while the reports of muskets showed that the battle was raging to the right. At length he came upon what appeared to be a rugged footpath, faintly worn in a gully of the rocks, and beheld the ruffians at some distance hurrying the lady up the defile. One of them hearing his approach, let go his prey, advanced towards him, and levelling the carabine, which had been slung on his back, fired. The ball whizzed through the Englishman’s hat, and carried with it some of his hair. He returned the fire with one of his pistols, and the robber fell. The other brigand now dropped the lady, and drawing a long pistol from his belt, fired on his adversary with deliberate aim. The ball passed between his left arm and his side, slightly wounding the arm. The Englishman advanced, and discharged his remaining pistol, which wounded the robber, but not severely.

The brigand drew a stiletto and rushed upon his adversary, who eluded the blow, receiving merely a slight wound, and defended himself with his pistol, which had a spring bayonet. They closed with one another, and a desperate struggle ensued. The robber was a square-built, thick-set man, powerful, muscular, and active. The Englishman, though of larger frame and greater strength, was less active and less accustomed to athletic exercises and feats of hardihood, but he showed himself practised and skilled in the arts of defence. They were on a craggy height, and the Englishman perceived that his antagonist was striving to press him to the edge. A side-glance showed him also the robber whom he had first wounded, scrambling up to the assistance of his comrade, stiletto in hand. He had in fact attained the summit of the cliff, he was within a few steps, and the Englishman felt that his case was desperate, when he heard suddenly the report of a pistol, and the ruffian fell. The shot came from John, who had arrived just in time to save his master.

The remaining robber, exhausted by loss of blood and the violence of the contest, showed signs of faltering. The Englishman pursued his advantage, pressed on him, and, as his strength relaxed, dashed him headlong from the precipice. He looked after him, and saw him lying motionless among the rocks below.

The Englishman now sought the fair Venetian. He found her senseless on the ground. With his servant’s assistance he bore her down to the road, where her husband was raving like one distracted. He had sought her in vain, and had given her over for lost; and when he beheld her thus brought back in
safety, his joy was equally wild and ungovernable. He would have caught her insensible form to his bosom had not the Englishman restrained him. The latter, now really aroused, displayed a true tenderness and manly gallantry which one would not have expected from his habitual phlegm. His kindness, however, was practical, not wasted in words. He despatched John to the carriage for restoratives of all kinds, and, totally thoughtless of himself, was anxious only about his lovely charge. The occasional discharge of fire-arms along the height showed that a retreating fight was still kept up by the robbers. The lady gave signs of reviving animation. The Englishman, eager to get her from this place of danger, conveyed her to his own carriage, and, committing her to the care of her husband, ordered the dragoons to escort them to Fondi. The Venetian would have insisted on the Englishman's getting into the carriage, but the latter refused. He poured forth a torrent of thanks and benedictions; but the Englishman beckoned to the postilions to drive on.

John now dressed his master's wounds, which were found not to be serious, though he was faint with loss of blood. The Venetian carriage had been righted, and the baggage replaced; and, getting into it, they set out on their way towards Fondi, leaving the foot soldiers still engaged in ferreting out the banditti.

Before arriving at Fondi, the fair Venetian had completely recovered from her swoon. She made the usual question— "Where was she?"—"In the Englishman's carriage."— "How had she escaped from the robbers?"—"The Englishman had rescued her."

Her transports were unbounded; and mingled with them were enthusiastic ejaculations of gratitude to her deliverer. A thousand times did she reproach herself for having accused him of coldness and insensibility. The moment she saw him she rushed into his arms with the vivacity of her nation, and hung about his neck in a speechless transport of gratitude. Never was man more embarrassed by the embraces of a fine woman.

"Tut—tut!" said the Englishman.—"You are wounded!" shrieked the fair Venetian, as she saw blood upon his clothes.—"Pooh! nothing at all!"—"My deliverer!—my angel!" exclaimed she, clasping him again round the neck, and sobbing on his bosom.—"Pish!" said the Englishman, with a good-humoured tone, but looking somewhat foolish, "this is all humbug."—The fair Venetian, however, has never since accused the English of insensibility.
HELL-GATE

PART IV.

THE MONEY-DIGGERs.

FOUND AMONG THE PAPERS OF THE LATE DIEDRICH KNICKERBOCKER.

'Now I remember those old woman's words
Who in my youth would tell me winter's tales;
And speak of spirits and ghosts that glide by night
About the place where treasure hath been hid.'

MARLOW'S JEW OF MALTA.

HELL-GATE.

About six miles from the renowned city of the Manhattoes in that sound or arm of the sea which passes between the mainland and Nassau, or Long Island, there is a narrow strait, where the current is violently compressed between shouldering promontories, and horribly perplexed by rocks and shoals. Being, at the best of times, a very violent, impetuous current, it takes these impediments in mighty dudgeon; boiling in whirlpools; brawling and fretting in ripples; raging and roaring in rapids and breakers; and, in short, indulging in all kinds of wrongheaded paroxysms. At such times, woe to any unlucky vessel that ventures within its clutches.

This termagant humour, however, prevails only at certain times of tide. At low water, for instance, it is as pacific a stream as you would wish to see; but as the tide rises it begins to fret; at half-tide it roars with might and main, like a bully bellowing for more drink; but when the tide is full, it relapses into quiet, and, for a time, sleeps as soundly as an alderman after dinner. In fact, it may be compared to a quarrelsome toper, who is a peaceable fellow enough when he has no liquor at all, or when he has a skinful, but who, when half-seas-over, plays the very devil.

This mighty blustering, bullying, hard-drinking little strait, was a place of great danger and perplexity to the Dutch navigators of ancient days; hectoring their tub-built barks in a most unruly style; whirling them about in a manner to make any but a Dutchman giddy, and not unfrequently stranding them upon rocks and reefs, as it did the famous squadron of Oloff the Dreamer, when seeking a place to found the city of the Manhattoes. Whereupon, out of sheer spleen, they nominated it Helle-gat, and solemnly gave it over to the devil. This appellation has since been aptly rendered into English by the name of Hell-gate, and into nonsense by the name of Hurl-gate, according to certain foreign intruders, who neither understood Dutch nor English—may St. Nicholas confound them!
This strait of Hell-gate was a place of great awe and perilous enterprise to me in my boyhood, having been much of a navigator on those small seas, and having more than once run the risk of shipwreck and drowning in the course of certain holiday voyages, to which, in common with other Dutch urchins, I was rather prone. Indeed, partly from the name, and partly from various strange circumstances connected with it, this place had far more terrors in the eyes of my truant companions and myself than had Scylla and Charybdis for the navigators of yore.

In the midst of this strait, and hard by a group of rocks called the Hen and Chickens, there lay the wreck of a vessel which had been entangled in the whirlpools and stranded during a storm. There was a wild story told to us of this being the wreck of a pirate, and some tale of bloody murder which I cannot now recollect, but which made us regard it with great awe, and keep far from it in our cruising. Indeed, the desolate look of the forlorn hulk, and the fearful place where it lay rotting, were enough to awaken strange notions. A row of timber-heads, blackened by time, just peered above the surface at high water; but at low tide a considerable part of the hull was bare, and its great ribs or timbers, partly stripped of their planks and dripping with seaweeds, looked like the huge skeleton of some sea-monster. There was also the stump of a mast, with a few ropes and blocks swinging about and whistling in the wind, while the seagull wheeled and screamed around the melancholy carcase. I have a faint recollection of some hobgoblin tale of sailors, ghosts being seen about this wreck at night, with bare skulls, and blue lights in their sockets instead of eyes, but I have forgotten all the particulars.

In fact, the whole of this neighbourhood was, like the straits of Pylorus of yore, a region of fable and romance to me. From the strait to the Manhattoes the borders of the sound are greatly diversified, being broken and indented by rocky nooks overhung with trees, which give them a wild and romantic look. In the time of my boyhood they abounded with traditions about pirates, ghosts, smugglers, and buried money; which had a wonderful effect upon the young minds of my companions and myself.

As I grew to more mature years, I made diligent research after the truth of these strange traditions; for I have always been a curious investigator of the valuable but obscure branches of the history of my native province. I found infinite difficulty, however, in arriving at any precise information. In seeking to dig up one fact, it is incredible the number of fables which I
KIDD THE PIRATE.

unearthed. I will say nothing of the devil's stepping-stones, by which the arch fiend made his retreat from Connecticut to Long Island, across the Sound, seeing the subject is likely to be learnedly treated by a worthy friend and contemporary historian, whom I have furnished with particulars thereof.* Neither will I say anything of the black man in a three-cornered hat, seated in the stern of a jolly-boat, who used to be seen about Hell-gate in stormy weather, and who went by the name of the pirate's _spuke_ (i. e., pirate’s ghost), and whom, it is said, old Governor Stuyvesant once shot with a silver bullet; because I never could meet with any person of stanch credibility who professed to have seen this spectrum, unless it were the widow of Manus Conklen, the blacksmith, of Frogsneck; but then, poor woman, she was a little purblind, and might have been mistaken, though they say she saw further than other folks in the dark.

All this, however, was but little satisfactory in regard to the tales of pirates and their buried money, about which I was most curious; and the following is all that I could for a long time collect that had anything like an air of authenticity.

KIDD THE PIRATE.

In old times, just after the territory of the New Netherlands had been wrested from the hands of their High Mightinesses the Lords States-General of Holland, by King Charles the Second, and while it was as yet in an unquiet state, the province was a great resort of random adventurers, loose livers, and all that class of haphazard fellows who live by their wits, and dislike the old-fashioned restraint of law and gospel. Among these, the foremost were the buccaneers. These were rovers of the deep, who, perhaps, in time of war, had been educated in those schools of piracy, the privateers, but having once tasted the sweets of plunder, had ever retained a hankering after it. There is but a slight step from the privateersman to the pirate; both fight for the love of plunder; only that the latter is the bravest, as he dares both the enemy and the gallows.

But, in whatever school they had been taught, the buccaneers who kept about the English colonies were daring fellows,

* For a very interesting and authentic account of the devil and his stepping-stones, see the valuable Memoir read before the New York Historical Society since the death of Mr. Knickerbocker, by his friend, an eminent jurist of the place.
and made sad work in times of peace among the Spanish settlements and Spanish merchantmen. The easy access to the harbour of the Manhattoes; the number of hiding-places about its waters, and the laxity of its scarcely organised government, made it a great rendezvous of the pirates; where they might dispose of their booty, and concert new depredations. As they brought home with them wealthy lading of all kinds, the luxuries of the tropics, and the sumptuous spoils of the Spanish provinces, and disposed of them with the proverbial carelessness of freebooters, they were welcome visitors to the thrifty traders of the Manhattoes. Crews of these desperadoes, therefore, the runagates of every country and of every clime, might be seen swaggering in open day about the streets of the little burgh, elbowing its quiet mynheers; trafficking away their rich outlandish plunder at half or quarter price to the wary merchant, and then squandering their prize-money in taverns; drinking, gambling, singing, swearing, shouting, and astounding the neighbourhood with midnight brawl and ruffian revelry.

At length these excesses rose to such a height as to become a scandal to the provinces, and to call loudly for the interposition of government. Measures were accordingly taken to put a stop to the widely-extended evil, and to ferret this vermin brood out of the colonies.

Among the agents employed to execute this purpose was the notorious Captain Kidd. He had long been an equivocal character; one of those nondescript animals of the ocean that are neither fish, flesh, nor fowl. He was somewhat of a trader, something more of a smuggler, with a considerable dash of the pickaroon. He had traded for many years among the pirates, in a little rakish, musquito-built vessel, that could run into all kinds of waters. He knew all their haunts and lurking-places; was always hooking about on mysterious voyages; and as busy as a Mother Cary's chicken in a storm. This nondescript personage was pitched upon by government as the very man to hunt the pirates by sea, upon the good old maxim of "setting a rogue to catch a rogue;" or as otters are sometimes used to catch their cousins-german, the fish.

Kidd accordingly sailed for New York in 1695, in a gallant vessel called the Adventure Galley, well armed and duly commissioned. On arriving at his old haunts, however, he shipped his crew on new terms; enlisted a number of his old comrades, lads of the knife and the pistol, and then set sail for the East. Instead of cruising against pirates, he turned pirate
himself; steered to the Madeiras, to Bonavista, and Madagascar, and cruised about the entrance of the Red Sea. Here, among other maritime robberies, he captured a rich Quedah merchantman, manned by Moors, though commanded by an Englishman. Kidd would fain have passed this off for a worthy exploit, as being a kind of crusade against the infidels; but government had long since lost all relish for such Christian triumphs. After roaming the seas, trafficking his prizes, and changing from ship to ship, Kidd had the hardihood to return to Boston, laden with booty, with a crew of swaggering companions at his heels.

Times, however, had changed. The buccaneers could no longer show a whisker in the colonies with impunity. The new governor, Lord Bellamont, had signalised himself by his zeal in extirpating these offenders; and was doubly exasperated against Kidd, having been instrumental in appointing him to the trust which he had betrayed. No sooner, therefore, did he show himself in Boston, than the alarm was given of his reappearance, and measures were taken to arrest this cut-purse of the ocean. The daring character which Kidd had acquired, however, and the desperate fellows who followed like bull-dogs at his heels, caused a little delay in his arrest. He took advantage of this, it is said, to bury the greater part of his treasures, and then carried a high head about the streets of Boston. He even attempted to defend himself when arrested, but was secured and thrown into prison, with his followers. Such was the formidable character of this pirate and his crew, that it was thought advisable to despatch a frigate to bring them to England. Great exertions were made to screen him from justice, but in vain; he and his comrades were tried, condemned, and hanged at Execution Dock, in London. Kidd died hard, for the rope with which he was first tied up broke with his weight, and he tumbled to the ground. He was tied up a second time, and more effectually. From hence came, doubtless, the story of Kidd's having a charmed life, and that he had to be twice hanged.

Such is the main outline of Kidd's history; but it has given birth to an innumerable progeny of traditions. The report of his having buried great treasures of gold and jewels before his arrest set the brains of all the good people along the coast in a ferment. There were rumours on rumours of great sums of money found here and there, sometimes in one part of the country, sometimes in another—of coins with Moorish inscriptions,
doubtless the spoils of his Eastern prizes, but which the common people looked upon with superstitious awe, regarding the Moorish letters as diabolical or magical characters.

Some reported the treasure to have been buried in solitary, unsettled places about Plymouth and Cape Cod; but by degrees various other parts, not only on the eastern coast, but along the shores of the Sound, and even of Manhattan and Long Island, were gilded by these rumours. In fact, the rigorous measures of Lord Bellamont had spread sudden consternation among the buccaneers in every part of the provinces. They had secreted their money and jewels in lonely out-of-the-way places, about the wild shores of the rivers and sea-coast, and dispersed themselves over the face of the country. The hand of justice prevented many of them from ever returning to regain their buried treasures, which remained, and remain probably to this day, objects of enterprise for the money-digger.

