in Haarlem, a refugee [204]from justice. If they take the city it is her death. You have Alva’s ear, plead with him. You have influence with his daughter, speak to her!”

“That is unnecessary,” answers Guy, “I have saved your daughter already.”

“Saved her? How? Where?

“Right here at the Gilded Tower.”

“Here! *In Gods naam!* You have saved her? Take me to her, my Mina who was lost—my Mina who is found!”

And the old man, delirious with joy, fondles Guy’s hand and invokes blessings upon him.

A minute after he turns to fly to the child he had grieved for, but Guy stays him and says: “First I must tell you something.”

“What is it? Don’t keep me.”

“Only for her sake,” he answers, and pours out his tale of Oliver’s death, then whispers: “Tell it to her—I tried but could not.”

In his story Chester is compelled to reveal to the merchant who he really is, and this seems to take more hold upon Bodé Volcker than even the painter's death. He gasps astounded: "You! 'The First of the English?' You! You came to Antwerp—did mortal man ever take such risk? Ten thousand crowns are now put upon your head since the battle on the ice. Why did you take such risk?" Here he suddenly cries: "Oh! *Bij den hemel!* I see. You're in love with Alva's daughter."

"Yes," says Guy, who feels that he has now put this man under such obligation that his secret is safe with him. "She is my affianced wife, I am going to marry the Duke's daughter."

"Then you must hurry, young man, you must hurry," says Bodé Volcker solemnly.

"Why?"

"Because—Ah I guess the reason now!—it was after the death of Guido Amati—she has become religious. It is said she will become a *nun*."

"A NUN!" screams Guy. "Because she's heard that Guido Amati is dead. This is a rare and cruel joke!" and bursts, with sinking heart and sickening soul, into hideous laughter, jeering at himself, as Bodé Volcker hurries away to take his daughter once more to his arms. [205]

BOOK III.

The Duke's Unlucky Penny.

[Contents]

CHAPTER XVIII.

“IS IT A DREAM?”

From his interview with his daughter Bodé Volcker comes out a great sadness in his Flemish eyes, and finding Guy waiting for him, breaks forth: “This painter Oliver! What right had such a man to love anything but his country? What right had he, with torture hanging over him, to love my child?”

“The right that all men have to love the beautiful,” sighs Guy, Bodé Volcker’s surprising revelations as Doña de Alvas’ convent yearnings having made him not only romantic, but sad.

“But not the right to sacrifice the beautiful. Oliver’s treachery to Alva put danger upon Mina, and now his death has broken her heart. She cannot even go to her home for fear of Alva’s torture. Alva!” shrieks the merchant, “who has brought this misery upon me and mine. Alva! who has ruined me.”

“Ruined you? How?” queries Chester uneasily. He has been waiting for the merchant, being in need of financial aid, and this talk of ruin makes him anxious.

“How?” echoes Bodé Volcker. “First by destroying my home. Second by destroying my business with his tenth penny tax, and third by taking from me as a forced loan for the Spanish government five hundred thousand crowns.”

“Do you want to get it back again?”

“Heavens and earth! Yes. The money is as good as lost. What wild talk are you jabbering to me?” says the merchant derisively. [206]

“It isn’t wild talk!”

“Not wild talk about Alva’s repaying his debts?”

“No, for I’ll pay them.”

“You—a fighting man—pay five hundred thousand crowns? Your sufferings have made you crazy,” cries Niklaas, who thinks Guy is jeering him.

“Not at all. Advance me ten thousand crowns, stake your life as I stake mine, and I’ll give you your five hundred thousand crowns and vengeance.”

This comes in determined whisper from the Englishman, who has thought this matter over, and concluded that, Oliver being gone, Bodé Volcker, with his Antwerp storehouse, Antwerp ships and Antwerp knowledge, is the man to aid him in this affair, *if he has the nerve*.

“Stake my life? I’ll stake it a hundred times to gain vantage of the man who has robbed me!”

“Very well, come with me to my room, we must talk very privately of this,” says Guy, who now feels pretty certain that though Bodé Volcker might not risk his life for patriotism, he would risk it a dozen times over to get back his five hundred thousand crowns. But it is not this man’s motives he cares for, but this man’s action.

Arrived at Chester’s room the merchant says: “What do you want?”

“First I want a hundred crowns to pay John Haring, who has helped me get your daughter out of Haarlem.”

“I will—I’ll give Haring a thousand. And I’ll give you my love, my devotion, whatever else you want for saving my Mina from despair and death,” answers the merchant in grateful voice.

“Your life, perhaps.”

“Yes, I’ll give that too, to get vantage of Alva.”

“Then,” says Guy, “listen to me.” And swearing Bodé Volcker very solemnly to secrecy, he tells him everything—everything connected with Alva’s statue, everything connected with Alva’s treasure, for he believes in no half confidences to this man, the risk of whose life he demands for his own selfish purpose.

“Very well. What do you want me to do?” answers the Dutchman, his eyes lighting up as he hears of Alva’s buried treasure, the joy of pirate plunder [207]coming into his merchant’s soul. “Should I not have a little more—interest, at least?”

“Yes, interest—six hundred thousand, or, as your life is worth something—we’ll make it seven hundred and fifty thousand.”

“Very well—to business! What do you want?”

“First, for time presses, I want clearance papers procured as soon as possible from the town of Amsterdam for the *Esperanza* that I have still at Flushing harbor. Can you procure them?”

“From Amsterdam? Impossible. But I can get you clearance and cargo from Stockholm.”

“That will take two weeks—some nearer port!”

“From Dunquerque? That’ll only take three or four days.”

“From Dunquerque! All right,” answers Chester. “With the *Esperanza* I shall go, consigned to you, as Captain Andrea Blanco, once more right into the harbor of Antwerp and lay there till I get Alva’s treasures and Alva’s daughter or lose my life. It isn’t known in that town that you came here?”

“No, I was very careful about that,” says Bodé Volcker. “They think I am in France buying Lyons’ silks. I’ll sail with you from Dunquerque myself. That’ll make everything seem very right—Lyons’ silks from a French port.”

“And afterwards if it is discovered you’ll lose your life.”

“That’s all right,” says the Dutchman. “Antwerp’s commerce is going to the dogs and I’m going to leave it with whatever money I can gather together. That seven hundred and fifty thousand crowns will help me.”

So all the arrangements are made and every little detail settled, even to Mina’s remaining quietly in Delft, which is the best place for the poor girl at present.

“She has no heart for anything,” mutters Bodé Volcker, then grinding his teeth, adds: “But I’ll have revenge upon the man who would have sent her to the lash and Spin-house, and because I am her father, robbed me of five hundred thousand crowns.”

This very night Guy takes a purse of gold to John Haring, of Horn, and putting it into the man’s hands [208]says: “This is your reward for the danger and trouble that have come to you for my sake!”

“*Donder en Bliksem!*” ejaculates the Holland fisherman. “This is more money than I ever saw before. I don’t want anything for doing a kind act.”

“You’ve a wife and children, take it for them and for your expenses returning to the North, where I wish you to go for me on a special errand.”

So it is arranged that Haring departs at once for North Holland, taking orders with him to Dalton to bring the *Dover Lass* straight to Flushing, and, not finding Guy and the *Esperanza* there, to sail the ship at once to

the South Beveland shore and anchor in the Krom Vliet. There will not be any great risk in this, nearly all the Spanish galleys having gone to Amsterdam to help the Haarlem leaguer.

The next morning Haring leaves for the North, and Guy and Bodé Volcker take boat to Flushing, where the *Esperanza* is lying.

Guy has left some ten men on board this ship, and they are sufficient to navigate it to Dunquerque, where he takes cargo from Bodé Volcker's agents at that place and obtains proper clearance papers to Antwerp.

Setting sail from this port they make Flushing, to find to Chester's delight the *Dover Lass* already there, Haring has traveled so rapidly, Dalton has obeyed his orders so promptly, and the *Dover Lass*, the ice having all melted in Enkhuysen harbor, is so fleet under favorable breezes.

"By all the mermaids!" cries his first officer, on seeing his captain, "we thought you dead—drowned at that cursed Diemerdyk fight. This is glorious news."

"I've got better for you," laughs Guy.

"What's that?"

"Money to pay off the crew!" At which the British tars set up a wild cheer and become very happy indeed.

Then drawing upon Bodé Volcker's money bags Chester makes settlement with his mariners.

The next morning taking many of the crew who had gone with him to Antwerp before, and the *Dover Lass* accompanying him as far as Krom Vliet and anchoring there, just off the South Beveland shore, Guy [209]proceeds to Antwerp, passes the guard boat off Lillo, and hauls up to the city docks, more impatient to get at Alva's daughter than Alva's treasure.

He knows he must make quick work of this. During his fights and skirmishes his face has become known to many Spanish soldiers, and though most of these are up in Holland, a few are here on sick leave. Fortunately these are mostly confined to bed and chamber, as only the desperately wounded come from the front, Spain having need of every man to carry on the siege of Haarlem—but still with ten thousand crowns upon his head, “The First of the English” is now in fearful jeopardy.

Letting no time pass Chester, disguised as completely as possible as Captain Andrea Blanco, goes up to the merchant’s house to make arrangements for unloading his cargo. They are in earnest conversation, Guy charging Bodé Volcker, who has now gone into this business of stealing Alva’s treasure with heart and soul, to discover all about the house of the Spanish woman, Señora Sebastian, when great and sudden joy comes to his soul.

He hears the voice of the Countess de Pariza in the salesroom just off the little counting room where he is holding converse with the merchant. This voice he has always before considered harsh, unpleasant and uninviting, but now it seems to him as sweet as an angel’s, as it says: “I have called to price and buy some white French muslin for my charge, Doña de Alva. You need not measure many yards, the lady Hermoine soon goes to Spain to enter a religious house.”

“Shall I deliver the goods at the Citadel for your ladyship?” asks the obsequious clerk.

“No, I’ll take them with me. The weather has been so pleasant that Doña Hermoine and I are now located for the summer at the country house near Sandvliet. Be quick, young man, the State barge is waiting.”

These words knock all thought of Alva’s treasure out of Guy’s mind.

“Give me some further details,” whispers the merchant, “about the house of the Spanish woman.”

“I’ve told you where it is. To-morrow I’ll talk with you. Which is the quickest way to Sandvliet?” [210]

“The quickest way is on horseback, but it is not the safest.”

“I go the quickest way.”

“Past the sentries of Lillo? You will be questioned! You must have a passport!” Then the merchant whispers in warning tones: “Are you going as Captain Andrea Blanco or as Colonel Guido Amati, or as—the other man?” Bodé Volcker’s face is white as he makes this last remark.

“As—My God! I *must* go as Colonel Guido Amati!”

“Do you think you’ll pass the fort at Lillo with a passport for Colonel Guido Amati, who has been marked dead upon the army rolls three or four months?” says Bodé Volcker, bringing the common sense of the merchant to bear upon the romance of the sailor. “A year ago you might have passed Lillo as *Captain* Guido Amati, but as *Colonel* Guido Amati, a man of mark, a man who rode at the head of his regiment, a man who has been mentioned in general orders as dead—no, no, you’ll throw away your life and not gain the girl. You’ll throw away the treasure and sacrifice my life.”

“You’re right,” says Chester moodily, “but see her I must.”

“Then go by boat, that’s your only way,” returns Niklaas.

“Very well, I’ll take the *Esperanza’s* gig; it is a quick pulling boat, and I’ll take every care of myself—for *her* sake most of all,” answers Chester. “It wouldn’t do for her to again mourn for Guido Amati. Meantime do what you can up here. I’ll meet you to-morrow morning.”

With these words Captain Andrea Blanco strides out of the counting room of the merchant Bodé Volcker and going on board the *Esperanza* gives himself the appearance of Colonel Guido Amati as much as he can;

for his wounds have made him pale, and desperate exertions and desperate anxiety have brought lines of care upon his brow.

Notwithstanding this, as his boat, propelled by six stalwart rowers, catching the ebb tide, goes down the Schelde, there is a gleam of intense happiness and expectant joy, upon the face of the dashing young man. [211]

This happiness is softer and more enraptured as with jaunty step and purple mantle, in satin and silk, and rigged up as cavalier to meet his lady love, Chester steps out of his boat on the dyke about half a mile west of Sandvliet, where there is a pretty landing-stage and ornamental steps running down to the water for lady's use and a charming walk shaded by poplars leading up to the exquisite chateau built by my lord of Alva for his daughter's summering.

The house though reached by the walk, is situated right upon the dyke itself, giving it a water view and summer breezes blowing up the Schelde. One wing of it even juts over the water, a boat could sail beneath its windows.

The mansion is extensive, consisting of a central portion and two wings; the one over the water from its luxurious balconies and awnings seems that portion where the Viceroy's daughter herself resides; the other wing, as well as Guy can judge as he approaches it, is devoted to the uses of the servants and contains the kitchen and other offices of the house. The main portion is probably used for general reception purposes. Altogether it is a very handsome and extensive water villa, built with an exquisite Moorish grace and Orientally luxurious in its fittings. This can easily be seen from the distance, for there are blinds on the outside to keep the sun out, and the windows themselves in some cases are of ornamental glass.

Running along the dyke in front of the house is a beautiful little garden, the trees, for it is well into May now, covered with early leaflets in their first green and freshest beauty. Some flowers, probably raised in hot-beds or green-house, have been planted in its grass plots.

At the end furthest from the villa is a little summer house covered with vines and fronting on the water. This catches Guy's eye as he looks about, inspecting carefully the house before he makes his entrance or knocks, calls or claps his hands for servants, after the manner of that day.

Looking closely at it, Chester discovers within the flutter of a white gown. Is it the instinct of love that [212]makes his heart beat wilder than it has ever beat before—save when she was in his arms?

A poplar tree stands by the hedge. Seizing this Guy swings himself lightly into the garden, and carefully approaches the arbor, to see therein enrapturing sight.

Hermoine de Alva—her face turned partly from him and looking seaward down the Schelde, is half reclining upon a low rustic bench made soft to her by cushions of down and silk, one little hand supporting the beautiful head, one graceful foot and delicate ankle outstretched, and all her lovely figure in softest draping white save where upon the neck, wrists and borders of her garments are trimmings of narrow black—makes picture upon which his eyes, that have so long been denied sight of her, could linger in a kind of dreamy rapture.

But Chester is not the man for dreams when his sweetheart is within hug of him. He only pauses to think how he can avert the shock of letting her see a dead man live before her.

"She'll think me a ghost and uncanny," he meditates; for ghosts, fairies and the supernatural were very common in those days.

As he stands hesitating the girl picks up a prayer book that is near her hand and forces herself to read, then sighing puts it down. As she moves a gleam from her white hand comes to him. It is from the ring he gave her, and Guy can be silent no more.

“Joy never kills, otherwise I were dead of it now myself,” he thinks; then says lightly, almost in her ear: “Doña Hermoine, why don’t you cry me welcome?”

“Holy Virgin! that voice,” falters the girl. “That VOICE!” Starting up and her eye catching him, she gasps: “*Madre mia!* Guido! My Guido, who is dead!” next whispers with white lips: “Your spirit has not come to reproach me—you cannot do that, when I wed only heaven because you’re dead!” And her lovely eyes beam with horror of the supernatural.

“Not dead, but on the sick leave! They don’t give sick leave to dead men.” Then thinking to destroy the supernatural with the commonplace, Guy suggests: “Are you not going to ask me to dinner?”

“A dinner for a *ghost*!” This is a wild shrieking gasp [213]from Hermoine’s pale lips, as seizing her prayer book and holding on high the gilded cross upon its vellum cover, she begins falteringly: “*Exorcizare te* —”

But he cries out: “No GHOST! Don’t exorcise me as weird!”

“No ghost? *Impossible!* I have mourned for you—ever since—the awful news—of the Battle-on-the-Ice—when that cruel English cut-throat and his men killed—”

“Not ME! Though they slashed me up a little here and there—a cut upon the head, and a bullet in the body. I’ll prove I am not dead. Are these ghost lips? Don’t you remember *them*?”

As Hermoine half reels Guy gets an arm about her graceful waist and stops her gasps and sighs as such hysteria should be always stayed in lovely woman.

Perhaps it is the vivid life that is in his kisses that makes the girl—though it takes many of them to convince her—suddenly gasp: “Alive! Yes, yes! you *are* alive! your heart beats against mine. My Guido lives!” and bursts out sobbing, as if grief had come to her instead of joy.

But she has ready and effectual comforter and soon her tears become smiles, her sighs become love notes, she beams upon the dead that is alive, like the sun itself, brighter, for the cloud it bursts through.

As for Guy, he makes up for enforced absence and lost time in a way that makes Miss Alva blush and beam, then blush again and murmur: “You—you need not prove to me so often that you live. I know your lips are not ghost lips.” Here she murmurs reproachfully: “And you let me mourn for you so long?”

“A prisoner—” begins Chester.

“A prisoner!—they take no prisoners!”

“The First of the English does! Besides my wounds,” mutters Guy, disconcerted.

“Oh, yes, your frightful wounds. I’ll—I’ll be your nurse.”

“Yes, under your hands I think I’ll recover *in time*,” he says, his face radiant, then goes excitedly on: “I’ll not get well before—”

“Before what?”

“Before I wed you.” [214]

“*Wed* me?” And blushes fly over Miss Brunette, even to her ivory neck, her eyes droop, though there is a joyous light in them.

"*Yes, this trip I wed you!*" This is a whisper, made almost ferocious by its determination.

Here Hermoine astounds him, for she answers, her brave eyes looking into his and her voice as determined as his: "YES, THIS TRIP YOU SHALL!" then falters: "I—I couldn't bear to suffer as I have done before. When you go to the front again, I go with you. Colonel Guido Amati de Medina shall have a wife. But you shall not think of this till you're well, and that will be a long time, I'm afraid," and the girl looks at a slight scar upon her lover's forehead as if it were a mortal hurt.

At this he anathematizes himself as a heartless wretch to let her mourn for him so long, no matter his duty and his oath to friend, for he sees in the lovely face the lingering traces of a cruel sorrow.

A minute after his sweetheart gives Guy a start. She suddenly cries: "Why what a prophet that little De Busaco is! He—he must have second sight!"

"De Busaco! You have seen him?" mutters the putative Guido Amati anxiously.

