

that there was a figure of Fortune over the door of that summer house; it was the figure-head of a ship; behind that figure was her favorite place. She would climb up somehow and spend hours there with a Chinese parasol over her head."

While I thought over these things I began to realize my supineness in having passed so many months in my grandfather's native town without attempting to find the scenes of his boyhood. I searched various quarters of the town in vain, and was about to retrace my steps, when suddenly I saw through an open doorway, at the far end of a courtyard, a shark's skin suspended in air.

The house seemed to have passed just as it was from the hands of its former proprietor to its present one. On its roof veered a weathercock in the form of a ship, which suggested the vocation of its quondam owner, and I knew that the house of my grandfather should have been beside it. Alas! there was no house there now, nothing but disorder, caused by the debris of walls and the gaping ruins of cellars and basements. My heart sank at the thought that, after all, I had arrived too late. My eyes wandered aimlessly over this desolate place, where once a little world had existed for my forefathers. I entered the courtyard. Before me stood the well where my grandfather had told me he had been let down in one of the buckets. I then climbed to the top of a heap of rubbish, from whence I could see into the neighboring garden. In the centre was a little summer house—the same of which I had so often heard—and the wooden figure of Fortune was still standing, her cheeks red as poppies, and a string of blue beads twisted around her yellow hair. The tangled wealth of ivy which covered the walls of that summer house must have been there in those halcyon days when the little madcap mounted by its tendrils to the Fortune's back, and silently watched her companion searching the garden for her in vain!

As I gazed at this relic of the past I remembered the words with which my grandfather ended his story.

"Even then she was pitiless," he murmured with a sigh, "even then without pity."

When, in due course, the precious miniature came once more into my hands, my father told me that this fair girl had not only been my grandfather's playmate as a child, but the engrossing love of his manhood. In after years, when he had established himself as a merchant at Antwerp, they met once more. Alas! they quarreled. With hopes shattered and pride humbled my grandfather accepted a situation in an American firm, and did not return to Europe until he was middle-aged. More than this my father could not tell me.

Slowly I turned homewards, my fancy picturing a bright face adorned by long brown curls, and methought I saw the child seated at the back of that figure of Fortune playing with her golden coins. As I walked along the scene changed, and I saw her in the full glow of beauty, clothed as a bride, driving my poor grandfather to seek his fortune in the wide world.

Winter had come. The cold north wind swept howl-

ing over the ice-bound earth. I had just heaped an armful of wood on the fire when my friend the burgomaster was announced. He told me that our neighbor, Madame Jansen, had just been found, more dead than alive, upon the staircase of her house.

"The old miser only warms herself with the green sticks from her orchard," said the burgomaster; "and at night, when honest folk are asleep, she crawls down to her cellar to count her gold."

"So they say," I murmured.

"Certainly, it must be so," he continued, "for there she was, crouching down in a corner of the stairs, grasping a dark lantern in her bony hand. The worst of it is that she is come to life again; but, according to the commissaire de police, her reason is quite gone."

"Well, my dear sir, and what can either you or I do in the matter?"

"Don't you see that in her present state she might do herself some mischief? I shall have to nominate a guardian over her and the money which she has been hoarding. You are just the man for that; I shall appoint you."

I did not like the duty.

"She has no money. All her legacies have been arranged under the will of her late husband."

"That is the question," interrupted the burgomaster; "that point is not very clear. She may yet make some absurd will. She must be taken care of. Will you undertake to do the best for her?"

There was no escape, and I was obliged to promise the burgomaster that I would call that very day on the strange old woman.

As my friend was leaving I inquired from him what sort of man Sievert Jansen was.

"Not good for much," he replied. "He was a *bon viveur*, and for that matter so was she. I was quite young when he died, but I remember a good deal of revelry proceeding from that house, a great deal of drinking and singing. She was very much admired by the young men in society, and being rich, she could afford to entertain them. But it did not last long. Youth and beauty vanished, and instead of clinking the wine-glass, she had to be satisfied with the ring and glitter of her golden crowns."

With these words the burgomaster departed.

This time I had no difficulty in getting into the house. A nurse from a neighboring hospital ushered me to Madame Jansen's room. A strange scene presented itself. On the chairs, whose coverings hung in shreds, were scattered articles of clothing, old bonnets, sauce pans and other culinary utensils, mingled with scraps of food. Spiders' webs hung from the ceiling and stretched across the curtainless windows. The windows had apparently been closed for years. When the nurse drew aside the heavy curtains of the huge, old-fashioned bed, a sound like the clanking of a chain was audible, and I saw a large bunch of keys firmly held by a shriveled hand. A lean form, enveloped in a soldier's ragged cape, tried to