This is the cause of those frequent reports of trees and rocks bearing mysterious marks, supposed to indicate the spots where treasure lay hidden; and many have been the ransackings after the pirates' booty. In all the stories which once abounded of these enterprises, the devil played a conspicuous part. Either he was conciliated by ceremonies and invocations, or some solemn compact was made with him. Still he was ever prone to play the money-diggers some slippery trick. Some would dig so far as to come to an iron chest, when some baffling circumstance was sure to take place. Either the earth would fall in and fill up the pit, or some direful noise or apparition would frighten the party from the place; and sometimes the devil himself would appear, and bear off the prize when within their very grasp; and if they revisited the place the next day, not a trace would be found of their labours of the preceding night.

All these rumours, however, were extremely vague, and for a long time tantalised without gratifying my curiosity. There is nothing in this world so hard to get at as truth, and there is nothing in this world but truth that I care for. I sought among all my favourite sources of authentic information, the oldest inhabitants, and particularly the old Dutch wives of the province; but though I flatter myself that I am better versed than most men in the curious history of my native province, yet for a long time my inquiries were unattended with any substantial result.

At length it happened that, one calm day in the latter part of summer, I was relaxing myself from the toils of severe study, by a day's amusement in fishing in those waters which had been
the favourite resort of my boyhood. I was in company with several worthy burghers of my native city, among whom were more than one illustrious member of the corporation, whose names, did I dare to mention them, would do honour to my humble page. Our sport was indifferent. The fish did not bite freely, and we frequently changed our fishing-ground without bettering our luck. We were at length anchored close under a ledge of rocky coast, on the eastern side of the island of Manhattan. It was a still, warm day. The stream whirled and dimpled by us, without a wave or even a ripple, and everything was so calm and quiet, that it was almost startling when the kingfisher would pitch himself from the branch of some dry tree, and after suspending himself for a moment in the air to take his aim, would souse into the smooth water after his prey. While we were lolling in our boat, half drowsy with the warm stillness of the day and the dulness of our sport, one of our party, a worthy alderman, was overtaken by a slumber, and as he dosed, suffered the sinker of his drop-line to lie upon the bottom of the river. On waking, he found he had caught something of importance, from the weight. On drawing it to the surface, we were much surprised to find it a long pistol of very curious and outlandish fashion, which, from its rusted condition, and its stock being wormeaten and covered with barnacles, appeared to have lain a long time under water. The unexpected appearance of this document of warfare occasioned much speculation among my pacific companions. One supposed it to have fallen there during the revolutionary war; another, from the peculiarity of its fashion, attributed it to the voyagers in the earliest days of the settlement—perchance to the renowned Adrian Block, who explored the Sound, and discovered Block Island, since so noted for its cheese. But a third, after regarding it for some time, pronounced it to be of veritable Spanish workmanship.

"I'll warrant," said he, "if this pistol could talk, it would tell strange stories of hard fights among the Spanish Dons. I've no doubt but it is a relic of the buccaneers of old times—who knows but it belonged to Kidd himself?"

"Ah! that Kidd was a resolute fellow," cried an old iron-faced Cape Cod whaler. "There's a fine old song about him, all to the tune of

My name is Captain Kidd,
As I sailed, as I sailed—
And then it tells all about how he gained the devil's good graces
by burying the Bible:
THE DEVIL AND TOM WALKER.

A FEW miles from Boston, in Massachusetts, there is a deep inlet winding several miles into the interior of the country from Charles Bay, and terminating in a thickly-wooded swamp or morass. On one side of this inlet is a beautiful dark grove; on the opposite side the land rises abruptly from the water's edge into a high ridge, on which grew a few scattered oaks of great age and immense size. Under one of these gigantic trees, according to old stories, there was a great amount of treasure buried by Kidd the pirate. The inlet allowed a facility to bring the money in a boat secretly and at night to the very foot of the hill; the elevation of the place permitted a good look-out to be kept that no one was at hand; while the remarkable trees formed good landmarks by which the place might easily be found again. The old stories add, moreover, that the devil presided at the hiding of the money, and took it under his guardianship; but this it is well known he always does with buried treasure, particularly when it has been ill-gotten. Be that as it may, Kidd never returned to recover his wealth; being shortly after seized at Boston, sent out to England, and there hanged for a pirate.

About the year 1727, just at the time that earthquakes were prevalent in New England, and shook many tall sinners down upon their knees, there lived near this place a meagre, miserly fellow of the name of Tom Walker. He had a wife as miserly as himself; they were so miserly that they even conspired to cheat each other. Whatever the woman could lay hands on, she hid away; a hen could not cackle but she was on the alert to secure the new-laid egg. Her husband was continually prying about to detect her secret hoards, and many and fierce were the conflicts that took place about what ought to have been common property. They lived in a forlorn-looking house that stood alone, and had an air of starvation. A few straggling savin-trees,
emblems of sterility, grew near it; no smoke ever curled from its chimney; no traveller stopped at its door. A miserable horse, whose ribs were as articulate as the bars of a gridiron, stalked about a field where a thin carpet of moss, scarcely covering the ragged beds of pudding-stone, tantalized and balked his hunger; and sometimes he would lean his head over the fence, look piteously at the passer-by, and seem to petition deliverance from this land of famine.

The house and its inmates had altogether a bad name. Tom's wife was a tall termagant, fierce of temper, loud of tongue, and strong of arm. Her voice was often heard in wordy warfare with her husband; and his face sometimes showed signs that their conflicts were not confined to words. No one ventured, however, to interfere between them. The lonely wayfarer shrunk within himself at the horrid clamour and clapper-clawing; eyed the den of discord askance, and hurried on his way, rejoicing, if a bachelor, in his celibacy.

One day that Tom Walker had been to a distant part of the neighbourhood, he took what he considered a short cut homewards, through the swamp. Like most short cuts, it was an ill-chosen route. The swamp was thickly grown with great gloomy pines and hemlocks, some of them ninety feet high, which made it dark at noonday; and a retreat for all the owls of the neighbourhood. It was full of pits and quagmires, partly covered with weeds and mosses, where the green surface often betrayed the traveller into a gulf of black, smothering mud; there were also dark and stagnant pools, the abodes of the tadpole, the bullfrog, and the watersnake; where the trunks of pines and hemlocks lay half drowned, half rotting, looking like alligators sleeping in the mire.

Tom had long been picking his way cautiously through this treacherous forest; stepping from tuft to tuft of rushes and roots, which afforded precarious footholds among deep sloughs; or pacing carefully, like a cat, along the prostrate trunks of trees; startled now and then by the sudden screaming of the bittern, or the quacking of a wild duck, rising on the wing from some solitary pool. At length he arrived at a piece of firm ground, which ran out like a peninsula into the deep bosom of the swamp. It had been one of the strongholds of the Indians during their wars with the first colonists. Here they had thrown up a kind of fort which they had looked upon as almost impregnable, and had used as a place of refuge for their squaws and children. Nothing remained of the old Indian fort but a few embank-
ments, gradually sinking to the level of the surrounding earth, and already overgrown in part by oaks and other forest trees, the foliage of which formed a contrast to the dark pines and hemlocks of the swamp.

It was late in the dusk of evening when Tom Walker reached the old fort, and he paused therefore awhile to rest himself. Any one but he would have felt unwilling to linger in this lonely, melancholy place, for the common people had a bad opinion of it, from the stories handed down from the time of the Indian wars; when it was asserted that the savages held incantations here, and made sacrifices to the evil spirit.

Tom Walker, however, was not a man to be troubled with any fears of the kind. He reposed himself for some time on the trunk of a fallen hemlock, listening to the boding cry of the tree toad, and delving with his walking staff into a mound of black mould at his feet. As he turned up the soil unconsciously, his staff struck against something hard. He raked it out of the vegetable mould, and lo! a cloven skull, with an Indian tomahawk buried deep in it, lay before him. The rust on the weapon showed the time that had elapsed since this death-blow had been given. It was a dreary memento of the fierce struggle that had taken place in this last foothold of the Indian warriors.

"Humph!" said Tom Walker, as he gave the skull a kick, to shake the dirt from it.

"Let that skull alone!" said a gruff voice. Tom lifted up his eyes, and beheld a great black man seated directly opposite him, on the stump of a tree. He was exceedingly surprised, having neither heard nor seen any one approach; and he was still more perplexed on observing, as well as the gathering gloom would permit, that the stranger was neither negro nor Indian. It is true he was dressed in a rude half Indian garb, and had a red belt or sash swathed round his body; but his face was neither black nor copper-colour, but swarthy and dingy, and begrimed with soot, as if he had been accustomed to toil among fires and forges. He had a shock of coarse black hair, that stood out from his head in all directions; and bore an axe on his shoulder.

He scowled for a moment at Tom with a pair of great red eyes.

"What are you doing on my grounds?" said the black man, with a hoarse, growling voice.

"Your grounds!" said Tom, with a sneer; "no more your grounds than mine; they belong to Deacon Peabody."
"Deacon Peabody be d—d," said the stranger, "as I flatter myself he will be, if he does not look more to his own sins and less to those of his neighbours. Look yonder, and see how Deacon Peabody is faring."

Tom looked in the direction that the stranger pointed, and beheld one of the great trees, fair and flourishing without, but rotten at the core, and saw that it had been nearly hewn through, so that the first high wind was likely to blow it down. On the bark of the tree was scored the name of Deacon Peabody, an eminent man, who had waxed wealthy by driving shrewd bargains with the Indians. He now looked round, and found most of the tall trees marked with the name of some great man of the colony, and all more or less scored by the axe. The one on which he had been seated, and which had evidently just been hewn down, bore the name of Crowninshield; and he recollected a mighty rich man of that name, who made a vulgar display of wealth, which it was whispered he had acquired by buccaneering.

"He's just ready for burning!" said the black man, with a growl of triumph. "You see I am likely to have a good stock of firewood for winter."

"But what right have you," said Tom, "to cut down Deacon Peabody's timber?"—"The right of a prior claim," said the other. "This woodland belonged to me long before one of your white-faced race put foot upon the soil."

"And pray, who are you, if I may be so bold?" said Tom.—"Oh, I go by various names. I am the wild huntsman in some countries; the black miner in others. In this neighbourhood I am known by the name of the black woodsman. I am he to whom the red men consecrated this spot, and in honour of whom they now and then roasted a white man, by way of sweet-smelling sacrifice. Since the red men have been exterminated by you white savages, I amuse myself by presiding at the persecutions of Quakers and Anabaptists: I am the great patron and prompter of slave dealers, and the grand master of the Salem witches."

"The upshot of all which is, that, if I mistake not," said Tom, sturdily, "you are he commonly called Old Scratch."—"The same, at your service!" replied the black man, with a half civil nod.

Such was the opening of this interview, according to the old story; though it has almost too familiar an air to be cre-
dited. One would think that to meet with such a singular per-
sonage in this wild, lonely place, would have shaken any man's
nerves; but Tom was a hard-minded fellow, not easily daunted,
and he had lived so long with a termagant wife, that he did not
even fear the devil.

It is said, that after this commencement they had a long and
earnest conversation together, as Tom returned homewards. The
black man told him of great sums of money which had been buried
by Kidd the pirate, under the oak trees on the high ridge, not
far from the morass. All these were under his command, and
protected by his power, so that none could find them but such
as propitiated his favour. These he offered to place within
Tom Walker's reach, having conceived an especial kindness for
him; but they were to be had only on certain conditions. What
these conditions were may easily be surmised, though Tom never
disclosed them publicly. They must have been very hard, for
he required time to think of them, and he was not a man to
stick at trifles where money was in view. When they had
reached the edge of the swamp, the stranger paused.—"What
proof have I that all you have been telling me is true?" said
Tom.—"There is my signature," said the black man, pressing
his finger on Tom's forehead. So saying, he turned off among
the thickets of the swamp, and seemed, as Tom said, to go down,
down, down into the earth, until nothing but his head and
shoulders could be seen, and so on, until he totally disappeared.
When Tom reached home, he found the black print of a finger
burnt, as it were, into his forehead, which nothing could ob-
literate.

The first news his wife had to tell him was the sudden
death of Absalom Crowninshield, the rich buccaneer. It was
announced in the papers with the usual flourish, that "A great
man had fallen in Israel." Tom recollected the tree which
his black friend had just hewn down, and which was ready for
burning. "Let the freebooter roast," said Tom, "who cares!"
He now felt convinced that all he had heard and seen was no
illusion.

He was not prone to let his wife into his confidence, but as
this was an uneasy secret, he willingly shared it with her. All
her avarice was awakened at the mention of hidden gold, and
she urged her husband to comply with the black man's terms,
and secure what would make them wealthy for life. However
Tom might have felt disposed to sell himself to the devil, he

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was determined not to do so to oblige his wife; so he flatly refused, out of the mere spirit of contradiction. Many and bitter were the quarrels they had on the subject, but the more she talked, the more resolute was Tom not to be damned to please her.

At length she determined to drive the bargain on her own account, and if she succeeded, to keep all the gain to herself. Being of the same fearless temper as her husband, she set off for the old Indian fort towards the close of a summer's day. She was many hours absent. When she came back, she was reserved and sullen in her replies. She spoke something of a black man, whom she had met about twilight, hewing at the root of a tall tree. He was sulkily, however, and would not come to terms: she was to go again with a propitiatory offering, but what it was she forebore to say.

The next evening she sat off again for the swamp, with her apron heavily laden. Tom waited and waited for her, but in vain; midnight came, but she did not make her appearance: morning, noon, night returned, but still she did not come. Tom now grew uneasy for her safety, especially as he found she had carried off in her apron the silver teapot and spoons, and every portable article of value. Another night elapsed, another morning came; but no wife. In a word, she was never heard of more.

What was her real fate nobody knows, in consequence of so many pretending to know. It is one of those facts which have become confounded by a variety of historians. Some asserted that she lost her way among the tangled mazes of the swamp, and sank into some pit or slough; others, more uncharitable, hinted that she had eloped with the household booty, and made off to some other province; while others assert that the tempter had decoyed her into a dismal quagmire, on the top of which her hat was found lying. In confirmation of this, it was said a great black man, with an axe on his shoulder, was seen late that very evening coming out of the swamp, carrying a bundle tied in a check apron, with an air of surly triumph.

The most current and probable story, however, observes that Tom Walker grew so anxious about the fate of his wife and his property, that he set out at length to seek them both at the Indian fort. During a long summer's afternoon he searched about the gloomy place, but no wife was to be seen. He called her name repeatedly, but she was nowhere to be heard. The
bittern alone responded to his voice, as he flew screaming by, or the bull-frog croaked dolefully from a neighbouring pool. At length, it is said, just in the brown hour of twilight, when the owls began to hoot, and the bats to flit about, his attention was attracted by the clamour of carrion crows, that were hovering about a cypress tree. He looked up, and beheld a bundle tied in a check apron, and hanging in the branches of the tree, with a great vulture perched hard by, as if keeping watch upon it. He leaped with joy; for he recognised his wife's apron, and supposed it to contain the household valuables.

"Let us get hold of the property," said he, consolingly to himself, "and we will endeavour to do without the woman."