"Yes, he's in the garrison at Lillo, sent there to recover. Frost got into the poor little lieutenant's wounds after the battle on the ice. Hearing he had seen the last of you, my Guido," she catches Guy's hand at this, as if she feared she would lose him even now, "I sent for him and deftly inquired —as if with the interest of a passing friend—Oh, I controlled my feelings well!—how you had passed away. And he told me; but before he left said, 'I venture this is not the last you will see of Colonel Guido Amati.' 'Why not?' I gasped, a wild hope in my heart. 'Did you not see him fall?' 'Yes,' De Busaco said nonchalantly, and I thought his manner very heartless then, 'but my friend, Colonel Guido Amati, has a cat's *nine* lives, and at present he has only sacrificed *one* of them.' Did the lieutenant guess they would spare your life?"

“Perhaps,” answers Guy. “This English cut-throat, as you call him, not only spared, but *saved* my life, guarded me, took me to Enkhuysen, and when I lay [215]there with the fever of my wounds, saw that I was as well nursed out of it, as if I were his very self.”

“Then he’s not an English cut-throat.”

“No, he’s an English knight, and some day I hope you’ll say he is a gentleman even worthy of your esteem.”

“And so he is! He saved your life from the knives of these cruel Dutch freebooters,” says the girl suddenly; then mutters in a horrified way: “And I induced papa to increase the reward for your savior’s head. Heaven forgive me!—ten thousand crowns are now offered for the man who saved your life!”

“*Diablo!*” replies Guy, not over pleased at what he hears. “The Englishman is very well able to take care of himself, so we’ll let him alone and return to Colonel Guido Amati.”

“Apropos of him,” laughs Hermoine, “the ghost asked for dinner, I believe—Will the spectre have spiritual oysters, hobgoblin turbot and ragout from the witches’ cauldron!” and the girl who is now a picture of radiant joy, claps her hands.

“No,” replies Guy, “but the ghost’ll take a giant dinner with permission of the maiden of the fairy castle, and she may put as many spirits in the wine as she likes.”

“Then haste, for I’m going to kill the fatted calf for you!” And Hermoine would seize upon her knight’s hand to lead him to her bower.

But Chester suddenly hesitates and mutters: “The Countess de Pariza—what will your duenna say!”

“She will say nothing,” remarks Miss de Alva in airy *ensouciance*. “The Countess de Pariza will not be here this evening.”

“No? I thought she had the State barge with her.”

“Yes. She’ll keep that in Antwerp over night. She lodges with the Countess Mansfeld. Since that night—you remember it, the one I bless—that night you rescued me from the *Gueux*—the Countess de Pariza fears the Beggars of the Sea worse than the fiends of the other world, and though nominally she lives here, she is absent every evening that she can be. She’ll not return before to-morrow morning.”

“That’s glorious,” laughs Guy, blessing in heart Dirk [216]Duyvel and his cut-throats, “it’ll save so much trouble; I’ll visit you in the evenings. The Countess de Pariza has a woman’s tongue.”

“If she has,” cries the girl, “I’ll find a curb for it!” and for one instant she looks like Alva’s daughter. “But come into the house. You’re hungry, and with your wounds you must have strengthening food. Come to supper.”

To this meal Guy, who has a sailor’s if not a ghost’s appetite, suffers himself to be led; Doña Hermoine taking his arm as if she feared to lose him.

Within the spacious hall of the beautiful country residence its fair mistress claps her hands, and the two Moorish girls Guy had seen before come running to her.

“Alida, have a room prepared for this gentleman, who sups with me,” orders Hermoine. At which one of the maids, making obeisance before her mistress, whispers in her ear:

Then Doña de Alva bursts out laughing, but says: “Certainly. He is my friend, Colonel Guido Amati, whom you must honor as you do me. Señor, when you return you will find the giant meal you asked for.”

Thereupon Guy, following the Moorish girl, who had brought him the packet that evening at the Citadel, and who appears to be his sweetheart’s confidential servant, soon finds himself in the most

luxurious chamber he has ever seen, though curiously masculine in its fittings, furniture and contents. There are arms upon the wall, men's boots are in the dressing-room adjoining, and on the toilet table a missal beautifully bound with the castle with the three towers, a raven on each —the arms of Alva; in this is a book-mark curiously worked, and signed "Thy Hermoine."

"What masculine creature," thinks Chester to himself, half jealously, "makes himself thus at home here?" Turning to the girl who has shown him hither, and who looks on him with curious and astonished eyes, he says: "These seem a gentleman's quarters?"

"Yes! It is the chamber of my lord his Highness of Alva, when he honors us with his presence," answers the maid, with a low courtesy, and leaves Guy gazing about this sanctum of his enemy. [217]

"Egad!" he thinks, "Truly I'm in the Lion's nest now." Then looking at the luxury of the draperies and canopy of the bed he mutters: "A week ago I slept in Hasselaer's inn, in Haarlem!" and all the horror of the famine and death of the leaguered city coming to him—his present luxury seems almost a dream.

But devoting himself to business, for he is anxious for sight for his sweetheart once more as well as dinner, the young man brushes from himself all evidences of his journey, making his ablutions with softer towels than his stalwart hands have ever clutched before.

Then striding down the great oak staircase into the hall below, he is ushered by the other Moorish maid into an apartment that will never leave his memory—perchance not for the impression it first made upon him, but for what afterwards took place in it.

It is a lofty arched room in the right wing of the mansion, one great oriel window at its end opening right over the waters of the Schelde, through which the splash of its soft waves can be heard, for the sashes are up and awnings extend above to keep out the setting sun. On one side the wall is

broken by three large arches. Heavily curtained with thickest Flemish tapestry adorned with bullion tassels, they separate this apartment from another one behind it. Opposite this, facing the garden, are pretty windows opening on a balcony, which has brilliant colored awnings over it and seats upon it.

Upon a cushioned lounge within the oriel window, the sun's setting rays tinting her dark hair, sits Hermoine. But even as he enters she is up to meet him, saying: "I've made no change in my toilet; I couldn't bear to keep you waiting, you—you are so hungry!" then cries out, clapping hands: "Supper instantly."

At once the heavy tapestries in two of the arches, drawn up by bullion cords drape themselves in graceful festoons, showing the dining-room, in which stands a table covered with snowy linen, decorated by silver and gold plate, sparkling with Venetian glass, and made pretty by flowers.

"Colonel Amati, thy arm!" murmurs Hermoine, and putting a white hand within his, the two go in together [218]to a meal served in a luxury Guy has never seen before, even at the court of Elizabeth; for there are strangely curious implements to eat with called forks, of which he does not know the use, preferring as a polished English gentleman his fingers and a napkin.

But his hostess insists on showing him how to use these Italian inventions, and teaches him how to get the instrument into his mouth without skewering his tongue, over which Guy laughs rather ruefully, crying: "I pray you, lady Hermoine, don't make me lose more blood!"

At this she grows a little pale, and looking at him mutters: "Your wounds, oh yes!—your awful wounds. Eat and grow strong for my sake." Then her loving hands compel Guy to make a giant meal, to which he is

nothing loath, as the cuisine is of the finest and the wine of the rarest Spanish vintages—the Rhine wine cooled with snow and ice—a new wrinkle in luxury to which the English sailor does the fullest justice.

All this time the girl eats nothing, making her meal off Guy with her eyes.

"You—you eat nothing, my Hermoine," whispers the cavalier, becoming anxious on his side.

"Oh, I've grown used to fasting," she says, "you know I was preparing myself for convent life. Wouldn't it have been horrible?" and a charming moue gives piquancy to the embrio nun.

"You would have entered a convent for my sake?"

"I thought so. There was a great house in Valladolid—that I was to be the Lady Abbess of—I was to dower it so grandly—"

"You—a lady abbess?"

"Yes. Don't I look austere?" prattles Miss Happiness. "Perhaps, though, I would have changed my mind. I was getting tired of the prayer-book already. But now I think no more of midnight vigils—oh, *Guido mio*—tell me it is not a dream."

"I'll do more—I'll prove it!" whispers Guy, and rises from the table.

He looks as if he would like to make love again. And perhaps being very willing for him to have his way in this matter, the young lady gives a signal to her two Moorish girls who have waited upon them, as Chester [219]and Hermoine pass from the dining-room to the other apartment, the curtains fall behind them, and they are alone.

"Come into the window; we'll have moonlight later," remarks the young lady. And somehow they find themselves side by side looking over the soft waves of the Schelde, a gentle summer breeze coming in upon them

from the open casement. “Would you like music?” suggests the lady.

“Your voice is enough for me.”

“Oh,” cries Hermoine, “I play the mandolin; I’ve some accomplishments. Besides I can dance the *cachuca* and the *bolero*. To-morrow evening I’ll have entertainment for thee. My Moorish girls play the harp and guitar, and I’ll invite De Busaco over.”

“Invite no one, please.”

“Not even little De Busaco, who would not believe you were dead?”

“No.”

“Do you know, perchance, he guesses our secret?”

“Why?”

“When he came to me he brought two letters he had found, having taken charge of your baggage. He handed them to me, remarking: ‘I think these may have interest for you.’ You, my Guido, didn’t keep them with you.” There is reproach in her eyes.

“I kept your letter with me,” answers Guy, with happy inspiration.

“My *letters*” corrects the girl; “I sent you three.”

“Oh, yes, but I—I call this one *your* letter, the one that came to me last, the one that I carried with me to stain with my blood, the one that sent me to win promotion against the English captain,” and Chester produces the epistle taken from the dead Guido Amati after the battle on the ice.

“Yes, the letter for which I cursed myself,” cries Hermoine, “the one I had supposed had brought you death for love of me; the letter that asked you to capture that brave Englishman, I’ll not call him cruel now.” With this the girl sheds tears upon the missive Guy has given to her, and murmurs: “Tell me all about your adventures when away from me.”

Thus compelled Chester gives a detailed account [220]of the skirmish on the ice, *from the Spanish standpoint*, and finally tells her that he really thinks one more battle will make him a general; and so goes on weaving the threads very deftly that Colonel Guido Amati de Medina, all unknown to himself, is bringing together to cause the extraordinary catastrophe that will shortly come upon him.

A minute after he says, looking over the Schelde: “Are you not afraid of visits from these Beggars of the Sea?”

“No,” replies Hermoine, “Every fighter of them has gone to Holland. Besides, I have eight armed lackeys within the house and stables, four more as escort of the galley, there is a garrison at Lillo, and half a company at Sandvliet, just round that point.” Her white arm makes graceful gesture. “I am safe here from every one but you, my Guido.”

And Guy, looking over the waters of the Schelde now illuminated by the rising moon, thinks: “Safe from all but me.” For he sees in the Krom Vliet, just against the South Beveland shore, the masts of the *Dover Lass*, and into his head has come a plan by which he will take Hermoine de Alva at her word and make her his very own.

[Contents]

CHAPTER XIX.

THE DAUGHTER'S DOWER.

To make preparations for this Chester's time is desperately short. He must advance as rapidly as possible his action as to Alva's treasure; besides this he wishes to guard most tenderly the good name of this woman who proves her love of him with every look of her eyes.

Therefore, after some half hour more of confidences in which the girl gives him one or two beautiful glimpses of her lovely soul, the Englishman, fighting with his very self, rises to go, reluctantly, lingeringly, but still—to go.

"Oh, not so soon," pleads Hermoine. "You've—you've been away so long!" [221]

"But I'll be back to-morrow."

"At what hour?"

"In the evening."

"In the evening? Ah! That is many seconds from now."

"I can't come before, but I'll be here as early as possible. For that you have my word."

"Where are you stopping?"

"On board the vessel that brought me from the North, the *Esperanza*."

"The *Esperanza*? The fort at Lillo is nearer to me!"

"At Lillo perhaps the commander would think me well enough for duty. I should have a garrison routine and would not be my own master to come to see you at my will."

“Yes, you’re right. My wounded hero, who made that wondrous march over the drowned lands over there deserves a lazy month or two. All Brabant, Flanders and Spain rang with the glory of that march.” And the girl puts her arms about him whispering compliments that would make Guy very happy did he not know that they belong to the passed away Guido Amati. Then seeing his determination, she adds: “If you must go I’ll have three minutes more of you.”

“How?”

“By going to your boat to see you off.”

Putting her hand in his arm she strolls with him down the little path, the poplars throwing shadows on it here and there. Each time they reach a shadow they pause for a farewell—and as they near the boat each farewell grows longer and more drawn out, so it is many minutes before they reach the last shadowed nook and stand there listening to the sailors’ voices coming up to them from the landing. The men are making merry, having brought provisions and wine with them for their stay. Then the girl suddenly puts her arms about the lost one that has returned to her and whispers impulsively: “Oh, my Guido, if we never had to say good-night!”

“That time is coming soon.”

“Soon? Papa doesn’t even know yet.”

“Nevertheless the time is coming soon. I swear to you by *this*!” And Guy Chester, leaving Hermoine’s [222]fair cheeks very blushing and her dark eyes in grandest brunette sparkle, walks down the stairs to the landing place and gets into his gig, in his heart a great determination to make good his words.

Curiously his boat does not drive up the Schelde, but turns the other way, and after a two hours’ hard pull, the tide being against it, makes the *Dover Lass*, in the cabin of which Chester has long and careful converse

with Dalton.

The immediate result of this is that the long boat of his vessel is put overboard fully armed and equipped, and all that night and the succeeding ones patrols the Schelde in front of Dona Hermoine's country house, guarding the slumbers of Alva's daughter. For Chester has not as much faith as his sweetheart in the absence of all marauding *Gueux*, and has made up his mind that no other pirate shall carry off his treasure.

Then aided by the tide, Guy's boat drives up the Schelde, getting to Antwerp docks in time to give him a few hours' sleep before daybreak. On the first rise of the sun he is up.

Giving orders to Martin Corker, who is in charge, to hasten the landing of the cargo, which is mostly light silks prepared purposely for quick discharge, Chester receives astonishment.

"We've got too few hands to do it very quick," grumbles the boatswain.

"How so? You've thirty!"

"Thirty yesterday—but Bodé Volcker, whose directions you told me to follow, came down before sunset last night and took off twelve men with their duds and bedding to sleep in the town."

"All right," answers the captain, but goes hurriedly up to the house on the Meir to find the reason of this.

Here getting immediate word with Bodé Volcker, who is awake and in his counting room, Guy finds that the merchant has entered into this business of treasure-stealing with true mercantile rapacity.

"I've got everything running now," remarks Niklaas. "Leave the whole thing to me. You'd better not be known much in the matter. I have discovered easily enough from people about the docks that old Señora Sebastian, who is called 'Dumb Devil' on account of [223]her infernal

temper and lack of tongue to express it with, keeps a sailors' lodging house for her dissipated livelihood, dividing her time between rum and sleep. Now the shipping of this port has fallen off greatly, owing to the accursed tenth penny tax."

"Yes," answers Guy, "the docks are not half full of vessels. But what has this to do with our matter?"

"This! As there are few vessels there are few sailors to board, and Mother Dumb Devil had only two last night, a Norwegian and a Frenchman. Now she has fourteen, twelve of your men, who occupy the balance of the house and have gone in there with their duds and bedding, each man of them carrying a large bed-tick filled with straw."

"What is your plan?"

"This: we get the Norwegian and the Frenchman drunk—dead drunk; ship 'em drunk on a vessel of mine, and to-morrow morning they wake up upon the open ocean outside the Schelde bound for the other end of the world. Then we get Mother Dumb Devil drunk and insensible; fill up the two now vacant berths in the house with two more of your sailors——you have very careful men?"

"Yes. They know their lives depend upon their caution."

"Then there is room for no more boarders and the house is our own for a few hours, in which we make our examination, and if all is right get the treasure of Alva; your sailors bringing it out each day, as their bedding ——only the bed-ticks will be filled with doubloons instead of straw—next a new lot of your men with fresh bedding."

"This is as good a plan," answers Guy, considering, "as you could have hit upon. There is but one serious danger. Is the house watched by some of Alva's agents?"

“That I have investigated, and I think no one connected with Alva or the Spanish government has ever been near the place since it was let to Señora Sebastian. But,” adds the merchant, rubbing his head, “that is what frightens me! Do you suppose such an astute man would take no precautions to inform himself of the [224]safety of his treasure? Mark my words, there’s something in that Alva’s statue that we don’t know of.”

“If you’re afraid to make the venture, I am not,” says Guy determinedly. “I’ll take the risk.”

“Well, perhaps it were better you go in first,” returns Bodé Volcker. “You have the greatest interest in the matter. Then, if it should come to fighting, you would have a thousand chances to my none.”

So the matter is arranged, and Bodé Volcker does his part of the work thoroughly. Four hours after this the Norwegian and French sailors are drunk; the next day they awake tossing upon the open ocean, aboard a ship bound for the Indies, a cruise that will last three years. At dusk the merchant comes to Chester, who waits in his counting room, and whispers: “Mother Dumb Devil is dead drunk also; do your work.”

“Show me the place.” And Guy, taking Corker with him, is led by Niklaas to a street just on the town side of the Esplanade, where, among tumble-down dwellings as wretched and dirty as itself, stands the house of Señora Sebastian. One of Guy’s sailors lets them in, the merchant not even entering the place, only pointing it out from round the corner.

“Where is the mistress of the house?”

“Dead drunk upstairs, captain,” whispers the man. “She was raving an hour ago, but now she’s good for an all night snore—she’s a rum one—dumb, but snores like old Neptune himself.”

Inspecting the woman, Chester finds the report correct, and leaving a rum bottle handy to keep her quiet in any event—he comes down stairs and says hastily “To work.”

With this Guy and Corker enter the cellar and get to business by the light of a flickering oil lamp.

To Chester's delight, after taking up the four stones in the center, he finds a heavy slab, made easy to handle by an iron ring inserted in its top. But it will not move to their combined strength until they use a crowbar. A hasty examination discloses that it has evidently been undisturbed for a year or two, and that time has settled and cemented it into its place. As they pry it up a little shaft is uncovered with a ladder leading down it.

This is scarce ten feet in depth, and lowering the [225]flickering lantern, they see a passage leading from it in the right direction.

"Now," whispers Guy to Corker, "keep watch here. If you're attacked make the best fight you can and warn and save me if possible. If not, remain exactly as you are."

"You'd better let me go with you, captain!"

"No, I'll risk my own life first. I have the drawings, I have the light, I have the keys."

