Scarcely had he uttered the words, when a sound from above caught his ear. He cast up his eyes, and lo! by the expiring light of the fire, he beheld, just over the disk of the rock, what appeared to be the grim visage of the drowned buccaneer, grinning hideously down upon him.

Wolfert gave a loud cry, and let fall the lantern. His panic communicated itself to his companions. The negro leaped out of the hole; the doctor dropped his book and basket, and began to pray in German. All was horror and confusion. The fire was scattered about, the lantern extinguished. In their hurry-scurry, they ran against and confounded one another. They fancied a legion of hobgoblins let loose upon them, and that they saw, by the fitful gleams of the scattered embers, strange figures in red caps, gibbering and ramping around them. The doctor ran one way, the negro another, and Wolfert made for the waterside. As he plunged, struggling onwards through bush and brake, he heard the tread of some one in pursuit. He scrambled frantically forward. The footsteps gained upon him. He felt himself grasped by his cloak, when suddenly his pursuer was attacked in turn. A fierce fight and struggle ensued. A pistol was discharged that lit up rock and bush for a second, and showed two figures grappling together—all was then darker than ever. The contest continued; the combatants clenched each other, and panted and groaned, and rolled among the rocks. There was snarling and growling as of a cur, mingled with curses, in which Wolfert fancied he could recognise the voice of the buccaneer. He would fain have fled, but he was on the brink of a precipice, and could go no further. Again the parties were on their feet; again there was a tugging and struggling, as if strength alone could decide the combat, until one was precipitated from the brow of the cliff, and sent headlong into the deep stream that whirled below. Wolfert heard the plunge, and a kind of strangling, bubbling murmur; but the darkness of the night hid everything from him, and the swiftness of the current swept everything instantly out of hearing.

One of the combatants was disposed of, but whether friend or foe, Wolfert could not tell, or whether they might not both be foes. He heard the survivor approach, and his terror revived. He saw, where the profile of the rocks rose against the horizon, a human form advancing. He could not be mistaken—it must be the buccaneer. Whither should he fly? a precipice was on one side, a murderer on the other. The enemy approached—
he was close at hand. Wolfert attempted to let himself down the face of the cliff. His cloak caught in a thorn that grew on the edge. He was jerked from off his feet, and held dangling in the air, half choked by the string with which his careful wife had fastened the garment round his neck. Wolfert thought his last moment was arrived; already had he committed his soul to St. Nicholas, when the string broke, and he tumbled down the bank, bumping from rock to rock, and bush to bush, and leaving the red cloak fluttering, like a bloody banner, in the air.

It was a long while before Wolfert came to himself. When he opened his eyes, the ruddy streaks of morning were already shooting up the sky. He found himself lying in the bottom of a boat, grievously battered. He attempted to sit up, but was too sore and stiff to move. A voice requested him, in friendly accents, to lie still. He turned his eyes towards the speaker—it was Dirk Waldron. He had dogged the party at the earnest request of Dame Webber and her daughter, who, with the laudable curiosity of their sex, had pried into the secret consultations of Wolfert and the doctor. Dirk had been completely distanced in following the light skiff of the fisherman, and had just come in time to rescue the poor money-digger from his pursuer.

Thus ended this perilous enterprise. The doctor and Black Sam severally found their way back to the Manhattoes, each having some dreadful tale of peril to relate. As to poor Wolfert, instead of returning in triumph, laden with bags of gold, he was borne home on a shutter, followed by a rabble rout of curious urchins.

His wife and daughter saw the dismal pageant from a distance, and alarmed the neighbourhood with their cries; they thought the poor man had suddenly settled the great debt of nature in one of his wayward moods. Finding him, however, still living, they had him speedily to bed, and a jury of old matrons of the neighbourhood assembled to determine how he should be doctored.

The whole town was in a buzz with the story of the money-diggers. Many repaired to the scene of the previous night's adventures; but though they found the very place of the diggings, they discovered nothing that compensated them for their trouble. Some say they found the fragments of an oaken chest, and an iron potlid, which savoured strongly of hidden money, and that...
in the old family vault there were traces of trales and boxes; but this is all very dubious.