As he scrambled up the tree, the vulture spread its wide wings, and sailed off screaming into the deep shadows of the forest. Tom seized the check apron, but, woful sight! found nothing but a heart and liver tied up in it!

Such, according to the most authentic old story, was all that was to be found of Tom's wife. She had probably attempted to deal with the black man as she had been accustomed to deal with her husband; but though a female scold is generally considered a match for the devil, yet in this instance she appears to have had the worst of it. She must have died game, however; for it is said Tom noticed many prints of cloven feet deeply stamped about the tree, and found handfuls of hair, that looked as if they had been plucked from the coarse black shock of the woodman. Tom knew his wife's prowess by experience. He shrugged his shoulders, as he looked at the signs of a fieree clapper-clawing. "Egad," said he to himself, "old Scratch must have had a tough time of it!"

Tom consolated himself for the loss of his property with the loss of his wife, for he was a man of fortitude. He even felt something like gratitude towards the black woodman, who, he considered, had done him a kindness. He sought, therefore, to cultivate a further acquaintance with him, but for some time without success: the old black legs played shy, for whatever people may think, he is not always to be had for calling for: he knows how to play his cards when pretty sure of his game.

At length, it is said, when delay had whetted Tom's eagerness to the quick, and prepared him to agree to anything rather than not gain the promised treasure, he met the black man one evening, in his usual woodman's dress, with his axe on his shoulder, sauntering along the edge of the swamp, and humming
a tune. He affected to receive Tom's advances with great indifference, made brief replies, and went on humming his tune.

By degrees, however, Tom brought him to business, and they began to haggle about the terms on which the former was to have the pirate's treasure. There was one condition which need not be mentioned, being generally understood in all cases where the devil grants favours; but there were others about which, though of less importance, he was inflexibly obstinate. He insisted that the money found through his means should be employed in his service. He proposed, therefore, that Tom should employ it in the black traffic; that is to say, that he should fit out a slave ship. This, however, Tom resolutely refused: he was bad enough in all conscience; but the devil himself could not tempt him to turn slave dealer.

Finding Tom so squeamish on this point, he did not insist upon it, but proposed, instead, that he should turn usurer; the devil being extremely anxious for the increase of usurers, looking upon them as his peculiar people.

To this no objections were made, for it was just to Tom's taste. — "You shall open a broker's shop in Boston next month," said the black man.—"I'll do it to-morrow, if you wish," said Tom Walker.—"You shall lend money at two per cent. a month."—"Egad, I'll charge four!" replied Tom Walker.—"You shall extort bonds, foreclose mortgages, drive the merchant to bankruptcy——"—"I'll drive him to the d—l," cried Tom Walker, eagerly.—"You are the usurer, for my money!" said the black legs, with delight. "When will you want the rhino?"—"This very night."—"Done!" said the devil.—"Done!" said Tom Walker. So they shook hands, and struck a bargain.

A few days' time saw Tom Walker seated behind his desk in a counting-house in Boston. His reputation for a ready-moneyed man, who would lend money out for a good consideration, soon spread abroad. Everybody remembers the time of Governor Belcher, when money was particularly scarce. It was a time of paper credit. The country had been deluged with government bills: the famous Land Bank had been established: there had been a rage for speculating: the people had run mad with schemes for new settlements; for building cities in the wilderness; land-jobbers went about with maps of grants, and townships, and El Dorados, lying nobody knew where, but which everybody was ready to purchase. In a word, the great speculating fever which breaks out every now and then in the country
had raged to an alarming degree, and everybody was dreaming of making sudden fortunes from nothing. As usual, the fever had subsided; the dream had gone off, and the imaginary fortunes with it; the patients were left in doleful plight, and the whole country resounded with the consequent cry of "hard times."

At this propitious time of public distress did Tom Walker set up as a usurer in Boston. His door was soon thronged by customers. The needy and the adventurous; the gambling speculator; the dreaming land-jobber; the thriftless tradesman; the merchant with cracked credit; in short, every one driven to raise money by desperate means and desperate sacrifices hurried to Tom Walker.

Thus Tom was the universal friend of the needy; and he acted like a "friend in need;" that is to say, he always exacted good pay and good security. In proportion to the distress of the applicant was the hardness of his terms. He accumulated bonds and mortgages; gradually squeezed his customers closer and closer, and sent them at length dry as a sponge from his door.

In this way he made money hand over hand: became a rich and mighty man, and exalted his cocked hat upon Change. He built himself, as usual, a vast house out of ostentation, but left the greater part of it unfinished and unfurnished out of parsimony. He even set up a carriage in the fulness of his vanity, though he nearly starved the horses which drew it; and as the ungreased wheels groaned and screeched on the axletrees, you would have thought you heard the souls of the poor debtors he was squeezing.

As Tom waxed old, however, he grew thoughtful. Having secured the good things of this world, he began to feel anxious about those of the next. He thought with regret on the bargain he had made with his black friend, and set his wits to work to cheat him out of the conditions. He became, therefore, all of a sudden a violent church-goer. He prayed loudly and strenuously, as if heaven were to be taken by force of lungs. Indeed, one might always tell when he had sinned most during the week by the clamour of his Sunday devotion. The quiet Christians, who had been modestly and steadfastly travelling Zionward, were struck with self-reproach at seeing themselves so suddenly outstripped in their career by this new-made convert. Tom was as rigid in religious as in money matters he was a stern supervisor and censurer of his neighbours, and seemed to
think every sin entered up to their account became a credit on his own side of the page. He even talked of the expediency of reviving the persecution of Quakers and Anabaptists. In a word, Tom's zeal became as notorious as his riches.

Still, in spite of all this strenuous attention to forms, Tom had a lurking dread that the devil, after all, would have his due. That he might not be taken unawares, therefore, it is said he always carried a small Bible in his coat pocket. He had also a great folio Bible on his counting-house desk, and would frequently be found reading it when people called on business. On such occasions he would lay his green spectacles in the book to mark the place, while he turned round to drive some usurious bargain.

Some say that Tom grew a little crack-brained in his old days, and that fancying his end approaching, he had his horse new shod, saddled and bridled, and buried with his feet uppermost; because he supposed that, at the last day, the world would be turned upside down; in which case he should find his horse standing ready for mounting, and he was determined at the worst to give his old friend a run for it. This, however, is probably a mere old wives' fable.

If he really did take such a precaution, it was totally superfluous; at least so says the authentic old legend, which closes his story in the following manner.

On one hot afternoon in the dog-days, just as a terrible black thunder-gust was coming up, Tom sat in his counting-house, in his white linen cap and India silk morning gown. He was on the point of foreclosing a mortgage, by which he would complete the ruin of an unlucky land speculator for whom he had professed the greatest friendship.

The poor land-jobber begged him to grant a few months' indulgence. Tom had grown testy and irritated, and refused another day.

"My family will be ruined, and brought upon the parish," said the land-jobber.—"Charity begins at home," replied Tom. "I must take care of myself in these hard times."—"You have made so much money out of me!" said the speculator.—Tom lost his patience and his piety.—"The d—I take me," said he, "if I have made a farthing."

Just then there were three loud knocks at the street-door. He stepped out to see who was there. A black man was holding a black horse, which neighed and stamped with impatience.

"Tom, you're come for!" said the black fellow, gruffly
Tom shrunk back, but too late. He had left his little Bible at the bottom of his coat pocket, and his big Bible on the desk, buried under the mortgage he was about to foreclose: never was sinner taken more unawares. The black man whisked him like a child into the saddle, gave the horse a lash, and away he galloped, with Tom on his back, in the midst of the thunder-storm. The clerks stuck their pens behind their ears, and stared after him from the windows. Away went Tom Walker, dashing down the streets, his white cap bobbing up and down, his morning gown fluttering in the wind, and his steed striking fire out of the pavement at every bound. When the clerks turned to look for the black man, he had disappeared.

Tom Walker never returned to foreclose the mortgage. A countryman, who lived on the border of the swamp, reported, that in the height of the thunder-gust he had heard a great clattering of hoofs and a howling along the road, and that when he ran to the window he just caught sight of a figure such as I have described, on a horse that galloped like mad across the fields, over the hills, and down into the black hemlock swamp, towards the old Indian fort; and that shortly after a thunder-bolt fell in that direction, which seemed to set the whole forest in a blaze.

The good people of Boston shook their heads and shrugged their shoulders; but had been so much accustomed to witches and goblins, and tricks of the devil in all kind of shapes from the first settlement of the colony, that they were not so much horror-struck as might have been expected. Trustees were appointed to take charge of Tom's effects. There was nothing, however, to administer upon. On searching his coffers, all his bonds and mortgages were found reduced to cinders. In place of gold and silver, his iron chest was filled with chips and shavings; two skeletons lay in his stable instead of his half-starved horses; and the very next day his great house took fire, and was burned to the ground.

Such was the end of Tom Walker and his ill-gotten wealth. Let all griping money-brokers lay this story to heart. The truth of it is not to be doubted. The very hole under the oak trees, from whence he dug Kidd's money, is to be seen to this day; and the neighbouring swamp and old Indian fort are often haunted in stormy nights by a figure on horseback, in morning-gown and white cap, which is, doubtless, the troubled spirit of the usurer. In fact, the story has resolved itself into a proverb,
and is the origin of that popular saying, so prevalent throughout New England, of "The Devil and Tom Walker."

Such, as nearly as I can recollect, was the purport of the tale told by the Cape-Cod whaler. There were divers trivial particulars which I have omitted, and which whiled away the morning very pleasantly until the time of tide favourable to fishing being passed, it was proposed that we should go to land and refresh ourselves under the trees, until the noon-tide heat should have abated.

We accordingly landed on a delectable part of the island of Mannahata, in that shady and embowered tract formerly under the dominion of the ancient family of the Hardenbrooks. It was a spot well known to me in the course of the aquatic expeditions of my boyhood. Not far from where we landed there was an old Dutch family vault, constructed in the side of a bank, which had been an object of great awe and fable among my school-boy associates. We had peeped into it during one of our coasting voyages, and had been startled by the sight of mouldering coffins, and musty bones within; but what had given it the most fearful interest in our eyes, was its being in some way connected with the pirate wreck which lay rotting among the rocks of Hell-gate. There were stories, also, of smuggling connected with it; particularly relating to a time when this retired spot was owned by a noted burgher, called Ready-money Provost; a man of whom it was whispered that he had many and mysterious dealings with parts beyond seas. All these things, however, had been jumbled together in our minds in that vague way in which such themes are mingled up in the tales of boyhood.

While I was pondering upon these matters, my companions had spread a repast from the contents of our well-stored pannier, under a broad chestnut on the green sward, which swept down to the water's edge. Here we solaced ourselves on the cool grassy carpet during the warm sunny hours of mid-day. While lolling on the grass, indulging in that kind of musing reverie of which I am fond, I summoned up the dusky recollections of my boyhood respecting this place, and repeated them, like the imperfectly remembered traces of a dream, for the amusement of my companions. When I had finished, a worthy old burgher, John Josse Vandermoere, the same who once related to me the adventures of Dolph Heyliger, broke silence, and observed, that he recollected a story of money-digging, which occurred in this
very neighbourhood, and might account for some of the traditions which I had heard in my boyhood. As we knew him to be one of the most authentic narrators in the province, we begged him to let us have the particulars, and accordingly, while we solaced ourselves with a clean long pipe of Blase Moore's best tobacco, the authentic John Josse Vanderemoere related the following tale.

**WOLFERT WEBBER, OR GOLDEN DREAMS.**

In the year of grace, one thousand seven hundred and—blank—for I do not remember the precise date; however, it was somewhere in the early part of the last century, there lived in the ancient city of the Manhattoes a worthy burgher, Wolfert Webber by name. He was descended from old Cobus Webber of the Brille in Holland, one of the original settlers, famous for introducing the cultivation of cabbages, and who came over to the province during the protectorship of Oloffe Van Kortlandt, otherwise called the Dreamer.

The field in which Cobus Webber first planted himself and his cabbages had remained ever since in the family, who continued in the same line of husbandry, with that praiseworthy perseverance for which our Dutch burghers are noted. The whole family genius, during several generations, was devoted to the study and development of this one noble vegetable, and to this concentration of intellect may, doubtless, be ascribed the prodigious size and renown to which the Webber cabbages attained.

The Webber dynasty continued in uninterrupted succession; and never did a line give more unquestionable proofs of legitimacy. The eldest son succeeded to the looks as well as the territory of his sire; and had the portraits of this line of tranquil potentates been taken, they would have presented a row of heads marvellously resembling, in shape and magnitude, the vegetables over which they reigned.

The seat of government continued unchanged in the family mansion, a Dutch-built house, with a front, or rather gable-end, of yellow brick, tapering to a point, with the customary iron weathervane at the top. Everything about the building bore the air of long-settled ease and security. Flights of martins peopled the little coops nailed against its walls, and swallows built their nests under the eaves; and every one knows that these house-loving birds bring good luck to the dwelling where they take up their abode. In a bright sunny morning, in early summer, it was delectable to hear their cheerful notes.
as they sported about in the pure sweet air, chirping forth, as it were, the greatness and prosperity of the Webbers.

Thus quietly and comfortably did this excellent family vegetate under the shade of a mighty button-wood tree, which, by little and little, grew so great, as entirely to overshadow their palace. The city gradually spread its suburbs round their domain. Houses sprang up to interrupt their prospects; the rural lanes in the vicinity began to grow into the bustle and populousness of streets; in short, with all the habits of rustic life, they began to find themselves the inhabitants of a city. Still, however, they maintained their hereditary character and hereditary possessions with all the tenacity of petty German princes in the midst of the empire. Wolfert was the last of the line, and succeeded to the patriarchal bench at the door, under the family tree, and swayed the sceptre of his fathers, a kind of rural potentate in the midst of a metropolis.

To share the cares and sweets of sovereignty, he had taken unto himself a helpmate, one of that excellent kind called stirring women, that is to say, she was one of those notable little housewives who are always busy when there is nothing to do. Her activity, however, took one particular direction: her whole life seemed devoted to intense knitting; whether at home or abroad, walking or sitting, her needles were continually in motion; and it is even affirmed that, by her unwearied industry, she very nearly supplied her household with stockings throughout the year. This worthy couple were blessed with one daughter, who was brought up with great tenderness and care; uncommon pains had been taken with her education, so that she could stitch in every variety of way; make all kinds of pickles and preserves, and mark her own name on a sampler. The influence of her taste was seen, also, in the family garden, where the ornamental began to mingle with the useful; whole rows of fiery marigolds and splendid hollyhocks bordered the cabbage-beds, and gigantic sunflowers lolled their broad jolly faces over the fences, seeming to ogle most affectionately the passers-by.