First lowering the lantern to the bottom to be sure that there is no foul air that may bring him death, Chester descends and finds a paved passageway scarce large enough for two men to pass abreast, with a vaulted arch of masonry overhead. Striding along this, though his heart beats faster, his nerves act steadily.

Within two hundred feet from the bottom of the shaft he encounters the first iron doors. These are immensely strong, and would yield to nothing save explosion. Inspecting by the lantern's light the instructions for the use of the successive keys, though Guy has already memorized them, he oils the first key with finest olive oil and inserts it.

The locks have evidently been left in perfect order and secured against all damp and rust. The key turns readily. Then the second is tried; again the wards yield; next the third with equal success. Withdrawing this Chester discovers how beautiful is the mechanism of the Italian, for the two immense iron doors would swing on their hinges to an infant's touch.

So far the dying Paciotto has told him the truth.

He goes on more confidently. The second pair of doors, from the surging of the waters that he hears faintly above him, he knows is under the moat itself. These yielding with equal readiness to the talisman he holds, disclose to Chester the apparatus the engineer had spoken of, and of which he holds the drawing in his hand, the one regulating the valves that will deluge him with the waters of the moat if Alva's statue is destroyed.

Following the directions on the paper, he disconnects these, shutting off connection with the moat, and to make things doubly sure wedges these valves in their places. [226]

Then he passes to the third doors. These are the ones that will open upon Alva's treasure house. His heart, which has been regular in its beats until now, begins to thump in spasms as he uses the keys carefully—almost lingeringly, as if afraid to see what is within.

Finally the wards yield three times, he presses the doors open, and holding his lantern in front of him would stride on, but suddenly stumbles, there is a clanking sound, and he falls groveling in the midst of bags of gingling coin. Then he holds the lantern up and gasps: "By heavens, what a miser's sight," and laughs, but very softly, as if he feared the twenty feet of solid rock and the great Bastion of the Duke that stands above it are as tissue paper and will let forth even his sighs.

Recovering himself he makes rapid inspection of the treasure, sufficient to know that there are four or five millions right to his hand.

Then he goes back and calling Corker to him, the seaman says: “Thing didn’t work?”

“Yes, it’s all right. Bring the men with you.”

Taking these with him he makes account of the treasure; and there are, as well as he can see—he may make a mistake of one or two—one hundred and seventy-nine bags of gold, each sealed with Alva’s arms and labeled twenty thousand crowns and about four hundred thousand Spanish silver dollars in some two hundred and fifty sacks. Besides these there is a strong case that Chester does not open, but guesses it contains jewels, plate and such pleasant things.

Leaving Corker in charge, he orders that each of the men carry out as many sacks as possible to the cellar and to continue this work until he returns. All this time he keeps four men heavily armed on guard at the entrance, and these have orders to defend the house from any sudden attack.

Then going along the dark streets to the counting room of Bodé Volcker, his step exalted and his mind on fire, Chester strides up to the merchant, who says to him—for he has not been very long upon this work—“No success—nothing!—a fool’s story!”

“A fool’s story worth five millions!” [227]

“*Hel en duivel!* Five millions! God bless you, my noble boy. Let us go and get it at once.”

“No; there’s been no one troubling us,” jeers Guy. “For that reason it’s dangerous, Bodé Volcker.”

But Bodé Volcker can no more be kept from seeing Alva’s treasure than he could be kept from running away from it before; and he goes back with Guy to the house of Mother Dumb Devil.

Here he says: “Leave everything in my charge. I’ll get it out; every dollar shall be accounted for to you on the honor of a merchant.”

To this Chester answers: “The honor of a merchant is sufficient for me. But in our freebooter’s way, I have directed Corker to tally every bag and store every coin on the *Esperanza*. We’ll divide it at Flushing. But you get it out. You’re better at this business than I am.”

And in truth Bodé Volcker is, for his whole soul is in the transaction, while Guy has only half his heart in it, the best half being at Sandvliet with Alva’s daughter.

So the matter is arranged; the men are to carry out all the gold into the cellar during this night, then the iron doors in the gallery are to be closed again, all of them, and during the day Bodé Volcker is to transfer the treasure done up as sailors’ bedding on board the *Esperanza*. This his facilities as merchant permit him to do with little chance of suspicion. The next night with fresh men they are to bring out the silver from the vault to the cellar of the house and get it away in the same manner during the daytime, also the box containing jewels.

“When we have the gold I think we’ll have the main value of it,” says Bodé Volcker. “Meantime I’ll commence to put cargo into the *Esperanza*, to give commercial reason for the vessel sailing from Antwerp again.”

“You are commercially correct about this,” says Chester. With this he orders Corker when the gold comes on board to store it under the cabin in the place where the smuggled arquebuses had been concealed on their previous visit to Antwerp. Then turning away and looking at his watch he mutters with a start: “By heaven, eight o’clock! I can’t get through the gates of the town. I shall break my appointment.” [228]

“Ah! At Sandvliet?” chuckles the merchant to him.

“Yes.”

“I thought so. But I can get you out of the gates now. Spanish troops no longer guard them. We have our civic guards on duty. Lieutenant Karloo, at the main port, is a friend of mine. I’ll go with you.”

At the city gate Guy finds very little trouble when vouched for by Bodé Volcker, as the Spanish garrison has been so reduced in Antwerp by drafts on it for the war in Holland that it is now only enough to properly man and guard the Citadel itself. The Fortress dominates the town and could prevent any rebellion or uprising, but the policing of the place is left entirely to the burghers themselves.

This also makes it easier, Guy thinks delightedly, to pass the gold through the gates and load it on his ship; there not being that discipline among the civic guards as prevails among the veteran soldiers of Alva. So it is with a light heart that Chester once more sails down the Schelde for the landing-place at Sandvliet, cogitating: “Now I’ve handled the daughter’s dower, I’m ready for Miss Hermoine herself!”

[Contents]

CHAPTER XX.

“PAPA’S COMING! I’LL—I’LL DO IT!”

“It is fully ten o’clock—but better late than never,” thinks Guy—as he springs on the landing, flies up the stairway, and traverses with hasty feet the little path at Sandvliet. “Egad! She’s not gone to bed yet, anyway,” he laughs, noting that the apartments in which Hermoine had received him before are brilliantly lighted. He sounds the bronze knocker at the door.

This is instantly opened by Alida, who is apparently waiting. She whispers hastily: “Her *Excelentisima* is expecting you.”

“She is alone?”

“Yes, *Señor Coronel*.”

Drawing aside the draperies of the door Chester steps [229]in to be enchanted by the beauty that bursts on his eyes.

The room is lighted by hanging lamps of perfumed oil, adorned with flowers in vases of Venetian glass, but standing with a savage little pout upon her coral lips is the goddess of this fair domain. She is robed in lightest evening dress of floating gauzy tissue of palest amber. This soft floating stuff is thrown about her in great masses, giving an almost cloud-like effect, from which her round arms and beautiful bosom and shoulders rise ivory like, gleaming under the lights as if issuing from some floating summer cloud just tinged by the sun’s rays. Above the white column of her neck posed in a piquant grace is her exquisite face, covered by the soft and wavy tresses of her dark hair, to which flowers give a soft effect, and lighted by indignant eyes that flash now with brightest brunette gleam. Thus she stands looking the fairy of a fairy scene.

She has apparently been very eagerly and savagely discontented, for a little foot that peeps from under a petticoat of Malines' lace is beating a drum solo on the polished floor, and her eyes, though scintillating, are teary as Guy enters. These light up now with radiant happiness and joyous sparkle, and she is at his side murmuring welcome. A second after she whispers: "I thought you were never coming. You could not have been very eager!"

"I had business."

"Business? What business has a lazy dandy of the army on sick leave?" and Doña Hermoine puts doubting nose into the air.

"Business getting my fortune in such shape that I can make proper showing to your father when I demand your hand from him," answers Guy, telling for once the truth; but adding another link in that strange chain which leads up to the wonders Providence holds in her hand for him.

"Oh, you needn't have thought of that," cries the girl. "I have money enough for both. Do you suppose I marry you for your money, Guido, when I have princely estates in Italy that are to be all yours, my lord?" And she courtesies before him, then mutters pleadingly: "You've only kissed me *once*!"

"How could I when you had your nose in the air?" [230]

"That brought my lips nearer to yours," she laughs.

But during the evening she has no reason to complain of this neglect again; for Guy has been gazing on her beauty, that seems to him more wondrous than ever, and drinks it in as a man does strong wine that almost makes him lose his head.

"You seem *en fête*," he murmurs into the pink ear that is so close to his lips.

“But only for you; you remember my lord commanded me no guests.”

“And you obeyed me?”

“Yes—are you not to be my lord?”

“You heed my behests as well as you would your father’s?” laughs Chester.

“Oh, much better! Papa says that I’m his tyrant and the real Viceroy of the Netherlands, but that isn’t true,” says the girl intensely; then sighs: “If I were this would be a different land”—next cries out harshly: “But don’t talk of it. Keep me from brooding over what has caused me so many tears. Let me only remember we are here together—happy! And I’m going to make you very happy to-night, my Guido.”

“Impossible to make me happier than I am,” whispers Chester, looking in rapture at the beauty he now thinks so nearly is his own.

“Oh yes I can. You don’t know what I’ve prepared for you. It seemed to me we didn’t entertain you properly last evening. I would have spoken to the Countess de Pariza had she come to-day, and had rebec players from Antwerp to give us music floating on the water outside the windows. That would have been romantic as the troubadours and Venetian night, would it not, my Guido?”

“That shall be my business next time,” mutters the enraptured Chester.

“But still I’ve done the best I can for you. My Moorish girls shall play and dance for you later—at present I will amuse you myself. I feared from your remark last night you thought I had no accomplishments. Listen!” And despite Guy’s protests that he would sooner do nothing but make love, his sweetheart, seizing from a near-by chair a mandolin with which she has apparently been passing the time until he came, [231]sits down and looking in his face, plays a pretty little prelude. Then the voice that the Dutch Sea Beggar said was like the angel’s tone in the organ at

Amsterdam, sings for him a Moorish melody, soft, tropical, languid, with that grace and lightness that only belong to sunny Italy and Spain. This emphasized and made piquantly charming by languid yet impassioned glances, puts Guy beside himself, and the song finishes with a little gasp of surprise; for the last note, though intended for his ear, is deposited right in the long drooping mustache of her betrothed, and shortened in a way unknown to scientific music.

"*Madre mia!*" laughs the girl, "one would think that you were the composer of this song. You have destroyed my great high note."

"Let me continue it!" This comes in a harsh, rasping voice from behind them.

And the two starting up, confront Hermoine's duenna, the Countess de Pariza, who stands glaring at them and in defense of outraged etiquette bursts forth: "I had expected, Doña de Alva, to join you this afternoon, but was detained by errands in the city. I come to find that I should not have gone away. I am surprised that one brought up under my charge should have entertained a cavalier alone."

"Not when that cavalier is my affianced husband, Colonel Guido Amati. You saw him before, you remember, at the merchant Bodé Volcker's. You—"

Just here with rolling eyes and wildest shriek her duenna cries:

"Guido Amati! the man that was killed! Oh heaven, a ghost! Holy Virgin, save me from the ghost!" and sinks down uttering Latin prayers before them.

But Hermoine breaks in laughing: "No. Not dead! He needn't be exorcised! This is flesh and blood, feel him, feel his lips!"

At this Chester whispers: "No, no!"

“Yes, yes, kiss her hand. She likes the homage of gentlemen; kiss her hand! I’ll give you permission. I shan’t be jealous, Guido *mio*.” And following her directions Guy laughingly places a kiss upon the mature fingers upraised in prayer.

This touch seems to sooth her, and seeing he is [232]not a ghost, the Countess de Pariza rises up, becomes a duenna again, and says haughtily: “Then Colonel Guido Amati not being a ghost, I must request the gentleman to discontinue his visits here until I have informed my lord of Alva of his pretensions to your hand.”

“The gentleman will not discontinue his visits to my house!” answers Hermoine, a defiant light in her eyes.

“You forget you are speaking to your *duenna*.”

“Remember I am Doña de Alva!”

“Very well, in that case I shall send letter to your father at once.”

“You will make no mention of this to my father. I will tell him in my own way at my own time.”

“Won’t I!” breaks out the duenna. “Won’t I! Do you think I could bear *your father’s* anger?”

“Then take MINE!” cries the girl, and walking up to her duenna, a great flash in her haughty eyes, she says: “Dare to breathe word of this to any one until I give you my orders to that effect, and I tell my father that four years ago, when I was too young for you to think I noticed the affairs of State, you, for two thousand crowns in hand, gave warning to young Brederode so that he escaped from Brussels and arrest and execution!”

“What proofs have you of this?” gasps the Countess.

“Only Brederode’s letter thanking you for giving him warning, and stating that he had paid you enough and would give you no more. I have it locked up. Do you suppose that I would have let you stay here by me unless I knew that I could dominate you when I pleased?” jeers Hermoine.

“I—I had such need of money,” stammers La Pariza.

“Dost think that will save you from the punishment—you know what my father decrees to any one assisting an escape—first the rack—and then the fagots!” This awful doom comes from the girl’s lips cool as from an iceberg; and gazing at her, Chester knows his betrothed is Alva’s daughter.

“No—no! Mercy!” sobs the Countess.

“Then down on your knees and swear to me by the cross of Christ that you will not breathe of my betrothal [233]to living thing. Swear it—down on your knees and swear it!” cries Hermoine in awful voice.

“I—I swear,” gasps the duenna.

“On your knees and with the cross upon your lips. Down! Swear it by the Seven Saints of Christendom, by the Twelve Evangelists, by the Four Apostles, by all the sacraments of the church, by the body of our Lord to hold, despite anathema and dispensation *both*—swear!”

And sinking to the floor the Countess de Pariza, affrighted, takes the oath prescribed by Alva’s daughter, who places the crucifix upon her lips.

“What need of such long testament?” asks Guy, who has looked upon the scene astonished, Miss Hermoine, giving him new views of her character.

“Because I don’t trust her,” answers the girl. “It will be cunning priest that will get her out of that. Break it and your soul flies straight through purgatory to unending torment, Countess de Pariza.”

“I—I always thought you loved me,” gasps the duenna, rising from her knees.

“Loved *you*?” ejaculates her charge, a strange light in her eyes. “Dost think I have forgotten when I was twelve years old you slapped my ears? Don’t think I fear you, though! Let that be for your Moorish slave girl who goes to your dressing closet as to the torture chamber. I heard her shriek under your scourge the other morning. But don’t dare, with coward nature, to revenge yourself on her. Beware of me, I hate cruelty! I AM ALVA’S DAUGHTER!”

At this astounding conjunction Guy bites his lips, fighting down a smile and Doña de Pariza gives out a half-smothered chuckle.

But the girl steps up to her and cries: “Don’t dare to look as if you jeered my father’s name; don’t dare to accuse him of cruelty. He has always been good to me as an angel. I’ll not hear it from your lips—or YOURS EITHER!” for a little of Guy’s smile has escaped from him, and she comes walking up to her lover with haughty face, saying: “Remember, I am a Viceroy’s daughter.”

“Penalty!” laughs Chester.

“Oh yes—oh—oh—I forgot! Yes, my lord!” and [234]making obeisance to him. As he exacts the forfeit she whispers: “Oh *Santos*! you are awful—you kiss me every chance you get.”

At this scene Duenna de Pariza glares astounded, and mutters to herself: “God be praised, Miss Spitfire has at last found her master! This worthless, dissipated Guido Amati will make her dance to his fiddling, I warrant you!” then goes to her chamber, leaving the two alone, at which they are nothing loath.

Could La Pariza gaze in upon them one moment later she would be even more astounded, for she would see Colonel Guido Amati giving Miss Hermoine a little lecture upon the advantages of keeping both temper

and tongue well in hand.

To this the girl listens attentively with downcast eyes in a manner that rather astonishes but intensely delights Guy, as he has now made up his mind that there is only one way to gain this lady of his love—that is to carry her off; and to do that he feels he must dominate her completely, entirely.

But continuing this lecture a little too long, she suddenly cries: "Bug-a-boo! Bug-a-boo! Viceroy's daughter!" and dances up laughing. And he, pursuing her, to exact penalty; they have a merry race of it about tables and chairs and over divans, Hermoine gathering up her long court train and fleeing with dainty feet and agile ankles before him, until at last he catches her at the third curtained arch of the room, one whose drapery he has never yet seen raised.

Here she, as he holds her in his arms, grows very serious and whispers: "Don't scold me; if you say the word I'll do penance, my Guido, for being haughty with you, but *not* with her. In here I'll say ten *Ave Marias* for you to-night." Then drawing aside the curtains she shows him the chapel of the house, illuminated, behind whose burning tapers stands the picture painted by his dead friend, the masterpiece of Oliver, and murmurs: "Here is where I pray for you!"

"Yes," responds Guy, pointing to the lovely Madonna, "I worship at that same shrine myself."

"Hush, don't jest," answers the girl solemnly. "This is the chapel in which we will be married." [235]

This idea puts Chester's thoughts into a horrible jumble, and he makes a fearful mistake, over which they have their first real discussion, for he suggests very deftly the plan of secret marriage.

At this she says haughtily: “Unknown to my father, without his consent, he who loves me? Never!” and becomes distant to her Guido for four or five minutes.

But he, deftly withdrawing from the matter, and pleading it is only his wild love for her, Hermoine forgives him and finally sends him away very happy, more wildly in love than ever, but now knowing that he has a very ticklish business before him—to kidnap this young lady and yet keep her affection.

The interview with the Countess de Pariza shows him that speed is now vital to his success, and that any long delay in the matter will probably be fatal to his scheme and perchance his life.

But the girl has her plan of action also and a courier arriving the next morning with letters from Holland, she claps her hands in glee at some sudden idea that has entered her vivacious brain and murmurs: “Papa’s coming. I’ll—I’ll do it! Hurrah! I’ll do it!”

[Contents]

CHAPTER XXI.

“MY LORD OF ALVA!”

Unknowing Doña de Alva’s plans for his welfare, her sweetheart, like prudent man, goes about getting together the little fortune with which he intends to begin housekeeping; and next morning in Antwerp remains on his vessel taking charge of the storage and tallying the bags of gold that a few hours before belonged to his future father-in-law and now are his.