In fact, the secret of all this story has never to this day been discovered. Whether any treasure was ever actually buried at that place; whether, if so, it was carried off at night by those who had buried it; or whether it still remains there under the guardianship of gnomes and spirits until it shall be properly sought for, is all matter of conjecture. For my part, I incline to the latter opinion, and make no doubt that great sums lie buried both there and in many other parts of this island and its neighbourhood ever since the times of the buccaneers and the Dutch colonists; and I would earnestly recommend the search after them to such of my fellow-citizens as are not engaged in any other speculations. There are many conjectures formed, also, as to who and what was the strange man of the seas who had domineered over the little fraternity at Corlear’s Hook for a time, disappeared so strangely, and re-appeared so fearfully.

Some supposed him a smuggler, stationed at that place to assist his comrades in landing their goods among the rocky coves of the island. Others, that he was one of the ancient comrades, either of Kidd or Bradish, returned to convey away treasures formerly hidden in the vicinity. The only circumstance that throws anything like a vague light on this mysterious matter is a report which prevailed of a strange foreign-built shallop, with much the look of a piccaroon, having been seen hovering about the Sound for several days without landing, or reporting herself, though boats were seen going to and from her at night; and that she was seen standing out of the mouth of the harbour, in the grey of the dawn, after the catastrophe of the money-diggers.

I must not omit to mention another report, also, which I confess is rather apocryphal, of the buccaneer, who was supposed to have been drowned, being seen before daybreak with a lantern in his hand, seated astride his great sea-chest, and sailing through Hell-gate, which just then began to roar and bellow with redoubled fury.

While all the gossip world was thus filled with talk and rumour, poor Wolfert lay sick and sorrowful in his bed, bruised in body, and sorely beaten down in mind. His wife and daughter did all they could to bind up his wounds, both corporal and spiritual. The good old dame never stirred from his bed.
side, where she sat knitting from morning till night; while his daughter busied herself about him with the fondest care. Nor did they lack assistance from abroad. Whatever may be said of the desertion of friends in distress, they had no complaint of the kind to make; not an old wife of the neighbourhood but abandoned her work to crowd to the mansion of Wolfert Webber, inquire after his health, and the particulars of his story. Not one came, moreover, without her little pipkin of penny-royal, sage, balm, or other herb tea, delighted at an opportunity of signalising her kindness and her doctorship.

What drenchings did not the poor Wolfert undergo, and all in vain: it was a moving sight to behold him wasting away day by day; growing thinner and thinner, and ghastlier and ghastlier, and staring with rueful visage from under an old patchwork counterpane, upon the jury of matrons kindly assembled to sigh and groan, and look unhappy around him.

Dirk Waldron was the only being that seemed to shed a ray of sunshine into this house of mourning. He came in with cheery look and manly spirit, and tried to reanimate the expiring heart of the poor money-digger; but it was all in vain. Wolfert was completely done over. If anything was wanting to complete his despair, it was a notice served upon him, in the midst of his distress, that the corporation were about to run a new street through the very centre of his cabbage-garden. He now saw nothing before him but poverty and ruin—his last reliance, the garden of his forefathers, was to be laid waste—and what then was to become of his poor wife and child? His eyes filled with tears as they followed the dutiful Amy out of the room one morning. Dirk Waldron was seated beside him; Wolfert grasped his hand, pointed after his daughter, and for the first time since his illness, broke the silence he had maintained.

"I am going!" said he, shaking his head feebly; "and when I am gone—my poor daughter—"—"Leave her to me, father!" said Dirk, manfully; "I'll take care of her!"

Wolfert looked up in the face of the cheery, strapping youngster, and saw there was none better able to take care of a woman.

"Enough," said he, "she is yours!—and now fetch me a lawyer—let me make my will and die!"

The lawyer was brought, a dapper, bustling, round-headed little man—Roorback (or Rollebuck, as it was pronounced) by name. At the sight of him the women broke into loud lamenta-
WOLFERT WEBBER,

...ions, for they looked upon the signing of a will as the signing of a death-warrant. Wolfert made a feeble motion for them to be silent. Poor Amy buried her face and her grief in the bed-curtain; Dame Webber resumed her knitting to hide her distress, which betrayed itself, however, in a pellucid tear which trickled silently down, and hung at the end of her peaked nose; while the cat, the only unconcerned member of the family, played with the good dame's ball of worsted, as it rolled about the floor.