Thus reigned and vegetated Wolfert Webber over his paternal acres, peacefully and contentedly. Not but that, like all other sovereigns, he had his occasional cares and vexations. The growth of his native city sometimes caused him annoyance. His little territory gradually became hemmed in by streets and houses, which intercepted air and sunshine. He was now and then subjected to the irruptions of the border
population that infest the skirts of a metropolis; who would sometimes make midnight forays into his dominions, and carry off captive whole platoons of his noblest subjects. Vagrant swine would make a descent, too, now and then, when the gate was left open, and lay all waste before them; and mischievous urchins would often decapitate the illustrious sunflowers, the glory of the garden, as they lolled their heads so fondly over the walls. Still all these were petty grievances, which might now and then ruffle the surface of his mind, as a summer breeze will ruffle the surface of a mill-pond; but they could not disturb the deep-seated quiet of his soul. He would but seize a trusty staff that stood behind the door, issue suddenly out, and anoint the back of the aggressor, whether pig or urchin, and then return within doors, marvellously refreshed and tranquillised.

The chief cause of anxiety to honest Wolfert, however, was the growing prosperity of the city. The expenses of living doubled and trebled; but he could not double and treble the magnitude of his cabbages; and the number of competitors prevented the increase of price: thus, therefore, while every one around him grew richer, Wolfert grew poorer; and he could not, for the life of him, perceive how the evil was to be remedied.

This growing care, which increased from day to day, had its gradual effect upon our worthy burgher; insomuch, that it at length implanted two or three wrinkles in his brow; things unknown before in the family of the Webbers; and it seemed to pinch up the corners of his cocked hat into an expression of anxiety totally opposite to the tranquil, broad-brimmed, low-crowned beavers of his illustrious progenitors.

Perhaps even this would not have materially disturbed the serenity of his mind had he had only himself and his wife to care for; but there was his daughter gradually growing to maturity; and all the world knows when daughters begin to ripen, no fruit nor flower requires so much looking after. I have no talent at describing female charms, else fain would I depict the progress of this little Dutch beauty. How her blue eyes grew deeper and deeper, and her cherry lips redder and redder; and how she ripened and ripened, and rounded and rounded, in the opening breath of sixteen summers; until in her seventeenth spring she seemed ready to burst out of her bodice like a half-blown rosebud.

Ah, well-a-day! could I but show her as she was then, tricked out on a Sunday morning in the hereditary finery of
the old Dutch clothes-press, of which her mother had confided to her the key. The wedding-dress of her grandmother modernised for use, with sundry ornaments, handed down as heirlooms in the family; her pale brown hair, smoothed with buttermilk in flat waving lines, on each side of her fair forehead; the chain of yellow virgin gold that encircled her neck; the little cross that just rested at the entrance of a soft valley of happiness, as if it would sanctify the place; the—but, pooh—it is not for an old man like me to be prosing about female beauty. Suffice it to say, Amy had attained her seventeenth year. Long since had her sampler exhibited hearts in couples, desperately transfixed with arrows, and true lovers' knots, worked in deep blue silk; and it was evident she began to languish for some more interesting occupation than the rearing of sunflowers, or pickling of cucumbers.

At this critical period of female existence, when the heart within a damsel's bosom, like its emblem, the miniature which hangs without, is apt to be engrossed by a single image, a new visitor began to make his appearance under the roof of Wolfert Webber. This was Dirk Waldron, the only son of a poor widow; but who could boast of more fathers than any lad in the province; for his mother had had four husbands, and this only child; so that, though born in her last wedlock, he might fairly claim to be the tardy fruit of a long course of cultivation. This son of four fathers united the merits and the vigour of his sires. If he had not had a great family before him, he seemed likely to have a great one after him; for you had only to look at the fresh bucksome youth to see that he was formed to be the founder of a mighty race.

This youngsters gradually became an intimate visitor of the family. He talked little, but he sat long. He filled the father's pipe when it was empty; gathered up the mother's knitting-needle or ball of worsted, when it fell to the ground; stroked the sleek coat of the tortoiseshell cat, and replenished the teapot for the daughter, from the bright copper kettle that sang before the fire. All these quiet little offices may seem of trifling import; but when true love is translated into Low Dutch, it is in this way that it eloquently expresses itself. They were not lost upon the Webber family. The winning youngster found marvellous favour in the eyes of the mother; the tortoiseshell cat, albeit the most staid and demure of her kind, gave indubitable signs of approbation of his visits; the tea-kettle seemed to sing out a cheery note of welcome at his
approach; and if the shy glances of the daughter might be rightly read, as she sat bridling, and dimpling, and sewing by her mother's side, she was not a whit behind Dame Webber, or grimalkin, or the tea-kettle, in good-will.

Wolfert alone saw nothing of what was going on; profoundly wrapped up in meditation on the growth of the city and his cabbages, he sat looking in the fire and puffing his pipe in silence. One night, however, as the gentle Amy, according to custom, lighted her lover to the outer door, and he, according to custom, took his parting salute, the smack resounded so vigorously through the long, silent entry, as to startle even the dull ear of Wolfert. He was slowly roused to a new source of anxiety. It had never entered into his head, that this mere child, who, as it seemed, but the other day, had been climbing about his knees, and playing with dolls and baby-houses, could, all at once, be thinking of lovers and matrimony. He rubbed his eyes; examined into the fact; and really found, that while he had been dreaming of other matters, she had actually grown to be a woman, and, what was worse, had fallen in love. Here arose new cares for poor Wolfert. He was a kind father, but he was a prudent man. The young man was a lively, stirring lad; but then he had neither money nor land. Wolfert's ideas all ran in one channel; and he saw no alternative, in case of a marriage, but to portion off the young couple with a corner of his cabbage-garden, the whole of which was barely sufficient for the support of his family.

Like a prudent father, therefore, he determined to nip this passion in the bud, and forbade the youngster the house, though sorely did it go against his fatherly heart, and many a silent tear did it cause in the bright eye of his daughter. She showed herself, however, a pattern of filial piety and obedience. She never pouted and sulked; she never flew in the face of parental authority; she never fell into a passion, or fell into hysterics, as many romantic novel-read young ladies would do. Not she, indeed! She was none such heroical rebellious trumpery, I'll warrant you. On the contrary, she acquiesced like an obedient daughter; shut the street door in her lover's face; and if ever she did grant him an interview, it was either out of the kitchen window, or over the garden fence.

Wolfert was deeply cogitating these matters in his mind, and his brow wrinkled with unusual care, as he wended his way one Saturday afternoon to a rural inn, about two miles from the city. It was a favourite resort of the Dutch part of the community,
from being always held by a Dutch line of landlords, and retaining an air and relish of the good old times. It was a Dutch-built house, that had probably been a country seat of some opulent burgher in the early time of the settlement. It stood near a point of land called Corlear's Hook, which stretches out into the Sound, and against which the tide, at its flux and reflux, sets with extraordinary rapidity. The venerable and somewhat crazy mansion was distinguished from afar by a grove of elms and sycamores, that seemed to wave a hospitable invitation, while a few weeping willows, with their dank, drooping foliage, resembling falling waters, gave an idea of coolness that rendered it an attractive spot during the heats of summer. Here, therefore, as I said, resorted many of the old inhabitants of the Manhattan, where, while some played at shuffle-board, and quoits, and nine-pins, others smoked a deliberate pipe, and talked over public affairs.

It was on a blustering autumnal afternoon that Wolfert made his visit to the inn. The grove of elms and willows was stripped of its leaves, which whirled in rustling eddies about the fields. The nine-pin alley was deserted, for the premature chilliness of the day had driven the company within doors. As it was Saturday afternoon, the habitual club was in session, composed, principally, of regular Dutch burghers, though mingled occasionally with persons of various character and country, as is natural in a place of such motley population.

Beside the fireplace, in a huge leather-bottomed armchair, sat the dictator of this little world, the venerable Ramm, or, as it was pronounced, Ramm Rapelye. He was a man of Wallon race, and illustrious for the antiquity of his line, his great grandmother having been the first white child born in the province. But he was still more illustrious for his wealth and dignity: he had long filled the noble office of alderman, and was a man to whom the governor himself took off his hat. He had maintained possession of the leather-bottomed chair from time immemorial; and had gradually waxed in bulk as he sat in this seat of government, until, in the course of years, he filled its whole magnitude. His word was decisive with his subjects; for he was so rich a man that he was never expected to support any opinion by argument. The landlord waited on him with peculiar officiousness, not that he paid better than his neighbours; but then the coin of a rich man seems always to be so much more acceptable. The landlord had ever a pleasant word and a joke to insinuate in the ear of the august Ramm. It is true,
Ramm never laughed, and, indeed, maintained a mastiff-like gravity and even surliness of aspect, yet he now and then rewarded mine host with a token of approbation; which, though nothing more nor less than a kind of grunt, yet delighted the landlord more than a broad laugh from a poorer man.

"This will be a rough night for the money-diggers," said mine host, as a gust of wind howled round the house and rattled at the windows.

"What! are they at their works again?" said an English half-pay captain, with one eye, who was a frequent attendant at the inn.

"Ay, they are," said the landlord, "and well may they be. They've had luck of late. They say a great pot of money has been dug up in the field just behind Stuyvesant's orchard. Folks think it must have been buried there in old times, by Peter Stuyvesant, the Dutch governor."

"Fudge!" said the one-eyed man-of-war, as he added a small portion of water to a bottom of brandy.

"Well, you may believe or not, as you please," said mine host, somewhat nettled; "but everybody knows that the old governor buried a great deal of his money at the time of the Dutch troubles, when the English red-coats seized on the province. They say, too, the old gentleman walks—ay, and in the very same dress that he wears in the picture which hangs up in the family house."

"Fudge!" said the half-pay officer.

"Fudge, if you please! But didn't Corny Van Zandt see him at midnight, stalking about in the meadow with his wooden leg, and a drawn sword in his hand, that flashed like fire? And what can he be walking for, but because people have been troubling the place where he buried his money in old times?"

Here the landlord was interrupted by several guttural sounds from Ramm Rapelye, betokening that he was labouring with the unusual production of an idea. As he was too great a man to be slighted by a prudent publican, mine host respectfully paused until he should deliver himself. The corpulent frame of this mighty burgher now gave all the symptoms of a volcanic mountain on the point of an eruption. First there was a certain heaving of the abdomen, not unlike an earthquake; then was emitted a cloud of tobacco smoke from that crater, his mouth; then there was a kind of rattle in the throat, as if the idea were
working its way up through a region of phlegm; then there were several disjointed members of a sentence thrown out, ending in a cough: at length his voice forced its way in the slow but absolute tone of a man who feels the weight of his purse, if not of his ideas: every portion of his speech being marked by a testy puff of tobacco-smoke.

"Who talks of old Peter Stuyvesant's walking?"—Puff—"Have people no respect for persons?"—Puff—puff—"Peter Stuyvesant knew better what to do with his money than to bury it."—Puff—"I know the Stuyvesant family."—Puff—"Every one of them."—Puff—"Not a more respectable family in the province."—Puff—"Old standers."—Puff—"Warm householders."—Puff—"None of your upstarts."—Puff—puff—puff—"Don't talk to me of Peter Stuyvesant's walking."—Puff—puff—puff—puff.

Here the redoubtable Ramm contracted his brow, clasped up his mouth till it wrinkled at each corner, and redoubled his smoking with such vehemence, that the cloudy volumes soon wreathed round his head as the smoke envelops the awful summit of Mount Etna.

A general silence followed the sudden rebuke of this very rich man. The subject, however, was too interesting to be readily abandoned. The conversation soon broke forth again from the lips of Peechy Praw Van Hook, the chronicler of the club, one of those prosy, narrative old men, who seem to be troubled with an incontinence of words as they grow old.

Peechy could at any time tell as many stories in an evening as his hearers could digest in a month. He now resumed the conversation by affirming, that to his knowledge money had at different times been dug up in various parts of the island. The lucky persons who had discovered them had always dreamt of them three times beforehand; and what was worthy of remark, those treasures had never been found but by some descendant of the good old Dutch families, which clearly proved that they had been buried by Dutchmen in the olden time.

"Fiddlestick with your Dutchmen!" cried the half-pay officer. "The Dutch had nothing to do with them. They were all buried by Kidd the pirate, and his crew."

Here a key-note was touched which roused the whole company. The name of Captain Kidd was like a talisman in those times, and was associated with a thousand marvellous stories. The half-pay officer took the lead, and in his narrations fathered
upon Kidd all the plunderings and exploits of Morgau, Black-beard, and the whole list of bloody buccaneers.

The officer was a man of great weight among the peaceable members of the club, by reason of his warlike character and gunpowder tales. All his golden stories of Kidd, however, and of the booty he had buried, were obstinately rivalled by the tales of Peechy Prauw; who, rather than suffer his Dutch progenitors to be eclipsed by a foreign freebooter, enriched every field and shore in the neighbourhood with the hidden wealth of Peter Stuyvesant and his contemporaries.

Not a word of this conversation was lost upon Wolfert Webber. He returned pensively home, full of magnificent ideas. The soil of his native island seemed to be turned into gold-dust, and every field to teem with treasure. His head almost reeled at the thought how often he must have heedlessly rambled over places where countless sums lay scarcely covered by the turf beneath his feet. His mind was in an uproar with this whirl of new ideas. As he came in sight of the venerable mansion of his forefathers, and the little realm where the Webbers had so long and so contentedly flourished, his gorge rose at the narrowness of his destiny.

"Unlucky Wolfert!" exclaimed he. "Others can go to bed and dream themselves into whole mines of wealth; they have but to seize a spade in the morning, and turn up doubloons like potatoes; but thou must dream of hardship and rise to poverty. must dig thy fields from year's end to year's end, and yet raise nothing but cabbages!"

Wolfert Webber went to bed with a heavy heart, and it was long before the golden visions that disturbed his brain permitted him to sink into repose. The same visions, however, extended into his sleeping thoughts, and assumed a more definite form. He dreamt that he had discovered an immense treasure in the centre of his garden. At every stroke of the spade he laid bare a golden ingot: diamond crosses sparkled out of the dust; bags of money turned up their bellies, corpulent with pieces of eight or venerable doubloons; and chests wedged close with moidores, ducats, and pistareens, yawned before his ravished eyes, and vomited forth their glittering contents.

Wolfert awoke a poorer man than ever. He had no heart to go about his daily concerns, which appeared so paltry and profitless, but sat all day long in the chimney corner, picturing to himself ingots and heaps of gold in the fire.
The next night his dream was repeated. He was again in his garden, digging, and laying open stores of hidden wealth. There was something very singular in this repetition. He passed another day of reverie; and though it was cleaning day, and the house, as usual in Dutch households, completely topsy-turvy, yet he sat unmoved amidst the general uproar.

The third night he went to bed with a palpitating heart. He put on his red night-cap, wrong side outwards, for good luck. It was deep midnight before his anxious mind could settle itself into sleep. Again the golden dream was repeated, and again he saw his garden teeming with ingots and money-bags.

Wolfert rose the next morning in complete bewilderment. A dream, three times repeated, was never known to lie, and if so, his fortune was made. In his agitation, he put on his waistcoat with the bind part before, and this was a corroboration of good luck. He no longer doubted that a huge store of money lay buried somewhere in his cabbage-field, coyly waiting to be sought for; and he repined at having so long been scratching about the surface of the soil instead of digging to the centre. He took his seat at the breakfast-table, full of these speculations; asked his daughter to put a lump of gold into his tea; and on handing his wife a plate of slap-jacks, begged her to help herself to a doubloon.