These come on board packed securely in wool and done up in the sailors’ bedding, and were it not for their weight, would seem very much like what they pretend to be; however, they are all handled by Chester’s [236]own crew, and the heavier the sack the better pleased is the seaman who carries it. In truth, it is only by the sternest command and threatening to kill the first one who cheers that Chester keeps the delight of his tars from becoming evident to the surrounding vessels.

Corker himself brings down the first load.

“Bodé Volcker is as grand a buccaneer as ever walked the plank,” whispers that mariner as he makes report to Chester. “He would fight to the death for the gold bags. He’s already given Jamaica twice to old Mother Sebastian, and it’ll be the devil looking after his own if she doesn’t die of rum before we get the last sack out of the house. Bodé’s got cords to tie her with if the worst comes to the worst; her being without squeal makes the thing neat and easy. No need of gags, just simply bind her to the bed-posts and she’s fixed.”

All that day the gold comes steadily on board and by the evening, for the men work very hard, Chester finds he has beneath the cabin floor of the *Esperanza* one hundred and seventy-nine bags of gold sealed with Alva’s

arms; and calculating them at twenty thousand crowns each, he finds he has three million five hundred and eighty thousand crowns. This tallies exactly with Corker's counting of the sacks.

Then leaving the men under Niklaas to get out the silver and the chest of unknown valuables, Martin Corker being kept in charge of the ship, as the *Esperanza* with the gold on board is very precious now, Chester takes boat and passing down the Schelde again arrives at Sandvliet, eagerly impatient for sight of sweetheart.

In this respect Doña Hermoine seems equally anxious. Apparently on the lookout for the boat, she runs down with happy eyes to meet Guy at the landing, crying, with joyous voice: "Good news! Good news!"

"What news?" Chester asks anxiously—almost any news is bad news to him now.

"Papa is coming—he will be here soon. Then you shall ask him in person."

"When will my lord duke be here?"

"In three or four days his letter said."

"A—ah!" This is a big sigh of relief, for Guy now [237]knows the next night will settle his business one way or the other with this fair being, who clings to his arm as he strides up the path to the house, her little feet making two steps to his one.

He has determined that the succeeding night will settle whether she shall be his wife and joy during all his life, or it will be the last of her. This thought makes his manner very tender to her, for come what may he knows she loves him.

Then *tête-à-tête* in the oriel window over the Schelde, they have pleasant converse together, though he tells her his time with her must be short.

“Short? Why?” she pouts to this suggestion.

“Because I am making arrangements about my fortune; you know, to make proper showing to your father.”

“Oh yes, I’ve heard that before! My lord of Alva has always been to me loving and indulgent. As such he will not refuse my request. I have heard him speak of you, my Guido, as the bravest man in the army of Spain; that means a great deal where so many men are brave. That march you made will make him love you as it does me.”

This praise of the dead man in whose shoes he stands drives from Guy’s tongue a confession that has been almost upon it once or twice in these last two days. He fears the effect of revelation upon his sweetheart and thinks tremblingly: “God help me if she loves my name, not me!”

Perhaps later in the evening he might tell his story to Hermoine, for he thinks it almost a justice to her that she know the truth—did not an incident come to these two that seems trivial, but has greater effect than either guesses upon their lives.

Guy has laughingly inquired about the Countess de Pariza.

“Since last night she has not spoken to me. She keeps to her own suite of apartments,” answers the young lady. “That woman, if she dared, would betray me; as it is I pity her Moorish slave girls. You know when papa gave me present of Zora he made Alida gift to the Countess de Pariza. But I liked Alida best, and to take her away from her tyrant—for that’s [238]what my duenna is—you needn’t stay my lips at every word, though it is pleasant, *Guido mio*—I have succeeded in exchanging their services and Alida waits on me and Zora on the Countess. It was a bargain, though no writing passed between us. But to-day, this very morning, she claimed again the duty of Alida. Is it to revenge herself on her?” she goes on intensely. “If so; if she puts hands on the poor girl, let her beware of Hermoine de Alva.”

As she speaks the girl, springing from Guy's arms, starts up and whispers: "What's that? Hark! My heaven, it is Alida!"

For a faint wailing sigh seems to come floating to the room from some distant apartment. "It is Alida! That coward has struck her!" she cries as the sound of agony comes floating in again.

And in a flash, with blazing eyes and vengeance on her face, Hermoine de Alva darts from the room, Guy following her, his feet scarce keeping up with her rapid flight. Turning up a passage, he finds himself—for the girl has hurriedly dashed open a door—gazing on a curious picture.

It is the chamber of the duenna; in it stands Doña de Pariza, with vicious whip upraised, and cowering before her crouches Alida, the Moorish slave. But the lash does not descend. With the spring of a young tigress Hermoine plucks the whip from the astounded Countess.

"How dare you intrude into my chamber?" cries the duenna.

"How dare you strike one that belongs to me?"

"Your pardon, Doña de Alva," sneers La Pariza. "This girl is the gift of your father to *me*. Give me my whip, that I may continue my correction."

"Never! Alida is mine; you made her over to me in words; she is mine to love, mine to protect, she is my Alida. Cruel one! you have asked for your whip! YOU SHALL HAVE IT!" And an avenging goddess is standing over the shuddering duenna, who gives an affrighted scream.

But Guy has hand upon the white arm that is upraised.

"I'll do it if she dares to touch her again!" says [239]Hermoine savagely to Guy; then whispers gently: "Alida, go to my chamber and stay; there you are safe," next breaks out: "Let her dare to lay hand on you and I'll not respect even her gray hairs!"

“Perdition! my wig!” screams La Pariza, and they leave her tearing her scant locks. They have intruded into the apartment of romantic old age, and the Countess without false hair and other artifices for effacing the traces of decay makes an ugly picture that now becomes an awful one; for on her face is now added to the ravages of time—demoniac hate.

As Guy leads his sweetheart away he whispers: “Did you note her countenance? She is now your enemy for life.”

“Pish! What care I?” laughs Doña de Alva haughtily. Then she murmurs: “I’m glad you stopped me from degrading myself to her level. Had I touched her I should have been ashamed of it. When I’m thine by the rights of Mother Church, bring a man’s forbearance to bear upon my woman’s weakness.”

This kind of adulation makes Guy feel ashamed of himself, for he is in his brawls with equals very headstrong and sometimes cruel and bloodthirsty, and among his sailors he is not light of hand with marling-spike and rope’s end when it is necessary for discipline of ship.

Hermoine’s very glorification of him makes Chester hesitate to tell her that he has been, in all his wooing of her, another being than the Guido Amati she thinks she loves. But all the same he would not lose her for the world, and will take the chance even of her reproach and anger to make her his by right of church in face of man and God.

To do this he has many preparations still to make. And getting from her arms once more he bids her adieu, saying: “To-morrow evening at nine o’clock precisely. Remember, I shall have for you a little water *fête*. The moon will not be up, but it will rise before we return. Will you go for a sail on the water with me to-morrow night, my love?”

“Yes, and to-night if you would ask me,” laughs the girl. Then she says wistfully: “If papa were only here, we could take him with us.” [240]

“I—I pray heaven no,” answers her lover with a start.

“Oh, don’t fear, I am omnipotent over my Lord of Alva!”

Kissing her hand to Guy and filled with this idea, Doña Hermoine runs back to the house.

This confidence in her power over Philip’s Viceroy brings sudden changes over love’s young dream.

The very next afternoon, with clanking spurs and covered with the dust of travel, escorted by some thirty dashing horsemen, my lord of Alva comes galloping up to Hermoine’s country house, there to receive a daughter’s welcome and a daughter’s love.

And oh! the happiness of that meeting!

The girl runs out to him, crying: “I didn’t think you would be here so soon; your letter said four days, My Lord of Alva!” And courtesies to him; but he springs off war horse, his serpent’s eyes aflame with the one love of his declining years, and taking to his heart his piquant child, whispers: “Then you, my Hermoine, are sorry?”

“Sorry that you have come?—*delighted!*”

“You must know,” remarks the Duke as he passes into the house with her, “after I had written to you I received courier from Antwerp that brought me such news from D’Avila, in command, that made it necessary for me to return to the Citadel for a day or two.”

This is true; for beneath a long account of military advices as to reinforcements, arms and munitions of war, and the various details of the garrisons of Brabant and Flanders, Sancho D’Avila had chanced to write almost as a postscript to the letter: “By the by, Your Highness will be concerned to learn your old pensioner, the venerable Roderigo, died four days ago.”

It is this careless line that has brought My Lord of Alva so suddenly from Nijmegen, where he has been forwarding munitions to the besieging army round Haarlem. Within an hour of receipt of this Alva, with some muttered execrations, has taken horse and journeyed from the town on the Waal with his body guard, getting relays of horses at Hertogenbosch, Breda and Bergen, and by quickest route coming up the Schelde from that place to Antwerp. The road passing through [241]Sandvliet, and it being but five minutes' ride to this thing he loves best upon the earth, my lord has turned his bridle and is now in his daughter's arms.

"I cannot stay long," he remarks hurriedly; "I must be in Antwerp to-night."

"To-morrow morning will do much better. Your chamber is always prepared for you. It is never occupied by anyone else." Here the girl blushes suddenly, remembering that her Guido had usurped it for some fifteen minutes of his time. "Sup with me you *shall*!"

"Impossible, I must go on."

"You shan't, papa, YOU SHAN'T! You've been away so long from orders you're becoming mutinous and undisciplined."

With this she treats him in a way that Alva loves from her, but would permit from no one else upon this earth, man nor woman. While she is speaking to him, despite his protestations, Doña Hermoine has got his helmet off and is patting his gray locks and pulling the two long tresses of his silver beard with her white hands and crying: "Now I have you a prisoner! Ten kisses for your ransom!"

"*Santos y demonios!* you're the worst rebel in the Netherlands," laughs the Duke.

"Yes, the most defiant and the only one who will conquer YOU!"

This pleases my lord of Alva, who is in what is for him a jovial humor, and he says: “You’re right; I have Haarlem now as surely in my grasp as if I had my troops in that dogged town. De Bossu has defeated Marinus Brandt upon the lake, the town is now cut off from provisions—it must be mine. Then when I have trampled out these rebels and can hand over this land unstained by sedition to my lord, Philip the King, we’ll go back to Spain together, and away from the fogs of this northern country, among the pomegranates, the vines, the cork trees and the olives, we’ll forget there ever has been war.”

“Yes,” cries the girl, “and we’ll take *him* with us.”

“Him? Who?”

“My coming husband.”

“Thy *coming* husband! Of whom are you talking, child?” says Alva in astounded voice. “Never saw I [242]woman that was so free from earthly loves!” Then he laughs: “This is a rare change. Last time you were drooping. You had psalm-book in your hand and ritual, and talked of being the bride of Mother Church.”

“But that has all gone away.”

“I am glad of it, though I should not have said you nay. My Hermoine would have made a curious nun.”

“Yes, she will make a better bride,” purrs the girl, going back to her subject. “But I won’t tell you all about it unless you dine with me, and only after dinner. See! Your escort are dismounting. They have had a long ride. They are taking refreshment. Will not my lord have the same mercy for himself he gives his soldiers? Besides, you look ill, worried.”

“Not at all. There’s only one thing on my mind; the errand I came for, and that, though important, is not, I pray God, immediate.”

“Then stay to dinner. I gave orders as I saw you ride up to the house.” At this, clapping her hands, the curtains are drawn up, and the Duke, taking his daughter’s arm, goes into the pleasures of the banquet. Here for the first time since the night before, Hermoine sees the Countess, and looking in her eyes knows that oath, or no oath, in some way she will get word of what has happened unto my lord of Alva.

But to Hermoine’s delight Don Fernando Alvarez de Toledo, Lord of Alva and Duke of Huesca, spurred by curiosity, wishes *tête-à-tête* with his lovely child, and to the astonishment and rage of her duenna says very shortly: “Countess, I am glad to see you in your usual health. My daughter and I, having weighty matters to discuss, would be alone. Good afternoon, Doña de Pariza, I kiss your hand,” and he bows her to the door with stately Spanish etiquette; then says: “Hermoine, your story. Is it a jest about a lover, child?”

“No jest.”

“Tell me.”

“After dinner, papa; not until wine has made your heart a little softer. You have hardened it in Holland.”

“Not unto thee,” says my Lord. “Tell me, pretty one.”

“Not unless you let me sit upon your august knee.” [243]

With this she is upon his lap and with soft caresses and cooing words of love and kisses and “Papa darlings” tells him of her lover.

At which he opens his eyes and remarks: “Your Guido Amati; he was reported dead after the battle on the ice, I think.”

“Yes, but he has recovered from his wounds. Oh, it would take a great deal to kill him! Remember his march across the Drowned Lands up there. You passed the place to-day,” she points her hand.

“Yes, I recollect. That was a feat worthy of the Cid,” says Alva, who, above all, is a military tactician.

“Ah! then give me to the Cid; the Cid would be worthy even of the daughter of Alva. If Guido was worthy of the Cid he is worthy of me!” And with pleadings, coaxings and caresses Hermoine wins from this man who she thinks can refuse her naught, promise that he will grant her hand to Colonel Guido Amati de Medina.

“Now you must not go,” she pleads. “He is coming here this evening. You must see him. You must make him as happy as I am. Father, I never loved you until now.”

“Oho!—If I had refused I suppose you would have hated me.”

“I never think of hate with you; but then, you never do refuse. And as you never say me nay, you’ll stay and meet him. Give him your blessing; father, promise me as you love me, you will give Guido Amati as my promised husband, your blessing.”

“Then if I must do so, and you say I must,” mutters the Duke, a tremble on his lips and a quiver in his eyelids, “I must first ride on to Lillo and send from there a message to Sancho d’Avila.”

“You’ll come back? He will be here at nine. You will come back—promise it, swear it!”

“I promise by this kiss.”

“Then take two to make sure,” prattles Miss Hermoine with happy eyes.

A moment after his escort being ready, pursued by kisses thrown from fairy hands, the Duke mounts charger and canters off from the villa of his daughter, [244]whose eyes are streaming with happy tears and whose lips are murmuring: “Father and future husband both together. To-night will be a happy one for me!”

Alva rides on to Lillo, and having word with Mondragon, the commandant, charges him to send courier at once with a note he writes to Sancho d'Avila, commandant of the Citadel at Antwerp. Then with a father's natural instinct of curiosity in regard to coming son-in-law, Don Fernando, chatting with the officer in command, one of his favorites, says: "Mondragon, do you know a certain Guido Amati, Colonel in Romero's Legion?"

"Of course, your excellency, he was under me before he went to Holland."

"Ah! Tell me of him."

"That's little good, except that he was the bravest of the brave, and as fine a swordsman as ever handled Toledo blade; but a more undisciplined, gambling, rake and debauchee I never met, and I'm an old campaigner."

"A debauchee undisciplined, a roué drunkard," gasps His Highness, his face growing even more pallid than is usual to his sallow cheeks. "You are sure you know what you say, Mondragon?"

"Certainly, I knew him well. But what matters it? Guido Amati is dead."

"Impossible; though I heard the rumor."

"It's marked upon the muster-rolls of Romero's command."

"Are you sure?"

"Certainly!"

"Then if alive his name would surely be on the roster of his regiment?"

"As sure as there is paymaster in the army. Guido Amati is not a gentleman to let his pay lapse by any negligence of his; but he is surely dead. There are men, I think, in the garrison who saw him fall."

“Ah! in the battle on the ice?”

“Yes. Young De Busaco, a lieutenant here on sick leave, and Sergeant Gomez.”

“Send for them at once,” says Alva, quite astounded and shaken at these curious words. [245]

And De Busaco, coming into the apartment, salutes.

“Lieutenant De Busaco, I believe?” remarks Don Fernando.

“Yes, Your Highness, just promoted.”

“You were at the battle on the ice?”

“Yes, Your Highness.”

“Who commanded there?”

“Colonel Guido Amati.”

“Was he killed there?”

“I think so, Your Highness; I saw him fall.”

“That’s very curious, when my daughter says he lives!” mutters the Viceroy in an amazed tone. At this Mondragon and De Busaco open their eyes, and the latter knows the catastrophe that he has sometimes guessed might take place, will come.

“You saw him fall?” queries Don Fernando, as if he can’t believe his ears.

“Yes, Your Highness.”

“And you think he is dead?”

“Yes, Your Highness, the Dutch butchered all our wounded.”

“As they always do,” answers Alva. “I’m afraid I taught them that trick. They’re ready students. Is Gomez in waiting?”

“Yes, Your Highness.”

And the bluff Sergeant stepping in, salutes with military precision my lord of Alva and gives him information thus:

“Yes, I saw Guido Amati fall. I tried to save him, but slipped and broke my head on the ice in doing it, but by the blessing of God, escaped.”

“You know this man is dead.”

“Yes—ten saints could not have saved him.”

“Speak respectfully of the church! How do you know it?”

“Because I saw three pikes driven through his body.”

“That is sufficient,” mutters Alva in a dazed manner. “You can go, Gomez.”

“And three pikes through the body would kill even as tough a fighter as Guido Amati,” remarks Mondragon; but as the sergeant turns his back the commandant suddenly says: “What is the matter, Your Highness. You have had bad news from Haarlem?” [246]

“Oh no, the best. They are eating grass in the streets now. We’ve beaten Orange on the lake and dominate it. It is not Haarlem.” Then Alva suddenly commands: “Order my escort at once. Is Gomez able to take horse?”

“Yes, your Excellency.”

“Let him accompany them.”

And followed by thirty men armed with lance and arquebus, my lord of Alva clatters back to the dwelling of his daughter. On the way he calls to his side the bluff Gomez and questions him: “What kind of a looking man was this Guido Amati?”

“Tall, well built, short crisp dark hair, eyes very black and reckless, and a skin as swarthy as a washed-out Morisco.”

“He had the manners of a gentleman, of *course*,” remarks the Viceroy.

“As well as a soldier like myself could guess, your Highness, and the tongue of one. It was said he spoke Castilian as purely as a priest.”

“Very good, that will do, sergeant,” says the Viceroy. And they soon arrive at the country house.

But being a wary old tactician, my lord of Alva says nothing of the strange revelation that has come to him at the Fort at Lillo, and striding into Hermoine’s apartment, remarks: “My daughter, as we promised we have returned to see this gentleman you love, Guido Amati; who must be of wondrous strong frame.”