Wolfert lay on his back, his nightcap drawn over his forehead, his eyes closed, his whole visage the picture of death. He begged the lawyer to be brief, for he felt his end approaching, and that he had no time to lose. The lawyer nibbled his pen, spread out his paper, and prepared to write.

"I give and bequeath," said Wolfert, faintly, "my small farm—"

"What!—all?" exclaimed the lawyer.

Wolfert half opened his eyes, and looked upon the lawyer.

"Yes—all," said he.

"What! all that great patch of land with cabbages and sunflowers, which the corporation is just going to run a main street through?"

"The same," said Wolfert, with a heavy sigh, and sinking back upon his pillow.

"I wish him joy that inherits it!" said the little lawyer, chuckling and rubbing his hands involuntarily.

"What do you mean?" said Wolfert, again opening his eyes.

"That he'll be one of the richest men in the place!" cried little Rollebuck.

The expiring Wolfert seemed to step back from the threshold of existence; his eyes again lighted up; he raised himself in his bed, shoved back his worsted red nightcap, and stared broadly at the lawyer.

"You don't say so!" exclaimed he.

"Faith, but I do!" rejoined the other. "Why, when that great field, and that huge meadow, come to be laid out in streets, and cut up into snug building lots—why, whoever owns it need not pull off his hat to the patroon!"

"Say you so?" cried Wolfert, half thrusting one leg out of bed; "why, then, I think I'll not make my will yet!"

To the surprise of everybody, the dying man actually recovered. The vital spark, which had glimmered faintly in the
socket, received fresh fuel from the oil of gladness which the little
lawyer poured into his soul. It once more burnt up into a flame.
Give physic to the heart, ye who would revive the body of a
spirit-broken man! In a few days Wolfert left his room; in a
few days more his table was covered with deeds, plans of streets,
and building lots. Little Rollebuck was constantly with him,
his right hand man and adviser, and instead of making his will,
assisted in the more agreeable task of making his fortune.

In fact, Wolfert Webber was one of those many worthy
Dutch burghers of the Manhattoes, whose fortunes have been
made in a manner in spite of themselves; who have tenaciously
held on to their hereditary acres, raising turnips and cabbages
about the skirts of the city, hardly able to make both ends meet,
until the corporation has cruelly driven streets through their
abodes, and they have suddenly awakened out of a lethargy, and
to their astonishment found themselves rich men!

Before many months had elapsed, a great bustling street
passed through the very centre of the Webber garden, just
where Wolfert had dreamed of finding a treasure. His golden
dream was accomplished. He did indeed find an unlooked for
source of wealth; for when his paternal lands were distributed
into building lots, and rented out to safe tenants, instead of pro-
ducing a paltry crop of cabbages, they returned him an abundant
crop of rents; insomuch that on quarter-day it was a goodly
sight to see his tenants knocking at his door from morning to
night, each with a little round-bellied bag of money, the golden
produce of the soil.

The ancient mansion of his forefathers was still kept up; but
instead of being a little yellow-fronted Dutch house in a garden,
it now stood boldly in the midst of a street, the grand house of
the neighbourhood, for Wolfert enlarged it with a wing on each
side, and a cupola or tea-room on top, where he might climb up
and smoke his pipe in hot weather; and in the course of time the
whole mansion was overrun by the chubby-faced progeny of
Amy Webber and Dirk Waldron.

As Wolfert waxed old, and rich, and corpulent, he also set up
a great gingerbread-coloured carriage, drawn by a pair of black
Flanders mares, with tails that swept the ground; and to com-
memorate the origin of his greatness, he had for his crest a full-
blown cabbage painted on the panels, with the pithy motto
alles kopf, that is to say, ALL HEAD, meaning, thereby, that he
had risen by their head-work.
To fill the measure of his greatness, in the fulness of time the renowned Ramm Rapelye slept with his fathers, and Wolfert Webber succeeded to the leather-bottomed armchair in the inn parlour at Corlear's Hook, where he long reigned, greatly honoured and respected, insomuch that he was never known to tell a story without its being believed, nor to utter a joke without its being laughed at.
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