His grand care now was, how to secure this immense treasure without its being known. Instead of working regularly in his grounds in the day-time, he now stole from his bed at night, and, with spade and pick-axe, went to work to rip up and dig about his paternal acres from one end to the other. In a little time the whole garden, which had presented such a goodly and regular appearance, with its phalanx of cabbages, like a vegetable army in battle array, was reduced to a scene of devastation; while the relentless Wolfert, with night-cap on head, and lantern and spade in hand, stalked through the slaughtered ranks, the destroying angel of his own vegetable world.

Every morning bore testimony to the ravages of the preceding night, in cabbages of all ages and conditions, from the tender sprout to the full-grown head, piteously rooted from their quiet beds, like worthless weeds, and left to wither in the sunshine. It was in vain Wolfert’s wife remonstrated; it was in vain his darling daughter wept over the destruction of some favourite marigold. “Thou shalt have gold of another guess sort,” he would cry, chuckling her under the chin. “Thou shalt have a string of crooked ducats for thy wedding necklace, my child!”
His family began really to fear that the poor man's wits were diseased. He muttered in his sleep at night about mines of wealth; about pearls and diamonds, and bars of gold. In the daytime he was moody and abstracted, and walked about as if in a trance. Dame Webber held frequent councils with all the old women of the neighbourhood. Scarce an hour in the day but a knot of them might be seen, wagging their white caps together round her door, while the poor woman made some piteous recital. The daughter, too, was fain to seek for more frequent consolation from the stolen interviews of her favoured swain, Dirk Waldron. The delectable little Dutch songs with which she used to dulcify the house grew less and less frequent, and she would forget her sewing, and look wistfully in her father's face as he sat pondering by the fireside. Wolfert caught her eye one day fixed on him thus anxiously, and for a moment was roused from his golden reveries. "Cheer up, my girl," said he, exultingly; "why dost thou droop? Thou shalt hold up thy head one day with the Brinkerhoffs and the Schermerhorns, the Van Hornes and the Van Dams—By St. Nicholas, but the Patroon himself shall be glad to get thee for his son!"

Amy shook her head at this vainglorious boast, and was more than ever in doubt of the soundness of the good man's intellect.

In the mean time, Wolfert went on digging and digging; but the field was extensive, and as his dream had indicated no precise spot, he had to dig at random. The winter set in before one-tenth of the scene of promise had been explored. The ground became frozen hard, and the nights too cold for the labours of the spade. No sooner, however, did the returning warmth of spring loosen the soil, and the small frogs begin to pipe in the meadows, but Wolfert resumed his labours with renovated zeal. Still, however, the hours of industry were reversed. Instead of working cheerily all day, planting and setting out his vegetables, he remained thoughtfully idle, until the shades of night summoned him to his secret labours. In this way he continued to dig, from night to night, and week to week, and month to month, but not a stiver did he find. On the contrary, the more he digged the poorer he grew. The rich soil of his garden was digged away, and the sand and gravel from beneath were thrown to the surface, until the whole field presented an aspect of sandy barrenness.

In the mean time the seasons gradually rolled on. The little frogs which had piped in the meadows in early spring croaked as
bull-frogs during the summer heats, and then sunk into silence. The peach-tree budded, blossomed, and bore its fruit. The swallows and martins came, twittered about the roof, built their nests, reared their young, held their congress along the eaves, and then winged their flight in search of another spring. The caterpillar spun its winding sheet, dangled in it from the great buttonwood tree before the house, turned into a moth, fluttered with the last sunshine of summer, and disappeared; and, finally, the leaves of the buttonwood tree turned yellow, then brown, then rustled one by one to the ground, and whirling about in little eddies of wind and dust, whispered that winter was at hand.

Wolfert gradually woke from his dream of wealth as the year declined. He had reared no crop for the supply of his household during the sterility of winter. The season was long and severe, and, for the first time, the family was really straitened in its comforts. By degrees a revulsion of thought took place in Wolfert's mind, common to those whose golden dreams have been disturbed by pinching realities. The idea gradually stole upon him that he should come to want. He already considered himself one of the most unfortunate men in the province, having lost such an incalculable amount of undiscovered treasure; and now, when thousands of pounds had eluded his search, to be perplexed for shillings and pence was cruel in the extreme.

Haggard care gathered about his brow; he went about with a money-seeking air; his eyes bent downwards into the dust, and carrying his hands in his pockets, as men are apt to do when they have nothing else to put into them. He could not even pass the city almshouse without giving it a rueful glance, as if destined to be his future abode. The strangeness of his conduct and of his looks occasioned much speculation and remark. For a long time he was suspected of being crazy, and then everybody pitied him; at length it began to be suspected that he was poor, and then everybody avoided him.

The rich old burghers of his acquaintance met him outside of the door when he called; entertained him hospitably on the threshold; pressed him warmly by the hand on parting; shook their heads as he walked away, with the kindhearted expression of "Poor Wolfert!" and turned a corner nimbly, if by chance they saw him approaching as they walked the streets. Even the barber and cobbler of the neighbourhood, and a tattered tailor in an alley hard by, three of the poorest and merriest rogues in the world, eyed him with that abundant sympathy
which usually attends a lack of means; and there is not a
doubt but their pockets would have been at his command, only
that they happened to be empty.

Thus everybody deserted the Webber mansion, as if poverty
were contagious, like the plague; everybody but honest Dirk
Waldron, who still kept up his stolen visits to the daughter,
and, indeed, seemed to wax more affectionate as the fortunes of
his mistress were in the wane.

Many months had elapsed since Wolfert had frequented his
old resort, the rural inn. He was taking a long, lonely walk
one Saturday afternoon, musing over his wants and disappoint­
ments, when his feet took, instinctively, their wonted direction,
and, on awaking out of a reverie, he found himself before the
doors of the inn. For some moments he hesitated whether to
enter, but his heart yearned for companionship; and where can
a ruined man find better companionship than at a tavern, where
there is neither sober example nor sober advice to put him out
of countenance?

Wolfert found several of the old frequenters of the tavern at
their usual posts, and seated in their usual places; but one was
missing, the great Ramm Rapelye, who for many years had
filled the leather-bottomed chair of state. His place was sup­
plied by a stranger, who seemed, however, completely at home
in the chair and the tavern. He was rather under size, but
deep-chested, square, and muscular. His broad shoulders,
double joints, and bow knees, gave tokens of prodigious strength.
His face was dark and weatherbeaten; a deep scar, as if from
the slash of a cutlass, had almost divided his nose, and made a
gash in his upper lip, through which his teeth shone like a bull–
dog's. A mop of iron-grey hair gave a grizzly finish to his
hard-favoured visage. His dress was of an amphibious cha­
acter. He wore an old hat edged with tarnished lace, and
cocked in martial style on one side of his head; a rusty blue
military coat with brass buttons, and a wide pair of short petti­
coat trousers, or rather breeches, for they were gathered up at
the knees. He ordered everybody about him with an authori­
tat ve air; talked in a brattling voice, that sounded like the
 craickling of thorns under a pot; d ——d the landlord and ser­
vants with perfect impunity; and was waited upon with greater
obsequiousness than had ever been shown to the mighty Ramm
himself.

Wolfert's curiosity was awakened to know who and what was
this stranger, who had thus usurped absolute sway in this ancient domain. Peechy Prauw took him aside, into a remote corner of the hall, and there, in an under voice, and with great caution, imparted to him all that he knew on the subject. The inn had been aroused, several months before, on a dark stormy night, by repeated long shouts, that seemed like the howlings of a wolf. They came from the waterside, and at length were distinguished to be hailing the house in the seafaring manner — House-a-hoy! The landlord turned out with his headwaiter, tapster, ostler, and errand-boy—that is to say, with his old negro, Cuff. On approaching the place from whence the voice proceeded, they found this amphibious-looking personage at the water's edge, quite alone, and seated on a great oaken sea-chest. How he came there; whether he had been set on shore from some boat, or had floated to land on his chest, nobody could tell, for he did not seem disposed to answer questions; and there was something in his looks and manners that put a stop to all questioning. Suffice it to say, he took possession of a corner room of the inn, to which his chest was removed with great difficulty. Here he had remained ever since, keeping about the inn and its vicinity; sometimes, it is true, he disappeared for one, two, or three days at a time, going and returning without giving any notice or account of his movements. He always appeared to have plenty of money, though often of very strange, outlandish coinage; and he regularly paid his bill every evening before turning in. He had fitted up his room to his own fancy, having slung a hammock from the ceiling instead of a bed, and decorated the walls with rusty pistols and cutlasses of foreign workmanship. A great part of his time was passed in this room, seated by the window, which commanded a wide view of the Sound, a short, odd-fashioned pipe in his mouth, a glass of rum-toddy at his elbow, and a pocket-telescope in his hand, with which he reconnoitred every boat that moved upon the water. Large square-rigged vessels seemed to excite but little attention, but the moment he descried anything with a shoulder-of-mutton sail, or that a barge, yawl, or jolly-boat hove in sight, up went the telescope, and he examined it with the most scrupulous attention.

All this might have passed without much notice, for in those times the province was so much the resort of adventurers of all characters and climes, that any oddity in dress or behaviour attracted but small attention. In a little while, however, this
strange sea-monster, thus strangely cast upon dry land, began
to encroach upon the long established customs and customers of
the place, and to interfere, in a dictatorial manner, in the affairs
of the ninepin-alley and the bar-room, until in the end he
usurped an absolute command over the whole inn. It was all
in vain to attempt to withstand his authority. He was not
exactly quarrelsome, but boisterous and peremptory, like one
accustomed to tyrannise on a quarter-deck; and there was a
dare-devil air about everything he said and did, that inspired a
wariness in all bystanders. Even the half-pay officer, so long
the hero of the club, was soon silenced by him; and the quiet
burghers stared with wonder at seeing their inflammable man
of war so readily and quietly extinguished. And then the
tales that he would tell were enough to make a peaceable man’s
hair stand on end. There was not a sea-fight, or marauding
or freebooting adventure that had happened within the last
twenty years, but he seemed perfectly versed in it. He de-
lighted to talk of the exploits of the buccaneers in the West
Indies and on the Spanish Main. How his eyes would glisten
as he described the waylaying of treasure-ships; the desperate
fights, yard-arm and yard-arm, broadside and broadside; the
boarding and capturing of huge Spanish galleons! With what
chuckling relish would he describe the descent upon some rich
Spanish colony; the rifling of a church; the sacking of a con-
vent! You would have thought you heard some gormandiser
dilating upon the roasting of a savoury goose at Michaelmas,
as he described the roasting of some Spanish Don to make him
discover his treasure—a detail given with a minuteness that
made every rich old burgher present turn uncomfortably in his
chair. All this would be told with infinite glee, as if he con-
sidered it an excellent joke; and then he would give such a
tyrranical leer in the face of his next neighbour, that the poor
man would be fain to laugh out of sheer faint-heartedness. If
any one, however, pretended to contradict him in any of his
stories, he was on fire in an instant. His very
cocked hat assumed a momentary fierceness, and seemed to resent the con-
tradiction. “How the devil should you know as well as I?—
I tell you it was as I say;” and he would at the same time
let slip a broadside of thundering oaths and tremendous sea-
phrases, such as had never been heard before within these
peaceful walls.

Indeed, the worthy burghers began to surmise that he klew
more of these stories than mere hearsay. Day after day their conjectures concerning him grew more and more wild and fearful. The strangeness of his arrival, the strangeness of his manners, the mystery that surrounded him, all made him something incomprehensible in their eyes. He was a kind of monster of the deep to them—he was a merman—he was Behemoth—he was Leviathan—in short, they knew not what he was.

The domineering spirit of this boisterous sea-urchin at length grew quite intolerable. He was no respecter of persons; he contradicted the richest burghers without hesitation; he took possession of the sacred elbow-chair which, time out of mind, had been the seat of sovereignty of the illustrious Ramm Rapelye;—nay, he even went so far in one of his rough jocular moods, as to slap that mighty burgher on the back, drink his toddy, and wink in his face—a thing scarcely to be believed. From this time Ramm Rapelye appeared no more at the inn and his example was followed by several of the most eminent customers, who were too rich to tolerate being bullied out of their opinions, or being obliged to laugh at another man's jokes. The landlord was almost in despair; but he knew not how to get rid of this sea-monster and his sea-chest, who seemed both to have grown like fixtures or excrescences on his establishment. Such was the account whispered cautiously in Wolfert's ear by the narrator, Peechy Prawu, as he held him by the button in a corner of the hall, casting a wary glance now and then towards the door of the bar-room, lest he should be overheard by the terrible hero of his tale.

Wolfert took his seat in a remote part of the room in silence, impressed with profound awe of this unknown, so versed in freebooting history. It was to him a wonderful instance of the revolutions of mighty empires, to find the venerable Ramm Rapelye thus ousted from the throne, and a rugged tarpauling dictating from his elbow-chair, hectoring the patriarchs, and filling this tranquil little realm with brawl and bravado.

The stranger was, on this evening, in a more than usually communicative mood, and was narrating a number of astounding stories of plunderings and burnings upon the high seas. He dwelt upon them with peculiar relish; heightening the frightful particulars in proportion to their effect on his peaceful auditors. He gave a long swaggering detail of the capture of a Spanish merchantman. She was lying becalmed during a
long summer's day, just off from an island which was one of the lurking-places of the pirates. They had reconnoitred her with their spy-glasses from the shore, and ascertained her character and force. At night a picked crew of daring fellows set off for her in a whale-boat. They approached with muffled oars, as she lay rocking idly with the undulations of the sea, and her sails flapping against the masts. They were close under her stern before the guard on deck was aware of their approach. The alarm was given; the pirates threw hand grenades on deck, and sprang up the main chains sword in hand. The crew flew to arms, but in great confusion; some were shot down, others took refuge in the tops, others were driven overboard and drowned, while others fought hand to hand from the main-deck to the quarter-deck, disputing gallantly every inch of ground. There were three Spanish gentlemen on board with their ladies, who made the most desperate resistance. They defended the companion-way, cut down several of their assailants, and fought like very devils, for they were maddened by the shrieks of the ladies from the cabin. One of the Dons was old, and soon despatched. The other two kept their ground vigorously, even though the captain of the pirates was among their assailants. Just then there was a shout of victory from the main-deck—"The ship is ours!" cried the pirates. One of the Dons immediately dropped his sword and surrendered; the other, who was a hot-headed youngster, and just married, gave the captain a slash in the face that laid all open.

The captain just made out to articulate the words "no quarter!"—"And what did they do with the prisoners?" said Peechey Prauw, eagerly.—"Threw them all overboard!" was the answer. A dead pause followed this reply. Peechey Prauw shrunk quietly back, like a man who had unwarily stolen upon the lair of a sleeping lion. The honest burghers cast fearful glances at the deep scar slashed across the visage of the stranger, and moved their chairs a little farther off. The seaman, however, smoked on, without moving a muscle, as though he either did not perceive, or did not regard the unfavourable effect he had produced on his hearers.