“How so?” asks the girl.

“He was desperately wounded at the Battle on the Ice.”

“I should think so! Haven’t I seen the wounds? They’re awful!” This last is a piquant shudder.

“*Seen* the pike wounds through his body?”

“No, but there was a cut upon his head that would have let out the life of any but a Paladin.”

“Humph! they say your Paladin is a dissipated fellow.”

“That’s a falsehood! some rival sends forth this story about him every time. Why, even at the house of Bodé Volcker,” goes on Hermoine, “that fibbing merchant told me he was drunk, when two seconds after my Guido strides up to me as sober as you are, and a good deal [247]happier looking, and not with that extraordinary benumbed expression that’s on your dear old face.” Here the girl kisses it.

“Tell me how you met him.”

Thus encouraged Doña Hermoine who, sweetheart like, loves to prattle of her adored, sits down and makes confession to her father; during which he asks her one or two questions she thinks are foolish, but he thinks pertinent. “You say you first met him on the day of the spring flood of 1572?”

“Yes, papa; that was the night I told you of, when he protected me from the Gueux.”

“A—ah—ah This gentleman you love has dark hair and eyes?”

“No, bright blue eyes, and his hair is for a Spaniard very blonde—Did I not tell you so, Goosey!”

“Oh, yes; I meant bright eyes, I had forgotten. Light chestnut hair, you say, and a free and easy manner. He walks like a sailor.”

“Like a *cavalryman*!”

“Ah, yes; they both have rolling gaits. The day you met him was the one I came so hurriedly in from Brussels?”

“Yes, you came very hastily. It was the day Floris the Painter had that drinking bout, and drank one of his opponents even unto death.”

“Yes, I recollect,” says His Highness slowly. “The day Guerra would have made revelation to me, but died. This gentleman you say you love,” my lord of Alva’s manner has a kind of forced lightness in it, “speaks the

patois of Hispaniola?"

"Yes, it is poor Spanish, but sounds very sweet *to me*."

"Humph! when this gentleman arrives, bring him to me." And going from the apartment Alva gives some pertinent directions to the lieutenant in command of his escort.

Then he returns to the dining-room, and, as it is nearly eight o clock—has supper served to him.

To minister to his wants comes running in his daughter, her face as radiant as a sunbeam. She who had been before to him as the lily is now blushing as a rose.

As he sits down there is a very curious expression in [248]my lord of Alva's face, and as he drinks there is a lump in his throat that nearly chokes him, though he is abstemious this evening, his daughter notes, as she serves papa with loving hands.

"You—you do not grieve at losing me?" she whispers, a ripple of concern running over her face.

"No, it—it isn't that." His face has an expression Hermoine cannot understand.

"By the by," she says, "adored papa, another promise."

"What?"

"Take off that reward for the Englishman's head. You remember I told you he saved my Guido's life."

"After to-morrow; then it may not be needed," mutters His Highness, though his eyes do not meet the girl's; he keeps them on his wine cup.

"Thanks, dear papa," answers the young lady. Then suddenly she says: "But I must go."

“Why?”

“To make toilet for my coming husband.”

“Humph!”

“I shall be dressed as a bride.”

“You love this man so very much, my Hermoine?” There is a sob in the father’s voice.

“With my whole heart,” she answers; then suddenly cries: “Perhaps I shall have another surprise for you to-night, if you’ll grant it, but then papa you grant me everything!—you dear old papa who will make your daughter’s happiness so very great this night.”

With this she puts tender kiss upon his brow and runs away, leaving her father wondering to himself whether he has guessed right or not.

But all the same there are tears in his eyes that never shed them; and once or twice when he hears his daughter’s voice from neighboring apartment giving orders as to her toilet and other preparations for the reception of the man she loves, his face has a horrified expression on it. Then a minute after a gleam comes into the serpent’s eyes, and his long hands clench themselves together as if seizing some enemy long sought for and difficult to grasp, but very pleasant to his grip and talons, and he mutters to himself: “If it is he who stole my gold for that Jezebel Elizabeth; if it is he by whose advice the [249]*Gueux* were ordered out of England with no food, no water, but only cannon balls and powder to stir up rebellion in this land, I’d sooner have him than even William the Silent!”

[Contents]

CHAPTER XXII.

“OHO! THE FOX AT LAST!”

All this day during which his sweetheart has been obtaining papa’s consent, Chester has worked like a beaver laying in winter store. The seamen under Bodé Volcker’s direction have got out all the silver, some of which is in ingots, the rest in Spanish dollars, into the cellar, and by the very earliest sunrise at the opening of the city gates, the first load comes into the hold of the *Esperanza*, for this is more bulky, though not nearly as valuable, as the gold.

Working at this with that diligence that men always give to looting treasure, they succeed in getting all of it into the hold of the *Esperanza* by twelve o’clock in the day.

Martin Corker, who has been at the house of Mother Sebastian assisting in the shipment since Chester has taken charge of the *Esperanza*, coming down with the last load, says to his captain: “Bodé Volcker wants to see you at the house of old Dumb Devil like a flash.”

“Why?”

“He didn’t bring out the chest of jewels. He feared some of the men might buccaneer it on the sly, it’s so easily handled, and is probably very valuable.”

With a muttered imprecation on the merchant’s commercial care, for Chester is now anxious to set sail, he strides rapidly up to the house of Mother Sebastian, and there finds Niklaas in company with four seamen, the last who have remained in charge.

“Did I not tell you that I didn’t wish to make entry into the treasure chamber during the day?”

“Yes, but I didn’t want to take the chance of losing the jewels,” returns the merchant.

“Well, since there’s no help for it,” Guy mutters, [250]“I suppose I must go in again.” This he does to find everything as before. Returning from his journey under the moat to the vault below the great Bastion of the Duke, bearing in his hand the chest that is presumed to contain jewels, he laughs: “Everything is all right, this is the last of Alva’s nest-egg.”

“You have locked all the iron doors?”

“Yes.”

Then they put the flagstones in place, closing up the entrance to the vault, and bed down the stones of the cellar on top of it; next sweeping the dust over it again and the seamen pocketing for luck money a few stray coins that had fallen out of one of the sacks, the cellar of Señora Sebastian is as they found it. Then Bodé Volcker leaving another bottle of rum by the side of the snoring dumb woman, they shake off the dust of the house with a sigh of relief from their feet.

“You have the clearance papers?” whispers Guy.

“Yes, I’ll get them at my office.”

“Very well, then we’ll hoist sail,” says the Englishman; and taking the case containing the jewels in his own hands, though he has covered it with a cloak, Guy goes on board the *Esperanza*.

Then his crew make ready to draw out from their moorings and go down the Schelde, while Guy waits impatiently for his clearance papers, for every instant seems an hour of agonized suspense to him.

As he stands gazing eagerly up into the streets of Antwerp, Bodé Volcker makes his appearance, pale, agitated, hurrying as fast as his fat legs can carry his fat body. He comes up the gang plank gasping and holding out to Guy the papers, says: “Captain Andrea Blanco, your clearances.”

“You are going on shore again?”

“No, as I’m a frightened man! God help me, I daren’t stay here. Take me to the cabin, something terrible has happened.”

“What?” gasps Guy, though he gives orders to the men to cast off and get under way. This they do in a flash and Martin Corker takes the helm. As they sail down the Schelde Guy goes into the cabin and whispers to the merchant, who is half fainting: “What’s the matter, what’s frightened you so?” [251]

“My God, my God! the hand moved!”

“What hand?”

“THE HAND ON ALVA’S STATUE!”

“Great heavens!—When?”

“When you went into the vault at twelve o’clock to-day, the right hand of the statue of Alva moved. They’ll be at the house of the woman Sebastian by this time. The statue guarded Alva’s treasure. God help us if they get messenger to Lillo to stop vessels before we get down! The garrison are talking about it as if it were supernatural. They say it predicts the fall of Haarlem; but I know it predicts that people have gone into Alva’s treasure house. That’s what the infernal statue was put there for,” cries Bodé Volcker.

But the last of this speech is made to an empty cabin, for Chester is on deck and is putting all sail upon the *Esperanza*. Seeing that every rag draws and the tide being with them, the boat flies down the river at such a speed that he hardly thinks he will be overtaken, and prays that the custom house officers and guard boat at the fort do their business quickly.

These Spanish officials, hailing them at Lillo, Guy gets them on board and makes the officer in charge so happy by hospitality and a roll of doubloons pressed into his ready hand—suggesting haste on account of the tide and wind, that his ship's business is very urgent—that they are soon allowed to pass. With a sigh of relief Chester, still keeping all sail up, drives down the Schelde, and at five o'clock in the evening they are alongside the *Dover Lass* in Krom Vliet, and are discharging the treasure into the armed vessel.

At seven the transfer has been completed; for Chester has now one hundred and twenty-five men working as seamen always work in sight of prize money.

This done, Guy speaks to Dalton. "Have you obtained as I directed, a chaplain of the Catholic Church from Zeeland?"

"Yes, and it was the devil's own job," says that blunt officer. "I got about the only one the Dutch had left alive on the islands. There was another, but Michael Krok had cut off his ears, and I didn't know [252]whether he could splice a legal knot," for Guy has been compelled to make confidant of his first officer in this business.

"Ask him to step here," Chester says.

And the priest being brought to him, the captain remarks: "You have been kindly treated, holy father?"

"With every care. Your fare is so bounteous, I would it had not been a fast day. It is almost continual starvation for me now. The Dutch have dispersed my flock, both of parishioners and sheep."

"You know the reason that I sent for you?"

"Yes, I was told it was to perform a sacrament of the church, which I am here to do; and have stayed on that island to do," he points to Beveland, "in spite of persecutions, in spite of threats, in spite of blows and

outrage. Ask any Beggar of the Sea whether Father Anastasius ever faltered before them, and there is only one of them who has ever treated Catholic priests as if they were men of God. 'The First of the English,' though he wars against Alva, is a true son of Rome. As such I come to do his bidding."

"You know me?" mutters Guy.

"Yes, that is why I came so readily."

"Then you'll journey with me to perform a sacrament of the Church?"

"I would do that for any one demanding it."

Guy knows this is so; for Father Anastasius is celebrated all over Zeeland as a priest who loves his Lord better than he loves his life, and who will do his duty to the humblest as well as to the highest, as commanded by his Church.

"Put Father Anastasius in my gig with me," Chester says shortly to Dalton. "Arm it and man it!"

"It is done."

"Are the long boat and cutter ready also?"

"Yes."

"How many men all told?"

"Sixty."

"That leaves sixty on the *Dover Lass*; plenty to handle, enough almost to fight her. You will remain in charge of the vessel, Corker will command the boats. They are well armed?" [253]

"Yes, pistols, arquebuses, pikes and battle axes, everything as trim as if it were a boarding party, not a troubadour affair," answers the lieutenant.

At eight o'clock dusk has fallen on both land and sea, and calculating an hour will be sufficient to take them across to the summer house where his love is waiting for him, Chester puts off in his gig, taking the Roman Catholic priest with him, and followed by the long boat and cutter, the men giving way with sturdy muscles as they are anxious now to leave this spot, the very value of their prize making additional danger for them.

Forty minutes after this, just off the dyke, where they turn up to Sandvliet, they meet a boat from Antwerp filled with Italian musicians, rebec players and mandolins, flutes and harps, and decorated as for a *fête*.

These in the early forenoon have been engaged for this purpose in Antwerp by Achille, who still officiates as cabin boy. They are all quite merry and are singing a gay Tuscan love song.

"This is my little water party," whispers Guy to Corker, whom he has sitting by him giving him his last instructions. "The lady will think it a pleasure sail upon the river."

"Oho! Abduction!" laughs the boatswain.

"Yes—to make her I love and honor—my wife," answers Chester. Then he whispers: "She is Alva's daughter."

To which Corker returns a prolonged whistle and muttered: "Good God!" and listens with rather awe-struck face as Guy gives him his last orders: "Take the long boat, guard the dyke between the house and Sandvliet, preventing troops coming that way if alarm is given. The gig and cutter will watch the other side of the house."

For Chester fears at the last moment some lackey or the Countess de Pariza may send some word of what is going on to Sandvliet or Lillo, or something unexpected may mar his plan and he knows if he loses Hermoine now he loses her forever.

A minute after he whispers exultingly: “See, the house is *en fête* and lighted up; she is ready for me, my bride!” Then speaking a few words of caution to Corker, the long boat comes alongside and that sturdy [254]seaman gets into her stern sheets and takes command of her.

Two minutes after Guy touches the landing stage.

“Under that casement, musicians, and play there a soft Venetian serenade,” he whispers to the leader of the Italians, pointing to the great oriel window blazing with lights.

“*Si, gracioso, Señor*,” the leader of these unfortunate devils replies; for Guy has hired them for his festival with princely hand, feeling himself financially a Midas. “A pleasant evening, Señor, a pleasant evening!” And the happy Italian kisses his hand to his liberal patron and goes with his serenaders to meet what fate has prepared for them.

To this Guy answers nothing, but springs upon the landing and whispers to his cockswain: “Have the boat ready to start on the instant,” then says to the priest: “I pray thee come with me, holy father.”

So the two go up the stairs on to the dyke and walk along the path by the little garden toward the mansion, that is scarce a hundred yards away.

“It is a summer night,” says Guy, “Father Anastasius, would you mind taking a seat among these trees until I summon you? It is the sacrament of marriage I shall ask at your hands, and would have word with the lady before I bring you to her.”

“At your pleasure, Captain,” replies the man of God. “I can tell my beads for you and offer up prayers for your wedded state as well under the sky as in a palace.”

Then, unarmed save by the rapier common to cavaliers and the keen stiletto he always wears in his breast, for he does not wish to frighten his love by undue display of weapons, Chester raps on the door of the house.

This is promptly opened by Alida, who whispers: “She is there, my lord, waiting for you, and oh, so happy! Take the compliments of one who loves you both and is your slave.”

The Moorish girl would kiss his hand, but he is too eager for this, and steps into the room with the great oriel window, to find it lighted by perfumed lamps and decorated with flowers, ribbons and hanging vines, as if for a gorgeous festival. [255]

Then, from the oriel window where she has been looking for him, sweeps a dazzling vision of radiant beauty, a glorious beam upon her face, of love and happiness complete, and he whispers to her: “My bride, thou art too beautiful for earth!”

He is right, for the girl is dressed as a bride, in gleaming, glimmering, glistening white, some exquisite creation of the looms of Lyons. She has orange flowers in her hair, her beautiful shoulders and maiden bosom gleam like ivory, and her white arms are pure as alabaster as they close softly round him, and she whispers: “My Guido, at last! See what I have for thee. Come with me, now we shall be happy. Perchance if I entreat him, he will permit us to be one this night.”

Her fairy fingers point to the chapel, as she laughs: “I have a surprise for *him*, too. It is because I have prayed to her that the Madonna looks so kindly on me this night.”

At this Guy gives a start and becomes radiant himself, though he scarcely understands, for, following Hermoine’s hand, he sees the curtains are raised showing the chapel; wax tapers are burning now in hundreds on its altar, there are flowers upon it, and everything seems ready for some religious ceremony.

“Don’t look at it too long; come with me. He will be astonished when I tell him the reason.”

“He! Who?”

“Quick, I’ll lead you to him.” They are at the curtains of the great arches between this room and the dining saloon, she cries: “Draw up the draperies!”

As they rise, she whispers: “Guido, on your knees before my father, who has promised that you shall be my husband—on your knees and thank him as I do!” and prostrates herself before the gaunt figure in black who always wears the golden fleece, the Viceroy of the King of Spain, My Lord of Alva!

Suddenly she is astounded, for instead of dropping on his knees, her Guido springs from her with a wild cry of horrified amazement, and lays hands upon his sword.

At that same instant eight Spanish arquebusiers spring in at the open windows and catching him with sword half drawn, have bound his hands, but not without [256]desperate struggle. Before it is done there is a dead Spaniard lying at his feet.

At this the girl starting up cries: “Guido! are you mad to kill a Spanish soldier?” next says haughtily: “Fellows, release that gentleman immediately!”

But the men only look at her father.

“Unhand that gentleman! You don’t know what you’re doing. Unbind him! He is Colonel Guido Amati, the future son-in-law of your Viceroy!” Then she says apologetically to Guy: “It is some horrible mistake, my Guido. Don’t struggle with them, they may kill you.” For Chester is silently trying to force his way to the window that he may throw himself out of it into the waters of the Schelde.

Then Hermoine, turning to her father, cries: “Command your soldiers to release the man I love. Is this the way you keep promise to me, your daughter?”

On this the Duke asks: “Who is this man? Somebody tell me. Do you recognize him? Who is he?”

Coming from behind him the bluff Sergeant of Romero salutes and whispers into the Viceroy’s ear: “It is ‘The First of the English!’”

With this there is a horrid burst of merriment from Alva, and he laughs: “Ho, ho! The fox at last. My daughter, you have gained the ten thousand crowns reward. This is the man I hungered for. Come here and kiss your father!”

Over all this to the girl’s astonished senses rises the soft music of the harps, mandolins and rebecs floating through the windows from the musicians on the barge playing serenade upon the summer water outside.

Hearing this music and seeing the Englishman’s design, Alva orders sharply: “His boat—take care of that! Let none escape!”

Immediately there is a volley fired from the room right into the boat floating beneath the window, and fearful cries and screams and shrieks go up from murdered Italy; as flute players die with note upon their lips, and wounded musicians drown beneath the window.

At this moment, with mighty bound, tearing himself free from those who hold him, Chester, this man she loves, her Guido, is beside her shuddering: “Why have you done this thing?” [257]

“Why have I done this thing? Because of love of you!” she answers back. “Why have you killed that man there?” For she does not yet understand.

But her father says: “Come hither, Hermoine, I will explain.”

To this she says: “No, no!” Alva is coming toward her and she cries to him: “Stand where you are! Don’t dare to touch me till you tell me why you have forgotten your promise to me!”

Then he of Alva, with voice that seems to her harsh as the judgment trumpet of our Lord will seem to those who have no hope in eternity, answers: “This man is not the man you thought you loved. This is not Guido Amati. He was killed at the Battle on the Ice, slain by this English rover, this accursed pirate, this scum of the sea, this base-born clown, who aped a Spanish noble to win your trust and love.”