The half-pay officer was the first to break the silence, for he was continually tempted to make ineffectual head against this tyrant of the seas, and to regain his lost consequence in the eyes of his ancient companions. He now tried to match the gunpowder tales of the stranger by others equally tremendous.
Kidd, as usual, was his hero, concerning whom he seemed to have picked up many of the floating traditions of the province. The seaman had always evinced a settled pique against the one-eyed warrior. On this occasion he listened with peculiar impatience. He sat with one arm a-kimbo, the other elbow on a table, the hand holding on to the small pipe he was pettishly puffing; his legs crossed; drumming with one foot on the ground, and casting every now and then the side glance of a basilisk at the prosing captain. At length the latter spoke of Kidd’s having ascended the Hudson with some of his crew, to land his plunder in secrecy. “Kidd up the Hudson!” burst forth the seaman, with a tremendous oath—“Kidd never was up the Hudson!”

“I tell you he was,” said the other. “Ay, and they say he buried a quantity of treasure on the little flat that runs out into the river, called The Devil’s Dans Kammer.”—“The Devil’s Dans Kammer in your teeth!” cried the seaman. “I tell you Kidd never was up the Hudson. What a plague do you know of Kidd and his haunts?”—“What do I know?” echoed the half-pay officer. “Why, I was in London at the time of his trial; ay, and I had the pleasure of seeing him hanged at Execution Dock.”—“Then, sir, let me tell you, that you saw as pretty a fellow hanged as ever trod shoe-leather. Ay!” putting his face nearer to that of the officer, “and there was many a land-lubber looked on that might much better have swung in his stead.”

The half-pay officer was silenced; but the indignation thus pent up in his bosom glowed with intense vehemence in his single eye, which kindled like a coal. Peechy Prauw, who never could remain silent, observed that the gentleman certainly was in the right. Kidd never did bury money up the Hudson, nor indeed in any of those parts, though many affirmed such to be the fact. It was Bradish and others of the buccaneers who had buried money; some said in Turtle Bay; others on Long Island; others in the neighbourhood of Hell-gate. Indeed, added he, I recollect an adventure of Sam, the negro fisherman, many years ago, which some think had something do with the buccaneers. As we are all friends here, and as it will go no further, I’ll tell it to you. “Upon a dark night, many years ago, as Black Sam was returning from fishing in Hell-gate—”

Here the story was nipped in the bud by a sudden move-
ment from the unknown, who, laying his iron fist on the table, knuckles downward, with a quiet force that indented the very boards, and looking grimly over his shoulder, with the grin of an angry bear—

"Hark'ee, neighbour!" said he, with significant nodding of the head. "You'd better let the buccaneers and their money alone—they're not for old men and old women to meddle with. They fought hard for their money; they gave body and soul for it; and wherever it lies buried, depend upon it he must have a tug with the devil who gets it!"

This sudden explosion was succeeded by a blank silence throughout the room; Pecchy Prauw shrunk within himself, and even the one-eyed officer turned pale. Wolfert, who from a dark corner in the room had listened with intense eagerness to all this talk about buried treasure, looked with mingled awe and reverence at this bold buccaneer, for such he really suspected him to be. There was a chinking of gold and a sparking of jewels in all his stories about the Spanish Main that gave a value to every period; and Wolfert would have given anything for the rummaging of the ponderous sea-chest, which his imagination crammed full of golden chalices, crucifixes, and jolly round bags of doubloons.

The dead stillness that had fallen upon the company was at length interrupted by the stranger, who pulled out a prodigious watch, of curious and ancient workmanship, and which, in Wolfert's eyes, had a decidedly Spanish look. On touching a spring, it struck ten o'clock; upon which the sailor called for his reckoning, and having paid it out of a handful of outlandish coin, he drank off the remainder of his beverage, and without taking leave of any one, rolled out of the room, muttering to himself, as he stumped up stairs to his chamber.

It was some time before the company could recover from the silence into which they had been thrown. The very footsteps of the stranger, which were heard now and then as he traversed his chamber, inspired awe. Still the conversation in which they had been engaged was too interesting not to be resumed. A heavy thunder-gust had gathered up unnoticed while they were lost in talk, and the torrents of rain that fell forbade all thoughts of setting off for home until the storm should subside. They drew nearer together, therefore, and entreated the worthy Pecchy Prauw to continue the tale which had been so discourteously interrupted. He readily complied, whispering, how-
ever, in a tone scarcely above his breath, and drowned occasion-ally by the rolling of the thunder; and he would pause every now and then, and listen with evident awe, as he heard the heavy footsteps of the stranger pacing overhead. The follow-ling is the purport of his story.

THE ADVENTURE OF THE BLACK FISHERMAN.

Every body knows Black Sam, the old negro fisherman, or, as he is commonly called, Mud Sam, who has fished about the Sound for the last half century. It is now many, many years since Sam, who was then as active a young negro as any in the province, and worked on the farm of Killian Suydam, on Long Island, having finished his day's work at an early hour, was fishing, one still summer evening, just about the neighbourhood of Hell-gate.

He was in a light skiff, and being well acquainted with the currents and eddies, he had shifted his station, according to the shifting of the tide, from the Hen and Chickens to the Hog's Back, from the Hog's Back to the Pot, and from the Pot to the Frying-pan; but in the eagerness of his sport he did not see that the tide was rapidly ebbing, until the roaring of the whirl-pools and eddies warned him of his danger; and he had some difficulty in shooting his skiff from among the rocks and breakers, and getting to the point of Blackwell's Island. Here he cast anchor for some time, waiting the turn of the tide to enable him to return homewards. As the night set in, it grew blustering and gusty. Dark clouds came brindling up in the west, and now and then a growl of thunder, or a flash of lightning, told that a summer storm was at hand. Sam pulled over, therefore, under the lee of Manhattan Island, and, coasting along, came to a snug nook, just under a steep beetling rock, where he fastened his skiff to the root of a tree that shot out from a cleft in the rock, and spread its broad branches, like a canopy, over the water. The gust came scouring along; the wind threw up the river in white surges; the rain rattled among the leaves; the thunder bellowed worse than that which is now bellowing; the lightning seemed to lick up the surges of the stream; but Sam, snugly sheltered under rock and tree, lay crouched in his skiff, rocking upon the willows until he fell asleep.

When he awoke, all was quiet. The gust had passed away, and only now and then a faint gleam of lightning in the east
showed which way it had gone. The night was dark and moonless; and from the state of the tide Sam concluded it was near midnight. He was on the point of making loose his skiff to return homewards, when he saw a light gleaming along the water from a distance, which seemed rapidly approaching. As it drew near, he perceived it came from a lantern in the bow of a boat, which was gliding along under shadow of the land. It pulled up in a small cove, close to where he was. A man jumped on shore, and searching about with the lantern, exclaimed, "This is the place—here's the iron ring." The boat was then made fast, and the man returning on board, assisted his comrades in conveying something heavy on shore. As the light gleamed among them, Sam saw that they were five stout desperate-looking fellows, in red woollen caps, with a leader in a three-cornered hat, and that some of them were armed with dirks, or long knives and pistols. They talked low to one another, and occasionally in some outlandish tongue, which he could not understand.

On landing, they made their way among the bushes, taking turns to relieve each other in lugging their burden up the rocky bank. Sam's curiosity was now fully aroused; so, leaving his skiff, he clambered silently up a ridge that overlooked their path. They had stopped to rest for a moment; and the leader was looking about among the bushes with his lantern.—"Have you brought the spades?" said one.—"They are here," replied another, who had them on his shoulder.—"We must dig deep, where there will be no risk of discovery," said a third.

A cold chill ran through Sam's veins. He fancied he saw before him a gang of murderers about to bury their victim. His knees smote together. In his agitation he shook the branch of a tree with which he was supporting himself, as he looked over the edge of the cliff.—"What's that?" cried one of the gang. "Some one stirs among the bushes!"

The lantern was held up in the direction of the noise. One of the red-caps cocked a pistol, and pointed it towards the very place where Sam was standing. He stood motionless—breathless—expecting the next moment to be his last. Fortunately, his dingy complexion was in his favour, and made no glare among the leaves.—"'Tis no one," said the man with the lantern. "What, a plague! you would not fire off your pistol and alarm the country?"

The pistol was uncocked, the burden was resumed, and the
party slowly toiled along the bank. Sam watched them as they went, the light sending back fitful gleams through the dripping bushes; and it was not till they were fairly out of sight that he ventured to draw breath freely. He now thought of getting back to his boat, and making his escape out of the reach of such dangerous neighbours; but curiosity was all-powerful. He hesitated, and lingered, and listened. By and by he heard the strokes of spades. "They are digging the grave!" said he to himself, and the cold sweat started upon his forehead. Every stroke of a spade, as it sounded through the silent groves, went to his heart; it was evident there was as little noise made as possible; everything had an air of terrible mystery and secrecy. Sam had a great relish for the horrible—a tale of murder was a treat for him, and he was a constant attendant at executions. He could not resist an impulse, in spite of every danger, to steal nearer to the scene of mystery, and overlook the midnight fellows at their work. He crawled along cautiously, therefore, inch by inch, stepping with the utmost care among the dry leaves, lest their rustling should betray him. He came at length to where a steep rock intervened between him and the gang; for he saw the light of their lantern shining up against the branches of the trees on the other side. Sam slowly and silently clambered up the surface of the rock, and raising his head above its naked edge, beheld the villains immediately below him and so near, that though he dreaded discovery, he dared not withdraw, lest the least movement should be heard. In this way he remained, with his round black face peering above the edge of the rock, like the sun just emerging above the edge of the horizon, or the round-cheeked moon on the dial of a clock.

The red-caps had nearly finished their work; the grave was filled up, and they were carefully replacing the turf. This done, they scattered dry leaves over the place. "And now," said the leader, "I defy the devil himself to find it out!"

"The murderers!" exclaimed Sam, involuntarily. The whole gang started, and looking up, beheld the round black head of Sam just above them; his white eyes strained half out of their orbits, his white teeth chattering, and his whole visage shining with cold perspiration.—"We're discovered!" cried one. —"Down with him!" cried another.

Sam heard the cocking of a pistol, but did not pause for the report. He scrambled over rock and stone, through bush and briar; rolled down banks like a hedgehog; scrambled up others
like a catamount. In every direction he heard some one or other of the gang hemming him in. At length he reached the rocky ridge along the river: one of the red-caps was hard behind him. A steep rock like a wall rose directly in his way; it seemed to cut off all retreat, when, fortunately, he espied the strong cord-like branch of a grape-vine reaching half way down it. He sprang at it with the force of a desperate man, seized it with both hands, and, being young and agile, succeeded in swinging himself to the summit of the cliff. Here he stood in full relief against the sky, when the red-cap cocked his pistol and fired. The ball whistled by Sam's head. With the lucky thought of a man in an emergency, he uttered a yell, fell to the ground, and detached at the same time a fragment of the rock, which tumbled with a loud splash into the river.

"I've done his business," said the red-cap to one or two of his comrades, as they arrived panting; "he'll tell no tales, except to the fishes in the river."

His pursuers now turned off to meet their companions. Sam, sliding silently down the surface of the rock, let himself quietly into his skiff, cast loose the fastening, and abandoned himself to the rapid current, which in that place runs like a mill-stream, and soon swept him off from the neighbourhood. It was not, however, until he had drifted a great distance that he ventured to ply his oars; when he made his skiff dart like an arrow through the strait of Hell-gate, never heeding the danger of Pot, Frying-pan, or Hog's Back itself; nor did he feel himself thoroughly secure until safely nestled in bed in the cockloft of the ancient farm-house of the Suydams.

Here the worthy Peechy Prauw paused to take breath, and to take a sip of the gossip tankard that stood at his elbow. His auditors remained with open mouths and outstretched necks, gaping like a nest of swallows for an additional mouthful.—"And is that all?" exclaimed the half-pay officer.—"That's all that belongs to the story," said Peechy Prauw.—"And did Sam never find out what was buried by the red-caps?" said Wolfert, eagerly, whose mind was haunted with nothing but ingots and doubloons.—"Not that I know of," said Peechy; "he had no time to spare from his work, and, to tell the truth, he did not like to run the risk of another race among the rocks. Besides, how should he recollect the spot where the grave had been digged, everything would look so different by daylight. And then, where was the use of looking for a dead body, when there was
no chance of hanging the murderers?"—"Ay, but are you sure it was a dead body they buried?" said Wolfert.—"To be sure," cried Peechy Prauw, exultingly. "Does it not haunt in the neighbourhood to this very day?"—"Haunts!" exclaimed several of the party, opening their eyes still wider, and edging their chairs still closer.—"Ay, haunts," repeated Peechy: "have none of you heard of father Red-cap, that haunts the old burnt farm-house in the woods, on the border of the Sound, near Hel­legate?"—"Oh! to be sure, I've heard tell of something of the kind: but then I took it for some old wives' fable."—"Old wives' fable or not," said Peechy Prauw, "that farm-house stands hard by the very spot. It's been unoccupied time out of mind, and stands in a lonely part of the coast; but those who fish in the neighbourhood have often heard strange noises there; and lights have been seen about the wood at night; and an old fellow in a red cap has been seen at the windows more than once, which people take to be the ghost of the body that was buried there. Once upon a time three soldiers took shelter in the building for the night, and rummaged it from top to bottom, when they found old father Red-cap astride of a cider-barrel in the cellar, with a jug in one hand and a goblet in the other. He offered them a drink out of his goblet; but just as one of the soldiers was putting it to his mouth—whew!—a flash of fire blazed through the cellar; blinded every mother's son of them for several minutes, and when they recovered their eyesight, jug, goblet, and red-cap, had vanished, and nothing but the empty cider barrel remained!"

Here the half-pay officer, who was growing very muzzy and sleepy, and nodding over his liquor, with half-extinguished eye, suddenly gleamed up, like an expiring rushlight.—"That's all fudge!" said he, as Peechy finished his last story.—"Well, I don't vouch for the truth of it myself," said Peechy Prauw, "though all the world knows that there's something strange about that house and ground; but as to the story of Mud Sam, I believe it just as well as if it had happened to myself."

The deep interest taken in this conversation by the company had made them unconscious of the uproar that prevailed abroad among the elements, when suddenly they were all electrified by a tremendous clap of thunder; a lumbering crash followed instantaneously, shaking the building to its very foundation—all started from their seats, imagining it the shock of an earth
quake, or that old father Red-cap was coming among them in all his terrors. They listened for a moment, but only heard the rain pelting against the windows, and the wind howling among the trees. The explosion was soon explained by the apparition of an old negro's bald head thrust in at the door, his white goggle eyes contrasting with his jetty poll, which was wet with rain, and shone like a bottle. In a jargon but half intelligible, he announced that the kitchen chimney had been struck with lightning.

A sullen pause of the storm, which now rose and sunk in gusts, produced a momentary stillness. In this interval, the report of a musket was heard, and a long shout, almost like a yell, resounded from the shore. Every one crowded to the window. Another musket-shot was heard, and another long shout, that mingled wildly with a rising blast of wind. It seemed as if the cry came up from the bosom of the waters; for though incessant flashes of lightning spread a light about the shore, no one was to be seen.

Suddenly the window of the room overhead was opened, and a loud halloo uttered by the mysterious stranger. Several hailings passed from one party to the other, but in a language which none of the company in the bar-room could understand; and presently they heard the window closed, and a great noise overhead, as if all the furniture were pulled and hauled about the room. The negro servant was summoned, and shortly after was seen assisting the veteran to lug the ponderous sea-chest down stairs.

The landlord was in amazement.—"What!—you are not going on the water in such a storm?"—"Storm!" said the other, scornfully; "do you call such a sputter of weather a storm?"—"You'll get drenched to the skin—you'll catch your death!" said Peechy Praw, affectionately.—"Thunder and lightning!" exclaimed the merman, "don't preach about weather to a man that has cruised in whirlwinds and tornadoes!"

The obsequious Peechy was again struck dumb. The voice from the water was heard once more, in a tone of impatience. The bystanders stared with redoubled awe at this man of storms, who seemed to have come up out of the deep, and to be summoned back to it again. As, with the assistance of the negro, he slowly bore his ponderous sea-chest towards the shore, they eyed it with a superstitious feeling, half doubting whether he were not really about to embark upon it, and launch forth upon the wild waves. They followed him at a distance with a lantern.
“Dowse the light!” roared the hoarse voice from the water—
“no one wants lights here!”—“Thunder and lightning!” exclaimed the veteran, turning short upon them; “back to the house with you!”

Wolfert and his companions shrunk back in dismay. Still their curiosity would not allow them entirely to withdraw. A long sheet of lightning now flickered across the waves, and discovered a boat, filled with men, just under a rocky point, rising and sinking with the heaving surges, and swashing the water at every heave. It was with difficulty held to the rocks by a boat-hook, for the current rushed furiously round the point. The veteran hoisted one end of the lumbering sea-chest on the gunwale of the boat; he seized the handle at the other end to lift it in, when the motion propelled the boat from the shore; the chest slipped off from the gunwale, and sinking into the waves, pulled the veteran headlong after it. A loud shriek was uttered by all on shore, and a volley of execrations by those on board—but boat and man were hurried away by the rushing swiftness of the tide. A pitchy darkness succeeded; Wolfert Webber, indeed, fancied that he distinguished a cry for help, and that he beheld the drowning man beckoning for assistance; but when the lightning again gleamed along the water, all was void; neither man nor boat were to be seen; nothing but the dashing and weltering of the waves as they hurried past.

The company returned to the tavern to await the subsiding of the storm. They resumed their seats, and gazed on each other with dismay. The whole transaction had not occupied five minutes, and not a dozen words had been spoken. When they looked at the oaken chair, they could scarcely realise the fact that the strange being, who had so lately tenanted it, full of life and herculean vigour, should already be a corpse. There was the very glass he had just drunk from; there lay the ashes from the pipe which he had smoked, as it were, with his last breath. As the worthy burghers pondered on these things, they felt a terrible conviction of the uncertainty of existence, and each felt as if the ground on which he stood was rendered less stable by this awful example.

As, however, the most of the company were possessed of that valuable philosophy which enables a man to bear up with fortitude against the misfortunes of his neighbours, they soon managed to console themselves for the tragic end of the veteran. The landlord was particularly happy that the poor dear man
had paid his reckoning before he went; and made a kind of farewell speech on the occasion. "He came," said he, "in a storm, and he went in a storm—he came in the night, and he went in the night—he came nobody knows from whence, and he has gone nobody knows where. For aught I know, he has gone to sea once more on his chest, and may land to bother some people on the other side of the world! Though it's a thousand pities," added he, "if he has gone to Davy Jones's locker, that he had not left his own locker behind him."

"His locker! St. Nicholas preserve us!" cried Peechy Prauw—"I'd not have had that sea-chest in the house for any money; I'll warrant he'd come racking after it at nights, and making a haunted house of the inn; and as to his going to sea in his chest, I recollect what happened to Skipper Onderdonk's ship, on his voyage from Amsterdam. The boatswain died during a storm, so they wrapped him up in a sheet, and put him in his own sea-chest, and threw him overboard; but they neglected, in their hurry scurry, to say prayers over him; and the storm raged and roared louder than ever, and they saw the dead man seated in his chest, with his shroud for a sail, coming hard after the ship, and the sea breaking before him in great sprays, like fire, and there they kept scudding day after day, and night after night, expecting every moment to go to wreck; and every night they saw the dead boatswain, in his sea-chest, trying to get up with them, and they heard his whistle above the blasts of wind, and he seemed to send great seas, mountain high, after them, that would have swamped the ship if they had not put up the dead lights; and so it went on till they lost sight of him in the fogs of Newfoundland, and supposed he had veered ship, and stood for Dead Man's Isle. So much for burying a man at sea without saying prayers over him."

The thunder-gust which had hitherto detained the company was at an end. The cuckoo clock in the hall told midnight; every one pressed to depart, for seldom was such a late hour of the night trespassed on by these quiet burghers. As they sal­lied forth, they found the heavens once more serene. The storm which had lately obscured them had rolled away, and lay piled up in fleecy masses on the horizon, lighted up by the bright crescent of the moon, which looked like a little silver lamp hung up in a palace of clouds.

The dismal occurrence of the night, and the dismal narrations they had made, had left a superstitious feeling in every mind.
They cast a fearful glance at the spot where the buccaneer had disappeared, almost expecting to see him sailing on his chest in the cool moonshine. The trembling rays glittered along the waters, but all was placid; and the current dimpled over the spot where he had gone down. The party huddled together in a little crowd as they repaired homewards, particularly when they passed a lonely field where a man had been murdered; and even the sexton, who had to complete his journey alone, though accustomed, one would think, to ghosts and goblins, yet went a long way round, rather than pass by his own churchyard.

Wolfert Webber had now carried home a fresh stock of stories and notions to ruminate upon. These accounts of pots of money and Spanish treasures, buried here and there and everywhere about the rocks and bays of these wild shores, made him almost dizzy. “Blessed St. Nicholas!” ejaculated he, half aloud, “is it not possible to come upon one of these golden hoards, and to make oneself rich in a twinkling? How hard that I must go on, delving and delving, day in and day out, merely to make a morsel of bread, when one lucky stroke of a spade might enable me to ride in my carriage for the rest of my life.”

As he turned over in his thoughts all that had been told of the singular adventure of the negro fisherman, his imagination gave a totally different complexion to the tale. He saw in the gang of red-caps nothing but a crew of pirates burying their spoils, and his cupidity was once more awakened by the possibility of at length getting on the traces of some of this lurking wealth. Indeed, his infected fancy tinged everything with gold. He felt like the greedy inhabitant of Bagdad, when his eye had been greased with the magic ointment of the dervise, that gave him to see all the treasures of the earth. Caskets of buried jewels, chests of ingots, and barrels of outlandish coins, seemed to court him from their concealments, and supplicate him to relieve them from their untimely graves.

On making private inquiries about the grounds said to be haunted by father Red-cap, he was more and more confirmed in his surmise. He learned that the place had several times been visited by experienced money-diggers, who had heard Black Sam's story, though none of them had met with success. On the contrary, they had always been dogged with ill luck of some kind or other, in consequence, as Wolfert concluded, of not going to work at the proper time, and with the proper ceremonials. The last attempt had been made by Cobus Quackenbos, who
dug for a whole night, and met with incredible difficulty, for, as fast as he threw one shovelful of earth out of the hole, two were thrown in by invisible hands. He succeeded so far, however, as to uncover an iron chest, when there was a terrible roaring, a ramping and raging of uncouth figures about the hole, and at length a shower of blows dealt by invisible cudgels, that fairly belaboured him off of the forbidden ground. This Cobus Quackenbos had declared on his death-bed, so that there could not be any doubt of it. He was a man that had devoted many years of his life to money-digging, and it was thought would have ultimately succeeded, had he not died recently of a brain fever in the almshouse.

Wolfert Webber was now in a worry of trepidation and impatience, fearful lest some rival adventurer should get a scent of the buried gold. He determined privately to seek out the black fisherman, and get him to serve as guide to the place where he had witnessed the mysterious scene of interment. Sam was easily found, for he was one of those old habitual beings that live about a neighbourhood until they wear themselves a place in the public mind, and become, in a manner, public characters. There was not an unlucky urchin about town that did not know Mud Sam, the fisherman, and think that he had a right to play his tricks upon the old negro. Sam had led an amphibious life, for more than half a century, about the shores of the bay and the fishing-grounds of the Sound. He passed the greater part of his time on and in the water, particularly about Hell-gate; and might have been taken, in bad weather, for one of the hobgoblins that used to haunt that strait. There would he be seen at all times, and in all weathers; sometimes in his skiff anchored among the eddies, or prowling like a shark about some wreck, where the fish are supposed to be most abundant. Sometimes seated on a rock, from hour to hour, looking, in the mist and drizzle, like a solitary heron watching for its prey. He was well acquainted with every hole and corner of the Sound, from the Wallabout to Hell-gate, and from Hell-gate even unto the Devil's Stepping-stones and it was even affirmed that he knew all the fish in the river by their Christian names.

Wolfert found him at his cabin, which was not much larger than a tolerable dog-house. It was rudely constructed of fragments of wrecks and drift wood, and built on the rocky shore, at the foot of the old fort, just about what at present forms the point of the battery. A "most ancient and fish-like smell" per-
waded the place. Oars, paddles, and fishing-rods were leaning against the wall of the fort; a net was spread on the sands to dry; a skiff was drawn up on the beach; and at the door of his cabin was Mud Sam himself, indulging in the true negro luxury of sleeping in the sunshine.

Many years had passed away since the time of Sam's youthful adventure, and the snows of many a winter had grizzled the knotty wool upon his head. He perfectly recollected the circumstances, however, for he had often been called upon to relate them, though, in his version of the story, he differed in many points from Peechy Prauw; as is not unfrequently the case with authentic historians. As to the subsequent researches of money-diggers, Sam knew nothing about them, they were matters quite out of his line; neither did the cautious Wolfert care to disturb his thoughts on that point. His only wish was to secure the old fisherman as a pilot to the spot, and this was readily effected. The long time that had intervened since his nocturnal adventure had effaced all Sam's awe of the place, and the promise of a trifling reward roused him at once from his sleep and his sunshine.

The tide was adverse to making the expedition by water, and Wolfert was too impatient to get to the land of promise to wait for its turning; they set off, therefore, by land. A walk of four or five miles brought them to the edge of a wood, which at that time covered the greater part of the eastern side of the island. It was just beyond the pleasant region of Bloemendaal. Here they struck into a long lane, straggling among trees and bushes, very much overgrown with weeds and mullein stalks, as if but seldom used, and so completely overshadowed, as to enjoy but a kind of twilight. Wild vines entangled the trees, and flaunted in their faces; brambles and briars caught their clothes as they passed; the garter snake glided across their path; the spotted toad hopped and waddled before them; and the restless cat-bird mewed at them from every thicket. Had Wolfert Webber been deeply read in romantic legend, he might have fancied himself entering upon forbidden, enchanted ground; or that these were some of the guardians set to keep a watch upon buried treasure. As it was, the loneliness of the place, and the wild stories connected with it, had their effect upon his mind.

On reaching the lower end of the lane, they found themselves near the shore of the Sound, in a kind of amphitheatre surrounded by forest trees. The area had once been a grass-plot,
but was now shagged with briars and rank weeds. At one end, and just on the river bank, was a ruined building, little better than a heap of rubbish, with a stack of chimneys rising, like a solitary tower, out of the centre; the current of the Sound rushed along just below it, with wildly grown trees drooping their branches into its waves.

Wolfert had not a doubt that this was the haunted house of father Red-cap, and called to mind the story of Peechy Prauw. The evening was approaching, and the light, falling dubiously among these woody places, gave a melancholy tone to the scene, well calculated to foster any lurking feeling of awe or superstition. The night-hawk, wheeling about in the highest regions of the air, emitted his peevish, boding cry. The woodpecker gave a lonely tap now and then on some hollow tree, and the fire-bird* streamed by them with his deep red plumage. They now came to an enclosure that had once been a garden. It extended along the foot of a rocky ridge, but was little better than a wilderness of weeds, with here and there a matted rose-bush, or a peach or plum-tree, grown wild and ragged, and covered with moss. At the lower end of the garden they passed a kind of vault in the side of a bank, facing the water. It had the look of a root-house. The door, though decayed, was still strong, and appeared to have been recently patched up. Wolfert pushed it open. It gave a harsh grating upon its hinges, and striking against something like a box, a rattling sound ensued, and a skull rolled on the floor. Wolfert drew back shuddering, but was reassured, on being informed by the negro that this was a family vault belonging to one of the old Dutch families that owned this estate; an assertion which was corroborated by the sight of coffins of various sizes piled within. Sam had been familiar with all these scenes when a boy, and now knew that he could not be far from the place of which they were in quest.

They now made their way to the water's edge, scrambling along ledges of rocks that overhung the waves, and obliged often to hold by shrubs and grape-vines to avoid slipping into the deep and hurried stream. At length they came to a small cove, or rather indent of the shore. It was protected by steep rocks, and overshadowed by a thick copse of oaks and chestnuts, so as to be sheltered and almost concealed. The beach shelved gradually within the cove, but the current swept, deep and black and rapid along its jutting points.

* Orchard orcoa.
The negro paused; raised his remnant of a hat, and scratched his grizzled poll for a moment, as he regarded this nook: then suddenly clapping his hands, he stepped exultingly forward, and pointed to a large iron ring, stapled firmly in the rock, just where a broad shelf of stone furnished a commodious landing-place. It was the very spot where the red-caps had landed. Years had changed the more perishable features of the scene; but rock and iron yield slowly to the influence of time. On looking more closely, Wolfert remarked three crosses cut in the rock just above the ring; which had no doubt some mysterious signification.

Old Sam now readily recognised the overhanging rock under which his skiff had been sheltered during the thunder-gust. To follow up the course which the midnight gang had taken, however, was a harder task. His mind had been so much taken up on that eventful occasion by the persons of the drama, as to pay but little attention to the scenes; and these places look so different by night and day. After wandering about for some time, however, they came to an opening among the trees, which Sam thought resembled the place. There was a ledge of rock of moderate height, like a wall, on one side, which he thought might be the very ridge from whence he had overlooked the diggers. Wolfert examined it narrowly, and at length discovered three crosses, similar to those above the iron ring, cut deeply into the face of the rock, but nearly obliterated by the moss that had grown over them. His heart leaped with joy, for he doubted not they were the private marks of the buccaneers. All now that remained was to ascertain the precise spot where the treasure lay buried, for otherwise he might dig at random in the neighbourhood of the crosses, without coming upon the spoils, and he had already had enough of such profitless labour. Here, however, the old negro was perfectly at a loss, and indeed perplexed by a variety of opinions; for his recollections were all confused. Sometimes he declared it must have been at the foot of a mulberry-tree hard by; then it was just beside a great white stone; then it must have been under a small green knoll, a short distance from the ledge of rock; until at length Wolfert became as bewildered as himself.