“Base-born clown!” breaks out the Englishman. “That’s a lie, when coupled with the name of Chester. My lord of Alva, you speak to belted English knight. My accolade was given by the Queen’s own hand. I have in me the blood of the Stanhopes, who fought with William the Conqueror; my cousin is a Stanley and wears Earl’s coronet. Nobility I have enough for you and yours. Do you think I would have sullied her I love by luring her to wed ignoble blood? Look—on my breast I bear the golden spurs of knighthood!”

At this the girl, who has cowered under the words that brand the man she loves as one of the ignoble, seizing from Chester’s breast the trinkets that show he is of her rank and class, holds them up before my lord of Alva, and cries out in almost happy voice: “*He’s noble!* Father, do you hear, HE’S NOBLE! Now you can’t refuse, he’s noble, though he is—” she pauses here and falters to Guy, for now she somewhat understands, “Are you the—‘The First of the English?’”

“YES!”

The answer comes haughtily and proudly, and with it there is a sudden light in her brain, and she gasps: “Ah, now I know—! This—this Oliver his friend—the day he rescued me, the day they said the English rover was in Antwerp.” Then she whispers, almost exultation [258]in her voice: “Twice, my love, that day I saved you; *to-day I will save you again!*”

But this dies away into one awful wailing cry, as he of Alva, in a voice as unyielding as the Rock of Ages, says harshly: “*Gomez, bring in the executioner!*”

“The executioner! Father, you don’t understand. This is the man I love.”

“You love him?” jeers the Duke. “You love an enemy of your country? This man who was a friend of Oliver, the traitor in my household, whose attack on Mons gave Orange time to rise with all of Holland; this man who robbed me for his queen of my Italian treasure? Bah! you must hate him, girl, as I do,” and he turns to give further orders.

At this mention of stolen wealth there is a jeering laugh from Guy, despite himself, but Hermoine puts hand upon his lips and whispers pleadingly: “Don’t anger him, for my sake, my Guido—my Englishman. I can twist papa about my little finger,” and tries to laugh in his face, “See me!”

With this she is about Alva’s neck murmuring: “What nonsense do you talk? You always do as your Hermoine tells you. Papa dear, shall I pull your naughty beard?”

But he says: “Child, you do not understand. I’ll send to France for gewgaws and new dresses for you. You will soon forget,” then raises up his voice—“THE EXECUTIONER!”

But she will not be put off and apes to laugh: “The executioner?—for the man you have promised me as husband? What NONSENSE! You mean the priest. Goosey dear, send for the priest at once!”

But Alva answers harshly: “To shrive him were he not a heretic,” next says sternly, “Gomez, why are you waiting? You have my orders—THE EXECUTIONER!”

[Contents]

CHAPTER XXIII.

“IT IS AN AFFAIR OF STATE!”

Then pandemonium breaks forth in the girl, and she laughs in awful jeer: “My father offers me gewgaws for my lover’s life. Perhaps he’ll toss the gold for my [259]affianced’s head in my lap and think I’ll spend it in buying sweetmeats and dainties for the mouth,” next sobs to Guy, who, the entrances of the room being all guarded, has now no chance of escape save by almost superhuman means: “Oh, Mother of Mercy! why did you not trust me? Did you suppose I loved only *a name*?” then screams out hoarsely: “Father, spare him! You promised! Spare at least his life. Father, mercy for ME!”

For there is a bustle outside, the noise of men coming into the house; but it is only the lieutenant of the guard who enters, a fiddle dripping with blood in his hand and announces: “We have killed every man in the boat, musicians and all.”

At this there is a spasm of hope, the first that has come to Chester. In his military mind has sprung this idea: “*The butchery of the musicians was warning to my boats that their captain is beset*.”

But this is effaced by the agony of her he loves, for Hermoine is now pleading with her father as if for her own life, calling him loving names as if she adored him in her agony, and sobbing, though she has no tears: “Father, don’t you *hear* me, don’t you *feel* me?” As her arms are round the grim old Viceroy’s neck. “Don’t you know—that I—*love* this man!—See it, believe it by the agony of my breaking heart. If you kill him you kill me. I had mourned for him as dead before; must I be widowed AGAIN?”

Thus supplicating, Hermoine de Alva looks lovelier in her despair than in her joy, for there is now about her a kind of nervous intensity and ethereal electricity that makes her not wholly of this earth; she is as Eve

pleading for Adam, not to God, but—to Satan.

But Satan is not merciful, and thinking her father does not really understand how it is her very life he is cutting short, she cries out: “You shall believe my love by *this*!”

Then this being whom modesty now covers with blushes, in the presence of grim old arquebusiers and all the lackeys and attendants the noise has drawn to the doors of the room, walks up to Guy Chester and her arms go round him and she is kissing him and sobbing over him, and begging him not to think she [260]would have betrayed him for all the world, she loves him *so*.

Even as she does this Hermoine de Alva seems suddenly to change. For, as she flutters over him, Guy, having golden opportunity, whispers in her ear: “Get me time—warn my boats—get me time!”

At this work she goes with every artifice of mind and body.

She looks about, then seems to grow faint, and mutters: “Water—water—my head!”

At this her father cries: “Good heavens, you are swooning!”

To him she jeers: “That would make it easy for you. When I came to I would be bereft. No, I’ll not faint *while he lives*—water!”

This Alva would bring her, but starting, she motions him away and shudders: “Not from your hands; my maid, Alida—quick!”

On this the Moorish girl, who is looking on, a strange pathetic interest in her face, comes to her bringing a goblet.

As Hermoine drinks she whispers: “To the landing, call them on—boats—the English boats!”

A quick look of intelligence flies over the subtle Moorish face, and Alida, bearing the goblet with her, steps out of the apartment.

This the Duke sees not. After his daughter has shuddered from him he has turned away and pressed his hand upon his heart, his face working strangely.

From this on he does not seem to wish to look upon his child, who now comes with all her soul to delay, if she cannot change, her father's purpose.

In this she is strangely aided by an enemy; the Countess de Pariza comes laughing in and giggles, viciously: "You are going to burn him by the slow fire, he is a heretic."

"Heretic in your teeth, hag," cries Chester, "I am as good a Catholic as my lord of Alva himself." And memory of his God coming over him with coming doom, he begins to tell his beads.

"A Catholic," laughs Alva harshly, "as good as I? And raise thy hand against the King of Spain!" [261]

"Yes," answers Guy, "I am a Catholic, *but I am also an Englishman*."

"There'll soon be one less of them to fight against the flag of Spain," sneers the Viceroy.

To this is joined a low wail of despair from Alva's daughter.

The executioner, one of whom my lord always carries with him for sudden use, comes in, in leather jerkin, and with awful cruel face, and he of Alva says to him: "How now, fellow, where is thy noose?"

"I thought, my lord," answers the man, "from what I heard outside, it was a burning at the stake and wanted to know where it should be done? There's faggots enough in the kitchen for roasting of my man. Shall I

burn him in the great courtyard in front of the house? Shall I burn him quick or burn him slow? I can find tallow fat enough to lard him!"

Here my lord of Alva sees something in his daughter's face, though she says no word to this, but simply strides up to her father and looks him in the eye; and he, turning his head away, mutters: "The noose; he is not a heretic, hang him up from a beam outside."

"You are resolved on—on this?" Hermoine's soft voice is broken now and harsh.

"Yes! It is an affair of State."

"My tears, my prayers, my breaking heart—" she sighs this out with gasping sighs, "make no—change—in—your decree?" And there is a sweat of agony about the girl's beautiful eyes instead of tears.

"No. It is an affair of State." Alva's lips tremble as he says it.

"Then I claim for this man I love, since he is not a heretic, the privilege of receiving the last rites of the church. You shall not damn his soul though you condemn his body. You are too good a Catholic to say a Catholic shall die without grace and church rites."

To this Don Fernando answers shortly: "There's no priest within reach."

"You bring the executioner, but not the priest!" she jeers. "Give him and me at least time to tell our beads—for when he dies—my heart breaks also." [262]

But here there is a bustle at the rear among the arquebusiers guarding the doors, and a man garbed as in the priesthood of the Catholic Church, says: "Room, a father of the church!" And the soldiers permitting him to pass, Guy sees with amazement it is the Father Anastasius he had hoped this night would celebrate his wedding.

"Now," cries Hermoine, "my Lord of Alva, you cannot refuse."

“He shall not,” says the priest, “not to me, Father Anastasius, who have lived in Zeeland persecuted all these years for love of the Lord; he dare not refuse permission to save this man’s soul.”

“And why not?” answers Alva haughtily.

“Because I will anathematize you. Great Catholic that you are, you have no right to violate an ordinance of Rome.”

“Then have your way. Bind him securely. Then let him make his orisons to you—in yonder chapel, if you think it would be more holy—and save this man’s soul. Now, girl, get thee to thy chamber.”

“Not until I see the last and hear the last word of the man I love. You have denied all I have prayed you for, you have refused to spare the life of him I love; and I have not cursed you for it—because I am your daughter. But I will call down heaven’s anathema upon you if you send me from his side while life is in him.”

To this Alva says nothing but sinks down at the table, putting his head in his hands, muttering to the lieutenant: “On your life, beware he does not escape you; that is all.”

Then the entrance of the chapel being guarded, Chester, bound and helpless, is led in there, and sinks down before the man of God.

But even as he makes the confession of the dying sinner, there is the frou of silk about him and the white laces and orange flowers of bridal robe brush his face that has been bruised by arquebus stocks, and a beautiful being upon whose face is despair but also love divine, sinks down beside him and sighs out to the priest: “Not the sacrament for the dead, but *the sacrament of marriage*!—with this man I love and [263]who loves me—and who has taken his life in his hands every time he looked upon my face. Now I know what you have risked to gain me—my Guido!—now I know—my Guy, my Englishman!”

“But my lord of Alva!” mutters the monk, aghast.

“You, didn’t fear him a minute ago. Be merciful as you are good. Look at the altar piece; see, the Madonna pleads for me!”

And gazing round Father Anastasius starts, crosses himself, and gasps: “A miracle! Our Mother’s face is yours, my child; the very eyes; the very mouth—miraculous!”

“You see Holy Mary has taken my face to intercede for me,” whispers the girl, an inspiration in her brain. “Quick; as short a ceremony as will make us one.”

Thus adjured, the priest, thinking it the very command of the Virgin herself, mutters over Guy Chester and Hermoine de Alva, though hastily, the sacrament of the Catholic Church that makes this man and woman of one flesh, one body and one name.

As he utters response a sudden exultation comes into Chester’s soul; God will not bring despair upon this noble woman, this tender angel, who whispers to him: “I am your wife; *now let me see if my father dare kill my husband*!—holy man of God, your blessing.”

And the priest, putting hands over them, there come tears in Father Anastasius s eyes and he murmurs: “*Benedicte!* The Virgin will guard the man you love.”

Then Chester feels upon him his bride’s kiss with lips that are cold as death itself; and she rising steps out to her father and says with hoarse, unnatural voice: “It is done!”

For this place is like a torture chamber now, and the voices of all are low and discordant; even Hermoine s own tones have grown harsh and rasping.

“He is absolved?”

“No, he is *married*.”

“WHAT?”

“YES, HE HAS MARRIED ME.”

“Married you! *Misericordia!* You will forever look upon your father as your husband’s butcher. Bring me the accursed priest!” cries he of Alva, rage mingling with his anguish. [264]

“What would you of me?” answers Father Anastasius, striding from the altar.

“How dared you marry them?”

“By command of the Virgin! See! Our Mother has taken the face of his bride to protect him.”

“Ah—h! the juggling trick,” cries Alva, “the picture painted by the traitor Oliver that comes in to stop my vengeance. But it shall not; it is an affair of State!” And he signs to the hangman who is beside him, the noose in his hands.

But Hermoine, confronting her father, answers: “No dastard death for my husband, who is as noble as yourself. At least the mercy of the sword.”

“Take it! I give him as noble a death as I granted Egmont and Horn. Hew me off this Englishman’s head on that table.”

“Before my eyes?” shudders his daughter.

“You wish it. It is an affair of State.”

“Father!” screams the girl. For the executioner has drawn his sword; “Father, as you hope for mercy give it to me. Do you want every one on this earth to call you an accursed and cruel butcher? There was only one

who did not before to-night. She was your daughter. Would you have her say, 'My father killed my husband?'"

But he answers hoarsely: "Quick, get this thing through."

Four or five of the men would now drag Guy to the table, but Father Anastasius striding to the altar, stands over the bound man and cries: "*This is sanctuary!* Anathema upon him who enters sacred place with drawn sword and naked weapon! The Madonna commands me! Stand back, or upon you I will launch the curse of Mother Church!" For the hermit priest has got to thinking he has the Virgin's command to save the bridegroom.

But Alva, brushing through the crowd of faltering soldiers, cries: "Get you gone, you cursed priest," and would make in to seize the bound man, for his men hang back as the priest, raising up his voice, utters: "Anathema!" and begins the awful sentence of excommunication.

To this Fernando laughs hoarsely. "Monks fright me not, I who have led army against the Pope!" and will perchance play executioner himself upon the husband of the daughter he loves. [265]

At this moment a dark, light-footed girl flies into the window, crying: "This way! Quick!"

Alva calls his men to turn about—but it is too late—they all have been so concerned in the execution that they have not noticed the rush of men who are now upon them headed by Corker, with a wild English cheer.

It's scarce a moment ere the astonished body guard are either cut to pieces or driven off to be pursued and butchered in the outer darkness round the house, leaving their master all alone among his enemies, though unwounded; for his armor has shed pistol and arquebus balls. His head is unhelmed and in a minute he would be dead, for Chester now has sword within his hand, and coming up he cries: "It is my turn now! My Lord of Alva!"

Then round the iron Duke, who looks steadfastly on the doom that is upon him, are thrown a pair of girl's white arms, and Hermoine de Alva from off her father's breast beseeches: "Spare him, if you have mercy on me! Spare him, husband, if you would have a happy bride in your arms to-night—for in your arms I should remember that you were the murderer of my father."

"Spare him, young man, I charge you, as I saved you," cries the priest.

"Yes, that you did, good Father Anastasius," cries Hermoine, as Guy drops his hand; and in another moment the hermit priest gets such a kiss as never St. Anthony had, else he had succumbed; and the good father murmurs: "For this feast of the flesh I will fast another week!"

But they are all laughing now, and joyous, save Don Fernando, as he mutters: "What ransom?"

Then to Guy's eyes come the picture of the blockaded town, the men gaunt with hunger, the famishing women—the starving children—and he answers: "The freedom of Haarlem!" and feels he has a nation in this chance.

"*Never!* I have gold to pay for my life, but before one banner recedes from Haarlem leaguer, or one soldier turns his back upon that town, hew me down!" is Alva's determined answer. "Butcher me if you will, [266]but no one shall say that Don Fernando de Toledo sold for his life his allegiance to his sovereign."

"Let them have a little bread." Guy is pleading now.

"NEVER!"

"Let the women and children come out to make the fewer mouths to feed!" is Hermoine's appealing cry.

"NEVER!"

Then if there were Dutchmen about him, the Duke would die; as it is, the English seamen cast on him glances of hatred and rage and lay hands upon their swords.

But Chester cries: “Down with your weapons! Not from the hands of any of my men can harm come to the father of the blessing of my life. Come with me, my Hermoine.”

And the girl goes to him.

Seeing this my lord of Alva falters: “You—you are going to take her away?”

“Why not? You do not love her!”

“By my soul I love her. It was an affair of State. At least promise if you will not live with me, Hermoine—you’ll come back to visit me some time —after you have forgot.”

But the girl answers: “No. I could not come without my husband, and I could never trust your love for me to save his life, had you the power to slay. It would be—‘*an affair of State*!’ What was my life, my happiness, everything I had on earth, as I plead with you scarce five minutes since, to ‘*an affair of State*!’ Father, keep your statecraft, it has cost you the only heart in all this world that—that loved you!” Here the beautiful being falters in her speech, and going up to this man who had been so much to her—till now—she murmurs: “You were always tender and good to me—before!” and places kiss upon his brow.

On this the Duke begins to plead with her to think of his gray hairs—she who is the comfort of his declining life—and finally bursts out at Guy: “This is a selfish love of yours—to take this girl who has had princess’ state to live with you, a rover of the sea.”

“But with her I have taken a mighty dower—worthy a King’s daughter; all THY UNLUCKY TENTH PENNY [267]TAX, my lord of Alva!” answers Chester, who can’t withhold this parting shot.

“How so? From whence?”

“From thy treasure house under the Bastion of the Duke.”

“Good God! Impossible!”

“It was the dying Paciotto’s secret!”

“I—I can’t believe,” falters Fernando, pale, trembling, broken.

“Believe by this! *The statue moved its hand!*” jeers Chester.

“And Roderigo, my watcher, *died* six days ago! It is fate—fortune has turned her face from me,” moans he of Alva, and bows his head upon his breast, as if hope had left him.

From this picture of despair Guy leads his bride away; but chancing at the door to turn back for one last glance at her father who is now alone, Hermoine begins to shudder and sob even in her husband’s arms.

The man of iron soul is kneeling before the altar piece, from which his daughter’s eyes look down at him, and sobbing—he who never sobbed before.

It is the last Alva has of his child in this world from now on. After the beautiful being who had been the joy of his declining years turns her back on him, fortune turns her face from him also. Though he wins Haarlem, and his executioners, five of them, working day and night, butcher the burghers of that hapless town and kill the bravest defenders of its walls, Ripperda, Hasselaer, and its other heroes of heroes; Don Fernando fails at the siege of Alkmaar.

He is not the Alva *of old*; and when some months after he departs for Spain he goes broken in mind and body, having lost the confidence of his king, but gained the immortal infamy of being the most cruel man of a most cruel age—all his unpaid creditors in Holland and Brabant shout execrations as he leaves their shores; they do not know the true story of his statue.

Even Requesens, the succeeding Viceroy, believing his soldiers' rumors, tears Alva's great image down, and goes to digging for his treasure—to find naught but the wondrous casket that contained it.

But the Duke takes with him to Spain one thing; [268]that he now values most of all on earth—the altar piece painted by the genius of Oliver, and it is set up on high behind the grand altar in the cathedral near Vittoria, where my lord of Alva worships. Soon peasant tales are told that he of iron heart cries each day before the Madonna, for the myriad lives that had been lost to the world through him in the Low Countries. And now in after years that picture is attributed to the early brush of Murillo, and goes to make that Master's glory—tourists being told it is without price.