The shadows of evening were now spreading themselves over the woods, and rock and tree began to mingle together. It was evidently too late to attempt anything farther at present; and, indeed, Wolfert had come unprovided with implements to
prosecute his researches. Satisfied, therefore, with having ascertained the place, he took note of all its landmarks, that he might recognise it again, and set out on his return homewards; resolved to prosecute this golden enterprise without delay.

The leading anxiety, which had hitherto absorbed every feeling, being now in some measure appeased, fancy began to wander, and to conjure up a thousand shapes and chimeras as he returned through this haunted region. Pirates hanging in chains seemed to swing from every tree, and he almost expected to see some Spanish Don, with his throat cut from ear to ear, rising slowly out of the ground, and shaking the ghost of a money-bag.

Their way back lay through the desolate garden, and Wolfert's nerves had arrived at so sensitive a state, that the flitting of a bird, the rustling of a leaf, or the falling of a nut, was enough to startle them. As they entered the confines of the garden, they caught sight of a figure at a distance, advancing slowly up one of the walks, and bending under the weight of a burden. They paused, and regarded him attentively. He wore what appeared to be a woollen cap, and, still more alarming, of a most sanguinary red. The figure moved slowly on, ascended the bank, and stopped at the very door of the sepulchral vault. Just before entering it, he looked around. What was the affright of Wolfert, when he recognised the grisly visage of the drowned buccaneer! He uttered an ejaculation of horror. The figure slowly raised his iron fist, and shook it with a terrible menace.

Wolfert did not pause to see any more, but hurried off as fast as his legs could carry him, nor was Sam slow in following at his heels, having all his ancient terrors revived. Away then did they scramble, through bush and brake, horribly frightenened at every bramble that tugged at their skirts; nor did they pause to breathe, until they had blundered their way through this perilous wood, and had fairly reached the high road to the city.

Several days elapsed before Wolfert could summon courage enough to prosecute the enterprise, so much had he been dismayed by the apparition, whether living or dead, of the grisly buccaneer. In the mean time, what a conflict of mind did he suffer! He neglected all his concerns; was moody and restless all day; lost his appetite; wandered in his thoughts and words, and committed a thousand blunders. His rest was broken; and
when he fell asleep, the nightmare, in shape of a huge money-bag, sat squatted upon his breast. He babbled about incalculable sums; fancied himself engaged in money-digging; threw the bed-clothes right and left, in the idea that he was shoveling away the dirt; groped under the bed in quest of the treasure, and lugged forth, as he supposed, an inestimable pot of gold.

Dame Webber and her daughter were in despair at what they conceived a returning touch of insanity. There are two family oracles, one or other of which Dutch housewives consult in all cases of great doubt and perplexity—the dominie and the doctor. In the present instance, they repaired to the doctor. There was at that time a little, dark, mouldy man of medicine, famous among the old wives of the Manhattoes for his skill, not only in the healing art, but in all matters of strange and mysterious nature. His name was Dr. Knipperhausen, but he was more commonly known by the appellation of the high German doctor.* To him did the poor women repair for counsel and assistance touching the mental vagaries of Wolfert Webber.

They found the doctor seated in his little study, clad in his dark camblet robe of knowledge, with his black velvet cap, after the manner of Boerhaave, Van Helmont, and other medical sages; a pair of green spectacles set in black horn upon his clubbed nose; and poring over a German folio that reflected back the darkness of his physiognomy. The doctor listened to their statement of the symptoms of Wolfert's malady with profound attention; but when they came to mention his raving about buried money, the little man pricked up his ears. Alas, poor women! they little knew the aid they had called in.

Dr. Knipperhausen had been half his life engaged in seeking the short cuts to fortune, in quest of which so many a long lifetime is wasted. He had passed some years of his youth among the Harz mountains of Germany, and had derived much valuable instruction from the miners touching the mode of seeking treasure buried in the earth. He had prosecuted his studies also under a travelling sage, who united the mysteries of medicine with magic and legerdemain. His mind, therefore, had become stored with all kinds of mystic lore; he had dabbled a little in astrology, alchemy, divination: knew how to detect stolen money, and to tell where springs of water lay hidden; in a word, by the dark nature of his knowledge he had acquired

* The same, no doubt, of whom mention is made in the history of Dolph Heyliger.
the name of the high German doctor, which is pretty nearly
equivalent to that of necromancer.

The doctor had often heard the rumours of treasure being
buried in various parts of the island, and had long been anxious
to get in the traces of it. No sooner were Wolfert's waking
and sleeping vagaries confided to him, than he beheld in them
the confirmed symptoms of a case of money-digging, and lost no
time in probing it to the bottom. Wolfert had long been
sorely oppressed in mind by the golden secret, and as a family
physician is a kind of father confessor, he was glad of an oppor-
tunity of unburdening himself. So far from curing, the doctor
cought the malady from his patient. The circumstances un-
folded to him awakened all his cupidity; he had not a doubt of
money being buried somewhere in the neighbourhood of the
mysterious crosses, and offered to join Wolfert in the search.
He informed him that much secrecy and caution must be ob-
erved in enterprises of the kind; that money is only to be
dugged for at night, with certain forms and ceremonies, the
burning of drugs, the repeating of mystic words, and, above all,
that the seekers must first be provided with a divining rod, which
had the wonderful property of pointing to the very spot on
the surface of the earth under which treasure lay hidden. As
the doctor had given much of his mind to these matters, he
charged himself with all the necessary preparations, and as the
quarter of the moon was propitious, he undertook to have the
divining rod ready by a certain night.*

* The following note was found appended to this passage, in the handwriting
of Mr. Knickerbocker:
There has been much written against the divining rod by those light minds
who are ever ready to scoff at the mysteries of nature; but I fully join with Dr.
Knipperhausen in giving it my faith. I shall not insist upon its efficacy in dis-
covering the concealment of stolen goods, the boundary stones of fields, the
traces of robbers and murderers, or even the existence of subterranean springs
and streams of water; albeit I think these properties not to be readily discred-
tided; but of its potency in discovering veins of precious metal, and hidden sums
of money, and jewels, I have not the least doubt. Some said that the rod turned
only in the hands of persons who had been born in particular months of the
year; hence astrologers had recourse to planetary influence when they would
procure a talisman. Others declared that the properties of the rod were either
an effect of chance, or the fraud of the holder, or the work of the devil. Thus
saith the reverend father Gaspard Sebett in his treatise on magic: "Propter
hec et similia argumenta audacter ego promisero vim conversivam virgulam
bifurcatam nequaquam naturalem esse, sed vel casu vel fraude virgulam
tractantis vel ope diaboli," &c. Georgius Agricola also was of opinion that it was a mere
delusion of the devil to inveigle the avaricious and unwary into his clutches;
and in his treatise, "De Re Metallica," lays particular stress on the mysterious
words pronounced by those persons who employed the divining rod during his
time. But I make not a doubt that the divining rod is one of those secrets of
natural magic, the mystery of which is to be explained by the sympathies exist-
ing between physical things operated upon by the planets, and rendered effi-
Wolfer's heart leaped with joy at having met with so learned and able a coadjutor. Everything went on secretly but swimmingly. The doctor had many consultations with his patient, and the good woman of the household lauded the comforting effect of his visits. In the mean time, the wonderful divining rod, that great key to nature's secrets, was duly prepared. The doctor had thumbed over all his books of knowledge for the occasion; and the black fisherman was engaged to take him in his skiff to the scene of enterprise; to work with spade and pick-axe in unearthing the treasure; and to freight his bark with the weighty spoils they were certain of finding.

At length the appointed night arrived for this perilous undertaking. Before Wolfert left his home, he counselled his wife and daughter to go to bed, and feel no alarm if he should not return during the night. Like reasonable women, on being told not to feel alarm, they fell immediately into a panic. They saw at once by his manner that something unusual was in agitation; all their fears about the unsettled state of his mind were revived with tenfold force; they hung about him, entreatling him not to expose himself to the night air, but all in vain. When once Wolfert was mounted on his hobby, it was no easy matter to get him out of the saddle. It was a clear starlight night when he issued out of the portal of the Webber palace. He wore a large flapped hat, tied under the chin with a handkerchief of his daughter's, to secure him from the night damp; while Dame Webber threw her long red cloak about his shoulders, and fastened it round his neck.

The doctor had been no less carefully armed and accoutred by his housekeeper, the vigilant Frau Ilsey; and sallied forth in his cambletrobe by way of surcoat; his black velvet cap under his cocked hat; a thick clasped book under his arm; a basket of drugs and dried herbs in one hand, and in the other the miraculous rod of divination.

The great church clock struck ten as Wolfert and the doctor passed by the churchyard, and the watchman bawled, in hoarse voice, a long and doleful "All's well!" A deep sleep had already fallen upon this primitive little burgh. Nothing dis-
turbed this awful silence, excepting now and then the bark of some profligate, night-walking dog, or the serenade of some romantic cat.

It is true Wolfert fancied more than once that he heard the sound of a stealthy footfall at a distance behind them; but it might have been merely the echo of their own steps echoing along the quiet streets. He thought also, at one time, that he saw a tall figure skulking after them, stopping when they stopped, and moving on as they proceeded; but the dim and uncertain lamp-light threw such vague gleams and shadows, that this might all have been mere fancy.

They found the old fisherman waiting for them, smoking his pipe in the stern of his skiff, which was moored just in front of his little cabin. A pickaxe and spade were lying in the bottom of the boat, with a dark lantern, and a stone bottle of good Dutch courage, in which honest Sam, no doubt, put even more faith than Dr. Knipperhausen in his drugs.

Thus, then, did these three worthies embark in their cockleshell of a skiff upon this nocturnal expedition, with a wisdom and valour equalled only by the three wise men of Gotham, who had ventured to sea in a bowl. The tide was rising and running rapidly up the Sound. The current bore them along almost without the aid of an oar. The profile of the town lay all in shadow. Here and there a light feebly glimmered from some sick chamber, or from the cabin-window of some vessel at anchor in the stream. Not a cloud obscured the deep starry firmament, the lights of which wavered on the surface of the placid river, and a shooting meteor, streaking its pale course in the very direction they were taking, was interpreted by the doctor into a most propitious omen.

In a little while they glided by the point of Corlear's Hook, with the rural inn, which had been the scene of such night adventures. The family had retired to rest, and the house was dark and still. Wolfert felt a chill pass over him as they passed the point where the buccaneer had disappeared. He pointed it out to Dr. Knipperhausen. While regarding it, they thought they saw a boat actually lurking at the very place; but the shore cast such a shadow over the border of the water that they could discern nothing distinctly. They had not proceeded far when they heard the low sound of distant oars, as if cautiously pulled. Sam plied his oars with redoubled vigour, and knowing all the eddies and currents of the stream, soon left their followers, if
such they were, far astern. In a little while they stretched
across Turtle Bay and Kip's Bay, then shrouded themselves in
the deep shadows of the Manhattan shore, and glided swiftly
along, secure from observation. At length the negro shot his
skiff into a little cove, darkly embowered by trees, and made it
fast to the well-known iron ring.

They now landed, and lighting the lantern, gathered their
various implements, and proceeded slowly through the bushes.
Every sound startled them, even that of their own footsteps
among the dry leaves; and the hooting of a screech-owl from
the shattered chimney of the neighbouring ruin made their
blood run cold.

In spite of all Wolfert's caution in taking note of the land-
marks, it was some time before they could find the open place
among the trees where the treasure was supposed to be buried.
At length they came to the ledge of rock, and on examin-
ing its surface by the aid of the lantern, Wolfert recognised
the three mystic crosses. Their hearts beat quick, for the mo-
mentous trial was at hand that was to determine their hopes.

The lantern was now held by Wolfert Webber, while the
doctor produced the divining rod. It was a forked twig, one
end of which was grasped firmly in each hand, while the centre,
forming the stem, pointed perpendicularly upwards. The doctor
moved this wand about, within a certain distance of the earth,
from place to place, but for some time without any effect;
while Wolfert kept the light of the lantern turned full upon it,
and watched it with the most breathless interest. At length
the rod began slowly to turn. The doctor grasped it with
greater earnestness, his hands trembling with the agitation of
his mind. The wand continued to turn gradually, until at
length the stem had reversed its position, and pointed perpen-
dicularly downward, and remained pointing to one spot as
fixedly as the needle to the pole.

"This is the spot!" said the doctor, in an almost inaudible
tone.

Wolfert's heart was in his throat,

"Shall I dig?" said the negro, grasping the spade.—"Potst-
tansends, no!" replied the little doctor, hastily. He now ordered
his companions to keep close by him, and to maintain the most
inflexible silence; that certain precautions must be taken, and
ceremonies used, to prevent the evil spirits, which kept about
buried treasure, from doing them any harm.
He then drew a circle round the place enough to include the whole party. He next gathered dry twigs and leaves, and made a fire, upon which he threw certain drugs and dried herbs, which he had brought in his basket. A thick smoke rose, diffusing a potent odour, savouring marvellously of brimstone and asafetida, which, however grateful it might be to the olfactory nerves of spirits, nearly strangled poor Wolfert, and produced a fit of coughing and wheezing that made the whole grove resound. Dr. Knipperhausen then unclasped the volume which he had brought under his arm, which was printed in red and black characters in German text. While Wolfert held the lantern, the doctor, by the aid of his spectacles, read off several forms of conjuration in Latin and German. He then ordered Sam to seize the pickaxe and proceed to work. The close-bound soil gave obstinate signs of not having been disturbed for many a year. After having picked his way through the surface, Sam came to a bed of sand and gravel, which he threw briskly to right and left with the spade.

"Hark!" said Wolfert, who fancied he heard a trampling among the dry leaves, and a rustling through the bushes. Sam paused for a moment, and they listened—no footstep was near. The bat flitted by them in silence; a bird, roused from its roost by the light which glared up among the trees, flew circling about the flame. In the profound stillness of the woodland they could distinguish the current rippling along the rocky shore, and the distant murmuring and roaring of Hell-gate.

The negro continued his labours, and had already digged a considerable hole. The doctor stood on the edge, reading formulæ, every now and then, from his black letter volume, or throwing more drugs and herbs upon the fire; while Wolfert bent anxiously over the pit, watching every stroke of the spade. Any one witnessing the scene, thus lighted up by fire, lantern, and the reflection of Wolfert's red mantle, might have mistaken the little doctor for some foul magician, busied in his incantations, and the grizzly-headed negro for some swart goblin, obedient to his commands.

At length the spade of the old fisherman struck upon something that sounded hollow; the sound vibrated to Wolfert's heart. He struck his spade again—"'Tis a chest," said Sam. —"Full of gold, I'll warrant it!" cried Wolfert, clasping his hands with rapture.