So the dead Oliver lost even renown. His genius went to give another fame; his body tossed into his own beloved Y; his head thrown into Haarlem as carrion. He died that Holland might live free, that a new age might come when men could live their own lives, think their own thoughts, and cry out to God *in their own way*. He has only the glory of the patriot—but is not that enough?

From the sight of her father's despair and humiliation Guy carries his bride to the landing-place. Here all his boats await him, the seamen rapidly bringing down such of Hermoine's belongings as they can readily put hands upon, Alida, the Moorish girl, directing them. Finally, her mistress's jewel case in her hand, she takes seat by Hermoine in the stern sheets of the gig.

Then Chester calls to his men and the seamen bending to their oars, the gig parts the waters of the Schelde making toward the *Dover Lass*.

“Dost remember our last boating on this river together?” whispers Guy, into the ear of his bride. “The unknown lady, who was to promote me to a Colonel, eh?”

“And have I not done more for you, my husband?” returns Lady Chester —*née* Hermoine de Alva—in his ear.

Looking on her beauty, Guy’s glance is answer to this; there is no need of words.

Making the *Dover Lass*, Chester carries in his arms his bride, and bearing her to the cabin, Hermoine looks round and murmurs, startled: “Thy ship is fitted up as a State galley or sovereign’s ship of pomp, my lord,” [269]for Achille has, with French taste, made the cabins like a lady’s boudoir, with fresh flowers brought from the shore.

“Yes, it was for a honeymoon cruise I decorated these cabins. It was for *thee*.”

“And you felt so sure of winning me—with against you all the power of Spain? What indomitable determination, what intense assurance you English have!” The last is a slight laugh. Then her face grows serious and she falters: “What awful risks you took to win your bride, my Guy—my Englishman!”

But Chester has to tear himself from her and go on deck to forget the bridegroom in the sailor. The flag of England is run up on the *Dover Lass*, her sails are spread, and the vessel speeds down the Schelde estuary, and passes Flushing, for Guy will not stop there for fear of pursuing Spanish warships.

The next evening as they drop anchor they hear the merry church bells of Harwich steeple.

“Welcome to England,” cries Guy, and takes his bride on shore. Here it is given out that Chester has captured a galleon of most wondrous riches: and he pays thereon ten per cent., as is usual, to the crown of England, by Drake, Hawkins and other rovers of the sea.

The rest of the treasure, by the law of the land is his, and he makes division with Bodé Volcker, paying him his share. With this money in hand the commercial Fleming hies him to Holland, and some years after when Amsterdam is taken by Orange, settles there, to become one of its merchant princes.

When they are paid and the rewards are given unto them, there are no happier sailormen carousing in the ports of England than those of the *Dover Lass*; and for weeks afterwards when a Jack tar is seen in Plymouth or Portsmouth sporting two big watches, bought from excited Jews, the cry is: “That’s one of Chester’s men, no one but a *Dover Lass* could flash such elegance!”

These things coming to the ears of Queen Elizabeth, Her Majesty remarks to her prime minister: “Burleigh, this Sir Guy Chester is the grandest thief of us all. He has stole that minx of Alva, and he and the girl have [270]got together and robbed her father, the poor old Duke.

“They took Your Majesty as precedent,” murmurs Burleigh. “Dost remember the eight hundred thousand crowns?”

“Yea, in God’s truth I do! But this Knight of mine, Chester, is lost to me as a fighting man if his fortune is a fifth what they say it is, and his bride’s loveliness is a tenth what rumor gives to her. Bring the wench to me. I would lay eyes upon this Spanish beauty.”

“In truth,” answers Cecil, who has seen and wondered at Hermoine’s loveliness, “Lady Chester is the most beautiful woman on earth—saving Your Majesty.”

“Out upon your cozening courtier’s tongue—that ‘saving your majesty’ was an afterthought,” laughs Elizabeth. “But bring the wench with you, I believe you’re half in love with her yourself—you old philanderer—bring me this minx of Alva, quick!”

So Sir Guy Chester, coming with his bride to court, Hermoine, by the graces of her mind, which are enchanting, and by her beauty, which is grand and winning, sends Shene and Westminster wild with admiration.

Looking on this, Queen Bess remarks sadly: “Good fortune has made this Chester a carpet knight; he now eats with that Italian abomination called a fork. Still, he has an eye for treasure; his lady’s diamonds are finer than my own. Perchance he may make a good Lord of the Treasury, for he’ll do no more fighting—unless he is a fool.”

Elizabeth’s guess is true, Chester buying great properties round London, settles down in almost princely state with his fair bride to contented happiness; though some ten years afterwards he buckles on his sword, as every true Englishman did, and fitting out at his own expense six stout vessels, the smallest of which is the old *Dover Lass*, which Dalton commands now, he takes his station in the channel, under my Lord Howard of Effingham, to battle against the great Armada Philip of Spain has sent against the liberties of his country.

That glorious victory is the last sea fight of the “First of the English.” From that time he lives most of the year amid the mild climate of the Kentish coast, which pleases best his Spanish bride, who remembers [271]the soft breezes of her native land. Here, to the end of her long and happy life, she reigns bride of her husband’s heart and mistress of his soul.

Their one sorrow is that no son comes to inherit their great estates, but they have a daughter, brunette-like as her mother, with Hermoine’s ivory skin and glorious, Madonna eyes, and she marries into a great

English family, bringing to it a dower of lands that now makes it one of the grandest and richest of England's ducal houses.

Every now and again some daughter of the house has Hermoine's exquisite eyes, ivory skin and wondrous hair, and her loveliness is not that of the North but of the South. Then her brothers and sisters laugh and say it is the Spanish beauty broken out once more, though they have forgotten from whence it came.

It is only a legend with them now in early chronicle, of the hardy sailor, the indomitable fighter, the non-despairing lover, who stole Alva's treasure and with greater fortune won the noble heart of Alva's daughter to make her bride to "The First of the English!"

FINIS.

[273]

[Contents]

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS'

LIST OF

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FOR THE WINTER SEASON, 1894.

ÉDITION DE LUXE.

THE THREE MUSKETEERS.

BY ALEXANDRE DUMAS.

With a Letter from ALEXANDRE DUMAS the Younger.

With 250 Original Illustrations by MAURICE LELOIR,
Engraved on Wood by J. HUYOT.

Two Volumes. Price £2 2s.

This Edition is limited to 750 copies for the English Market.

Prospectuses and Specimens will be sent on application.

THE POCKET EDITION OF

LONGFELLOW'S POETICAL WORKS.

In Fifteen Volumes.

Strongly bound in paste grain, gilt edges, in a Box, price £2 2s.

GRACE AGUILAR'S BOOKS.

Seven Volumes.

Crown 8vo, cloth gilt, in a Box, price 21s.

SONGS OF TWO SAVOYARDS.

Words and Illustrations by W. S. GILBERT. Music by Sir ARTHUR SULLIVAN.

New and Cheaper Edition. Price 12s. 6d.

FOXHOUND, FOREST, AND PRAIRIE.

By Captain PENNELL-ELMHIRST.

With Plain and Coloured Illustrations by J. STURGESS and J. MARSHMAN. Price 10s. 6d. [274]

Price 7s. 6d. each.

NEW AND IMPORTANT ADDITIONS

TO

ROUTLEDGE'S SEVEN-AND-SIX GIFT BOOKS.

1.

CAPTAIN COOK'S VOYAGES.

With many Illustrations in the Text, and 12 Plates printed in Colours from Designs by GORDON BROWNE.

2.

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

With many Illustrations in the Text, and 12 Plates printed in Colours from Designs by E. J. WHEELER.

3.

THE ARABIAN NIGHTS' ENTERTAINMENTS.

With many Illustrations in the Text, and 12 Plates printed in Colours from Designs by A. W. Cooper.

4.

THE PLAYFELLOW

By Harriet Martineau.

Containing "The Crofton Boys," "Feats on the Fiord," "The Settlers at Home," "The Peasant and the Prince."

With many Illustrations, and 8 Plates printed in Colours from Designs by A. W. Cooper.

5.

THE ADVENTURES OF DON QUIXOTE.

Adapted for the Young by M. Jones.

With many Illustrations and 6 Coloured Plates by Kronheim.

6.

THE ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD.

With 20 page Illustrations and 8 Coloured Plates from Designs by GORDON BROWNE.

7.

WHITE'S NATURAL HISTORY OF SELBORNE.

SIR WILLIAM JARDINE'S EDITION.

With many Illustrations, and 6 Plates in Colours from Designs by HARRISON WEIR. [275]

ROUTLEDGE'S SIX-SHILLING NOVELS.

THE FLYING HALCYON. By R. H. SAVAGE.
THE QUEEN OF ECUADOR. By R. M. MANLEY.
STUCK UP. By NAT GOULD.
THE MYSTERY OF STEPHEN CLAVERTON & CO.
THE PASSING SHOW. By R. H. SAVAGE.

RANDOLPH CALDECOTT'S PICTURE BOOKS.

New and Cheaper Edition, reduced from One Shilling to Sixpence each.

THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT.

JOHN GILPIN.
THE THREE JOVIAL HUNTSMEN.
SING A SONG FOR SIXPENCE.
THE MAD DOG.
THE BABES IN THE WOOD.
THE QUEEN OF HEARTS.
THE FARMER'S BOY.

Also in 2 Volumes, price 2s. 6d. each.

RANDOLPH CALDECOTT'S PICTURE BOOK.
RANDOLPH CALDECOTT'S PICTURE BOOK No. 2.

And in 1 Volume, price 5s.

RANDOLPH CALDECOTT'S COLLECTION OF PICTURES AND SONGS.

HARRY FURNISS'S PICTURE BOOKS.

New and Cheaper Edition, reduced from One Shilling to Sixpence each.

Holiday Romps.
Romps at the Seaside.
Romps in Town.
Romps all the Year Round.

And in 1 Volume, price 2s. 6d.

ROMPS. By HARRY FURNISS.

Price 5s.; gilt edges, 6s.

CHIVALRY. By LEON GAUTIER. With 100 Illustrations.

Price 5s., Cloth.

NORWEGIAN FAIRY TALES. Translated by ABEL HEYWOOD from the Collection of P. CHR. ASBJÖRNSEN and JÖRGEN MOE. Illustrated by BESSIE DU VAL. [276]

Price 3s. 6d. each.

THE PELHAM EDITION OF

LORD LYTTON'S NOVELS.

Being a New Edition of LORD LYTTON'S Novels. In Monthly Volumes.

Demy 8vo, cloth.

Order of Publication.

THE LAST DAYS OF POMPEII.
THE LAST OF THE BARONS.
NIGHT AND MORNING.
ERNEST MALTRAVERS.
RIENZI.
MY NOVEL. 2 Vols.

THE BREAKFAST-TABLE SERIES.

By OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

Pocket Edition, Complete in 1 Volume. Cloth, gilt top.

THE ESSAYS OF ELIA and THE LAST ESSAYS OF ELIA.

By CHARLES LAMB.

Pocket Edition, Complete in 1 Volume. Cloth, gilt top.

ROUTLEDGE'S PASTIME LIBRARY.

A series of Card and Table Games and Popular Amusements.

1 **CARD GAMES.** Edited by Prof. HOFFMANN.
2 **TABLE GAMES.** Edited by Prof. HOFFMANN.
3 **HANDBOOK OF POKER.** By W. J. FLORENCE.
4 **DRAWING-ROOM AMUSEMENTS AND EVENING PARTY ENTERTAINMENTS.**
5 **THE ILLUSTRATED BOOK OF PATIENCE GAMES.**
6 **THE BOOK OF SKAT.** The German Card Game.
7 **HOME GYMNASTICS**: A Manual for Young and Old.
8 **THE ART OF PRACTICAL WHIST.** By General A. W. DRAYSON.
9 **CHESS.** By L. HOFFER.
10 **THE SECRETS OF CONJURING AND MAGIC.** Edited by Professor HOFFMANN.
11 **THE SECRETS OF STAGE CONJURING.** Edited by Professor HOFFMANN.
12 **ACTING CHARADES AND PROVERBS.** A Series of Plays.
13 **FRET CUTTING AND WOOD CARVING.** By General Sir THOMAS SEATON.

[277]

Price 3s. 6d. each.

ROUTLEDGE'S PRIZE SERIES.

Cloth gilt, with Coloured Plates. The Cheapest Series of Prize Books ever published. Also in cloth, gilt edges, 5s.

CAPTAIN COOK'S VOYAGES.
GULLIVER'S TRAVELS.
THE ARABIAN NIGHTS' ENTERTAINMENTS.
THE BOYS' OWN NATURAL HISTORY.
THE PLAYFELLOW. By HARRIET MARTINEAU.
DON QUIXOTE. Adapted for the Young.
ROBIN HOOD. By J. B. MARSH.
WHITE'S NATURAL HISTORY OF SELBORNE.
ÆSOP'S FABLES.
THE PRINCE OF THE HOUSE OF DAVID.
EDGEWORTH'S EARLY LESSONS. With 72 Illustrations and 3 Coloured Plates by F. A. FRASER.
EDGEWORTH'S PARENTS' ASSISTANT. With 30 Illustrations and 5 Coloured Plates by F. A. FRASER.
EDGEWORTH'S MORAL TALES. With 30 Illustrations and 4 Coloured Plates by F. A. FRASER.
EDGEWORTH'S POPULAR TALES. With 30 Illustrations and 4 Coloured Plates by F. A. FRASER.

ROUTLEDGE'S POPULAR LIBRARY.

New Volumes.

(*The "Beautiful Thoughts Series."*)

FAMILIAR LATIN QUOTATIONS, WITH ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS.
BEAUTIFUL THOUGHTS FROM GREEK AUTHORS.
BEAUTIFUL THOUGHTS FROM FRENCH and ITALIAN AUTHORS.
BEAUTIFUL THOUGHTS FROM GERMAN and SPANISH AUTHORS.
GROCOTT'S INDEX TO FAMILIAR QUOTATIONS. New Edition, with Appendix of Quotations from American Authors.
JOHNSON'S LIVES OF THE POETS. In 2 Vols.
CARLYLE'S LIVES OF SCHILLER AND STERLING.
THE PLAYS OF EURIPIDES.

[278]

ROUTLEDGE'S THREE-AND-SIXPENNY GIFT BOOKS.

New Volumes.

SONGS OF A SAVOYARD. By W. S. GILBERT.
THE DAYS OF BRUCE. By GRACE AGUILAR.
UNTRODDEN PEAKS and **UNFREQUENTED VALLEYS**. By AMELIA B. EDWARDS.

ROUTLEDGE'S POPULAR SCIENCE LIBRARY.

New Volumes.

THE ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH. Edited by ROBERT ROUTLEDGE, B.Sc. (Lond.), F.C.S. With 70 Illustrations.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING. Edited by ROBERT ROUTLEDGE, B.Sc. (Lond.), F.C.S.

SCIENCE IN SPORT MADE PHILOSOPHY in EARNEST. Edited by ROBERT ROUTLEDGE, B.Sc. (Lond.), F.C.S. Illustrated.

THE MODERN SEVEN WONDERS OF THE WORLD. By CHARLES KENT. Illustrated.

COMMON OBJECTS OF THE MICROSCOPE. By the Rev. J. G. WOOD. With 400 Coloured Illustrations.

AGRICULTURAL CHEMISTRY. By ALFRED SIBSON, F.C.S.

THE EARTH AND ITS INHABITANTS. By M. E. DARTON.

Price 2s. 6d.

WEBSTER'S PRACTICAL DICTIONARY. 1,500 Illustrations in the Text. Large crown 8vo, cloth.

THE DAYS OF BRUCE. By GRACE AGUILAR.

[279]

Price 2s.

RAILWAY LIBRARY.

New Volumes.

THE ANARCHIST. By Col. R. H. SAVAGE.
THE KING'S STOCKBROKER. By ARCH. C. GUNTER.
THE PRINCESS OF ALASKA. By Col. R. H. SAVAGE.
HOW I ESCAPED. Edited by ARCH. C. GUNTER.
THROWN AWAY. By NAT GOULD.
THE FLYING HALCYON. By R. H. SAVAGE.

TWO SHILLING JUVENILE BOOKS.

New Volumes.

THE DAYS OF BRUCE. By GRACE AGUILAR.
MILDRED'S NEW DAUGHTER. By MARTHA FINLEY.

Price 1s. 6d.

WEBSTER'S PRIMARY DICTIONARY. With 400 Illustrations. Uniform with Routledge's Eighteenpenny Dictionaries.

Price 1s. each.

MASTER JACK SERIES.

New Volumes.

ANIMAL STORIES, OLD AND NEW. HARRISON WEIR.

BRIGHT FAIRY TALES.
BUNYAN'S PILGRIM'S PROGRESS. In Words of One Syllable.

SWIMMING. By A. SINCLAIR. (The Oval Series of Games.)
HARRY COVERDALE'S COURTSHIP. Complete Edition.
TOM JONES. By HENRY FIELDING. Complete Edition.
MILDRED'S NEW DAUGHTER.
ELSIE AT ION.
KATE GREENAWAY'S ALMANACK FOR 1895. (And in cloth, 1s. 6d.)

Price 6d. each.

CAXTON NOVELS.

New Volumes.

THE ROMANCE OF WAR. By JAMES GRANT.
TOM JONES. By HENRY FIELDING. In 2 Vols.
AMELIA. By HENRY FIELDING.
CHICOT, THE JESTER. By ALEXANDRE DUMAS.
OLD ST. PAUL'S. By W. HARRISON AINSWORTH.
WINDSOR CASTLE. By W. HARRISON AINSWORTH.
THE RIFLE RANGERS. By Capt. MAYNE REID.
EUGENE ARAM. By Lord LYTTON.
RODERICK RANDOM. By TOBIAS SMOLLETT.

NIGHT AND MORNING. By Lord LYTTON.
MRS. CAUDLE'S CURTAIN LECTURES. By DOUGLAS JERROLD.
LOOKING BACKWARD. By EDWARD BELLAMY.
A SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY. By LAURENCE STERNE.
IVANHOE. By Sir WALTER SCOTT.
THE MISER'S DAUGHTER. By W. HARRISON AINSWORTH.
ZANONI. By Lord LYTTON.
HANDY ANDY. By SAMUEL LOVER.
THE KING'S OWN. By Captain MARRYAT.
THE DEERSLAYER. By J. FENIMORE COOPER.
THE LAUGHING MAN. By VICTOR HUGO.
A CHRISTMAS CAROL. By CHARLES DICKENS.
THE STAR CHAMBER. By W. HARRISON AINSWORTH.
JACOB FAITHFUL. By Captain MARRYAT.
THE PACHA OF MANY TALES. By Captain MARRYAT.

SIR JOHN LUBBOCK'S HUNDRED BOOKS.

New Volumes.

71 **HUME'S HISTORY OF ENGLAND.** In 3 Vols. 10s. 6d.
72 **LOCKE ON THE HUMAN UNDERSTANDING.** 3s. 6d.
73 **ADDISON'S ESSAYS.** 3s. 6d.

74 **TAYLOR'S HOLY LIVING AND DYING.** 2s. 6d.

75 **HUME'S ESSAYS.** 3s. 6d.

76 **CICERO—OFFICES, FRIENDSHIP AND OLD AGE.** 3s. 6d.

77 **HESIOD.** 2s.

78 **XENOPHON'S ANABASIS and MEMORABILIA.** 5s.

79 **VOLTAIRE—ZADIG ET MICROMEGAS.** 1s. 6d.

80 **ŒUVRES DE MOLIÈRE.** 6s.

81 **SAKOONTALA; OR, THE LOST RING.** 5s.

82 **DESCARTES—DISCOURS DE LA METHODE.** 1s. 6d.

83 & 84 **LIVY, BOOKS I. TO V.—TACITUS'S GERMANIA AND AGRICOLA.** 5s.

London Manchester and New York. [281]

[Contents]

NOVELS, 250 VOLUMES.

AINSWORTH, W. H.

1 The Tower of London
2 Old St. Paul's
3 Windsor Castle
4 The Miser's Daughter
5 The Star Chamber
6 Rookwood
7 St. James'
8 The Flitch of Bacon
9 Guy Fawkes
10 The Lancashire Witches
11 Crichton
12 Jack Sheppard
13 The Spendthrift
14 Boscobel
15 Ovingdean Grange
16 Mervyn Clitheroe
17 Auriol
18 Preston Fight
19 Stanley Brereton
20 Beau Nash
21 The Manchester Rebels

The Set, in 21 Volumes, price 42/-

AUSTEN, Jane.

22 Pride and Prejudice
23 Sense and Sensibility

24 Mansfield Park
25 Emma
26 Northanger Abbey, and Persuasion

The Set, in 5 Volumes, price 10/-

BRONTËË, Charlotte E. & A.

27 Jane Eyre
28 Shirley
29 Wuthering Heights

COCKTON, Henry.

30 Valentine Vox
31 Sylvester Sound
32 Stanley Thorn

COOPER, Fenimore.

33 The Deerslayer
34 The Pathfinder
35 The Last of the Mohicans
36 The Pioneers
37 The Prairie
38 The Red Rover
39 The Pilot
40 The Two Admirals
41 The Waterwitch
42 The Spy
43 The Sea Lions
44 Miles Wallingford
45 Lionel Lincoln
46 The Headsman
47 Homeward Bound

48 The Crater; or, Vulcan's Peak
49 Wing and Wing
50 Jack Tier
51 Satanstoe
52 The Chainbearer
53 The Red Skins
54 The Heidenmauer
55 Precaution
56 The Monikins
57 The Wept of Wish-to-Wish
58 The Ways of the Hour
59 Mercedes
60 Afloat and Ashore
61 Wyandotte
62 Home as Found (Sequel to "Homeward Bound")
63 Oak Openings
64 The Bravo

The Set, in 32 Volumes, price 64/- [282]

DICKENS, Charles.

65 Sketches by "Boz"
66 Nicholas Nickleby
67 Oliver Twist
68 Barnaby Rudge
69 The Old Curiosity Shop
70 Dombey and Son
71 Grimaldi the Clown, with CRUIKSHANK'S Illustrations
72 Martin Chuzzlewit
73 The Pickwick Papers
74 David Copperfield (Copyright)
75 Pictures from Italy, and American Notes

76 Christmas Books

DUMAS, Alexandre.

77 The Three Musketeers
78 Twenty Years After
79 Monte Cristo
80 Marguerite de Valois
81 Chicot, the Jester
82 Forty-five Guardsmen
83 Taking the Bastile
84 The Queen's Necklace
85 The Conspirators
86 The Regent's Daughter
87 Memoirs of a Physician
88 The Countess de Charny
89 The Vicomte de Bragelonne, Vol. 1
90 The Vicomte de Bragelonne, Vol. 2
91 The Chevalier de Maison Rouge

The Set, in 15 Volumes, price 30/-

FERRIER, Miss.

92 Marriage
93 The Inheritance
94 Destiny

FIELDING, Henry.

95 Tom Jones
96 Joseph Andrews
97 Amelia

GASKELL, Mrs.

98 Mary Barton

GRANT, James.

99 The Aide de Camp
100 The Scottish Cavalier
101 Bothwell
102 One of the Six Hundred
103 Jane Seton
104 The Yellow Frigate
105 The Romance of War
106 Oliver Ellis
107 Mary of Lorraine
108 Legends of the Black Watch
109 Lucy Arden
110 The Captain of the Guard
111 Colville of the Guard
112 The Constable of France
113 The Dead Tryst
114 Did She Love Him
115 The Duke of Albany's Highlanders
116 Dulcie Carlyon
117 Fairer than a Fairy
118 First Love and Last Love
119 The Girl He Married
120 The King's Own Borderers
121 Laura Everingham
122 Letty Hyde's Lovers
123 The Lord Hermitage

HALIBURTON, Judge.

124 The Clockmaker
125 The Attaché

[283]

HUGO, Victor.

126 Les Misérables
127 Notre Dame
128 History of a Crime
129 Ninety-Three
130 Toilers of the Sea
131 By Order of the King

KINGSLEY, Charles.

132 Alton Locke
133 Yeast

LEVER, Charles.

134 Harry Lorrequer
135 Charles O'Malley
136 Jack Hinton
137 Arthur O'Leary
138 Con Cregan

LOVER, Samuel.

139 Handy Andy
140 Rory O'More

LYTTON, Lord.

Author's Copyright Revised Editions containing Prefaces to be found in no other Edition.

141 Pelham
142 Paul Clifford
143 Eugene Aram
144 Last Days of Pompeii
145 Rienzi
146 Ernest Maltravers
147 Alice; or, The Mysteries
148 Night and Morning
149 The Disowned
150 Devereux
151 Godolphin
152 The Last of the Barons
153 Leila; Pilgrims of the Rhine
154 Falkland; Zicci
155 Zanoni
156 The Caxtons
157 Harold
158 Lucretia
159 The Coming Race
160 A Strange Story
161 Kenelm Chillingly
162 Pausanias: and the Haunted and the Haunters
163 My Novel, Vol. 1.
164 —— Vol. 2.
165 What will He Do with it? Vol. 1.
166 What will He Do with it? Vol. 2.
167 The Parisians, Vol. 1.
168 —— Vol. 2.

The Set, in 28 Volumes, price 56/-

MARRYAT, Captain.

169 Frank Mildmay

170 Midshipman Easy
171 Phantom Ship
172 Peter Simple
173 The King's Own
174 Newton Forster
175 Jacob Faithful
176 The Pacha of many Tales
177 Japhet in Search of a Father
178 The Dog Fiend
179 The Poacher
180 Percival Keene
181 Monsieur Violet
182 Rattlin, the Reefer
183 Valerie
184 Olla Podrida

The Set, in 16 Volumes, price 32/-

MOUNTENEY-JEPHSON.

185 Tom Bullkley
186 The Girl he left behind him
187 The Roll of the Dice

PORTER, Jane.

188 The Scottish Chiefs
189 The Pastor's Fireside
190 Thaddeus of Warsaw

[284]

REID, Captain Mayne.

191 The Scalp Hunters

192 The Rifle Rangers
193 The War Trail
194 The Quadroon
195 The Headless Horseman
196 The Tiger Hunter
197 The Guerilla Chief
198 Lost Lenore
199 The White Gauntlet
200 The White Chief
201 The Hunter's Feast
202 The Half Blood
203 The Wild Huntress
204 The Maroon
205 The Wood Rangers
206 The Lone Ranche

The Set, in 16 Volumes, 32/-

RICHARDSON, Samuel.

207 Clarissa Harlowe
208 Pamela
209 Sir Charles Grandison

SCOTT, Michael.

210 Tom Cringle's Log
211 The Cruise of the "Midge"

SCOTT, Sir Walter.

212 Waverley
213 Guy Mannering
214 Old Mortality
215 The Heart of Midlothian

216 Rob Roy
217 Ivanhoe
218 The Antiquary
219 Bride of Lammermoor
220 The Black Dwarf and A Legend of Montrose
221 The Monastery
222 The Abbot
223 Kenilworth
224 The Pirate
225 The Fortunes of Nigel
226 Peveril of the Peak
227 Quentin Durward
228 St. Ronan's Well
229 Redgauntlet
230 The Betrothed and The Highland Widow
231 The Talisman and The Two Drovers
232 Woodstock
233 The Fair Maid of Perth
234 Anne of Geierstein
235 Count Robert of Paris
236 The Surgeon's Daughter

The Set, in 25 Volumes, price 50/-

SMEDLEY, Frank.

237 Frank Fairlegh
238 Lewis Arundel
239 Harry Coverdale's Courtship
240 The Colville Family

SMOLLETT, Tobias.

241 Roderick Random
242 Humphry Clinker
243 Peregrine Pickle

SUE, Eugene.

244 The Wandering Jew
245 The Mysteries of Paris

THACKERAY, W. M.

246 Vanity Fair
247 Pendennis
248 The Luck of Barry Lyndon

WARREN, Samuel.

249 Ten Thousand a Year
250 The Diary of a late Physician

[285]

[Contents]

ROUTLEDGE'S RAILWAY LIBRARY,

Price TWO SHILLINGS each, Picture Covers.

ARCHIBALD C. GUNTER.

Mr. Potter of Texas.
That Frenchman.
Miss Nobody of Nowhere.
Mr. Barnes of New York.
Miss Dividends.
Baron Montez of Panama & Paris.
A Princess of Paris.
The King's Stockbroker.

COLONEL SAVAGE.

My Official Wife.
The Little Lady of Lagunitas.
Prince Schamyl's Wooing.
The Masked Venus.
Delilah of Harlem.
For Life and Love.
The Anarchist.
The Princess of Alaska.

VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Moondyne: A Story from the Under-World. *John Boyle O'Reilly.*
Jane Eyre. *Charlotte Brontë.*
Can Such Things Be? *Keith Fleming.*
Stories from Scotland Yard. *C. Rideal, F.R.S.L.*
Secrets of a Private Enquiry Office. *Mrs. Geo. Corbett.*
Vanity Fair. *W. M. Thackeray.*
At the Eleventh Hour. *Keith Fleming.*
Guilty Bonds. *Wm. Le Queux.*
A Fair Free-Lance. *Sir Gilbert Campbell.*
Mrs. Arthur. *Mrs. Oliphant.*
The Romance of an Alter Ego. *Lloyd Bryce.*
The Prodigal Daughter. *Mark Hope.*
David Copperfield. *Charles Dickens.*
Pictures from Italy, and American Notes. *Charles Dickens.*
Through the Mist. *Mrs. Adams-Acton.*
A Matter of Millions. *Anna Katharine Green.*
The Forsaken Inn. *Anna Katharine Green.*
A Diplomat's Diary. *Julien Gordon.*
Shirley. *Charlotte Brontë.*
Gleanings from "On and Off the Stage," *Mrs. Bancroft.*
Funny Stories. *P. T. Barnum.*
Toole's Reminiscences. Edited by *Joseph Hatton.* With Portrait and 36 Illustrations.
Foggerty's Fairy. *W. S. Gilbert.*
The Family Feud. *Thomas Cooper.*
Wuthering Heights and Agnes Grey. *Emily and Anne Brontë.*
Loyal.
Alton Locke. *Charles Kingsley.*

ALPHONSE DAUDET.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

Tartarin on the Alps.
Tartarin of Tarascon.
Jack.
Kings in Exile.
Thirty Years of Paris.
Recollections of a Literary Man.
Artists' Wives.
Robert Helmont.
Afloat (by *De Maupassant*).
Sister Philomène (by *De Goncourt*).
Madame Chrysanthème (by *Pierre Loti*).

ROUTLEDGE'S SPORTING NOVELS.

With New Sporting Covers, drawn by JOHN STURGES, and others.

Crown 8vo, boards, 2s. each.

Jockey Jack. *Nat Gould.*
Running it Off. *Nat Gould.*
The Best Season on Record. *Captain Pennell-Elmhirst.*
A Pink Wedding. *R. Mounteney-Jephson.*
Blair Athol. *Blinkhoolie.*
Beaten on the Post. *J. P. Wheeldon.*

The Tale of a Horse. *Blinkhoolie.*
Jorrocks' Jaunts and Jollities.
Life of John Mytton. *Nimrod*, with a Memoir of the Author.
The Tommiebeg Shootings; or, A Moor in Scotland. *Jeans.*
The Double Event. A Tale of the Melbourne Cup. *Nat Gould.*
Too Fast to Last. *John Mills.*
Won in a Canter. *Old Calabar.*
Nimrod's Northern Tour.
Frank Maitland's Luck. *Finch Mason.*
Horses and Hounds. *Scrutator.*
Reminiscences of a 19th Century Gladiator. With Portraits. *J. L. Sullivan.*
Euthanasia; or Turf, Tent, and Tomb.
The Young Squire. "*Borderer.*"
Soapey Sponge's Sporting Tour.
Very Long Odds. *Campbell Rae-Brown.*
Banker and Broker. *Nat Gould.*
Harry Dale's Jockey. *Nat Gould.*
Thrown Away. *Nat Gould.*

[Contents]

Monkey Brand Soap.

BROOKE'S

Monkey Brand Soap

FOR SCRUBBING KITCHEN TABLES AND FLOORS.

The World's most marvellous Cleanser and Polisher. Makes Tin like Silver, Copper like Gold, Paint like New, Brass Ware like Mirrors, Spotless Earthenware, Crockery like Marble, Marble White.

SOLD BY GROCERS, IRONMONGERS AND CHEMISTS.

EDMUND EVANS, ENGRAVER AND PRINTER, RACQUET COURT, FLEET STREET, LONDON, E.C.

Colophon

Availability

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org ↗.

This eBook is produced by the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at www.pgdp.net ↗.

Scans of this book are available from the Internet Archive (copy 1 ↗).

A Dutch adaptation of this work is also available from Project Gutenberg as *Een strijd om de schatten van Alva: of De watergeuzen in 1572* 📘.

Metadata

Title:	The first of the English	
Author:	Archibald Clavering Günter (1847–1907)	Info ↗
Language:	English	
Original publication date:	1895	

Revision History

2022-04-09 Started.

External References

This Project Gutenberg eBook contains external references. These links may not work for you.

Corrections

The following corrections have been applied to the text:

Page	Source	Correction	Edit distance
Passim.	[*Not in source*]	.	1
6	ratlings	rattlings	1
15	Alvas	Alva’s	1
22, 128	‘	“	1
25	Jemmingem	Jemmingen	1
37, 45	Corolus	Carolus	1
41	come	comes	1
41, 41, 42, 72, 96	Herr	Heer	1
42	Grooten genachts	Groote genades	4
44, 138, 151, 151, 184, 215, 261	[*Not in source*]	“	1
45, 46	Brabrant	Brabant	1
45, 63, 179, 206	[*Not in source*]	”	1
48	convivialty	conviviality	1
52	unfinishd	unfinished	1
54	intelletual	intellectual	1
58	[*Not in source*]	‘	1
74	geatest	greatest	1
75	Parisa	Pariza	1

76, 254	Senor	Señor	1 / 0
78	anchory	anchovy	1
79	Guiseppe	Guisseppi	2
80	“	[*Deleted*]	1
80	’?’	?”	2
92	Provencal	Provençal	1 / 0
94	Senorita	Señorita	1 / 0
101, 148	”	[*Deleted*]	1
106	aim	am	1
122	Gadszooks	Gadzooks	1
124	’	”	1
128, 157	[*Not in source*]	,	1
138, 221	,	.	1
139	You re	You’re	1
140	Middleburg	Middelburg	2
147	griping	gripping	1
149	That s	That’s	1
152, 154	Bode	Bodé	1 / 0
152	geneeral	general	1
154	Esperañza	Esperanza	1 / 0
159	[*Not in source*]	….	4
163	langor	languor	1
164	rouê	roué	1 / 0
165	Whilhelmina	Wilhelmina	1
166, 201, 202	Spaaren	Spaarne	2
170	Speaking	speaking	1

171	’tZeraert’s	’t Zeraert’s	1
172	suceed	succeed	1
174, 174, 174, 174, 175	’tHoen	’t Hoen	1
180	Maartin	Maarten	1
191	Anstel	Amstel	1
192	aross	across	1
193	patroling	patrolling	1
205	Dona	Doña	1 / 0
206	mater	matter	1
216	Duyvil	Duyvel	1
218	Valodolid	Valladolid	2
221	I ll	I’ll	1
225, 231, 254	[*Not in source*]	a	2
229	sun s	sun’s	1
232	Broderode’s	Brederode’s	1
233	YOUR’S	YOURS	1
240	Nijmagen	Nijmegen	1
243	tactition	tactician	2
244	Fernanado	Fernando	1
254	:	,	1
267	Rippreda	Ripperda	2
268	nee	née	1 / 0
286	[*Not in source*]	).	2

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE FIRST OF THE ENGLISH: A NOVEL ***

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed. Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE

THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG™ LICENSE

PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK
To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.
Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg electronic works
1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.
1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.
1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.
1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:
1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

> This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.
1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.
1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg.
1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg License.
1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext

form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”
- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.
- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.
- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S.

copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you ‘AS-IS’, WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers

associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg

Project Gutenberg is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg's goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 41 Watchung Plaza #516, Montclair NJ 07042, USA, +1 (862) 621-9288. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations ($1 to $5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or

determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate.

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.